

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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

Cc: Members of Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee
Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change

6 December 2009

Dear Mr Swinney

TICC Report on Draft Budget 2010-11: Cycling Investment

On November 3rd you gave evidence to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee on the draft budget. On the question of investment in cycling as transport, and on the Spokes proposal to double cycling investment by a transfer of £20m from other parts of the transport budget, you stated, *"I know that the issue has concerned the committee before and would be happy to consider its proposals on the matter."* [Official Report, Nov 3 TICC Committee, col 2280].

The Committee has now published those proposals, in its *Report on the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2010-11*. The report very strongly confirms your understanding of the Committee's concern over funding for active travel, which has in effect been static or even declining for the last 2 years. The Committee points out the apparent contradiction of this with your targets for increased cycle use and with the *"hugely significant challenge"* of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The Committee clearly feels this cannot be postponed until the next Spending Review (although further debate will then be needed) - and indeed we understand that the Committee's Convener and Vice-Convener have met you to discuss the matter.

Because of this urgency, the Committee makes the following very specific and very immediate recommendation...

*"that the Scottish Government should conduct an exercise to establish what scope exists across the transport budget for reallocating resources in order to reverse the incremental decline in the active travel line. **It further recommends that this exercise is conducted prior to the debate on the Finance Committee's report on the draft budget and that the results are submitted to both committees.**"*

Since you promised in your evidence to consider the proposals of the Committee, we trust that you will arrange for this immediate exercise, with its outcome known for the above debate, which we understand is on 17 December.

We look forward with great interest to hearing the outcome of the exercise, and hope it will be made public in the debate. As we have already pointed out, **total** cycling investment in Scotland from all main sources could be more than doubled for the sum of £20m, which represents less than 10% of the **increase** in the trunk roads budget in 2010-11 over 2008-09. Moreover, this could probably be achieved by the postponement for one year of one modest trunk road project in one location. **The result** would be literally 100-200 or more local cycling/walking infrastructure projects (and resulting job opportunities) benefiting almost every constituency in Scotland. We have every confidence that this sum, if announced reasonably soon, could be effectively spent in 2010-11 by the means suggested in our budget submission - and/or possibly combined with other approaches such as restoration of the 50% cut the government has made to the work of Sustrans with local authorities, transport partnerships, British Waterways, and other such bodies.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu, for Spokes