



Clockwise from top left: The Senedd: Wales has made strides with policies such as its default 20mph speed limit but the funding allocation for cycling is now unclear. Stormont: Northern Ireland has the most work to do. Cycling UK and [centre photo] Lord Berkeley at the House of Commons, Westminster, for the launch of the IPPR report that backed Cycling UK's call for active travel to receive 10% of the transport budget. Cycling UK at Holyrood: Scotland has just slashed £31m from its active travel budget

Top left: John Wellings. Bottom left: Andy Catlin



Three years on, there's no sign of a sectoral plan, investment in active travel remains the lowest in the UK and progress has been glacial. However, in December 2024 the Department of Finance launched a consultation on the next year's budget. We're still waiting for confirmation of the final budget, but through our campaign action, members and supporters have been pushing their MLAs for a timescale and plan for active travel investment to be ramped up to that 10% target.

WALES

And so to Wales. We've praised many of its decisions and policies, from the Active Travel Act to the introduction of a default 20mph speed limit. Wales has also, slowly but consistently, been increasing the funding allocated to active travel.

Allocate is the key word, because changes to the way funding is allocated in Wales mean that it's not clear from the draft budget published in December just what money is being assigned to cycling and walking. Budget lines are unclear, and money for active travel seems to fall within wider funding streams, making it difficult to discern exactly what's available for or likely to be spent on active travel.

We've been pressing for clarification on the budget figures for the last two months. Our supporters have too, through one of six separate actions we've set up since December to help people let politicians know they want more money spent on cycling, wherever they live in the UK.

ENGLAND

I've left England until last because I wanted to end with some cautious optimism, although I'll caveat that by saying that funding for cycling is inadequate across the UK.

Last year Cycling UK instructed independent think-tank IPPR (Institute of Public Policy Research) to produce a report on the levels of funding needed in England to achieve government targets to increase levels of cycling. It supported our calls for the allocation of around 10% of the transport budget. When the report was written, we were still dealing with the consequences of a decision that the last government made to cut active travel funding by £233m (around 70%).

The current government inherited that legacy, and we've been furiously lobbying to reverse those cuts and then increase funding further. Last October the government took the first steps towards that, announcing a further £100m for active travel in the autumn budget. It's not enough. It doesn't fully reverse the cuts. Yet it's a welcome first step.

Sadly, one-year budget increases tend to lead to one-year funding settlements for local authorities. It's hard for councils to then plan and deliver connected networks of separated cycling routes without some assurance regarding long-term funding.

In Westminster, the government has been consulting on a multi-year spending review, which is expected to be published in June. A major part of our influencing work in Westminster in recent months has therefore been to make the case for increased and long-term funding for cycling. Once again, thousands of you have used our campaign actions to support this. And you can still do so; see the sidebar.

So that's my whistle-stop tour through budgets, spending reviews and investment in cycling across all four nations. Some ups, some downs, but there's been progress in every nation since I started working at Cycling UK. I only wish it were quicker. With your support, we'll continue to (politely) ask politicians to show us the money. ●

Your voice matters

Cycling UK's policy and public affairs team leads on our engagement with politicians and decision-makers in all four nations, and we now have designated teams focused on this in each nation. That work is integrated with our public-facing campaigning, through which we mobilise public support for our policy asks.

More funding for cycling is one of our key demands from all four governments. We raise this with the governments, with individual politicians and with opposition parties. It's also a central ask within a new UK-wide campaign we are about to launch, and will be seeking your support for. Details will be on our campaign page shortly: cyclinguk.org/cycle-campaigning.

We often ask people to support our campaigns by taking a simple campaign action, such as emailing their own elected representatives. Over the last 10 weeks we've had six campaign actions running, linked to funding for cycling, budgets or the spending review. If you live in England there's still time to let your MP know you support our calls linked to the spending review for more funding for cycling.

Email your MP today: cyclinguk.org/email-your-mp.