



for sustainable transport

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To: Members of the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

cc: John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth
Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change

Monday 17th November 2008

Dear Member of the TICC Committee

Joint letter from Cycling Scotland, Living Streets Scotland, Paths for All Partnership, Ramblers Scotland, Sustrans Scotland & Transform Scotland

DRAFT BUDGET 2009-10: FUNDING FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL

We the undersigned organisations write to request that the TICC Committee, in its recommendations to the Finance Committee on the government's draft budget, provide for the transfer of transport expenditure into supporting the development of active travel.

1. Background

We propose that the TICC Committee bring forward an amendment to 'Draft Budget 2009-10' in order to transfer funds into supporting active travel. The proposal would be paid for by a reduction in the planned £123m growth in the road 'capital works' budget line.

The Budget proposes that the principal funds allocated for the enhancement of walking and cycling, 'Support for Sustainable and Active Travel' and 'Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes' remain static at £9m and £11m per annum, respectively, during the course of the Budget period.¹ In contrast, the Government has set out plans for a large growth in spending on trunk roads and motorway budget lines.

We further propose that the Committee further recommend that, in the subsequent Spending Review, the Government amends its spending plans to reach the active travel target of 10% of all transport expenditure proposed by the Association of Directors of Public Health in their document Take Action on Active Travel (see §4 below).

2. The proposal would allow Scotland to start emulating the continental good practice in active travel that the Scottish Government has already identified

In May 2008, Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson MSP said: "With a cycling modal share of just 1% we clearly have to do much more if we are to emulate our European neighbours who enjoy 10%-30% share"²

In October 2008, Communities Minister Stewart Maxwell MSP said that "Copenhagen already enjoys a [cycling] modal share of 35% and has set itself a target of 50% .. To reach our [climate] emissions target we must consider if such a [cycling modal shift] target is attainable here"³

Given a current cycle modal share in Scotland of 1%, an early and substantial investment in cycle infrastructure is essential if we are to start building towards such targets. The high rates of cycling observed in comparator countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark did not occur by themselves: they came about because of sustained investment programmes over many years.⁴

Transform Scotland is the national alliance for sustainable transport, bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors.

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3. The proposal is important for climate change and energy security

The Scottish Government's 2007/8 Climate Change Report states it is "imperative that transport emissions are driven down." We are unclear how this can be achieved in the context of static spending on walking and cycling, the most sustainable modes of transport, and large increases in spending on road-building. The type of infrastructure provided by the fund would foster local active travel and help develop local sustainable communities, helping to drive down climate change emissions.

4. The proposal is important for improving public health

In April this year, Britain's top professional bodies in public health, transport and planning have combined to issue an unprecedented call for 10% of transport funds to be invested in walking and cycling⁵

Initiated by the Association of Directors of Public Health, 'Take Action on Active Travel' was also supported by the Institute of Highway Engineers, Royal Institute of British Architects, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Royal College of Physicians, Sustainable Development Commission and many other prestigious and professional bodies central to public health, environment and transport policy and practice.

5. The proposal will benefit equalities and inclusion

In the current recession, the proposal has the benefit of providing useful and relatively labour-intensive construction work throughout Scotland, whereas if funds were to remain in the trunk road budget it would provide many fewer jobs and probably in one or two areas only. Furthermore, being small-scale compared to road schemes, cycling and walking projects can often get off the ground more quickly – an important factor in the current climate.

The infrastructure provided would encourage local and active travel, and support local purchasing and local communities, all of which are beneficial to social inclusion.

Active travel investment will also help disadvantaged groups. Those suffering the highest health inequalities also have limited access to car travel. Therefore, active travel development can reduce these inequalities whereas road-building will have the opposite effect.

6. Conclusion

We want to see a national strategic programme of investment in active travel. Walking and cycling can make a major contribution towards tackling the country's obesity crisis. The Danes and the Dutch have cycle journey shares of 20-25%, which puts Scotland's 1% to shame. It is surely not accidental that these countries also feature obesity levels less than half of Scotland's. With around 99% of Scotland's transport budget devoted to motorised transport, it is perhaps unsurprising that rates of walking and cycling remain so low.

Yours sincerely,

Erl Wilkie, Chief Executive, Cycling Scotland
Keith Irving, Manager, Living Streets Scotland
Ian Findlay, Chief Officer, Paths for All Partnership
Dave Morris, Director, Ramblers Scotland
John Lauder, National Director, Sustrans Scotland
Colin Howden, Director, Transform Scotland

¹ See <<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/PQA/default.aspx?pq=S3W-11171>>.

² Herald, 14/05/08.

³ Cycling Action Plan Scotland conference held on 07/10/08.

⁴ See e.g. <<http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/pucher/irresistible.pdf>>.

⁵ Available at <<http://www.adph.org.uk>>.

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