



Motorcycles in bus lanes consultation responses

MAG's analysis.

The Department for Transport (DfT) received 14,327 responses to the consultation. Of these, 14,107 were from individual respondents and 46 were from 'main' stakeholder organisations. These stakeholders were identified by the DfT as organisations with the highest level of vested interest in outcomes and activities associated with the consultation proposals.

Of these 46 key stakeholders:

- 22 were from local authorities
- 24 were from other stakeholder organisations, including police forces, motorcycling groups, cycling groups, bus operators and road safety organisations

Of the 22 local authorities, one combined authority and two transport authorities did not identify as local authorities when responding and so were excluded from local authority specific questions.

MAG submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to be supplied with complete consultation responses and any associated attached documents submitted by the 46 key stakeholders.

The FOI response came as a single large pdf file containing the questionnaire responses, but with no further documents that may or may not have been attached to the stakeholder consultation responses.

Who were the 46 key stakeholders?

The 46 key stakeholders and their support for the key question “How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘If it is safe to do so, motorcycles should be allowed to access bus lanes by default?’” were as follows:

The following organisations **agreed strongly** that motorcycles should have default access where it is safe to do so:

1. **The Motorcycle Action Group**
2. Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCIA)
3. National Motorcycle Dealers Association
4. IAM RoadSmart
5. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary
6. Travel Cornwall (bus operator)
7. City of Westminster Council
8. North Somerset Council
9. Vision Zero South West
10. The Association of Consumer Support Organisations

The following organisations **agreed** that motorcycles should have default access where it is safe to do so:

1. British Motorcyclists Federation
2. National Motorcyclists Council
3. RoSPA
4. National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)
5. Nottinghamshire Police Force
6. First Bus (bus operator)
7. Leeds City Council
8. Brent Borough Council
9. Redbridge Borough Council
10. Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)

The following organisations **neither agreed nor disagreed** that motorcycles should have default access where it is safe to do so:

1. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
2. Devon & Cornwall Police
3. Leicester City Council
4. Institute of Highway Engineers
5. Nottinghamshire County Council
6. London Borough of Hackney
7. Surrey County Council
8. Transport for London

The following organisations **disagreed** that motorcycles should have default access where it is safe to do so:

1. Sustrans
2. West Midlands Police
3. Ealing Borough Council
4. Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
5. Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
6. Hertfordshire County Council
7. Cheshire West and Chester Council
8. Transport for West Midlands
9. Transport for Greater Manchester
10. Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)

The following organisations **disagreed strongly** that motorcycles should have default access where it is safe to do so:

1. Cycling UK
2. London Cycling Campaign
3. City of London Police
4. Islington Borough Council
5. Southampton City Council
6. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
7. Norfolk County Council
8. Road Danger Reduction Forum

Local Authority Responses.

The DfT outcome states “DfT researched this policy area in 2007 and the result was inconclusive. This consultation was designed to gather more up to date information primarily from local authorities, but the base size was too small to draw useful conclusions.”

LAs responding were:

1. Redcar & Cleveland
2. Rotherham
3. Leicester City
4. Nottinghamshire
5. Norfolk
6. City of Westminster
7. Stockport
8. Brent
9. Redbridge
10. Hackney
11. Hertfordshire
12. Ealing
13. Surrey
14. Cheshire West and Chester
15. Southampton City
16. Islington
17. Leeds City
18. North Somerset

Of these Redcar and Cleveland has no bus lanes and unsurprisingly had no data or evidence to provide. This leads to the question why did they respond?

Of the remaining 17 LA respondents 11 do not allow access to their lanes (Rotherham, Leicester, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Stockport, Redbridge, Hackney, Ealing, Surrey, Southampton and Islington) whilst just 6 (Westminster, Brent, Hertfordshire, Cheshire West and Chester, Leeds and North Somerset) do allow access.

As with Redcar it seems reasonable to suggest that LAs not allowing access will have little evidence to prove or disprove the case for access unless they specifically ran a trial themselves.

Did these LAs run trials?

Of the 11 LAs not allowing access some have given tabletop consideration but only one (Ealing) has conducted a trial.

