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Our ref: 2009/0020571
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Dear Shirley-Anne,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June, on behalf of Mr Dave du Feu, of Spokes, The Lothian Cycle Campaign, who is concerned about national investment in cycling. Below I have outlined what the Scottish Government's plans are for cycling.

On 28 May, the Scottish Government published its consultation on the first ever Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. My overall "vision" for cycling is that "By 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike." This is an ambitious target but one I believe is achievable. It is also no surprise to anyone that this spending review round is very tight and that an increase in the overall budget in Scotland is unlikely. For that reason, we must work within the budget limits we have. In some areas of Scotland, cycling is higher than the national average of 2%. In Edinburgh, for example, 4% of journeys are taken by bike and in the Highland Council area, over 8% of children cycle to school. These are levels achieved through financial investment but also personal investment from those who make cycling a priority in their areas.

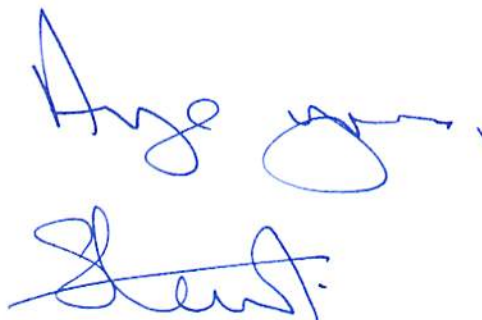
Over the period of this spending review, the Scottish Government is investing a record £11 million a year in sustainable travel, which includes walking and cycling. Of that £11 million, over 50% will be spent directly on cycling projects each year. As Spokes has agreed, it is difficult to measure the exact figure spent on cycling projects in Scotland. For example, cycling and walking infrastructure forms an integral part of many road and rail improvements which is not costed separately. However, as part of the investment in trunk road maintenance, direct funding as part of the trunk road network cycling policy and the development of the NCN within trunk road corridors is around £2.5 million this year.

Also, as part of our investment, £15 million is being targeted in the seven Smarter Choices, Smarter Places communities across Scotland which will promote and provide more opportunities for cycling and walking, allowing more people to enjoy the benefits of increased physical activity. Indeed, as part of the Health and Wellbeing agenda, the National Physical Activity Strategy will have invested £12 million over this spending review period for physical activity initiatives in schools, workplaces, homes and communities. This will include projects that promote cycling.

Since the launch of the Climate Change Challenge Fund in 2008, over £800,000 has been awarded to projects that promote cycling. In Edinburgh, the Fund will support the Greener Leith project which aims to cut carbon emissions by encouraging communities to make the shift to a low carbon healthier lifestyle.

And finally, through our concordat with COSLA, we have given local authorities more funding than ever before and greater flexibility to invest in local priorities. In each year of this spending review, local authorities will receive £9.09 million for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets projects, which they can add to from their own resources if cycling is a priority in their area.

This Scottish Government believes that cycling can become a more realistic choice for journeys and that the 10% target in the Cycling Action Plan is achievable if the commitment is there at all levels.



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