

Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

21<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Dear Lee

### **Temporary infrastructure for cycling and walking**

As you will be aware, towns and cities around the world are enabling temporary changes to streets and roads, aimed at supporting the safe movement of key workers choosing to walk and cycle during the current crisis. These changes provide space to allow social distancing, preventing the spread of coronavirus and supporting the continued fight against the current pandemic.

We are delighted to see Cardiff Council begin to introduce measures such as temporary 20 mph zones and the reallocation of road space to allow walkers and cyclists to practise social distancing. The availability of Next Bikes for staff in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, and subsidised servicing being provided by Pedal Power is no doubt of valuable help in supporting those on whom we all rely.

The increase in people cycling and walking for exercise in line with the government's public health recommendations is also encouraging. A fit and healthy population is a more resilient population, but in order to enable safe exercise, changes need to be made to our towns and cities. More space is required to enable everyone to move safely whilst maintaining adequate social distancing.

We have vast amounts of currently underused road space which can be temporarily reallocated at low cost, but we need to act quickly. We know that 'light segregation' can provide spaces in which walkers and cyclists feel safe, and that it can be installed quickly and at low cost.

In discussion with NHS colleagues, we know that these measures would have a positive impact in encouraging more health workers to cycle to work, with the added benefit of providing safe segregation or protection from motor traffic.

Post the current lockdown restrictions, a large proportion of the Welsh population will again be moving around towns and cities, but hesitant to use public transport where there is a greater risk of transmission. In order to mitigate against a second wave of coronavirus cases, we feel it prudent to plan ahead and implement these temporary measures now for key workers, but also to allow the wider population to travel by cycle or by foot, with safe social distancing, as lockdown restrictions lift.

Furthermore, emerging evidence suggests that the risk of death from Covid-19 is increased in areas of poor air quality. The improvements in air quality we are seeing during the current lockdown can be extended if we encourage and enable people to adopt healthy and sustainable transport modes as part of their routine. This will have a beneficial effect on the wide number of diseases already known to be linked to air pollution and may specifically help in the fight against coronavirus too.

We ask for your prompt and public encouragement of local authorities to support these initiatives and offer our support, as experts in our fields, to ensure that plans are effective and actioned.

We also ask that you support them by making emergency changes to legislative processes to facilitate installation of temporary infrastructure and enable the wider introduction of 20 mph with minimum delay. We need to quickly enable active travel by our NHS heroes and the key workers who are helping the country through this crisis and plan for, and support, the surge in walking and cycling trips likely to happen following the lifting of current restrictions.

Yours sincerely

**Gwenda Owen, Cycling UK**

**Dr Tom Porter, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Healthy Travel Wales ([healthytravel.wales](http://healthytravel.wales))**

**Neil Canham, Sustrans Cymru**

**Anne Adams-King, Welsh Cycling**

**Joseph Carter, Healthy Air Cymru**

**Rebecca Brough, Ramblers Cymru**

**Sian Donovan, Pedal Power Cardiff**

**Stephen Edwards, Living Streets**

**Will Butler-Adams OBE, CEO Brompton Bicycles**

**Andy Middleton, NOW Partners**