



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Dear Kim

Thank you for your emails following our recent conversation regarding cycling infrastructure on Twitter and apologies for not having got back to you sooner. I wanted to give you more than a tweet in reply but was then off on leave for two weeks.

The Scottish Government has recently announced its draft budget for 2013/14 which gives an indication on its intentions for cycling and active travel and provides some context.

In 2013/14 a total of £10m has been allocated in capital support for sustainable and active travel, down £1m on the budget for 2011/12. As you know, during the budget statement, John Swinney stated that £6m of next year's allocation will be invested in cycling infrastructure.

Alongside this capital support, £5 has been allocated to promote specific initiatives. However, this money is to support sustainable, as well as active travel initiatives, and the detail of how it will be divided has yet to be provided. Therefore, a like-for-like comparison with last year's budget suggests that investment in the active and sustainable travel budget line will fall from £16m to £15m. This follows a cut of more than a third last year.

Scottish Labour's position is that we need to see increased investment in infrastructure to encourage cycling. I am pleased to see Edinburgh taking a lead on this with a commitment to ensure that 5% of the total transport budget goes on cycling investment in 2012/13 and that this figure would be advanced by 1% each year. To help deliver that commitment the Council has recently agreed to fund an additional project officer in the cycling team.

The Scottish Government needs to put in place proper funding and sustained investment. We need both dedicated facilities for cycling and better integration on our trunk and local road networks. Part of this process must be to ensure that the needs of cyclists are designed into our roads maintenance, our local transport strategies and our planning decisions so that routes and infrastructure such as parking facilities are designed with the needs of cyclists in mind.

Alongside considering cycling as a mode of transport, there are interesting opportunities to take a broader approach. I recently met with representatives of Scottish Cycling, the governing body of sport cycling in Scotland.

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I'm keen that their perspective is added to the debate on considering how cycling can help to address other Scottish Government goals. They points to the Government's physical activity targets and legacy planning for the 2014 Commonwealth Games as opportunities to set clear targets on cycling participation. They also see promoting cycling amongst school students as crucial.

My own view is that we need to promote safer road cycling opportunities generally as well as targeting specific cycle interest developments for sport and tourism.

It is clear that a step change is needed to deliver the increases in cycle participation that the Scottish Government want to achieve under the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and I, along with my Labour Party colleagues will continue to press for investment in facilities and initiatives to make this a reality.

As requested, I have written to John Swinney MSP as the Cabinet Secretary on Finance and asked for his attention to the points you make.

I met with Councillor Frank McAveety last weekend and hope that the next Cycling CPG can promote some practical discussion about what local authorities can do to boost safer cycling opportunities and infrastructure.

Finally, thanks for the note on the Dutch situation – I've passed it to Richard Baker MSP who speaks for Labour on Transport.

Again, with best wishes.

Yours sincerely



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