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## STIRLING|MATTERS

News from Stirling's Parliamentary Team

'With vaccination figures climbing and infection numbers falling, there's much hope that a return to a degree of normality is closer with each passing day. The Scottish Government has published the draft 2021-2022 budget, which contains a raft of decisive interventions, support packages and grants to help Scotland recover economically and socially from this long and devastating outbreak. The First Minister has also announced a plan for the phased return to education for our young people. Our offices stand ready to assist our constituents through these unprecedented times.'

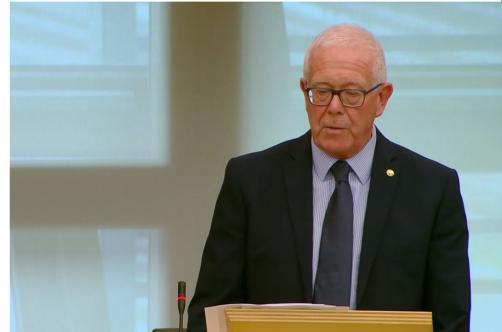
- Bruce Crawford MSP and Alyn Smith MP



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## Comment on First Minister update

Alyn Smith MP and Bruce Crawford MSP have offered their views after a Covid-19 situation update from First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on 2 Feb.

The FM emphasised the ongoing need to remain in lockdown until at least the end of February, in order to further suppress the virus.

However, in light of the progress so far made, plans are in train for the re-opening of schools in a phased manner, from the week beginning 22 February.

[Read more here.](#)

## Scottish Budget Delivers for Stirling

Stirling politicians have welcomed the budget announced by Kate Forbes MSP, SNP Finance Secretary for the Scottish Government.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in the aftermath of Brexit, businesses and households across Stirling will benefit from several key initiatives announced in the draft budget.

The draft budget will be subject to negotiation with the other parties represented in the Scottish Parliament.

[Read more here.](#)

## Bruce receives 2nd dose assurance

Bruce Crawford MSP has received assurances from First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in regards to Scottish Government considerations over vaccine supply and second doses.

Mr Crawford raised the point during a parliamentary question session, as continued strains on supply and limitations in vaccine production remain live issues.

The First Minister assured Bruce that the rollout of second doses was firmly entrenched in planning assumptions.

[Watch it here.](#)



## 100% business rates relief a lifeline to many

Bruce Crawford MSP and local councillor Evelyn Tweed have welcomed an announcement for Finance Secretary Kate Forbes regarding an extension to 100% business rates relief, as part of the draft Scottish budget.

The pressure is now on the UK Chancellor to outline his own plans, and outline Barnett Consequentialists.

[Read more here.](#)



## University of Stirling praise in Commons

Alyn has paid tribute to the good work of the University of Stirling and Stirling Students' Union in looking after their students and staff during the pandemic.

Mr Smith underlined that the UK Government must urgently act to ensure the sector UK wide is financially supported during pandemic recovery.

[Watch it here.](#)



## Equitable Life pension scandal demands action

Alyn Smith MP has raised the need for urgent action on the Equitable Life pension scandal, which left thousands of people out of pocket through no fault of their own.

Mr Smith argues that the UK Government has a responsibility to ensure fair compensation is dispersed to participants, years after the fund collapsed.

[Watch it here.](#)



## £3.5 billion for Scotland's low-income families

Stirling politicians Bruce Crawford MSP and local SNP Councillor Evelyn Tweed are encouraging families in Stirling to check their eligibility for the social security they may be entitled to.

With the pandemic hitting vulnerable households hard, the Scottish Government is determined to tackle child poverty and help families make ends meet.

[Read more here.](#)



## National Parks £3.6 million funding boost

MP for Stirling Alyn Smith, and local councillor Evelyn Tweed, have welcomed a £3.6 million increase to Scottish Government funding of the nation's national parks, as announced in the draft budget.

The 2021-2022 plan indicates an uplift from £13.9 million to £17.5 million overall, boosting efforts to preserve our natural heritage for future generations to enjoy.

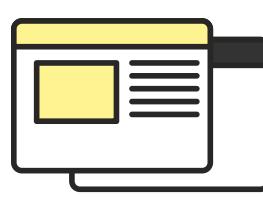
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