

Stephen Flynn MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

04 August 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

We are writing as a coalition of organisations working across Scotland to deliver programmes that enable people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys.

Active travel contributes to Scotland's transport network, visitor economy, economic growth and public health. It plays a vital role in achieving Scotland's ambitions within the Programme for Government on climate change, high quality and sustainable public services, child poverty, and economic growth. The previous SNP Government oversaw a welcome increase in active travel funding over the course of its tenure, and ensured a significant improvement and expansion of active travel infrastructure across Scotland with more than 115 km of new or improved walking and cycling routes in 2023–24 alone. This is something we hope will be continued in this Parliament.

However, we are deeply concerned by both recent reductions to active travel funding through the People and Place resource funding and the growing uncertainty surrounding annual budget allocations and funding confirmations due to a move away from multiyear funding. These challenges are having real-world consequences for active travel and the organisations working to deliver Scotland's active travel ambitions.

We are asking you to commit to preventing any further cuts to the active travel budget this year. We also urge you to keep the commitment in the Climate Change Plan to provide '*Multi-year funding commitments to enable build-up of capacity and capability in the active and sustainable sector and confidence for planning and delivery of long-term, large-scale ambitious infrastructure programmes.*'

Organisations across the sector have been operating "at risk" for extended periods because funding decisions have not been confirmed in time for the start of the financial year. This shifts significant financial risk from government to charities and third-sector delivery partners, forcing many to rely on reserves and cashflow to maintain services—an approach that is neither sustainable nor consistent with the principles of Fairer Funding. Delayed funding confirmations also undermine effective planning, create unnecessary financial liabilities and divert resources away from frontline delivery, creating avoidable instability in a sector expected to deliver long-term public policy outcomes through short-term funding arrangements.

Active travel is not a discretionary extra. It is a proven investment that helps address some of Scotland's most pressing challenges. Walking, wheeling and cycling in [Scotland's eight largest cities](#) generates an estimated £1.48 billion in economic benefit every year, prevents more than 4,530 serious long-term health conditions annually, saves NHS Scotland £56.4 million each year, saves approximately 93,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually as well as taking up to 520,000 cars off the road every day. Meanwhile, [active travel infrastructure improves access](#) to education, jobs and services, particularly for low-income households where car ownership is limited.

The evidence for investment is compelling. Research shows that every £1 invested in walking and cycling schemes [returns](#) approximately £5.62 in benefits. Scotland's active travel programmes are already delivering measurable results. [Evaluation](#) of the Places for Everyone programme found that completed projects generated an estimated 1.3 million additional active travel trips each year, including a 28% increase in active travel trips overall and an 85% increase in cycling trips on monitored routes.

These outcomes demonstrate why active travel should be viewed as an essential component of Scotland's National Transport Strategy. Funding reductions and delays undermine progress toward the Scottish Government's goals. They disrupt programmes, weaken organisational capacity, reduce opportunities for long-term planning and create inefficiencies that ultimately diminish the value of public investment. Conversely, protecting and increasing investment offers one of the most cost-effective ways of delivering multiple policy outcomes simultaneously.

We therefore urge you to:

- Commit to preventing any further cuts to Scotland's active travel budget and set out a plan to move towards investing 10 per cent of the transport budget in active travel, per the previous Government's commitment.
- Provide timely funding decisions and budget certainty for delivery partners.
- Support multi-year funding arrangements that enable effective planning and long-term delivery.
- Recognise active travel as a vital investment in prevention, delivering benefits across health, climate, transport, inequality and economic policy.
- Work with delivery organisations to ensure Scotland continues to build a safe, accessible and connected active travel network for everyone.

