

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 5 February 2025
2nd Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

PE2065: Improve and prioritise pedestrian safety

Introduction

Petitioner Shauna Rafferty

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve and prioritise safety for pedestrians by:

- widening pavements and reducing street clutter
- introducing a mechanism to report pavement parking
- improving visibility of pedestrian crossings.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2065>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 6 March 2024](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to Transport Scotland and COSLA.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received new written submissions from Transport Scotland and COSLA which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 6 December 2023](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 45 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

8. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
January 2025

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2065: Improve and prioritise pedestrian safety

Petitioner

Shauna Rafferty

Date Lodged

9 November 2023

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to improve and prioritise safety for pedestrians by:

- widening pavements and reducing street clutter
- introducing a mechanism to report pavement parking
- improving visibility of pedestrian crossings.

Previous action

I have raised the issue of increased safety measures and consideration for those with greater accessibility needs with MPs and MSPs, specifically in their constituencies where dangers for pedestrians have been prolific and fatal.

Background information

This report, written by Sustrans together with ARUP and Living Streets, published in 2022, calls for Government action to stop cars, cycles and e-scooters encroaching on pavement space.

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/news/2022/march/new-report-calls-for-government-action-to-give-pavements-back-to-people>

Transport for All has campaigned for an Equal Pavements Pledge.

<https://www.transportforall.org.uk/campaign/equal-pavements-pledge/>

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2065 on 6 March 2023

The Convener: PE2065, which was lodged by Shauna Rafferty, calls on the Parliament to urge the Government to improve and prioritise safety for pedestrians by widening pavements and reducing street clutter; introducing a mechanism to report pavement parking; and improving visibility of pedestrian crossings. The SPICe briefing notes that responsibility for the maintenance, management and development of most of Scotland's streets, including footways and crossings, rests with councils.

Transport Scotland's response to the petition points to "Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030", which created targets for key priority groups, including pedestrians. Investments are highlighted in the submission, including funds for new and improved pavements, safer junctions, improved place design and projects for casualty and risk reduction. Transport Scotland is working closely with local authorities to assist them in preparing for the enforcement of the pavement parking ban. Do members have any comments or suggestions?

David Torrance: Would the committee consider writing to Transport Scotland to ask how Scotland's active travel vision to 2030, the national transport strategy and the road safety improvement fund will work to directly address street clutter, and to ask whether it has considered a national approach to improving the visibility of pedestrian crossings? Perhaps the committee could also consider writing to COSLA to seek information about the capacity of local authorities to widen pavements, reduce street clutter, improve the visibility of pedestrian crossings, enforce the pavement parking ban and implement safe system measures through the road safety improvement fund, and ask how it intends to share best practice on measures to improve pedestrian safety across local authorities.

Fergus Ewing: I support that, but in doing so I am aware from my own constituency that the pavement parking ban has caused practical issues for residents in residential areas where the street is narrow and there are usually cars on each side of the road and where, if there is some abuttal of the pavement, unless a car can mount the pavement to an extent, it becomes impossible for people to have a car. That in turn means that some people are effectively isolated, particularly elderly people, those with impaired mobility and those with disability. It is an issue that has been raised with me, and it has quite severe consequences.

The safety of pedestrians is very important, but there is another side to it. In taking up Mr Torrance's suggestion, could we ask whether that aspect has been considered and whether local authorities in other parts of Scotland have received complaints such as those that have been raised with me? If not, perhaps some further work might need to be done, because I suspect that the issue will come back, and we will probably receive a petition on the topic before too much longer.

The Convener: That has been my experience with constituents, as well, although the parking ban has not yet been enforced in my constituency, despite the excited

interventions of Mr Greer, who is continually invoking the local authority to proceed. There are a number of streets where the application of the law means that emergency service vehicles are not able to access the street, which is a clear issue that could have been foreseen.

