

Spending Review representation summary

The Treasury is currently accepting representations (written submissions) from anyone who would like to comment on what the UK government's spending priorities should be. Representations will help inform the Treasury's decisions for the Spending Review, which will be released later this year and will allocate budgets for UK government departments for the next few years.

Submissions "should include proposals that outline funding priorities and explain the rationale, costs, benefits, and feasibility of your suggestions" and "be evidence-based, providing clear arguments on how they align with the objectives of the Spending Review, such as delivering value for money, supporting economic growth, and achieving strategic outcomes across government."

The process for submitting a representation is very simple: just head to the Treasury's online [portal](#) and answer three questions. There is an optional fourth question which allows you to attach a document that elaborates on your thoughts.

For those who would like to respond, we've prepared a quick guide to provide you with some ideas.

Question 1: In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Select 'an individual'

Question 2: Which government department(s) and/or independent bodies does your Spending Review representation relate to?

Select 'Department for Transport'. Depending on what you choose to write about, you can also select 'Department of Health and Social Care and 'Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government'.

Question 3: Please summarise your representation in no more than 250 words. To help us protect your anonymity, please do not enter any information here which might unnecessarily identify you or others.

Summarise your thoughts about what the UK government's spending priorities should be and why. Remember to state clearly at the beginning that you think there should be more investment in cycling.

You can pick out a few of our main points (listed below Question 4).

Question 4 (optional): Please upload your representation, ensuring that the file name includes the name of the organisation or individual it is submitted on behalf of.

Cycling UK will make the following points in our representation, which you are welcome to use. If you want to submit a more detailed response, you can upload it as a document to

the portal. Alternatively, you can just write a shorter response in Question 3 and skip the attachment.

- Recent governments have adopted positive and much needed objectives to increase cycling:
 - [Gear Change](#), the UK Government’s 2020 vision for cycling and walking in England, aimed for half of all journeys¹ in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030.
 - The [Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#) (CWIS 2), which covers April 2021 to March 2025, added the interim objectives of increasing “the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled from 41% in 2018 to 2019 to 46% in 2025” and doubling the number of annual cycling stages from 0.8 billion in 2013 to 1.6 billion in 2025.
 - While these objectives were set by previous governments, the current UK government has reiterated its commitment to increasing levels of walking, wheeling and cycling.
- CWIS2 projected £3.784 billion of investment in active travel from April 2021 to March 2025. In 2023 the government cut its already inadequate capital funding for active travel by 75%, resulting in much less overall active travel spending in the last two years of CWIS2. The new government recouped some of that funding in its Autumn Statement in 2024, committing £100 million to active travel. However, it remains insufficient to achieve the government’s goals to increase walking and cycling levels. Active travel has accounted for just two percent of transport spending in England, so it’s not surprising that it continues to have some of the lowest cycling levels in Europe.
- IPPR’s 2024 report “[Stride and Ride](#)” concluded that the UK government must ramp up annual active travel spending to £50 per person to achieve its objectives, or about 10% of the overall transport budget. Of this allocation, £35 per head should be spent on infrastructure, and £15 per head should go to resource spending (which includes behaviour change programmes). IPPR recommended a funding settlement that would cover 2025-2035, reflecting Cycling UK’s calls for longer term funding, which would give local authorities the stability and confidence to implement active travel projects. IPPR’s spending recommendation is not far off DfT’s own calculations about the funding required to meet its CWIS 2 targets, as revealed in National Audit Office [analysis](#).
- Investment in cycling offers excellent value for money:
 - Investing £2 billion per year on active travel (as advocated for by Cycling UK) would provide £38 billion in return on investment.
 - Cycling saves people money they’d otherwise spend on running a car, which eats up 20% of a household’s income for those on the lowest incomes.

¹ This was later amended by CWIS2 to refer specifically to “short” journeys

- Cycling improves people's health by building in exercise. Ill health caused by physical inactivity costs the UK around [£7.4 billion](#) annually.
- Higher cycling rates would decrease air pollution, which is estimated to hasten between 28,000 and 36,000 [deaths](#) annually in the UK, at an economic cost of [£20 billion](#) or more.
- Cycling also decreases congestion, which costs the UK economy [£30 billion](#) per year.