Thus 10 of the 11 LAs who do not allow access had no meaningful new evidence to add for consideration – they were stating subjective opinion and occasionally referring to evidence from locations where trials have taken place.

In conclusion, the responses from just seven LAs were based on firsthand evidence as opposed to opinion. Six of the seven LAs (86%) providing first hand evidence were supportive of motorcycle access.

Ealing was the only non-supportive LA that had run a trial. Ealing's evidence is not conclusive. The Ealing trial was conducted as part of the wider Transport for London (TfL) trials and their decision pre-empted and contradicted the results of the TfL analysis completed in 2011. Following the first TfL report in 2010, Ealing took the decision not to continue their scheme because of the early motorcyclist collision findings, and a numerically small rise in cyclist casualties. Even though Ealing's report revealed no direct collisions between a motorcycle and pedal cycle, officers surmised that the increase in cyclist casualties resulted from cyclists riding closer to the kerb (because of motorcycles passing fast and close), making them less visible to other road users. Evidence to support this claim was not provided. It was felt that the borough's cycling objectives would be put at risk. Ealing's road safety campaign on bus lanes had not been evaluated, but it was felt it may not have been successful, may have needed to be repeated and enhanced, and that there would be ongoing cost implications. Ealing was apparently unwilling to invest in road safety.

Ealing's decision was made before the completion of the full trial and thus the credibility of this evidence is undermined.

Journey Times

The DfT outcome analysis points out that three respondents reported an increase in bus journey times but only two of these were LAs (Rotherham and Westminster). The third was Transport for West Midlands which is not a LA. Furthermore, one of the LAs reporting an increase in bus journey times (Rotherham) does not allow motorcycles in its bus lanes.

The DfT outcome analysis also points out that four LAs reported a decrease in bus journey times. One of these LAs (Hertfordshire) allows motorcycles in their bus lanes.

Any conclusion that motorcycles increase bus journey times is clearly not supported by the evidence.

The DfT outcome analysis also points out that two LAs reported no change in motorcycle journey times while 15 had no information on motorcycle journey times. The two LAs reporting no change to motorcycle journey times (Redcar & Cleveland, and Stockport) do not allow motorcycles to use their bus lanes.

No conclusions can be drawn from first hand evidence provided in this consultation on motorcycle journey times.

Collisions

The question on collisions was worded as follows: "In bus lanes that allow motorcycle access has your local authority seen an impact on collisions for: motorcycles, buses, pedal cycles, taxis?"

The DfT outcome analysis points out that they received 16 responses to this question. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of the question since only six responding LAs allow access.

Of those six qualifying LAs, one (Leeds) did not respond to this question, and one (Cheshire West and Chester) had no information. Thus, only four responses were relevant to the analysis.

Of the relevant responses, three LAs (Brent, Hertfordshire, and North Somerset) reported no change to motorcycle collisions. One LA (Westminster) reported an increase in motorcycle collisions, but Westminster also reported increases in bus and pedal cycle collisions suggesting an overall increase in all collisions which is likely to be the result of increased movements of all vehicle types rather than a motorcycle-specific phenomenon.