The other issue that makes this all the more difficult is the continual increase in the size of motor vehicles. I think, Mr Ewing, of the cars with wing mirrors in which you and I passed our driving test, and I think back, as a Ford dealer in those days, to the Ford Capri, the Ford Cortina, the Ford Escort and the Ford Fiesta—they would occupy half the space of a modern vehicle, both in length and width. It is not a surprise that, when vehicles park in the streets, there is no road left in the middle for anybody to drive through. Vehicles have certainly got a lot bigger—unnecessarily so, in my view—with a consequent impact on the road network and infrastructure that has to support them.

Having got that out of my system, we will proceed. Mr Choudhury, were you trying to come in? Do you drive a particularly big vehicle?

Foyso Choudhury: No, I do not—not one with those big mirrors. If you watch the old cowboy movies, you can see the big wing mirrors sticking out.

The Convener: Some people are even driving camper vans these days.

Foyso Choudhury: That is one thing that I have been asking you guys to organise for me, but I have not been in a camper van yet.

I have a constituent who wrote to me on the pavement parking issue that we were talking about earlier. Some local authorities have already banned parking on pavements, and there have been a lot of issues. Is there any data on the councils that have banned pavement parking? If so, can we request it?

The Convener: I suspect that there is no data yet, because it is very early. However, Mr Ewing is probably correct to suggest that we might anticipate a petition at some point in relation to the unintended—or, in some cases, intended—consequences of the legislation that has been imposed.

Foyso Choudhury: I would be very happy if we could organise a camper van.
[Laughter.]

Annexe C: Written submissions

Transport Scotland written submission, 28 March 2024

PE2065/B: Improve and prioritise pedestrian safety

How Scotland's Active Travel Vision to 2030, the National Transport Strategy and the Road Safety Improvement Fund will work to directly address street clutter

Scotland's [Road Safety Framework to 2030](#) sets out a vision for Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world by 2030 and an ambitious long term goal where no one is seriously injured or killed on our roads by 2050. The framework adopts the 'Safe System' approach to road safety which is recognised internationally as best practice in road safety delivery. For the first time, mode and user specific targets for key priority groups have been created to focus attention by partners on our priority areas, this includes a 40% reduction in pedestrians killed or seriously injured.

£9.5m was dedicated to a Road Safety Improvement Fund in 2023/24 which has supported local authorities to reduce casualties and risks on their roads through the implementation of Safe System measures. Some local authorities have utilised their allocation to improve pedestrian safety within their area.

The [National Planning Framework 4](#) highlights that one of the 6 qualities of a successful place is well connected with networks which make a place easy to move around. This includes designing for pedestrian experience including safe crossing, pedestrian priority, reduced street clutter and more.

The Scottish Government announced record funding for Active Travel of £220m in its draft budget proposal for 2024-25. The £189.2m budget for 2023-24 included the Cycling Walking Safer Routes grant of £35m that goes directly to local authorities on a pro rata basis for active travel improvements.

The record budget for 2023-24 included a £20m Transformation Fund, providing grant funding to partners to support the delivery of eligible construction-ready active travel schemes. The fund sees Transport Scotland assume responsibility for authorising funding and programme management in a more direct partnership model, and puts into practice for 2023-24 our theory of what transformation needs to look like for 2024-25 in a pragmatic and enabling manner.

In 2023-24, through our established programmes, including Cycling and Walking Safer Routes, Places for Everyone and the National Cycle Network, we will continue to support infrastructure projects that contribute to the transformation of our towns, cities and villages and the delivery of our 2030 vision for place and people-focussed communities that enable active travel modes to be the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys.

It is for local authorities to identify streets that are in need of decluttering and utilise available funding to improve safety on these streets.

