

# SPOKES KES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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Transport Scotland ref: 2015/0014905

13 October 2015

Dear Mr Mackay

## **Scottish Government Trunk Road Cycling Initiative**

We wrote to you on 22 April about the attitude of Transport Scotland trunk roads section to small standalone cycling project proposals involving trunk roads. Thank you for the reply dated 16 September from Karen Furey of the TS Sustainable Transport Team.

Our letter raised the general issue, illustrated by some specifics from Dumfries and Galloway area where some very cheap projects involving the A75 and A701 (some involving little more than signing) could provide additional local cycling connectivity and, importantly, would enable significant sections of trunk road to be avoided on many cycling journeys.

We are very pleased with the outcome (so far) as regards the specific cases, but the response did not fully address the general issue of the Trunk Roads section of TS taking a positive and pro-active stance on local cycling projects to improve connectivity and/or safety and which require trunk road involvement to go ahead.

In terms of the above **specific cases**, Karen spoke to the relevant trunk roads Area Manager and then arranged a meeting for ourselves, Sustrans and the Dumfries Cycle Campaign with the local council. Most importantly, the local Area Manager asked (via Karen) that the council resubmit its proposals for the above small local schemes, for a fuller consideration. We hope that these schemes will be able to go ahead before too long.

### **Trunk Road Cycling Initiative [TRCI]**

Having thought further about the **general issue**, we suggest that the Government should consider reviewing and updating the TRCI, which has its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year - having been introduced way back in 1996 by Lord James Douglas-Hamilton MP, and never subsequently revised. The fact that it was introduced by a Scottish Conservative Transport Minister really highlights its age!

Such a revision would fit well into your current refresh of the National Transport Strategy. Either the TRCI revision could be part of the NTS refresh, or the NTS refresh could include a commitment to revise the TRCI in 2016.

Things have moved on a great deal since 1996 – notably with the government's highly ambitious wish for 10% of all trips to be by bike in 2020. With such ambition, all arms of government – and particularly all arms of transport – need to play an active part. The current TRCI, however, whilst it certainly has some achievements, is insufficiently pro-active, and its aims are insufficiently wide, to properly reflect your government's ambitions on cycling.

**We also highlight that rural 'A' road cyclist fatalities per km cycled are 8 times more than on non-'A' rural roads, and urban fatalities 5 times higher on 'A' than non-'A' roads.** These are truly shocking figures and highlight the need for cycling to receive far greater trunk road attention. Although the above is DfT data we believe the position in Scotland is at least as bad. For example, our notes suggest that of 12 cycling fatalities in 2013 in Scotland, 8 were on 'A' roads, 5 rural and 3 urban, (although we are not sure which of these 'A' roads were trunk roads).

As a contribution to **how the TRCI might be developed**, we suggest that it could be expanded to include the following, in addition to its current actions ...

- ◆ Transport Scotland, working with councils, Sustrans and local cycling bodies, to be responsible for a programme of *identifying* and *ensuring implementation of* trunk road alternatives and opportunities for cycling, both low-cost and more ambitious – for all trunk roads, not just those currently being widened or newly built. The actual work of *implementing* such opportunities could be by Sustrans, TS or the local council, as suited each case.
- ◆ Clarity that cycling work associated with new or existing trunk roads is funded by trunk road money - not by Sustrans or the government's Sustainable Transport Team. Either trunk road Area Managers would be expected to allocate cash to such projects from their area funding allowance – or there could be a central trunk roads cycling fund to which they would apply.
- ◆ Expanded progress on current government moves to cut trunk road speed limits in urban and rural settlements.
- ◆ Full investigation of cycling fatality roads, like Fife's A92, bearing in mind the shocking record (as mentioned above) of 'A' road cycling fatalities.
- ◆ A brief annual TRCI report, to include lists of all projects identified, planned and/or implemented within each trunk roads area. Incidentally, this would also have the presentational bonus that the government would then at last find it possible to give a figure for cycling investment in relation to trunk roads.

Finally, **in the near future, in advance of a TRCI revision...**

- ◆ To clear up the existing confusion which prompted our initial letter, all local authorities to be advised that Transport Scotland Trunk Road Area Managers are willing to consider local schemes, whether low-cost or more ambitious, to improve cycling connectivity and/or safety which involve trunk roads.

We hope you will find our ideas useful and look forward to hearing from you about your intentions for the future of the TRCI.

Yours Sincerely

Dave du Feu  
Spokes