Why motorcycles are not given access

The 11 LAs stating that they do not allow access gave the following reasoning for their position:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Rotherham | None - motorcycles are presently prohibited from all bus lanes in the Borough. Bus lanes in Rotherham have been introduced in Rotherham to facilitate faster and more reliable bus journeys. Admitting motorcycles does not support that objective. Moreover, to date no safety, operational or policy grounds, nor any material request from the public, have arisen to warrant admitting motorcyclists into bus lanes. |
| Leicester | No city bus lanes permit motorcycle usage. Detailed consideration was given via a scrutiny process in 2013 (https://cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/documents/s54309/Bus%20Lane%20policy%20Enforcement.%20-%20report%20by%20TptCC%20Cmsn.pdf) whether to permit usage. Access was opposed for the following reasons:• Increased usage of motorcycles was not a target within the Climate Change Action Plan or Air Quality Action Plan, with no strong environmental benefits from increasing usage and some suggestions that an increase in usage could be detrimental to local air quality.• Given the small modal share of motorcycles, removing them from general traffic lanes would have negligible impacts to congestion. In addition, overall trends in reduced uptake of motorcycles suggested greater promotion would not materially improve congestion by providing an alternative to car traffic.• Findings from trials in London suggested that motorcycle speeds increased when awarded access to bus lanes. Given the disproportionate representation of motorcycles in road casualty statistics, this could lead to increased risk to users and volume and severity of incidents on the network.• The overall cost to implement these changes would be high – yet given the low modal share for motorcycles measuring overall impact would be very difficult and disproportionately expensive and intensive. This matter was later revisited in a 2016 Scrutiny Review (https://cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/documents/s74797/Bus%20Lanes%20-%20final%20draft%20report.pdf) that found no change in position from the previous decision was warranted. |
| Nottinghamshire | The County Council’s current policy is to not allow any motor vehicles other than buses to use its bus lanes, and therefore motorcycles are not permitted to use them. This decision was made following an assessment of the benefits and dis-benefits of allowing them to do so following:• Department for Transport (DfT) guidance• consideration of current policy and strategy delivery• road safety impacts• advice from the police concerning enforcement• neighbouring highway authority’s views as some of the bus lanes in the county adjoin ones in the city. The County Council’s current policy of not permitting PTW vehicles to use bus lanes was determined following the publication of the DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet (TAL) 2/07 'The Use of Bus Lanes by Motorcycles'. TAL 2/07 encourages an objective assessment be made on each individual bus lane. It also gives detail on a number of issues, such as safety assessments, visibility, pedestrians, pedal cycles, turning vehicles, bus access, widths of bus lanes and frequency of bus stops which all need to be considered on each individual bus lane before allowing motorcycles to use it. TAL 2/07 recommends that bus lanes that are shared with motorcycles should be at least 4m wide to ensure that motorcycles and buses do not have to leave the bus lane whilst overtaking one another. This was a key factor in the County Council’s policy decision as PTW vehicles overtaking/filtering with other traffic are two of the |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| | <p>major contributory factors to accidents involving PTW vehicles in the county. If the bus lanes are not sufficiently wide enough to allow PTW vehicles to remain within them whilst overtaking this would result in increasing their conflict with other vehicles, and could result in more PTW vehicle casualties. An exercise was therefore carried out to determine the width of existing bus lanes and what the available road width is at these locations (in case the road was wide enough to accommodate widening of the bus lane). None of the County Council's existing bus lanes were found to be 4m wide (all of them were narrower). The road widths at the location of the bus lanes were also found to be insufficient to accommodate widening the bus lanes to 4m (or wider) and allow traffic to continue flowing safely in each direction. Based on this information it was determined that motorcycles would not be permitted to use bus lanes in the county.</p> |
| Norfolk | <p>No bus lanes in Norfolk can currently be used by motorcycles. Norfolk County Council has taken the decision that allowing motorcycles into bus lanes is not consistent with our transport policies.</p> |
| Stockport | <p>The 2 factors that we consider are Safety and Greater Manchester standards/ guidance we are required to follow. We also consider the risk of inadvertently promoting using a bus lane to drivers of single occupancy vehicles. This is extremely dangerous and inefficient and in addition goes against the principle of reserving parts of limited highway spaces for public transport use. Allowing motorcyclists to use bus lanes will also contribute to inefficiencies in public transport such as bus service delays and increased journey times.</p> |
| Redbridge | <p>The Council is considering the use of bus lanes by motorcycles. Concerns are the impact on other types of road user and consideration of consistency across East London/London. Other than TLRN there are no bus lanes on borough roads which allow access to motorcyclists. This is based on local decision making and concern about safety and other impacts and specific local conditions. TfL requirements. Safety - Motorcycles are seen as posing potentially increased risks of collisions for more vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists due to their higher speeds.</p> |
| Hackney | <p>Environment - Motorcycle emissions and noise pollution go against the goals of promoting active, sustainable, and low/zero-emission modes of transport. Prioritisation - Hackney aims to prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users over private motor vehicles like motorcycles in order to create safer, calmer, less congested urban environments. However their contribution to space efficiency is recognised and it should also be noted that the main contributory factor for collisions, with drivers in particular, is the driver's failure to recognise the motorcyclists (SMIDSY), so visibility is of major importance. The current lack of enforcement of inconsiderate riding (motorcyclists) is also a consideration</p> |
| Ealing | <p>In 2009-10, TfL and Ealing trialled allowing motorcycles in bus lanes. The trial showed statistically significant increases in both cycle and motorcycle casualties, increase in speeding by motorcycles and reductions in motorcycle journey times. The increase in cycle casualties was dismissed on the spurious grounds that the cyclists were not colliding with motorcycles. A second trial was run with an attempt to reduce motorcycle casualties back to normal by increasing law enforcement. The report on the second trial made it impossible to determine if casualty rates for cyclists and motorcyclists were still worse than control sites, or not. On the basis of this evidence, Ealing terminated its trial and prohibited all motorcycle use of borough bus lanes. Unfortunately TfL ignored the evidence and decided to allow motorcycles in all their bus lanes anyway. This decision was political, not evidence-based. I am aware of no other trials that have produced robust evidence on this issue, so the conclusion is that motorcycles should NOT be allowed to use any bus lanes. We therefore strongly oppose the proposal to force local authorities to allow them. I have attached the report I wrote for councillors in 2012, signed and approved by my then manager.</p> |
| Surrey | <p>Buses, cycles and hackney carriage taxis are permitted to use bus lanes in Surrey. Motorcycles are not permitted. Bus lanes in Surrey include traditional with-flow bus lanes, bus lanes on bus only sections of carriageway which lead to bus stops, bus only sections of carriageway on the approach to traffic signals, bus only sections of road on the approach to bus gates i.e. bollard controlled.</p> |
| Southampton | <p>Southampton City Council doesn't not currently allow motorcycles to use bus lanes as this could undermine the true purpose of bus lanes, and potentially lead to confusion amongst members of the public. At present around 1% of peak morning traffic flows in the City Centre</p> |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| | are undertaken by motorcycle compared to over 18% for bus movements, which carry around 20.9 million passengers annually. Southampton City Council also has safety concerns about enabling motorcycles to use bus lanes. |
| Islington | Historically the council has not provided access to motorcycles and powered two wheelers in bus lanes. In the early 2010's, TfL carried out a trial to assess whether permitting motorcycles and powered two wheelers in bus lanes could relieve congestion safely and effectively. The trials did not result in conclusive evidence to support a road danger reduction benefit to allowing motorcycles and powered two wheelers in bus lanes. Transport Research Laboratory's 2010 report assessing TfL's trial was inconclusive on this aspect. Collisions in bus lanes between motorcycles and powered two wheelers and cars increased, as did collisions between pedal cycles and cars. Though the number of low severity collisions between motorcycles and powered two wheelers and pedal cycles decreased, the number of higher severity collisions between the two modes increased. |

