Dear Mr Tuohy,

Thank you for contacting us. I understand that cyclists may be offended by Rod Liddle's brief comments on this incident, but I do not agree that a retraction or apology is appropriate.

Of course it is dreadful when cyclists are killed or injured on the roads. Mr Liddle's purpose was not to condone such tragedies but to ridicule Mr Grayling by heavy irony. That the transport secretary, of all people, should open a car door and hit a cyclist seems to be quite extraordinarily careless.

Mr Liddle's humour may not be to everyone's taste but he is a commentator on human foibles, not a diplomat.

As for the Highway Code and "undertaking", the guidance you cite that permits passing on the left applies to motor traffic on a congested multi-lane carriageway. The guidance for cyclists on overtaking is to "watch out for doors being opened",  and to "take care"; and there is a very specific warning about undertaking before junctions. I think it is reasonable to describe this as discouragement.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Tyrer

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