

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

St. Martins Church, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG 0131.313.2114 [answerphone] spokes@spokes.org.uk www.spokes.org.uk

If replying by email, please use... DaveduFeuATgmail.com

To: John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, Scottish Government

Cc: Patrick Harvie MSP, Convener, Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

1 November 2009

Dear Mr Swinney

Scottish Government Budget 2010-11

I was very grateful for the opportunity to ask you a question after your speech at the SSN conference at Dynamic Earth on Thursday 29 October, and for your response.

In my question I pointed out that the Sustainable Development Commission, which advises the Scottish Government, has stated that transport is the poorest performing area of the Scottish Government in terms of sustainable development and that, within that disappointing area, "*active travel is in relative decline.*" I then referred to the fact that Spokes research, covering the main areas of cycling investment, has been used by the independent Scottish Parliament Information Centre in its report 09/48 *Cycling in Scotland*, and has been noted there as "*the most comprehensive analysis of funding for Scottish cycling projects from all sources.*" That research shows cycling investment from all main sources to be in the order of £20m, probably less, and probably declining. I pointed out that is equivalent to almost certainly less than 1% of the £2.5bn transport budget. Finally I asked if you would consider a step change for cycling investment in the budget, particularly also in view of the government's European-style target for increased cycle use, and of the fact that you *have* managed to increase trunk road spending by £233m in 10/11 over 08/09, at the same time as cycling investment has at best been frozen (though our analysis suggests it has declined).

I noted in your response that you did not contradict any of the above assertions.

You did mention that there is cycling work undertaken within the trunk road budget and by local authorities – but I should point out that these are both covered in the above £20m calculation in the SPICe report.

Much of your response in fact discussed another area of sustainable transport – rail. We are generally very supportive of the government on that issue, and, unlike cycle use, see your policies there being in line with sustainable economic growth. However, that point was really very far from my question!

It was therefore a little disappointing that you did not really respond to the heart of my question.

I am therefore taking the opportunity to attach a copy of our 2010/11 budget submission and would ask you to give it careful consideration when considering amendments to the draft budget, particularly if the TICC Committee should make a recommendation similar to last year.

Our budget submission goes into much more detail on the points in my question, adding further justifications and evidence, and makes a substantive proposal very similar to that which we discussed last year very positively with then Head of Transport Strategy, Diane McLafferty, at your suggestion I believe. Our submission includes an appendix showing the type of projects which would be made possible, and a section discussing the contribution to sustainable economic growth.

As something of an aside, but taking up your point about rail investment, it is interesting to see that even within rail, where the Scottish government is doing well, one area where the UK government under Lord Adonis is more forward-looking than Scotland is their recent bold moves on cycle-rail integration – a £14m new fund which will enable construction of 'cycling hubs' at 10 mainline stations – centres for bike secure storage, hire, maintenance, repair and basic cycle-parts retail – as well as improved cycle access to a number of stations, and 10,000 more bike parking places in stations across England. Regrettably there is no similar fund in Scotland, though the case for cycle hubs and improved cycle access at city stations is of course equally strong. The proposal in our above budget submission would give the possibility of ScotRail bidding (with match-funding) for such schemes in Scotland even as early as 2010/11.

You will recall that last year the TICC Committee recommended increased funding for active travel, and specifically that the Spokes submission be considered as a means of achieving that. Regrettably that recommendation was (implicitly) dismissed by Finance Committee, and their report suggests they were swayed by your comments about cycling investment coming from a variety of sources. However, now that the SPICe report has shown that the total from all main sources is nonetheless in the order of £20m, probably less, the case for following the TICC recommendation is much stronger.

I am therefore copying this for the attention of the Convener of the TICC Committee.

In conclusion, we would very much appreciate your careful consideration of our attached budget submission, and your response to the other points in this letter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
for Spokes