

On 12 October 2011 23:40, <Marco.Biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk> wrote:

Dear XXXX

Thank you for your email. As a personal point I should mention from the outset that since I do not drive I consequently rely on a combination of public transport and the pedestrian side of active travel to get around myself. I am therefore very well acquainted with the concerns that transport policy-making can put other priorities first.

The budget line I think you are referring to is Active & Sustainable Travel, which includes more than just cycling. I believe the apparent drop may be the loss of the green bus fund from that budget, but I will be in a position to confirm that when more detailed figures are published in the coming weeks. The Scottish Government will continue to fund the national bodies responsible for promoting cycling.

This administration however takes the position that local authorities are duly elected and as a result have a mandate of their own for their areas of responsibility. I have asked parliamentary questions of the government on cycle provision in national public transport hubs and alongside the trunk road network, which are the national government's responsibility, and will always be happy to do so.

For cycling however the majority of the transport projects of interest are decided on at a council level. Just as roads within Edinburgh are the responsibility of the City of Edinburgh Council, so are cycle lanes and dedicated cycle paths. In 2010-11, initial out-turn estimates are that £533m was spent by local authorities on transport in the towns and cities across Scotland. This is a considerable sum, and I have concerns that the share of investment in cycle and pedestrian facilities may well be extremely low. I do not think councils should be able to get away with evading the spotlight on this issue, and they need to shoulder their share of the responsibility.

Edinburgh actually has some of the better provision from a council level, and at 4% Edinburgh currently has the highest modal share for cycling in the whole of Scotland. That share should be higher. I recognise the strong interest in and support for cycling in Edinburgh. On behalf of the many constituents who have raised this I therefore intend to enter a dialogue with the City of Edinburgh Council to press them for clarity and strategy on how they intend to deliver better provision for walking and cycling here in city. I would be happy to keep you updated on how this progresses.

Yours
Marco Biagi

Marco Biagi
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-----Original Message-----

Sent: 11 October 2011 21:18
To: Biagi M (Marco), MSP
Subject: Letter from your constituent

Dear Marco Biagi,

I am very concerned to read press reports about the cuts in the budget for cycling and walking that have been announced by your party recently and that an increased proportion of the transport budget is allocated for trunk road development.

Not only do cycling and walking have a lower environmental impact than road travel, but most importantly they will improve the health of Scots. I work as an epidemiologist and I am acutely aware that the epidemics of today are not the infectious diseases of the past but are the results of changes in our modern lifestyle. One of the most important of these changes is lack of exercise, leading to huge increases in diabetes and other similar conditions. Putting more cars on the road and failing to develop facilities for walking and cycling is just going to make this worse.

Please try to influence your party to change this aspect of the current budget so we may be proud of our government.

Yours sincerely