



Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

February 2021

SNP Budget For Recovery And Renewal



In the 2021-22 Scottish Budget, the SNP Government have committed significant investment to drive economic recovery, bolster public services, and support families.

Gordon was pleased the Budget includes £1.1 billion of support for jobs and skills, a commitment to launch a new Green Workforce Academy to help people secure work in the low carbon economy, a £100 million Green Jobs Fund, £98 million to improve digital infrastructure and make Scotland a world class digital business hub, and an extra £115 million for the Young Person's Guarantee.

Health receives record funding of over £16 billion, along with a further £869 million to continue tackling COVID-19. This means health spending has increased by £1.8 billion in real terms — more than tripling the commitment to increase funding by £500 million.

£11.6 billion is allocated for local government, a £336 million increase, and includes £90 million for local authorities to freeze Council Tax.

Gordon has welcomed the budget and said, "This is one of the most important budgets in the history of the Scottish Parliament. We need to invest in people, jobs, and infrastructure in order to recover from COVID and face the calamity of Brexit.

"I am particularly pleased to see £68 million to fund the first full year of the Scottish Child Payment, more than £3.1 billion invested in education and skills, and £567 million to provide 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare — in the UK's most ambitious childcare programme."

"Whilst this Budget targets support in those in immediate need, it also seeks to build a fairer, stronger, and greener country."

Spaces For People Consultation



"Spaces for People" measures have been put in place during the pandemic.

The aim of these measures are to help people physically distance near schools, while using streets, and provide protected cycle lanes on main roads so that people can consider cycling for trips that they might otherwise make by public transport.

The Council are now considering whether to keep some 'Spaces for People' measures in place more permanently and are looking to hear from locals.

Gordon commented, "There has been strong opinions about many of the new measures—from the perspective of drivers, pedestrians, bus users and cyclists—so this is an opportunity for the everyone to have their say."

Consultation:

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/bi/retainingspacesforpeopleconsultation/>

ALSO THIS MONTH...

Scottish Child Payment



The new “game changing” Scottish Child Payment has officially opened—the most ambitious anti-poverty measure currently being undertaken anywhere in the UK.

It provides families with a much-needed boost by giving eligible families and carers £40 every four weeks for each child under six.

Gordon said, “The introduction of the Scottish Child Payment will be a welcome boost for families across Edinburgh and I urge anyone who hasn’t applied to do so as soon as they can so they can receive this benefit that is unique to Scotland.

“The payment will make a difference to the lives of thousands of children.

“This is in stark contrast to the Tories at Westminster who are planning on taking away the £20 uplift to Universal Credit at a time when families need it most.

“Along with the Best Start Grant and other benefits rolled out by Social Security Scotland, this payment is forming part of a benefits system built on dignity, fairness and respect.”

Apply For Postal Vote



Gordon has highlighted the deadline for registering to postal vote in this year’s Scottish Parliament elections.

Applying for a postal vote is simple. You can request a postal vote just because you want to, no reason needs to be given. Your ballot papers will be sent to you by post, prior to the election. The deadline to apply for a postal vote for the 6 May election is 5pm on Tuesday 6 April. You must also be registered to vote by midnight on Monday 19 April.

Gordon said, “Postal voting is easy and means you don’t have to go to the polls on election day.”

You can apply for a postal votes via the below link: -

www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk/postal-voting

Expansion of Self Isolation Grant



The SNP Scottish Government has extended the £500 COVID-19 Self-Isolation Support Grant to cover those who are on the Real Living Wage or less — 200,000 more people will now be eligible.

Those in receipt of a council tax deduction due to low income and those with caring responsibilities will also be included.

Furthermore, the time when people need to apply is also being extended to within 28 days of being told to self-isolate.

Gordon commented, “I am delighted the Scottish Government has decided to extend the number of people who can apply.

“The £500 grant has been a lifeline for thousands of families and it is reassuring that 200,000 more people are now eligible.”

Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

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Monthly Surgeries

Due to the ongoing public health concern, in the interest of public and staff safety, Gordon’s surgeries are suspended until further notice but he will continue to handle enquiries as usual.

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands