



Dave du Feu
davedufeu@gmail.com

Our Reference: 202500447262

Your Reference: Active Travel funding

4 February 2025

Dear Dave du Feu,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 January to Fiona Hyslop MSP, Minister for Transport, regarding Active Travel funding. As Director for Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel, it has been passed to me to respond. Your letter addresses a number of different points, and I address these below.

Active Travel Budget 2025-26

In 2024-25, the Scottish Government confirmed the active travel budget at a record £220 million. However, significant pressures around wider public finances, and the need for all parts of the Scottish Government to ensure a path to a balanced budget, meant that difficult decisions on how to manage the budget during the financial year had to be made.

We have continued to make significant investments in active travel, well above the spend per head in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, with over £157 million allocated this year across both infrastructure and behaviour change activity. For 2025-26, the draft Scottish budget includes £188.7 million for Active and Sustainable Travel.

The Scottish Government remains committed to ambitious funding for Active Travel, however there are a number of legal and contractual commitments across the transport portfolio that Transport Scotland must comply with, largely across our Roads, Rail and Ferries network.

Bus Infrastructure Fund

Many of the corridors identified for bus priority through the good work of the Bus Partnership Fund also contain Active Travel elements, such as dedicated cycle lanes, improved path surfaces or tactile paving. At the same time, we need to think about how we deliver routes and paths for walking, wheeling and cycling so that these also enable and encourage safe use of public transport, and provide suitable infrastructure.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



Officials responsible for oversight and delivery of these elements of bus and active travel infrastructure are already working in tandem. Bringing them together in budget terms reflects the opportunities for an integrated place-based approach, and helps deliver public value by identifying at an early stage how to better align proposed projects to deliver more than one desirable outcome and purpose.

Multi-year funding

While I acknowledge that multi-year funding would be highly advantageous for Local Authorities (LAs), we are not in a position to confirm funding beyond each financial year. This is the case across the Scottish Government due to the annual nature of the budget setting process. However, the transformed delivery model for Active Travel does allow LAs some certainty about yearly funding provision. Tier 1 of this model offers block grant funding which, while not contractually guaranteed, does provide partners with a degree of certainty looking forward. In addition, Tier 2 projects which span multiple years may be prioritised in future years, subject to budget availability, suitable progress being made, and internal Transport Scotland assurance/approval processes.

Car use reduction

Your correspondence also covers issues around car use reduction. I would agree that incentivising desirable behaviours is unlikely to be sufficient in a context where car use remains highly attractive in terms of individual-level benefits, while the dis-benefits to environmental and population health are largely externalised.

The Scottish Government has always been clear that reaching our target of a 20% reduction in car use by 2030 will require a broad combination of interventions, including infrastructure, incentives and disincentives. Reducing car use will require a substantial shift in travel behaviour, and we need all sectors of society to play their part in meeting this challenge. We are committed to further exploration of equitable options for demand management to discourage car use, including pricing, and this has been explored through the Transport Demand Management research, which considered what fiscal measures might disincentivise unnecessary car use.

Whilst we understand your disappointment relating to publication of an updated route map, I would like to reassure you that the Scottish Government continues to work closely with local and regional partners to update the route map and timeline for demand management, and we will publish it on completion of that engagement.

Kind regards,

Bettina Sizeland

TS : TS Bus, Accessibility And Active Travel

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1
3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