Note that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council states that to date it has received no material request from the public to allow motorcycle access. MAG has now written to Rotherham Metropolitan borough Council to make a material request for motorcycle access.

Leicester City Council states that it considered motorcycle access in 2013 and revisited the matter in 2016. The linked 2013 report recommends that the Mayor "further consider the merits of piloting the use of bus lanes by motorcycles, in line with a number of other authorities in the UK." However, the linked 2016 report simply states that a review resulted in "no change from current policy" with no further explanation or detail.

Nottinghamshire County Council references the DfT guidance note TAL 2/07. This guidance was superseded by TAL 1/24 published on 15th January 2024. Nottinghamshire refer to discussion of narrow bus lanes. MAG correspondence with DfT about the 4m width recommendation has prompted an admission that "the Department holds no information about how this value was arrived at".

Nottinghamshire also states that in addition to looking at DfT guidance they took advice from the police concerning enforcement. Nottinghamshire Police responded to this consultation agreeing that motorcycle access should be default policy saying: "With motorcycle KSI's accounting for over 25% of all KSI's nationally, reducing motorcycle KSI's is a main priority for Police forces and key stakeholders..... By allowing motorcyclists to routinely use bus lanes across the UK, it is hoped that riders will be clearly visible to all traffic particularly those in 4 wheels, that riders will be removed from filtering on the outside of traffic, that riders will have more space to see and be seen and overall, less collisions will occur."

