



Cycling UK
Ormeau Baths
18 Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8HS

Dear Julie Harrison,

Many thanks for your letter of 19 December 2023 in response to the questions raised in our letter sent 30 November 2022.

We appreciate the more comprehensive response but seek further clarification on several areas, and have some additional questions.

Active Travel Spend

In your response to our question regarding the 10% spend on Active Travel, you again have not given any specific or even general timescales. Given the huge delays on Active Travel projects over the past few years we implore you to share with us your schedule for moving towards the 10% spend, because 'very soon' does not give us any indication of timescales.

We note that former DAERA Minister Edwin Poots has stated that the department must "lay the first Climate Action Plan before the Assembly by the end of 2023". Can we expect the Department for Infrastructure to follow a similar timetable and have a completed Action Plan this year to present to the Assembly?

You mentioned that the Department has restructured its divisions with two senior posts being created. Can you confirm these posts are in the Active Travel Branch and share details of their remit, and are you also able to give a more specific timescale than 'early 2023' for the posts to begin?

Project Delays

Regarding the lighting of the Comber Greenway, you stated that:

'I can advise that the civils work for the lighting of the Comber Greenway is complete except for the length between Beersbridge Road and North Road'

The lighting is to this date still not turned on, meaning that people cycling and walking on the greenway have been doing so in pitch black and icy conditions for most of the dark winter nights.

The original completion date was given as August 2022, and until the lights are switched on the work is not complete. Can you please give us the date the lights will be turned on?

Further to this can you also please explain the decision to delay the installation at the busiest part of the greenway (i.e. the section closest to Belfast (Beersbridge to North Road). Even once the existing lighting is turned on, all users going to and from Belfast will be in the dark for a lengthy section. Several of our members who use the greenway have pointed out that the lighting should have been installed from Beersbridge and then heading out of Belfast rather than the other way round.

Pop-Up Cycle Lane

Regarding the pop-up cycle lane on Hardcastle Street we were under the impression that permanent status had already been approved by Minister O'Dowd when he was in post. Given the length of time since the review was completed and new legislation is not required, can you explain why progressing this project still requires a legislative role (which is impossible in the current circumstances) and also why it has taken so long to get to this stage?

Pavement Parking Consultation

Thankyou for the information on the number of responses to the consultation and the information on the 'Think Before You Park' campaign. Given how serious the impact of pavement parking is across Northern Ireland to pedestrian and cyclists' safety, and the seemingly manageable number of responses; we ask again for a timescale on progression and action on this, rather than a statement of the data and the date the consultation was completed.

Belfast Bicycle Network

While we appreciate the Department is considering taking on a greater role in the delivery of greenways, we are concerned there will therefore be less resource and priority given to on street, separated cycle lanes, more appropriate to urban settings. When the goal is modal shift from car journeys, street level cycle lanes are essential to encourage people to consider cycling, as they often offer more direct routes, better access to facilities and additionally, they don't come with the myriad of issues associated with mixing people walking, wheeling and cycling.

Are you able to reassure us that the Department will continue to focus on delivering phase 1 of the Belfast Bicycle Network, which is a mix of greenways and separated infrastructure, as well as the NI wide greenway network?

Shared Responsibility

We noted from your response to Andrew Muir that you intend to continue with 'Shared



Responsibility' of all road users in your language regarding road safety.

We understand the shared systems approach is the international standard, however we feel the Department has been misrepresenting the intended focus of the 'Shared Responsibility' wording.

Shared Responsibility in the safe systems approach places the focus of responsibility on 'Road users, road managers and vehicle manufacturers', the departments messaging and road safety strategy continues to place the focus on vulnerable road users in the language and prominence given to 'Be safe, be seen' campaigns, and the images used in the draft Road Safety Strategy to 2030.

According to DfIs own statistics, the reality of KSIs on the roads in Northern Ireland is that causation is rarely attributed to the behaviour of people walking, wheeling and cycling, even less so to how 'bright' their attire is. 83% of fatalities in 2020 were attributed to careless driving, speeding and intoxication, therefore we would ask you to focus on the data and target resources and messaging appropriately at those who carry the greatest responsibility when using the roads.

Many thanks for your continued correspondence,

Yours faithfully,

Duncan Dollimore

**Head of campaigns
Cycling UK**