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Spokes

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World

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LEGACY 2014  
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES  
SCOTLAND



20 November 2014

*Dear Dave,*

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2014 regarding the draft budget for 2015/16 and in particular the funding for cycling and walking infrastructure.

I am happy to confirm that, as stated in the draft budget document and in my speech to Parliament, we have committed an additional £10 million in 2015-16 to support the delivery of improved cycling and walking infrastructure, and to support its use and help people make smarter travel choices.

We will make further announcements on the deployment of this funding in due course but you are correct in identifying that £5 million of the additional funding in 2015-16 is for the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP) Programme (as announced in June 2014) and £5 million is in the form of Financial Transactions.

The SCSP funding was specifically requested by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland for projects that are largely focussed on behaviour change, and I know that it has been broadly welcomed by active travel organisations, climate change NGOs and local authorities. Although this funding is revenue based, it will support and promote capital projects.

In terms of the use of Financial Transactions funding, I would point out that the Scottish Government's capital budget has been cut by around 26% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2015-16. This has required us to explore a number of innovative and creative ways to deliver against our capital priorities. I am happy to confirm that, if Financial Transactions prove not to be the best option for investing in cycling, then we will identify additional capital funding from elsewhere in the transport budget to ensure that we meet our commitment to investing in cycling and walking infrastructure.

This £10 million funding is additional to the total budget for cycling and walking that was previously announced for 2015-16 in the 2014-15 draft budget document. In addition, we have allocated £20.25 million to the Future Transport Fund in 2015-16. The Future Transport Fund provides capital funding for a range of sustainable transport infrastructure projects – including walking and cycling infrastructure. Decisions have yet to be taken about how this funding will be deployed in 2015-16 but we will consider the use of this fund alongside the funding made available to cycling and walking to ensure that we maximise the use of all of our available resources in the most appropriate way whilst meeting our commitment to cycling and walking infrastructure.

I know that Keith Brown in his role as Minister for Transport has said on numerous occasions that when funding does become available he will put forward a robust and evidence based argument for allocating that funding to support walking and cycling. This was proven again in June of this year when £7 million of the £10 million allocated to sustainable transport infrastructure from underspend on the Forth Road Bridge was allocated to cycling – enabling us to significantly expand the Community Links programme administered by Sustrans.

I am confident that cycling will continue to be a priority for this Scottish Government as we strive, in partnership with all stakeholders, to achieve the shared vision of 10% of everyday journeys being made by bike by 2020, as set out in the refreshed Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.

Y - m



JOHN SWINNEY