

SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM LIVING STREETS SCOTLAND

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2013-14.

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 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.

This written evidence summarises key points we made in greater detail during the Committee meeting on 26th September 2012. If further information is required, please don't hesitate to contact us.

1. The budget and walking

We thoroughly welcome the commitment of the Scottish Government to develop a National Walking Strategy and believe it should cover walking for transport, walking for health as well as walking for recreation. In particular, the strategy should support efforts to increase walking to, from and at school and work with an indicative target to complement the 10% of journeys target in the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS). The budget is the key opportunity to provide resources to implement a walking strategy and there are strong arguments for doing so:

- 9% of preventable deaths are due to physical inactivity.¹
- Walking is the most common form of physical activity, at any age or any income. It is the mode of transport most often used by those on lowest incomes, by those under 20 and by those over 80.
- The conditions for walking are worst in areas of deprivation, with the worst air quality, highest levels of derelict land and worst road casualty records. To tackle health inequalities, to genuinely increase preventative spend and to deliver "*the most important outcome of 2012 and 2014 Games- a more active nation*"ⁱⁱⁱ walking levels should be increased and walking conditions improved, especially in areas of deprivation.
- Access to a bike varies hugely with income. Only 1 in 10 people in least well off areas have access to a bike. In contrast, there are 20 times as many journeys made on foot as by bike so the budget should invest in cycling and invest in walking and recognise that those are two differing, though frequently complementary, investments.
- Physical inactivity has become the norm. Walking to school levels have dropped from 90% to below 50% in 2 generations
- Finally, we would echo the words of Shona Robison, Commonwealth Games and Sport Minister: "*We know 30 minutes of walking each day provides more protection against death than any medication.*"ⁱⁱⁱ

2. The budget and maintenance

In their Budget report in 2011, the Committee noted the costs of cutting local maintenance budgets:

"the Committee notes the point made in the recent National Roads Maintenance Review that if maintenance budgets were to be cut by 20% on trunk and local roads, the cost of doing so (in

Net Present Value terms) is nearly five times worse on local roads than on trunk roads.⁴³⁶ The report also confirms that local authorities have identified a £1.54bn backlog”

Transport Scotland highlighted that the impact of cutting maintenance budgets is worst on vulnerable road users:

“cutting the maintenance budget on local roads has negative impacts on pedestrians as vulnerable road users in particular, ranging from “increased roadside noise and reduced local air quality”, “increased defects on footpaths [particularly [for] those with a visual or mobility impairment]” and “increased perceptions of crime caused by poorer levels of street lighting.”^{iv}

Furthermore, the Committee called for savings in the trunk road maintenance budget in its budget report in 2011:

“84. .. The Committee has identified three expensive spending lines where even relatively modest efficiencies could substantially increase the available resource and used to underpin low carbon and active travel. Specifically:

- *from the Government’s investment in the rail industry, during refranchising, for example;*
- *from more efficient management of operation of the concessionary fares scheme; or*
- *from trimming the trunk road maintenance budget.*

85. The Committee requests that the Scottish Government give consideration to these suggestions.”^v

In the light of cuts to local authority footway maintenance budgets, totalling 11% and 30% in 2 local authorities that we are aware of, we believe the Committee should therefore be reviewing whether its recommendations around maintenance have been taken sufficiently seriously in this year’s budget. The National Walking Strategy offers a clear opportunity to invest in maintenance of better conditions for walking.

3. The budget, jobs and inequalities

The ICI Committee and Cabinet Secretary last year acknowledged the economic benefits to local companies of smaller capital schemes and acknowledged the value for money of these schemes:

“42. The Committee welcomes the Cabinet Secretary’s acknowledgment of the value for money offered by smaller capital schemes and the fact that Scottish companies are invariably the contractors on such projects.

“The Committee notes that... investment in cycling and walking schemes often offers excellent value for money”

We would highlight two areas where capital investment has a major impact in tackling inequalities and creating jobs: the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and Cycling Walking and Safer Streets fund. We welcome the continued commitment to tackling vacant and derelict land, to the tune of £7.1m in 2013/14. As Scottish Planning Policy makes clear: *“Vacant and derelict land ... can act as a constraint on the economic growth of towns and cities.”^{vi}*

We welcome the continued investment in CWSS but are disappointed that CWSS has been cut to £5.6m given that the ICI committee asked for it to be increased to £7.5m:

“Consequently, the Committee is also seeking reassurances about the CWSS funding for local authorities. The Committee therefore recommends that the Cabinet Secretary seeks to maintain

CWSS funding at the current level of £7.5 million per annum and ensures that the fund continues to be ring fenced”

4. Budget transparency

In their budget report last year, the committee asked for greater transparency. We would support the committee in this call:

“The Committee notes that the best estimate of levels of funding for active travel is provided by Spokes, the cycling charity, and recommends creating a separate budget line for active travel within the transport budget, or even creating respective budget lines for cycling and for walking and safer streets”

In conclusion, Living Streets Scotland wants to see a budget clearly focused to get more Scots walking in improved walking conditions as this will tackle inequalities, create jobs and help the Scottish Government achieve its purpose, creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Irving
Head of Living Streets Scotland

ⁱ Effect of physical inactivity on major non-communicable diseases worldwide: an analysis of burden of disease and life expectancy; The Lancet, Volume 380, Issue 9838, Pages 219 - 229, 21 July 2012

ⁱⁱ Shona Robison; Scottish Parliament Official Report; 18th September 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ quoted in The Sun, 22 May

^{iv} (Page 11-12) Source: Transport Scotland; National Roads Maintenance Review - Phase 2 Report; Published 2nd November 2011

^v ICI Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee Report on the Scottish Government Draft Budget 2012-13 and Spending Review 2011 to Finance Committee

^{vi} Scottish Planning Policy: A statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. Feb 2010