

## **SUSTRANS**

### **WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

Sustrans welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment (ICI) Committee's call for evidence on the draft budget 2014-15. Sustrans is a leading UK charity that enables people to travel by foot, bicycle or public transport for more of the journeys they make everyday. We work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

At the outset, Sustrans would like to state that we are pleased that Cabinet Secretary for Finance John Swinney announced an additional £20 million over a two year period for cycling during the draft budget announcement. At the first National Cycling Summit in September, the Transport Minister Keith Brown announced that this additional money would be managed by Sustrans, with £16.4 million being directed towards our Community Links Programme and £3.6 million being directed at improving Leith Walk in Edinburgh. This is a much welcomed injection of capital funding which will be used to improve cycling infrastructure throughout the country.

In this written evidence we present our views on whether the draft budget proposals are consistent with the Scottish Government's strategic priorities of most relevance to transport. We also provide some comments on key issues relating to the draft budget.

#### **Progress being made in relation to specific indicators**

##### **To reduce emissions over the period to 2011**

##### **To reduce emissions by 80 per cent by 2050**

###### *Performance improving*

Despite the status assigned to this indicator, Sustrans considers that work in this area has been insufficient to date given that Scotland has missed its climate change annual targets for two consecutive years. Increasing the number of people travelling actively or on public transport would significantly help to reduce emissions from the transport sector. This is particularly pertinent given that the transport sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland.

Sustrans considers that the Draft Budget could go further in helping to reduce emissions. There is still too much emphasis being placed on improving the road network, with a commitment to spend £638 million on motorways and trunk roads in 2014-15. This spending will not help to decrease emissions and indeed would most likely have the opposite effect.

## **Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads**

### *Performance improving*

Despite decreasing road casualties across the board in 2012, there were 898 cyclist incidents (+9%); including 9 fatalities (2 more than 2011)<sup>i</sup>. Part of this may be due to the increasing number of cyclists on the road, but it is also due to a host of other factors such as the inadequate provision of safe cycling routes. It is imperative that facilities for cyclists are improved as perceptions of safety are a key reason for people not cycling (at all or more often)<sup>ii</sup>.

While the additional money announced for cycling infrastructure will go some way to making facilities safer for cyclists, Sustrans considers that money must also be directed towards education. It is important that all P6 children receive on road cycle training at school in order to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to cycle safely on our roads. Bikeability Scotland relies on volunteers to deliver cycle training to children. This works well in areas where volunteers are forthcoming but in areas where this is not the case, children miss out on receiving training. Therefore, we consider that this programme should be properly funded to ensure that all children benefit. In addition, more funding should be directed at delivering adult cycle training classes. It is not simply a case of building more infrastructure and expecting people to know how to use it. It is imperative that they have the option to receive training in order to keep them safe on the road and to improve their confidence.

## **Reduce traffic congestion**

### *Performance maintaining*

Scotland's main towns, cities and roads all experience varying levels of traffic congestion problems, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. This is despite the Scottish Government pursuing a comprehensive programme of road building. Therefore, it is clear that alternative modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport need to be made more appealing and better advertised to people in order to encourage them out of their cars and consequently reduce congestion.

In particular, the school run is a major cause of congestion with one in five cars on the road during morning peak traffic taking children to school. This is despite the fact that the average primary school journey is less than 1.5 miles, which is a distance easily manageable on foot or by bike by many pupils. In 2012, 49.7% of pupils in Scotland said they normally travelled to school actively, without using any form of motorised transport<sup>iii</sup>. This figure needs to be significantly increased if we are to seriously tackle traffic congestion on our roads.

Sustrans considers that the construction of new roads, as outlined in the budget, is not a suitable, long-term method of reducing congestion. Indeed, we believe that it normally has the opposite effect and actually generates new, higher levels of traffic.

## **Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport**

### *Performance maintaining*

Figures have remained fairly static in recent years therefore pointing to the need for more action to be taken in this area. Building in exercise to our everyday lives, in the form of walking or cycling to work, brings significant health benefits, saves us money, decreases congestion and helps to reduce air pollution. Given these considerable benefits, it is clear that increased effort and funding must be directed towards getting more people active on their daily commute.

Obviously, in some instances the daily commute can be too long to be realistically made on foot or by bike. We should be aiming to make public transport the obvious choice for these journeys. In order to do this the public transport network in Scotland needs to be fit for purpose; in other words it must be reliable, affordable and most of all convenient.

In order to encourage more people to consider travelling actively to work it is essential that they are better informed about what transport options are available. Funding should be directed to ensuring that all workplaces in Scotland encourage staff to travel actively or take public transport instead of relying on their car. In many cases it will just be the case that people do not realise how convenient active or public transport can be and they simply need to be presented with clear facts. In other cases they might not feel confident cycling to work and therefore cycle training is required. Much more investment is required in such behaviour change measures in order to successfully encourage people to change how they travel to work.

## **Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint**

### *Performance worsening*

Sustrans considers that work in this area has been insufficient to date given that Scotland has missed its climate change annual targets for two consecutive years. Increasing the number of people travelling actively or on public transport would significantly help to reduce emissions from the transport sector. This is particularly pertinent given that the transport sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in Scotland. We think that the budget as it currently stands is much too heavily focused on road building and therefore will not be able to deliver on reducing Scotland's carbon footprint. Much more emphasis must be placed on encouraging people to travel by public or active forms of transport.

## **Other issues**

### **Presentation of figures**

It is important that figures for active travel are presented as clearly as possible within the budget. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the funding in this area given that there is no clear budget line for active travel in the document. Last year, the ICI Committee asked the Scottish Government for greater clarity surrounding the active travel component of the budget and it was agreed that officials would look into this. Clear budget lines are presented for other areas of transport and we recommend that the same should be the case for active travel.

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<sup>i</sup> Transport Scotland (2013) Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2012

<sup>ii</sup> Cycling Scotland (2008) CAPS Public and Stakeholder Consultation Facilitation

<sup>iii</sup> Sustrans (2013) Hands Up Scotland 2012

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