Whether Transport Scotland has considered a national approach to improving the visibility of pedestrian crossings

Guidance on pedestrian crossing design is provided in UK guidance, the [Traffic Signs Manual](#), published by Department for Transport. It sets out three types of crossing facility and indicates a site assessment should be carried out by an experienced practitioner to enable the designer to make an informed decision about whether a crossing is needed and if so, what type it should be:

- a) Uncontrolled or informal crossings; for example a pedestrian refuge or dropped kerb,
- b) Zebra and Parallel crossings; which give pedestrians and cyclists (as appropriate) a right of way over vehicles when on the crossing, and at which drivers must give way, and
- c) Signal-controlled crossings; which require drivers to stop at red lights, and which give users a push button to register the demand for a green signal.

Traffic Signs Manual indicates that site assessments should include "...details of the driver's view at various points on the approach and of the pedestrian's view of approaching traffic at the crossing point..."

Specifically in relation to controlled crossings not at junctions, for example those within a length of road, the guidance in Traffic Signs Manual states that "...Pedestrians should be able to see and be seen by approaching traffic. Different groups will have different requirements – for example, wheelchair users and children may be harder for a driver to see as they are lower in the landscape", and "Visibility should not be obscured or restricted by factors such as parked vehicles, trees or street furniture. Obstacles should be moved or removed wherever possible, especially if doing so enables a crossing to remain on the desire line. If the carriageway is wide enough, it may be worth building out the footway to provide enhanced sight lines..." .

It should be noted that the guidance is aimed at new crossings or where the need for changes has been established. Crossings may have been established prior to current guidance, and local authorities have a statutory duty to monitor these areas and consider appropriate measures which will safeguard road users and residents.

Furthermore, there is an established process of independent auditing of road schemes to identify road safety issues (at design stage, and upon completion prior to opening to traffic) which would consider issues such as pedestrian safety – road safety audits are a mandatory requirement on trunk road schemes.

Additionally, research studies are underway by Transport Scotland on zebra crossings and active travel infrastructure, and updates to guidance such as

Cycling by Design which considers where pedestrian and cycling infrastructure interact.

Introducing a mechanism to report pavement parking

Finally, to address your point on introducing a mechanism to report pavement parking, it may be helpful if I explain that prohibitions for pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs were introduced by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and are aimed at promoting, supporting and advancing the rights of pedestrians to ensure that our pavements and roads are accessible for all.

The last of the secondary legislation to support this was laid in parliament and approved, meaning local authorities have the tools to enforce these prohibitions from 11 December 2023. As local authorities are responsible for the day-to-day enforcement of the prohibitions, it would be a matter for each local authority to decide whether to set up their own reporting system via their websites and indeed some have already put this in place.

Road Safety Policy Team

COSLA written submission, 19 December 2024

PE2065/C: Improve and prioritise pedestrian safety

COSLA does not maintain operational information on the above areas. We also typically do not share good practice between councils as we are predominantly a political membership body, which acts on behalf of all 32 Scottish authorities. However, we can respond in a general sense to your questions:

COSLA supports the shared goal to eliminate road fatalities and casualties by 2050 and is committed to working with partners to achieve targets set through the national multi-partner Road Safety Framework to 2030. Ensuring pedestrian safety is a key element of this goal. Local Government is a key delivery partner in the work being conducted to achieve these targets and COSLA works with Transport Scotland to ensure the best use of funding provided through initiatives such as the Road Safety Improvement Fund. COSLA also welcomes the additional resources provided through the Scottish Budget for Active Travel, Road Safety, and other related policies which aid pedestrian safety.

However, following several years of budget reductions and flat cash settlements, Local Government continues to face unprecedented financial pressures. The result is consistent cuts to service areas, such as roads and street cleaning services, and the exacerbation of a workforce capacity and recruitment crisis – both of which impact our councils' ability to implement measures related to the initiatives identified above. For example, as outlined in the Local Government Information Unit's National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022/23, since 2010/11 there has been a 9%

reduction in roads spending and a 35% reduction in street cleaning spending across Local Government.

Overall, COSLA supports the implementation of measures to ensure pedestrian safety as part of wider efforts to reduce road casualties and fatalities, and is committed to continued close working with partners such as Transport Scotland, while also noting the key challenges presented by ongoing financial constraints.