

## **Response of the Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative to a continuing experiment allowing PTWs into certain bus lanes.**

Thank you for the invitation to submit a response regarding the experiment of allowing Powered Two Wheelers into bus lanes.

The Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative (NICI) recognises PTW riders and pillions, like cyclists, are vulnerable road users. PTWs riders suffer horrific casualty rates, which we have previously highlighted to the Department.

PTWs account for 0.33 %<sup>1</sup> of distance travelled by mode in NI yet account for 15% of road deaths and 12% of serious road injuries<sup>2</sup>.

The Transportation Vision contained in the Regional Transportation Strategy states *“to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life”*

Roads Service Mission *“ To facilitate the safe movement of people, goods and services for the social and economic benefit of all people in Northern Ireland”*

The NICI believe that the Department in line with the above Mission statements should not encourage modal shift to PTW but should run campaigns to heighten other road users awareness to PTWs and safety awareness campaigns aimed at PTW riders and pillions.

The Department’s decision to allow PTWs regrettably lacks rational evidence for the benefit that the measure will bring.

The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy at paragraph 11 states ‘for the health and environmental benefits of cycling to be more enjoyed it must be perceived as freer from danger, particularly from other road users’.

In Bristol the City Council found that after allowing PTWs into bus lanes 31% of cyclists using the bus lanes had experienced problems. The Council concluded ‘it appears that the experiment has had a measurable negative effect on cyclists’<sup>3</sup>.

We note the Final Report to Government of the Advisory Group on Motorcycling and the chapter prepared by the Integration and Traffic Management Task Force. At a number of sections in this chapter it was acknowledged that the figures and research on casualty rates and the effect on other road users was inconclusive and incomplete. There is no indication in the report of any health benefits of the modal shift to PTWs. Encouragement of PTWs simply reinforces the existing obesogenic environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Travel Survey for NI 1999-2001

<sup>2</sup> PSNI Road Traffic Statistics 2003

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in: C-PAG (2000) Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) in bike and bus lanes, Cyclists Public Affairs Group

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in its 20<sup>th</sup> report said, “We have not received any information that would indicate that they (PTWs) would have an environmental advantage over cars”. There appears no environmental advantage to the scheme.

The Transport Research Laboratory report TRL 610<sup>4</sup> highlights that bus lanes are popular with cyclists with increasing perceived levels of safety and reductions in journey times. This mirrors research carried out in Belfast on behalf of the Department.

No mention is made in the synopsis of TRL 610 of the potential suppressive effect on cyclists using PTWs. Is the Department aware of the research carried out in the UK or Europe on the suppressive effect on cyclists of allowing PTWs into bus lanes. Has the Department carried out a review of the literature? Can you please confirm what has been done in this regard?

Members of NICI have raised concerns about the ambiguities raised in the recently circulated questionnaire *Bus Lane Usage “After” Study for Cyclists*. Questions 9,10,11 have ambiguities. The NICI is concerned that the survey through ambiguity could under report cyclists concern about PTWs in bus lanes.

Has the Department taken cognoscence of a recent PSNI survey reported in the Belfast Telegraph, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004, which showed high levels of PTW use by unlicensed and uninsured riders and an estimate that 50% of all motorbikes on the road are currently untaxed<sup>5</sup>.

Has the Department considered the relationship between this disregard of the law and lack of compliance with the Highway Code and appreciation of other road users by PTW riders?

TfL Surface Transport recently published an 18-month review<sup>6</sup> of the experiments allowing PTWs into certain bus lanes.

The review reported cyclists experienced a sevenfold increase of problems with PTWs (paragraph 6.5) and a doubling in the number of cyclists suggesting removing PTWs from bus lanes (paragraph 6.6)

PTWs accounted for over 27% of collisions on the trial routes (paragraph 3.2).

The report is inconclusive on the benefits of allowing PTWs into bus lanes in London and suggests there is a suppressive effect on cyclists.

You will find attached to this correspondence a report entitled *Geneve : velos et scooter en concurrence*, author Isabelle Voser Jenod and an approximate translation by Steve Shore of NICI. Madame Voser Jenod highlights how PTWs use space reserved for cyclists, creating problems for cyclists and suppressing cycling.

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<sup>4</sup> TRL 610 Cycling in Bus Lanes

<sup>5</sup> David Neely, Belfast Telegraph, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004, page 33

<sup>6</sup> Network Performance Division Powered Two Wheelers in Bus Lanes Report on Progress – version 04 Author Julie Dye