Scotland has made significant progress in recent years, but this progress is fragile. Protecting and strengthening active travel investment will help ensure that the momentum built over the last decade is not lost and that the sector can continue delivering benefits for people, communities and the environment.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you and your officials, and to work together to secure a stable and sustainable future for active travel in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer, Cycling UK
Catherine Woodhead, Chief Executive Officer, Living Streets
Kevin Lafferty, Chief Executive Officer, Walking Scotland
Nick Rennie, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Cycling
David Glover and Rebecca Petford, Project Managers, Greener Kirkaldy
Dr. Adrian Davis, Transport Research Institute
Scott Francis, Director, Dundee Cycle Hub
Tejesh Mistry, Chief Executive Officer, Voluntary Health Scotland
Kim Harding, Director, Edinburgh Festival of Cycling
Sam Green, CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil
Eloise Brakefield, Re-cycle-a-bike
Andrew Robertson, Re-cycle Penicuik
Carol Thompson, Sunny Cycles
Dave du Feu, Lead Organiser, Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign
Sarah Deas, Co-Lead, Cycling Killearn
Emily Greaves, Bike Manager, Comrie Croft
Mark Morgan, CEO, Stella's voice
Leanne Farmer, A wee pedal
Rachel Hardie, Border Greenway
Shgufta Anwar, Founding Director, Women on Wheels
Liz Davies, Senior Officer, Transport and Health Science Group
Fiona Beal, Sea the Change
Stephen McCluskey, Founding CEO, Bikes for Refugees
Grieg Hawke, Lanarkshire Climate Action Hub
Amanda Wagstaffe, Founder, Pedal Pursuits
Richard Sanderson, Chair, St Andrews Space for Cycling
Fraser Sutherland, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland
Tracy Daszkiewicz, President, The Faculty of Public Health
Andrew Abbess, Director, Stirling Cycle Training
Neil Lovelock, Convener, GoBike -Strathclyde Cycle Campaign
Catherine Wykes, Chair, Dundee Cycle Forum
Geoff Peart, Paths Manager, Gargunnock Community Trust
Aaron McCarthy, Dundee Critical Mass
Sally Hinchcliffe, Convener, Cycling Dumfries
Sasha Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, The Bike Station
Alberta Gutteridge, Chief Executive Officer, Bike for Good
Caroline Hamilton, Chair, Teri Bikes
Stuart Bates, Chair, South Ayrshire Paths Initiative
Jane Herbstritt, Bike Library Coordinator, Porty Community Energy
Alice Henderson, Hub Manager, Fife Climate Hub
Chris Hill, Powderhall.link
Alistair Macleod, Project Manager, Transition University of St Andrews
Alex Robertson, Director, Pedal on Parliament

Ben Seven, Campaign Lead, edi.bike
 Rhiannon McIntyre, Manager, Sustainable Kirriemuir
 Dr. Yvan Biot, Chair, A Greener Melrose
 Eibhlin McHugh, Chair, Stow Cycle Hub CIC
 Kirsty Ellis, Chair, ByCycle Perth
 Alan Vass, Director, Cycle Station
 Chris Lavelle, Chairperson, Glasgow Eco Trust
 Malcolm Campbell, Chair, Laich of Moray Active Travel Routes
 Scott Bamford, Active Travel Coordinator, Clackmannan Development Trust
 Ellie Harrison, Chairperson, Get Glasgow Moving
 Tim Godwin, Owner, Ariel Bikes Ltd.
 Tim Godwin, Director, Dumfries Community Workshop CIC
 Mark von Delft, Coordinator, SHRUB Cooperative
 Emily Kynaston-Williams, Chair, Highland Cycle Campaign
 Emily Kynaston-Williams, Inverness Bicycle Mayor
 Dr. Bridie Barnett, Organiser, Kidical Mass North
 Katie Noble, Velo City Inverness
 Becky Baird, Parents for Future Highlands
 Claire Larkin, Chief Executive Officer, Parents for Future Scotland
 Bridget MacKinnon, Chair, Inverness Access Panel
 Clara Walker, Chief Executive Officer, Forth Environment Link
 Colin Howden, Director, Transform Scotland
 Christine Bell, Chief Executive Officer, Cycling Without Age Scotland

