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Date: 23 Mar 2016 12:05

Subject: RE: Cycle space on trains

To:

Cc:

Many thanks for your email. I very much share widespread concerns about the prospect of cycle spaces being reduced on new trains.

One of the cycling issues that I am contacted about most frequently is that of the lack of facilities that can enable more people to travel with bikes by train. As Co-convenor of the Cross Party Group on Cycling, I frequently press the Transport Minister and the Finance Secretary to scale up their ambition, and it is a frustration to see missed opportunities for creating a more ambitious and user-friendly transport network, in particular when new rolling stock is under consideration.

Part of our aim must be to deliver a transport network that can best serve the needs of the public in their daily lives, and I believe that an integrated approach to walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure is the way forward. Increased capacity and flexibility for the carriage of bicycles and other larger items is long overdue, and the last thing needed is a reduction of provision.

Previously, I worked to make sure that Network Rail understood that the only sensible thing to do was reverse their decision to ban cyclists from Waverley station, and I took the opportunity to try out the Borders Railway line when newly opened – with my bike. I tried booking a cycle space in advance but was told it is an “unreservable service”.

This ‘first come first served’ policy does seem an outdated way of approaching sustainable travel, and on a brand new railway service, that would be among the issues I would hope to see addressed in advance as a high priority. You can read more about my journey [here](#).

To honour climate change commitments made in Paris, and for the sake of bringing our infrastructure into line with that of many of our European cousins, we must take a different approach to transport in general, and active travel in particular.

The Scottish Green Party has a longstanding commitment to spend at least 10% of Scotland’s transport budget on cycling and walking infrastructure, to put us on a course that would bring us up to the standard seen in many European countries where cycling rates are notably higher than our own.

It is simply unacceptable that in a transport spending of around £2 billion each year, cycle funding makes up less than 2% of this total. Since 2011/12, the trunk roads budget has increased by 36%, and yet cycle funding has plateaued, despite widespread concern that the Scottish Government is not on track to meet its 2020 target of 10% of journeys by bike.

In the time since I was elected as an MSP in 2011, it has been fantastic to receive such strong support from constituents on these issues.

Please be assured that I am determined to do all I can to see improved cycle infrastructure across Scotland, and encourage more people to choose to take the healthy, active and environmentally-friendly option of cycling.

Best wishes,

