



**NORTHERN IRELAND BRANCH**

Department for Regional Development  
Room 4.27  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST. BT2 8GB

Mr J P Heyburn  
Hon Branch Secretary  
C/o URS/Scott Wilson  
Beechill House, Beechill Road  
BELFAST. BT8 7RP

E-mail: [drd.budgetconsultation@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:drd.budgetconsultation@drdni.gov.uk)

E-mail: [philip.heyburn@scottwilson.com](mailto:philip.heyburn@scottwilson.com)

14 February 2011

Dear Sir

**Written response by the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation –  
Northern Ireland Branch to the Consultation on Executive’s Draft Budget 2011-  
2015**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) is a learned society concerned specifically with the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of land-based transport systems and infrastructure. It serves the transport profession for the benefit of society and its members.

With over 12,000 members, working across a wide range of disciplines, CIHT aims to promote the exchange of knowledge, improve policy formulation, stimulate debate on transportation issues, recognise individual competence and encourage best practice in the industry.

**2.0 DRAFT BUDGET 2011-2015 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT –  
SPENDING AND SAVING PROPOSALS WITHIN DEPARTMENT FOR  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Due to the interests of Highways and Transportation, the CIHT are commenting specifically on the Draft Budget 2011-2015 for the Department for Regional Development, dated 13 January 2011, with particular reference to Roads Service and Regional Planning & Transportation related issues.

## **2.1 BACKGROUND**

CIHT believes that a modern, efficient transport infrastructure is a vital component for economic prosperity. We recognise the commitment and success that the Department for Regional Development (DRD) has had in the development of transport networks and public transport in recent years but there is still much to be done in the North of Ireland.

The Regional Transportation Strategy provides a much needed framework for this development and we note it is currently under review no doubt to reflect changes since its adoption.

The change in the economy and the proposed cuts in DRD's allocation of funding will have a severe impact on the firms that remain working in the construction industry and, in particular, the development of skills needed for the future. CIHT has serious concerns about the reduced level of expenditure and the distribution of funds as set out in DRD's draft budget 2011-2015. It is understood that DRD is the only main spending Department that has a current expenditure reduction in each of the 4 years.

The Chief Executive of CIHT, Mary Lewis, wrote to the DRD Minister, Conor Murphy, on 31 August 2010 outlining priorities for transport infrastructure investment to ensure effective use of available resources. The points made in the letter were discussed with the Minister when a delegation of senior members of the local branch of CIHT met the Minister on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

The key priorities identified by CIHT were as follows:

- Maintaining and safely operating our transportation network.
- Making better use of that network.
- Making targeted infrastructure improvements.

## **2.2 MAINTAINING AND SAFELY OPERATING OUR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

CIHT is extremely concerned about the continued underfunding of maintenance works on our road and rail network. The draft recognises that the funds allocated for roads maintenance fall £200m short of the levels recommended in the structural maintenance funding plan, the deficit being particularly severe in years 2 and 3 of the plan. Recent severe weather and earlier flooding exacerbate the problem. CIHT notes that Councils in England, who are responsible for road maintenance, have, in view of the severe winter weather been successful in urging the Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, to provide extra funding for maintenance. The Devolved Governments in Scotland and Wales have already allocated extra funding for roads maintenance to their councils. This relative success does not equate with the proposed cuts for roads maintenance in the North of Ireland. Under-funding in the long term leads to reduced

skid resistance on the road surface, which has implications for road safety, pot holes, rutting and eventually pavement failure - a spiral of decline.

These points have been made by other professional and associated bodies. They are repeated because CIHT believes them to be so important. CIHT notes that the severe reductions in funding in years 2 and 3 of the budget plan are to make funds available for the investment in the capital works programme on the A5 and A8 strategic routes. Given the substantial cuts in the draft budget, CIHT questions if DRD is making best use of the allocated money by proposing to fund these particular capital works schemes at this time.

The draft budget makes little reference to further work planned for the continued maintenance of the rail network. CIHT notes with concern that no funds are available for improvements identified to the line between Knockmore and Lurgan. However we note that improvements to the line between Coleraine and Derry are anticipated towards the end of the budget period. CIHT believes that, even with the requirement to make significant savings in the budget, maintenance is not receiving a sufficient allocation of the funds.

### **2.3 MAKING BETTER USE OF THE NETWORKS.**

Given the very significant reduction in capital investment in infrastructure over the draft budget compared to the projected spend published in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI 2) delivery plans CIHT believes making better use of our existing networks is paramount.

To achieve this greater use of public transport should be a key driver in the development of the transport strategy over the next four years. CIHT is concerned about the very modest funding for public transport in the draft budget. Not only would greater use of public transport make better use of existing networks but it would make a significant contribution to the reduction of green house gas emissions and to the development of more sustainable transport to which the Government is committed.

CIHT puts forward the following suggestions:-

- Increase capacity on our rail network by increasing the frequency of trains and by providing additional capacity on each train. This will require improvements to the signalling system and new rolling stock.
- Improve bus priority measures so that there is a quicker and more reliable journey times from Park and Ride facilities and along the main arterial routes into Belfast city centre. This will encourage greater use of public transport and reduce congestion on arterial routes.

- Additional traffic management measures and information systems to improve the flow of traffic at peak periods. CIHT appreciates that DRD's 'Belfast On The Move' proposals aim to give greater priority to public transport (ie. bus lanes, Rapid Transit Vehicles) which should encourage the travelling public to make better use of public transport, particularly in Belfast City Centre.

## **2.4 MAKING TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.**

CIHT is concerned that approximately 70% of the investment budget over the next 4 years is to be invested solely in two schemes the A5 Aughnacloy to Derry road and the A8 Sandyknowes to Larne Road.


CIHT believes greater benefit would be achieved by targeting infrastructure improvements on the established bottleneck areas i.e.

- York Street Flyover
- A2 Greenisland
- A2 Sydenham By-Pass Widening
- A6 Randalstown to Castledawson

Significant improvement works have been completed on the A5 and A8 roads over the last ten years and, while CIHT is keen to see these two schemes proceed, we believe, in times of severe financial restraint, the programme of works should concentrate on those schemes where the greatest benefit would be derived for the travelling public.

CIHT trust the Department will take these comments into account when finalising the Executive's DRD budget for 2011-2015.

Yours faithfully



**PHILIP HEYBURN**  
Honorary Secretary  
CIHT – Northern Ireland Branch