Redbridge discusses concerns about safety impacts and TfL requirements, but the Mayor's Transport Strategy clearly states that the Mayor will seek to improve motorcycle safety by "Calling on all boroughs to allow motorcycle access to their bus lanes, to end the inconsistency between highway authorities that causes unnecessary confusion and risk to motorcyclists."

Hackney points to their policies to improve environmental factors and even admits that the motorcycle's "contribution to space efficiency is recognised" and points to the driver SMIDSY issues faced by riders, whilst refusing to accept the mode as being worthy of any safety consideration or promotion.

Ealing, the council that contradicted the outcome of all the London/TfL bus lane trials claims that TfL ignored evidence and that their "decision was political, not evidence-based".

Southampton claims that motorcycle access will “potentially lead to confusion amongst members of the public” without providing any evidence to support this claim.

Islington also refers to the 2010 TRL study, ignoring the fact that the second report in 2011 led to the adoption of default access policy for TfL’s bus lanes.

The attitudes displayed in these comments betray bias, confusion, a poor understanding of motorcycles and a refusal to accept the premise that all vulnerable road users benefit from the greatest possible separation from larger vehicles in congested areas.

Revoked permission for motorcycles to use a bus lane

Only one LA (North Somerset) stated that they had revoked motorcycle access. The explanation states: “We have one location where motorcycle access was revoked to use a bus lane. This related to safety concerns involving visibility at a junction.”

This is particularly relevant as it shows that a LA which states “Our current approach is the default inclusion of motorcycles in bus lanes, except for where safety concerns preclude this” demolishes any claim that default access is a mandate or that it removes LAs power to prevent motorcycle access in any bus lane.

Of equal note is the reason for revoking permission – visibility at a single junction.

Sub Nationals Responses

The DfT outcome response document stated - somewhat confusingly - that “Of the 22 local authorities, 1 combined authority and 2 transport authorities did not identify as local authorities when responding and so were excluded from local authority specific questions.”

These three (specifically Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and Transport for London (TfL)) were not able to answer the questions specifically for LAs, but did respond to the general questions.

Here we are also covering the response from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Should default access be given?

Of these four sub-national bodies, two (Liverpool and London) neither agreed nor disagreed, while two (West Midlands and Greater Manchester) disagreed.

The reasons for these positions were given as follows:

| | |
|--|--|
| Liverpool City Region Combined Authority | A bus lane ideally must be for use by high occupancy vehicles if it's to have the desired effect to assist with modal shift from privately owned cars or motorcycles to bus. Notwithstanding this, consideration locally should continue to whether motor cycles and/or bicycles would be appropriate and safe to use in a specific bus lane. |
| Transport for West Midlands | While safety is important and should be the first priority when deciding on who uses bus lanes, we also need to appreciate that bus lanes are primarily for buses and are in place to allow for accountable network performance management and tackling issues causing congestion, reliability problems and frequency. We install bus lanes to enhance areas of poor reliability, punctuality and performance and address a range of identified issues and concerns with our bus network. This in turn helps encourage modal shift and long-term behaviour change in partnership with our businesses and operators. Additionally, we strongly promote active travel options and so feel any changes should not impact pedal cycle users in anyway or their perception of safety, when using bus lanes. Considering these points then helps us fulfil our goals embedded in our Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands as well as those within our own EP Plan. Yet, at the same time, TfWM, along with its local authorities does appreciate the benefits of being as consistent as possible across our region concerning bus lane enforcement rules and we appreciate there are benefits to adopting a more consistent, regional approach. We attempt to do this through the EP scheme where we strive to provide clarity, consistency and transparency across all of our regions bus lane contravention policies and processes in accordance with current best practice. Yet we also acknowledge we need to strike the right balance between consistency, while also allowing policies to suit local circumstances and risks and ensure the safety of all users is considered first and foremost. And so, our local highway authorities should still decide whether motorbikes should be allowed to use a bus lane, as is currently the case, and be based on bus lane safety issues and road safety accident data that often varies, depending on the local and surrounding environment |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Transport for Greater Manchester | In Greater Manchester we have a commitment to deliver the Bee Network which is to increase the number of journeys made by walking, wheeling and public transport. This will result in more people cycling in bus lanes which will typically be 3.25m wide, where a cyclist is encouraged to take the primary position in the middle of the lane. In this scenario, there is insufficient space for a motorbike to safely pass (leaving at least 1.5m as per the highway code), and there could be a higher risk of close passes as a result. There are circa. 200 existing bus lanes across Greater Manchester, if motorbikes are mandated this would lead to a significant financial cost to undertake necessary Safety Audits, amend all Traffic Regulation Orders and change all bus lane signage. The Department for Transport would need to provide funding to allow the changes to occur. |
| Transport for London | - |

