

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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To: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

22 March 2013

Attention: Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Transport and Veterans

UK Budget March 2013 Barnett Consequentials

Dear Mr Brown

I am emailing from Spokes. I know we do not need to repeat the arguments for greater cycling investment, given the government's 2020 cycle-use target and the many public health, transport and climate benefits of increased use of bicycles for everyday journeys. Such investment also has great jobs potential, given that virtually all the expenditure would be with Scottish firms, and that such projects are more labour-intensive than many other capital investments.

We very much welcomed your promise last year to fight for consequentials funding should it become available, and we understand that the Scottish Government is now expected to receive £279m consequentials for capital investment as a result of the UK Chancellor's recent budget.

There are many ways in which some of this funding could be used to raise cycling investment usefully, but we mention two.

First and particularly in the immediate term, Sustrans will undoubtedly have many further projects ready-to-go with their local authority and other partners. There is considerable delight in our own area at two Sustrans-related projects funded by recent government additional investments – the forthcoming much-awaited upgrades of Edinburgh's heavily-used North Meadow Walk cycle route, and of the tourist, commuting and leisure path from the city out towards the Forth Bridge.

Second we suggest a more ambitious idea, as put forward at the Scottish Parliament by Søren Rasmussen of the Danish Cycle Embassy. The proposal is for the Scottish Government to create an award to which local authorities could bid, to create perhaps 2 or 3 'exemplary' cycling projects of European standard. The projects could encompass a town or part of a city, but should in our view include at least one main-road corridor, given the data showing that 'A' roads are far more dangerous for cyclists (and more deterring) than lesser roads. We understand that Jim Eadie MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP and Claudia Beamish MSP, of the Cross-Party Cycling Group, are proposing an award rather on these lines.

The consequentials money, being a one-off opportunity rather than a regular part of the budget, would fit well with such an award. It is difficult at short notice to assess the required cost, and advice could be sought from experts, but we suggest around £10m, and hope that this could fund 2 or perhaps 3 exemplary projects in different parts of Scotland, with additional funding also brought in from other sources including local authority own funds.

We very much hope our suggestions make sense to you, and that you can raise them with the Finance Secretary. We look forward to hearing the outcome.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
for Spokes