

I finally received a reply from my SNP MSP Marco Biagi.

I assume the budget is done and dusted now!

Cheers

Ben

From: Liam.Hewat@scottish.parliament.uk [mailto:Liam.Hewat@scottish.parliament.uk] **On Behalf Of**
Marco.Biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Sent: 24 February 2016 10:58

To:

Subject: RE: Letter from your constituent

Dear

Marco read and acknowledged your email regarding active travel spend in the 2016-2017 budget and wanted me to send his reply on his behalf.

As someone who has written to me over the active travel spend I wanted to take the time to let you know a little bit more about the Government's position in the budget that will hopefully pass later today.

The SNP Scottish Government is firmly committed to supporting active and sustainable travel. We have taken a number of steps to encourage walking and cycling activity in Scotland and to promote the benefits of active travel across all age groups.

Based on the Draft Budget, funding for active travel from the Other Transport Policy, Projects and Agency Administration level 2, together with the local government budget for Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes, will total approximately £39 million in 2016-2017 (This reflects a 12% increase on the active travel budget at the start of the 2014-2015 financial year). The investment in sustainable and active travel will help reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production and will also help us to live longer and healthier lives.

It is worth noting that while trunk roads are the responsibility of the Scottish Government; pavements, streets and cycle paths are the responsibility of local authorities. So the money the Scottish Government spends on active travel is in addition to what Scotland's councils will spend. Local authorities spend between £400-500 million on transport and in particular it should be worth noting Edinburgh's spending on cycling, which at 8%, is a commendable portion of its transport budget. The Scottish Government cannot and should not micromanage local authority decisions but the money offered to them shows our commitment to supporting sustainable travel.

The national budget for Motorways and trunk roads sets out the projects being built such as the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and associated works, the Dalry bypass in Ayrshire, and the ongoing dualling of the A9/A96. Alongside the Forth Replacement Crossing these are long-running transport commitments. There can be a perfectly honest disagreement about these, but in this regard the Scottish Government is following through the manifesto commitments we were elected on.

Both ScotRail and Caledonian sleeper services carry cycles free of charge. Furthermore, under the new franchise negotiated in 2014, Abellio ScotRail will deliver more than 5,000 cycle spaces at stations across the rail network, 3,500 of which will be in place within the first three years of the franchise.

We are also working with our partners to make Scotland's roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists. We have developed guidance for local authorities on 20mph limits and zones which will provide greater clarity for local authorities on the options that are available when they are considering the introduction of 20mph speed limits. As you will be aware, Edinburgh is now one of the most enthusiastic adoptees of this approach in the country.

Most of Scotland's schools offer training schemes such as Bikeability Scotland which is designed to give children the skills and confidence they need both to cycle safely on the roads, and to encourage them to carry on cycling into adulthood. Cycling Scotland is also working with students in further and higher education campuses to encourage more active travel in and around universities and colleges. This includes Active Travel Champions which helps students be more active through walking or cycling for more of their everyday journeys. Champions gives advice about walking and cycling and/or sets up walking and cycling activities in their university or college setting and in return Sustrans offers training, resources and support.

I hope this is useful and if you have anything else I can assist with then please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

Kind Regards,

Liam Hewat

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