TfL gave no explanation for answering neither agree nor disagree which is problematic given the clearly stated position from the Mayor’s Transport Policy (MTS) and the fact that the authority has direct control of the largest bus lane network in the UK (over 77 miles in total length) to which it allows blanket access for motorcycles. Again, for clarity the Proposal 11 of the MTS states:

“The Mayor, through TfL, the boroughs, police and stakeholders, will seek to improve motorcycle safety by:
c) Calling on all boroughs to allow motorcycle access to their bus lanes, to end the inconsistency between highway authorities that causes unnecessary confusion and risk to motorcyclists.”

Transport for West Midlands seems to imply that while safety *should* be the “first priority” when deciding who uses bus lanes, it is not when it comes to motorcycles. Again, the first Transport Strategy for the West Midlands Combined Authority (Movement for Growth) stated “safety initiatives will supplement initiatives to facilitate motorcycling as a choice of travel within a safe and sustainable transport framework. These include provision of more, secure parking for PTWers, allowing PTWers in bus lanes, as is the case in Birmingham and London”.

Whilst discussion of motorcycles has been removed from the more recent core strategy document, there is no justification provided for this apparent change in stance on motorcycle access to bus lanes in the West Midlands.

The comment from TfGM also demonstrates a blinkered promotion of cycling with no concern demonstrated for the safety of equally vulnerable motorcyclists.

The indefensible emerging attitude at sub-national level is no doubt a reflection of the DfT’s own statement that “at present, the government has no policy to encourage greater use of motorcycles.”

Bus Operators' Responses

Two bus operators (Travel Cornwall and First Bus) responded to the consultation.

Travel Cornwall agreed strongly with default motorcycle access pointing out the small footprint of motorcycles.

First Bus agreed with default motorcycle access stating “we see no strong reason not to permit them to use bus lanes by default.”

The Campaign for Public Transport (CPT), which in its submission described itself as “an organisation that represents the interests of bus operators”, disagreed with default access, but the explanation appeared to contradict the answer. CPT’s statement for disagreeing was as follows:

“We are aware of the new guidance published for local authorities in January this year, Motorcyclist using bus lanes (TAL 1/24), and are supportive of the recommendations made including consideration of

- The width of bus lanes
- Frequency and location of bus stops
- Areas, such as pedestrianised areas, which require a bus gate facility

We are also supportive of the requirement for any local authority considering giving motorcycles access to bus lanes to consult with all local stakeholders and road users. We would encourage all local transport authorities to engage with bus operators to ensure that any decision is made collaboratively, and with the safety of all road users in mind.”

The confused response would appear to result from the framing in earlier questions of the default policy position as a mandate or removal of the authority to consult.

Police Responses

There were police responses from five individual forces and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

The NPCC, Nottinghamshire and Hampshire agreed or strongly agreed with default access. Devon & Cornwall Police neither agreed nor disagreed.

However, City of London Police strongly disagreed and West Midlands Police disagreed. The explanation from West Midlands suggests that the response may be the opinion of an individual officer as opposed to the considered evidence-based position of the Force. It states:

“Bus lanes provide a safe haven for the more vulnerable road users in my opinion, the cyclist. Motorbikes have the facility to filter regardless improving their travel time. I am mindful that the safe haven of the bus lane may benefit a motorbike rider but increase the risk factor for a pedal cyclist.”

