

Johnstone calls for the Government to improve its performance on transport justice

Alison Johnstone, MSP for Lothian, is calling on The Scottish Government to recognise its failure to increase transport justice, reduce air pollution or deliver and climate change targets through investment in sustainable transport.



Speaking at an event this evening organised by Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign Johnstone will highlight that despite promises for change, the SNP has failed to support walking, cycling and public transport in Scotland.

✗ Since 1999, motoring costs in Scotland have fallen by 6%, while transport costs for rail users and bus passengers have increased by 18% and 26% respectively (note 2). Despite the SNP claiming that the proportion of journeys taken by bike in Scotland will be increased from 1% to 10% by 2020 (note 3), less than 2% of the transport budget is currently spent on those modes of transport.

Johnstone will highlight that the lack of investment in sustainable transport hits the poorest and most vulnerable in society hardest, with the effects of climate change and air pollution felt primarily by children and old people and in deprived areas. Johnstone will also argue that as those living in poorer areas are less likely to own a private car, prioritising public transport, walking and cycling would help tackle inequality.

Alison Johnstone said ahead of the event: “The SNP keep

reassuring us of their commitment to clean transport, but we have seen very little action to deliver these open-ended promises. Scotland is still prime country for motorists, with virtually non-existent cycling networks and unaffordable public transport.

“We have to remember that sustainable transport is primarily a social justice issue. The impact of poor quality air and climate change are felt worst by the most vulnerable in our society, and those same people would also benefit the most from affordable transport connections. Not everyone has the money to rely on a private car to get to places and to get on with their lives.

“We know funding is tight, but we can prioritise – instead of pouring endless resource into roads, let’s invest at least 10% of our transport budget in active travel, and increase support for public transport. We know the problems, we have the solutions, and we now need the Scottish Government to deliver on their transport pledge.”