SUBMISSION FROM LIVING STREETS SCOTLAND

1. Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. Our arguments and evidence led to such road safety milestones as the introduction of 30mph speed limits and the driving test in the 1930s, the green cross code in the 1970s, and 20 mph zones in the 1990s.

Key messages

- Scottish Government policies aim to tackle two key challenges- an aging, increasingly overweight/obese population, and need/desirability to shift to a low carbon economy.
- Walking is a vital transport mode: one in four journeys that we make are on foot, it is the most inclusive form of transport and the most common travel mode for under 20s and over 80s.
- Investing in sustainable transport is preventative spend. Investing in walking helps tackle the public health challenges and the transition to a low carbon economy.
- Our key calls for the Draft Budget of relevance to the committee are:
  - Maintain Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets as additional funding for local authorities
  - Maintain funding to Local Government for tackling Vacant and Derelict Land and maintaining footways
  - Support implementation of Designing Streets- a low cost solution to high cost problems
- Further background to our evidence will be available in our submission to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee.

Sustainable Transport and Low Carbon Economy

2. To achieve the Low Carbon economy and decarbonised transport sector- key Scottish Government objectives- a key element is creating walkable neighbourhoods. People will walk more when it is the most logical travel choice to reach their destination and will prefer to walk when other people are around. It is proven that the number of trips and distance travelled by car falls with increasing population density, reducing the distance, hence cost to individuals and carbon emissions of their transport requirements. II Scottish Government policy on Designing Streets agrees:

“Density is also an important consideration in reducing reliance on the private car. Scottish Planning Policy encourages a flexible approach to density, reflecting the desirability of using land efficiently and the need to promote higher density development in places well served by public transport. Residential densities should be planned to take advantage of proximity to activities, or to good public transport linking those activities.”
3. Residential densities can be increased with the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land, as opposed to greenfield development (this was a key conclusion of a Future Glasgow working group in July 2011). This can remove the blight from the communities (often in areas of deprivation) who have to live next to such sites. Indirectly, it will improve the conditions for walking and cycling as it will create a higher quality environment for doing so. To achieve this, investment is required to prepare land for development. The Draft Budget highlights preparation for “the first investments through the £50 million JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) Fund, managed by the European Investment Bank and jointly funded by EU and Scottish Government money”. However, the future of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund which received £10m in 2011/12 but is tbc for 2012 is not clear.

4. Finally, we would be interested in clarification of how the Government’s manifesto commitment on town centres will be met: “We will also look to bring together the various existing funding streams to create a simpler, more easily accessible Town Centre Regeneration Fund, which will focus on important improvements to the built environment and heritage of our town centres, contributing in this way to making our town centres more attractive places to do business.”

5. The Budget should ensure that there can be investment in Vacant and Derelict Land to enable future development opportunities, temporary uses of land should be enabled to reduce the blight on communities from derelict land, there should be investment in our town centres and strict enforcement of the requirements of Designing Streets on new and existing streets should be required, giving developers certainty.

Sustainable Transport Mechanism for funding: Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets (CWSS)

6. The Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) Grant is paid to local authorities annually as a ring fenced grant through S70 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. The grant was not rolled up into the General Settlement during the financial reforms associated with the Concordat and Single Outcome Agreements in 2007 and was preserved for 2011/12, with a 17% cut in budget from £9m to £7.5m.

7. While improvements could be made, we believe this mechanism should continue to be funded at current levels, and increased during the Spending review period, for the following reasons:
   - £7.5m is a small sum of money- 0.35% of the overall transport budget but with important implications for investment in active travel across Scotland
   - The money invested predominantly goes directly to local contractors to carry out the work, keeping the money within the local economy.
   - It is used to match and lever in additional funding, for example from European funding.
– CWSS is a proven mechanism for delivering the small scale but important improvements local communities are demanding.
– The Scottish Government has already streamlined the reporting process, reducing bureaucracy around the fund being ring-fenced.
– Without this money, local authority officers express severe scepticism that any budget would be available for delivering initiatives improving safety for the most vulnerable road users.
– Funding for CWSS should be additional funding for local authorities. The Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee’s Report on its Inquiry into Active Travel, published in 2010 called for increased investment in active travel but highlighted concerns that local authorities would not give active travel “sufficiently high priority” in times of economic constraint. vi

8. **We call for CWSS to be maintained at £7.5m for 2012/13 as additional funding for Local Authorities and increased to deliver on the Scottish Parliament’s Transport Committee recommendation in 2010 for increased resources on active travel.**

**Sustainable Transport and Road Maintenance:**

9. **Living Streets participated during Summer 2011 in the Transport Scotland working group identifying the Wider Economic Impact of Changes in Maintenance Spend on Roads. This highlighted that the costs to both the economy and individuals of cutting maintenance on local roads was significantly higher than cutting it on trunk roads and that vulnerable road users were the most affected by such cuts.**

10. **The importance of local road maintenance as preventative spend is illustrated in Edinburgh. Over 10 years, Edinburgh council paid out £2.3m in claims resulting from injuries caused by defective pavements and £250,000 for claims relating to damage to cars from defective roads. The Council estimates the cost of necessary maintenance as £45m on roads and £41m on pavements. As Transport Minister, Keith Brown said “we need to remember that the road asset is not confined to the part used by motorised vehicles - how we maintain our footways and cycleways is also crucial”**

11. **We note that the routine and winter maintenance budget for trunk roads increases from £61.5m this year to £72.5m in 2014/15, an 18% increase. In contrast, we know of one local authority where it is anticipated the road maintenance budget could be cut by up to 40% in 2012/13, on top of a 5% cut in 2011/12.**
12. We are concerned that vulnerable road users are facing a double-whammy with local authority budgets (and therefore maintenance budgets) and CWSS funding being cut while trunk road maintenance spend increases. This appears to take no account of the Road Maintenance Working Group conclusions and should be re-considered.

Living Streets Scotland

21 October 2011

References to walking encompass people with mobility impairments and people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters. National Travel Survey figures, which have historically under-reported walking levels

Source of graph: Cabinet Office/DfT presentation, Nick Bisson, 2 march 2010, TRL 2004

Future Glasgow Working group, 15th July 2011 Organised by Glasgow City Council.

With reference to Town Centre Regeneration: How Does it Work & What can be Achieved? Scottish government Social Research 2011

Local authorities are allocated proportions of the total on a population basis. The grant ranges from £1,021,000 for Glasgow City Council to £34,000 for Orkney Islands Council. In the budget, the amount is ‘tbc’ for a renamed Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes fund

The Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee’s Report on its Inquiry into Active Travel, published in 2010 recommended that: “the decline in the funding of sustainable transport and active travel line needs not only to be reversed, but significantly increased.”

[The Committee] “was concerned that active travel may not be given a sufficiently high priority by local authorities, particularly during…a period of economic constraint.” Importantly it said that: “It is not enough simply to increase the size of budget allocations and assume that results will naturally flow from this increased spending. Available funding must be used to provide infrastructure and other measures that have been proven to have a high benefit to cost ratio and deliver tangible outcomes including health benefits, savings on road maintenance and reductions in CO2 and air pollution.”