The explanation from City of London Police seems to imply that default access for pedal cycles is equally wrong. “To allow a default that motorcycles can use bus lanes will allow, during peak times, motorcycles to use what is a clear lane if no bus present at a certain moment in time when other traffic is stationary. This will present a false sense of security for pedestrians, buses are slower and easier to be seen, motorcycles are not and ebikes cannot be heard. We see collisions between pedal cycles and pedestrians in similar circumstances.”

Road Safety Organisation Responses

Of five road safety organisations that responded, four (RoSPA, Vision Zero South West, IAM RoadSmart and PACTS) agreed with default access. Only one (Road Danger Reduction Forum) disagreed, and they strongly disagreed.

The stated reason was as follows:

“If it is safe to do so” means different things to different people. As it is, authorities have shown little interest in the evidence when deciding whether or not to allow motorcycles into bus lanes. A clear directive is needed that on the available evidence it is NOT safe to do so. Motorcycles are more likely than bicycles, cars and vans to be involved in Road Traffic Collisions with pedestrians. Having a blanket acceptance of motorcycles in bus lanes will generate more motorcycle traffic with this increased risk.”

The Road Danger Reduction Forum made no effort to provide the alleged evidence that it is not safe to do so. The position betrays an absolutist view that access is permissible only if absolute safety is achieved. Strangely this absolute evidential bar is not considered necessary for any other road user type using the bus lane (including buses).

Motorcycling Organisations Responses

Unsurprisingly there were no motorcycling organisations opposed to default access.

The Motorcycle Action Group, Motorcycle Industry Association and National Motorcycle Dealers Association all strongly agreed with default access.

The National Motorcyclists Council and British Motorcyclists Federation agreed with default access.

Cycling Organisations Responses

As expected, resistance to default motorcycle access came from the cycle lobby.

Three cycle lobby organisations responded (Sustrans, Cycling UK and London Cycling Campaign). Sustrans disagreed, while Cycling UK and the London Cycling Campaign strongly disagreed.

Their explanations were as follows:

