July 2020

Thank you for contacting me about cycling and walking.

As the Minister in charge of the cycling portfolio my ambition (and that of the Government) is to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys, or as part of longer journeys, by 2040.

With public transport capacity reduced to facilitate social distancing, cycling and walking will play a vital role in helping the country to get back to work.

Despite fewer people travelling overall during the COVID-19 crisis, there has been around a doubling of weekday cycling, and approximately a 200% increase in cycling at weekends, in comparison to pre-COVID-19 levels. This needs to be harnessed and millions more need to be encouraged to take up safe and socially distanced active travel.

Building on significant recent investment, the Government has pledged to invest an additional £2 billion in cycling and walking and committed to publish a national cycling plan, as well as an updated Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

The first stage of this £2 billion investment is a £250 million emergency active travel fund. The Fund is intended to deliver new pop-up cycle lanes with protected space for cycling, cycle and bus-only corridors, safer junctions and wider pavements**.**New statutory guidance has also been issued to councils to ensure they are able to reallocate road space for significantly increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians.

Furthermore, up to half a million £50 Fix Your Bike Vouchers will be issued to help people to bring bikes out of retirement.

Investment in recent years has also enhanced cycling and walking infrastructure. Indeed, £210 million through the Cycle Ambition Cities programme has delivered 155 miles of new segregated cycle routes, 186 miles of new on-road and off-road routes for cyclists and pedestrians and 136 miles of off-road cycling signage and resurfacing improvements across eight cities. In addition, £22 million has been invested to upgrade 32 routes, covering 103 miles, along the National Cycle Network.

Through the Transforming Cities Fund, the Government wants to fund the delivery of radical transport schemes to boost connectivity within cities, including through cycling and walking schemes. Of the £1 billion allocated through the Fund at the 2020 Budget, £800 million will go towards bus and cycling projects, for example an iconic new Central Park Bridge in Plymouth and new cycleways in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Previous funding allocations included £160 million towards the Beeline Cycle Network in Greater Manchester.

My Department, the Department for Transport, has been providing support to 46 local authorities to assist with the preparation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. Now with the urgent need to increase cycling and walking, local authorities are being encouraged to bring forward permanent schemes already in the pipeline and which can be relatively speedily constructed – this could be under Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.



Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**