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Dear First Minister

£100m Capital Investment Boost after the Brexit Vote

We were pleased to read the News Release¹ of your above initiative and are writing to suggest that a proportion of the funding should go to capital investment in infrastructure to boost cycling and walking as means of everyday travel. One simple and effective way of doing this would be a significant funding boost to the Sustrans Community Links² and/or Community Links Plus schemes.

Active-travel investment aligns well with the criteria in the News Release, as follows..

Projects will be assessed for accelerated funding against a range of criteria including how quickly work can start, the number of jobs that will be supported or created, the likely impact on the supply chain and geographic spread.

- ◆ **How quickly work can start** – we understand that Sustrans has a list of projects from local authorities and other bodies, assessed and ready to go if and when funding becomes available.
- ◆ **Number of jobs supported or created** – there is convincing evidence^{3,4} that more jobs are created and/or supported per £ invested through cycling infrastructure than through road projects. This also makes intuitive sense, in that small scale projects are likely to be more staff-intensive whereas large-scale construction project are likely to be more mechanised.
- ◆ **Impact on supply chain** – small scale construction projects are more likely to use local suppliers of materials and equipment than large scale projects, where savings come from bulk buying – often from further afield and even from overseas. For example, one Community Links project contractor stated,⁵ “*All staff are either from Oban or Fort William and even the sub-contractors tend to be local, for example the fencing comes from a local supplier. So all workers are local to the area from the quarrying to the finished path.*”
- ◆ **Geographical spread** – a small number of large-scale projects inherently benefit only a small number of areas, whereas a large number of small-scale projects can be widely distributed. The Sustrans Community Links programme is a perfect example of the latter, with every local authority in Scotland already having benefited. For example see the map⁶ of 2016/7 projects.

1 <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Capital-spending-boost-post-Brexit-vote-2872.aspx>

2 <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/communities/community-links-grant-programme-0>

3 <http://www.peri.umass.edu/236/hash/64a34bab6a183a2fc06fdc212875a3ad/publication/467>

4 https://www.downtowndevelopment.com/pdf/baltimore_Dec20.pdf

5 <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/files/scotland/policy/Sustrans-Scotland-walking-and-cycling-outcomes-report-September-2014-optimised.pdf>

6 https://communitylinks.carto.com/viz/7d09cf9e-228d-11e6-93fd-0e787de82d45/embed_map

Such investment also contributes significantly to other major government objectives..

- ◆ **Cycle use vision** – The 2016 SNP manifesto⁷ stated, “*We are determined to meet our vision of 10% of everyday journeys being made by bike by 2020.*” However, according to the independent Scottish Parliament Information Service, SPICe,⁸ “*it seems clear that the vision of 10% of everyday trips in Scotland being made by bike by 2020 will not be met.*” A significant boost to the Community Links (and/or CL-Plus) programme would enable the government at least to get closer to meeting its manifesto vision. We note the widespread calls, notably from the *Association of Directors of Public Health*,⁹ endorsed by 110 transport, medical and other professional, expert and interested bodies,¹⁰ that 10% of transport budgets should be allocated to cycling and active travel investment – compared to somewhat under 2% currently in Scotland.
- ◆ **Climate Change targets** – The 2020 cycle use ambition is built in as a milestone to the government's strategy to reduce climate emissions, *Low Carbon Scotland*¹¹ [section 7.2.1]. Transport is a poor-performing policy area for emissions reduction, according to the Committee on Climate Change, in *Reducing Emissions in Scotland*¹², and therefore is “*of particular importance for the achievement of Scottish targets.*” If the level of cycle use for everyday journeys falls far below the 2020 10% target, this makes overall transport emission figures yet more intractable – and the CCC reminds us that the proportion of journeys made by bike “*has remained around 1% since 2003*” - far below the 10% 2020 ambition.
- ◆ **Public Health** – The 2020 cycle use ambition is also part of the government's public health measures and is referenced, for example, in *Scotland's Obesity Strategy*¹³. More widely, increased physical activity as part of daily lifestyles is now seen as critical to improving the health of the population and moderating pressures on the NHS. Cycling as a means of everyday travel is a major potential contributor¹⁴ – unlike sport and leisure activities, it does not involve the individual in additional time or expense.
- ◆ **Air Quality** – “*Active Travel is inextricably linked to improving air quality*” according to *Cleaner Air for Scotland*¹⁵, the government's national strategy to achieve the “*best possible air quality for Scotland.*” The 2020 cycle-use ambition is referenced in the strategy [page 45] as a means of “*improving air quality, reducing environmental noise and easing congestion.*”

To summarise the above 4 bullet points, government objectives on climate change, public health and air quality will all be harder to achieve if the 2020 cycle use aim falls badly astray, as it is in danger of doing.

We hope these ideas are of use, and look forward to hearing from you about the investment programme.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu
for Spokes

7 http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SNP_Manifesto2016-web.pdf

8 http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16-33_Key_Issues_for_the_Parliament_in_Session_5.pdf

9 Action on Active Travel, April 2008, and 2012 update <http://www.adph.org.uk/category/atpa/>

10 http://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Take_Action_on_Active_Travel_sigs_June_2010.pdf

11 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets>

12 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2015-progress-report/>

13 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>

14 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/oliver-Health-and-Cycling-160416-for-website.pdf>

15 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00488493.pdf>