| | |
|------------|--|
| Sustrans | We disagree. We believe that the current situation where local authorities can choose whether to allow motorcycles to use bus lanes on their networks works well. |
| Cycling UK | As part of the plan for drivers, one of the stated objectives for introducing this consultation is to decrease congestion for drivers who share roads with motorcyclists. Again, we don't believe this is a worthy policy goal. But in any case, motorcyclists make up only 1% of traffic in Great Britain and, like cyclists, take up comparatively little road space, so any resulting congestion impacts on drivers would be negligible. Furthermore, this change is likely to result in induced demand, meaning that freeing up space for cars by allowing motorcycles in bus lanes would only lead to greater car traffic, so congestion would not decline in the long term. If congestion relief is the objective, the government should invest in active travel and public transport – all more efficient and sustainable uses of limited urban space. Most importantly, we don't believe it is safe for motorcyclists to share spaces with cyclists. Motorcycles make up about 1% of traffic in Great Britain, yet are involved in 2% of pedal cyclist casualties. This could in part be because only 41% of motorcyclists comply with the speed limit on 30mph roads, and less than 10% comply with the speed limit on 20mph roads (a lower proportion than that of any other motor vehicle category). In contrast, 76% of bus drivers follow the speed limit on 30mph roads, and tend to behave more predictably. Thus, cyclists often feel safer sharing road space with buses – despite their size – than motorcycles. When Transport for London conducted its first trial of allowing motorcycles in some London bus lanes, it found that motorcycle speeding increased and both motorcyclist and cyclist collisions increased. Given these negative results, TfL complemented its second trial with a road safety awareness campaign, and found that, while overall motorcyclist collision rates remained constant this time, collisions between motorcyclists and cyclists increased significantly. That explains why 3,500 London cyclists signed the London Cycling Campaign's petition |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | <p>opposing TfL’s plans to allow motorcyclists in bus lanes. Sharing space with motorcyclists and losing the sense of safety many cyclists experience in bus lanes would undoubtedly discourage some people from cycling, causing society to lose out on the many benefits of more people cycling.</p> |
| <p>London Cycling Campaign</p> | <p>We note that this consultation was instigated as part of the previous Conservative government’s Plan for Drivers which, among other things, sought to increase the opportunity for drivers to go faster more often even though the highway code clearly highlights that increased speeds pose a greater danger to other road users notably pedestrians and cyclists. This is referenced in the Motorcycle in Bus Lanes consultation which states that a benefit of making all bus lanes in England accessible to motorcycles would be: “improved journey times for motorcyclists, making motorcycling a more convenient form of transport.” Studies carried out in London during the trials of motorcycle in bus lanes in 2009 and 2010 found that 40 to 50% of riders exceeded speed limits in bus lanes which, at the time, were 30 mph. The first study found an increase in motorcycle collisions in bus lanes, when they were permitted to use them, as compared with controls. The second study followed TfL targeted speed enforcement on TLRN (red route) corridors and a road safety awareness campaign. While motorcyclist collisions rates were unchanged the proportion of motorcycles exceeding speed limits remained above 40%. The cost of enforcement campaigns is significant and is unlikely to be sustained by local authorities. Regrettably, motorcyclists are involved in 23% of collisions in London (2022) while accounting for just 1% of trips. According to TfL: “Motorcycles are the highest risk mode of transport on the road. They account for 2.6% of the distance travelled by vehicles in London (2017-2021) but represented 27% of those killed or seriously injured in collisions... Motorcycles are also disproportionately involved in collisions that kill or seriously injure another road user (6%).” We note that, as the quotes below indicate, allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes may allow them to reach higher speeds, often exceeding local speed limits, and in some cases this may lead to more collisions for the motorcyclists. As noted above, findings from an initial bus lane trial in London in 2009 noted higher collision rates which necessitated an enforcement and education campaign ahead of a second trial whose analysis again found that speed limits were commonly exceeded (the enforcement and education programme reduced exceedance from 51% to 41%). There is little clarity as to why motorcycles should be viewed as a suitable mode of transport to enable to use bus lanes – a priority measure for active and sustainable travel modes. London is showing the urban (where bus lanes generally are found) need for public transport priority and active travel comfort and safety – and is also showing what happens when bus lanes are available to powered two wheeler users widely.</p> |

Cycling UK state that they do not believe reducing congestion is a worthy policy goal. This is a confusing admission. They say “Sharing space with motorcyclists and losing the sense of safety many cyclists experience in bus lanes would undoubtedly discourage some people from

cycling, causing society to lose out on the many benefits of more people cycling.” Is not one of the key arguments for modal shift to cycling the resultant reduction in congestion?

They also point to the fact that “motorcyclists make up only 1% of traffic in Great Britain and, like cyclists, take up comparatively little road space, so any resulting congestion impacts on drivers would be negligible”.

Their position against default motorcycle access is therefore as self-contradictory as it is self-defeating.

Cycling UK and the London Cycling Campaign focus at length on the question of compliance with speed limits but do not provide evidence that speed compliance in bus lanes is a factor in increased cycle fatalities in bus lanes. As shown by the local authority responses to the consultation there is no substantive evidence of increased collisions with motorcycles in bus lanes when they are allowed access. There has been only one case reported of motorcycle access being revoked once allowed, and as previously discussed this was at one location and due to visibility concerns, not speed. Furthermore, this occurred in a LA (North Somerset) that agreed strongly with default access.

The London Cycling Campaign highlights data from TfL stating that motorcycles are the highest risk mode of transport on the road. They then show a callously selfish disregard for policy aimed at improving safety for motorcyclists by claiming “There is little clarity as to why motorcycles should be viewed as a suitable mode of transport to enable to use bus lanes”.

For the record we believe that motorcycles are a legitimate solution to transport issues – and one that should be encouraged. MAG does not believe motorcycles are the only solution and is supportive of active travel and public transport. MAG wants to see road casualties minimised for all road users regardless of their modal choice.