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date: 26 February 2015 at 13:14  
subject: Rail/cycle/walk integration

*Attention:* Derek Mackay, Minister for Transport and the Islands  
Dear Mr Mackay

### **Cycle/walk integration in rail projects**

At the Parliamentary Cross Party Cycling Group yesterday I raised the need for major rail projects to be seen as 'integrated' rather than just rail-only. It was very encouraging to hear both you and John Deitz from Abellio understanding and commenting positively on this, and the need to ensure maximum opportunity for active travel trips between origin and destination, not just between stations.

The example I gave was the Bathgate/Airdrie project, which was a particularly dire example. Despite the issue being raised by ourselves and others on several occasions, the project totally omitted cycling/walking connections between the stations and nearby towns and communities, stating that this was the responsibility of the local authorities - effectively admitting that it was a non-integrated project. [The project did of course replace the Sustrans path which had existed along the rail bed, albeit even that took a long timescale to complete].

It was years later before the Council was able to scrape together sufficient resources, along with Sustrans cash, to fund some of the necessary connections from stations to communities - and some are not yet built, years after the railway opened. In summary, most commuters will now have well-established habits, with large numbers travelling to the stations by car. These people should have been given the opportunity - combined with incentive schemes - to travel to the station by bike from the very outset.

We understand that the Borders railway has involved more integrated working from the outset with the local authorities and with Sustrans - but even in this case the routes to stations, as we understand it, have had to be funded by councils and Sustrans rather than as part of one integrated project.

Those examples are now in the past, but we would be grateful for your comments on how you see

integration in future major rail projects.

### **Gogar rail/tram interchange station**

Secondly, we ask you to look into one current project where, again proper integration has failed - the new rail/tram interchange station at Gogar. An underpass of the A8 is to be included for pedestrians, but is designed at a weak standard under which cyclists will be told to dismount! Various surrounding paths are being provided but this crucial central connection bans cycling.

This is a vital route from the Gyle and from the city in general to the new station - and indeed to the International Business Gateway beyond. The alternative for cyclists is an at-grade crossing of the A8 adjacent to a major roundabout - obviously hugely undesirable when the Government and Council aim to encourage a wide range of people to cycle.

At the planning application stage the Council's transport department recommended that the underpass be constructed suitable for both cycling and walking; and the Council received 28 objections to the plans on these grounds. Without going into further extensive detail (although we can supply this) there was a mess-up in Planning and the plans were approved without a real appreciation of what was happening, as a result of which cycling in the underpass is not to be permitted.

Since the Scottish Government is behind this project, and providing substantial funding, we believe you may be in a position to ask Network Rail even at this late stage to make this absolutely vital connection suitable for cycling. We urge you to take this up.

I am cc'ing for info the conveners of the CPCG, and also Peter Hawkins who was our main representative in the various discussions and submissions on this issue.

Yours

Dave du Feu

for Spokes