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Keith Brown MSP  
Minister for Transport and Veterans  
Scottish Government

23.6.13

Dear Minister

## **NPF3 – Proposed National Development, Cycling Network for Scotland**

I am writing about the above, as you asked me to do at the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Cycling on June 18<sup>th</sup> in relation to the developing National Planning Framework 3<sup>1</sup>. The Spokes submission '*Cycle Network Scotland*' to the associated NPF3 National Developments consultation is attached [and linked below<sup>2</sup>] as you also requested.

As I mentioned at the meeting, Spokes is delighted that the new NPF3 draft framework document<sup>3</sup> [*Main Issues Report*] includes a national cycling (and walking) network as a candidate national development. This is something we had also proposed, but unsuccessfully, at the time of NPF2 and NPF1, suggesting that strategic thinking on cycling policy is now moving forward somewhat under NPF3.

Equally, however, as I specifically raised with you at the meeting, we are extremely disappointed that this proposed national development is centred almost exclusively on tourism and leisure. Those are, of course, very important concerns but this completely misses the opportunity and, in our view, the necessity, to foster everyday cycle-use on a Scotland-wide basis, an objective which was at the heart of our own submission to the consultation.

Thank you for the full verbal reply you gave to my question, which I feel supported our concerns to a great extent. **You rightly emphasised that in order to reach Scotland's cycling and climate targets, the aspects of cycle use which will be most significant are everyday journeys like trips to work and school** (and, I presume, other utility trips such as shopping, which you saw on your Netherlands visit) rather than tourism and leisure (important though these are in their own right).

Your point becomes even more critical given the Scottish Government's recent re-affirmation in the CAPS Refresh<sup>4</sup> of its wish hugely to increase everyday cycle use throughout Scotland. It surely is vital that different government policy documents, such as NPF3 and CAPS2013, work in tandem and are mutually supportive.

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1 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review/NPF3> NPF3 website

2 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00422112.pdf> *Cycle Network Scotland – Spokes submission [23.11.12] to National Planning Framework 3 - National Developments Proposal Form*

3 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/04/2377> *National Planning Framework 3 - Main Issues Report and Draft Framework*

4 [http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/files/CAPS\\_2013\\_-\\_final\\_draft\\_-\\_19\\_June\\_2013.pdf](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/files/CAPS_2013_-_final_draft_-_19_June_2013.pdf) *Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 2013*.

Turning to our attached submission, our proposal was for one cycle-friendly town or city to be developed in every Scottish local authority, these to be linked by the national network. The aim of the cycle-friendly towns would be to greatly increase everyday cycle use, journeys to work, school, shops, etc, primarily through safer and more welcoming cycling conditions. Thus the heart of the project represents a national initiative to kick-start everyday cycle use in every part of Scotland. We would hope that the experience and success of these initial towns within each local authority would encourage each council to undertake similar schemes more widely in their area.

In terms of leisure and tourism, the links between the cycle-friendly towns and the national network would provide local residents with the opportunity and the incentive to undertake wider leisure trips than they could within the town itself, leading to weekends away and to 'holidays at home.' Conversely, visitors to Scotland using the National Cycling Network would also have the benefit of cycle-friendly towns along the network throughout their holiday, rather than being dumped from the national cycling network into potentially hostile local urban cycling environments.

There is no need to repeat here the further rationale and justification which is contained in our submission. However, given the contents of CAPS2013 (which was published after our NPF3 submission) it is clear that our proposal would tie in well with the increased CAPS2013 emphasis on shared government/ local authority working and leadership, and would give a key central focus to the planned new annual government/ local authority cycling summit.

Finally, for your discussion on this with the Planning Minister, it will be useful to note that the NPF3 documentation did not rule out our proposal but explicitly left it open for further consideration and, indeed, almost invites support for a national initiative targeting everyday cycle use. The *Assessment of Proposed National Developments*<sup>5</sup> categorises our proposed national development into Annex 1, namely “*considered suitable for designation*” but requiring further refinement. Furthermore, the NPF3 Main Issues Report consultation questionnaire<sup>6</sup> asks specifically, in Question 14, “*Should NPF3 go further in promoting cycling and walking networks for everyday use, and, if so, what form could this take at a national scale?*”

I hope these points are of use, and look forward to your reply.

Dave du Feu  
for Spokes

PS As this was all discussed in open at the SP CPCG, I will cc this letter for information to the CPCG co-conveners and a few other relevant addresses.

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5 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00420881.pdf> *Assessment of Proposed National Developments Report, April 2013*

6 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review/NPF3-documents/consult-question>  
*NPF3 Main issues report consultation questionnaire*