

Transport Policy

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CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Mr Dave du Feu
Ms Hinchcliffe
Mr Brennan

Your ref:

Our ref:
2017/0011586

Date:
10 May 2017

Dear Dave, Sally and David

Thank you for your email of 21 March 2017 to Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for Transport and the Islands, regarding Pedal on Parliament's recent meeting with him. The Minister has asked that your email be passed to me for reply.

The Minister appreciated your frank and candid views on active travel and felt the meeting was helpful and constructive. Indeed, the Minister is always keen to hear from as wide a range of individuals and organisations as possible about how we can work together to promote and increase active travel.

I have replied under each of the headings as referred to in your correspondence.

Segregated cycle-lane setbacks

As council leaders and Transport Conveners are crucial to achieving a modal shift to walking and cycling the Minister is keen to reinforce the message that local authorities have a key leadership role to play in achieving Scotland's vision for cycling, as outlined in our revised Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) 2017-2020.

Regarding the publication date of the Active Travel Task Force's report, Transport Scotland officials will look at the possibility of some interim findings from the evidence already submitted. However, the overriding concern of the report is to ensure that the Task Force has the time to evaluate fully all the evidence presented before submitting their final report. Additionally, the volume of evidence and two election periods are factors which also need to be considered when determining a realistic publication date.

Cycling and active travel investment

Since 2007, we have steadily increased funding for active travel and since the first Cycling Action Plan in 2010, we have increased funding by 112% to a record level of £39.2 million in 2017/18. Indeed, you will be aware that the Programme for Government commits us to maintaining these record levels for the term of this current parliament, something no other Government has done. As the Minister has explained before, levels of transport spend cannot simply be based on percentage allocations for each transport mode. The overall transport

budget must reflect existing contractual requirements, planned maintenance and upgrades and it would be wrong to arbitrarily allocate definite amounts of investment to any one mode.

Cyclists and pedestrians also benefit from wider investment in the transport network. For example, investment in road maintenance work supports improved conditions for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians. And investment in our rail network through the Scotrail franchise will lead to greater integration between walking and cycling, enhancing opportunities to choose active travel as part of multi-modal journeys. In addition, major transport infrastructure projects make provision for non-motorised users, supporting and developing active travel alternatives, such as the plans for dualling the A9 and A96 in future years. Active travel also benefits through the impacts of improved trunk road networks on taking traffic off local roads, making local, shorter journeys more accessible.

Road safety and enforcement

Cycling should be a safe mode of transport, and I would like to reassure you that road safety is of paramount importance to Ministers and road safety partners who are fully committed to the outcome of safe road travel in Scotland for everyone. And it is road safety interventions such as the recently announced 'Close Pass' initiative that will help to make choosing active travel a realistic choice.

Additionally, Scottish Government Ministers want to see 20 mph limits and zones implemented where they are appropriate in Scotland and are keen to encourage initiatives that cut speed, particularly near schools and in residential areas. That is why we have revised our national guidance to local authorities on these matters, with the *Good Practice Guide on 20 mph Speed Restrictions* published in January 2015. This aims to ensure that 20 mph zones and limits are used more widely where the individual circumstances call for them. Mark Ruskell MSP's proposed bill for a 20mph default speed limit for urban areas in Scotland is welcomed by the Minister and Road Safety colleagues in Transport Scotland will keep close ties in that regard.

Enforcement

You highlighted that sometimes when a cycling near miss or incident has happened that "the response is often patchy". The Minister did suggest that officials could look into setting up a high level meeting between the relevant parties and cycling organisations. I will speak to my Road Safety colleagues and come back to you on that proposal.

Staffing and design

Scottish Government and Transport Scotland have obvious roles in providing investment within the resources available and will continue to do so. Also, local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) have an important leadership role in meeting local demand for bold and innovative projects which provide high quality, local infrastructure to support active travel routes. We will continue to work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure best value and best design standards are adhered to.

Planning Policy at a national level has for a long time supported the aspiration of Scottish Government to increase rates of Active Travel. Indeed, the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy (including Designing Streets) emphasise the need to support the road user hierarchy – with the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first, and those of motorists last – and the need to actively plan for improvements to walking and cycling conditions.

Finally, Transport Scotland and cycling organisations recognise and appreciate the level of effort which goes into submitting a bid for active travel infrastructure grants. And, by the nature of any

bidding process or competition such as Community Links Plus, which involves spending public funds, thorough criteria need to be set and we must ensure the best use of resources is achieved. I can assure you that those projects which are not successful in bidding for Community Links PLUS funding are not forgotten and the time and effort is not wasted. These projects remain live and receive detailed feedback and help from Sustrans to be able to be taken forward at some stage in the future.

Finally, the Minister was delighted to accept your invitation to take part in the Pedal on Parliament bike ride and address the gathering in George Square on Sunday 23rd April 2017. He commented that it was a successful event and a good turnout for the first ever POP in Glasgow.

Please do contact me again if there is anything further you need clarification or information on.

Best regards,

KAREN FUREY
Cycling Policy Manager