

PE1653/F

Scottish Government submission of 31 January 2018

Thank you for your letter of 21 December seeking clarification from Transport Scotland following the Committee's consideration of the petition on 21 December 2017. The Committee has agreed to ask the Scottish Government:

- For its views on the establishment of a legal framework for active travel in infrastructure projects;
- Clarification of the status of the Trunk Road Walking and Cycling strategy, which was due to be published in September 2017.

A legal framework for including active travel in all infrastructure projects may not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example, if we are promoting a roads project where the existing National Cycle Network is adjacent to the project then it may not be appropriate to provide additional facilities. Another illustration showing that it may not be appropriate is in the fact that cyclists are not permitted to cycle along Special Roads (including Motorways). That said, the Rail Enhancement and Capital Investment Strategy, although not strictly a legal framework – and due to be published shortly - will set out our new approach to planning and funding rail projects. It will highlight the importance of connectivity to the rail network by requiring Network Rail to work with the wider industry and key stakeholders, to consider enhanced modal integration including cycling and walking as appropriate in the development of rail projects.

However, in line with the Scottish Government's vision to promote active travel in A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel 2030, the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the Trunk Road Cycling Initiative suitable provision for all road users, including cyclists, is a major part of our major roads projects.

Suitable provision for all users, including cyclists, is an important part of both the A9 and the A96 Dualling programmes, where the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) alone includes proposals for nearly 30km of off-carriageway shared-use facilities which will improve safety for cyclists and walkers while also helping connect local communities along the route. As part of our engagement with stakeholders on the A9 and A96 dualling programmes, we have set up non-motorised user Forums to provide updates on emerging proposals and also to seek vital feedback. We will continue to engage with these Forums as we progress the design of both dualling programmes.

Our other major roads projects also give careful consideration to suitable provision for all road users, including cyclists. For example on the A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan upgrade a shared use facility is proposed adjacent to the full length of the 17km scheme.

As another example the grade separation at Sheriffhall on the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass will improve access for pedestrians and cyclists compared to the existing arrangement. By allowing Edinburgh City Bypass traffic to pass over it will significantly reduce congestion and through the provision of active travel facilities will enhance accessibility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Provision for

non-motorised users at Sheriffhall, including cyclists, is currently being developed in further detail as we progress the detailed design of the scheme in consultation with local interest groups (including Spokes and Sustrans). I would like to reassure you that we are taking into account the views of these groups along with the wider public during the development of the scheme.

Additionally, part of the criteria for local authorities bidding for funding from Community Links and Community PLUS projects is that they have an Active Travel Strategy in place and that the project they are bidding for is part of a wider network, especially in urban settings. Also, our commitment in the Programme for Government is to make our towns and cities friendlier and safer spaces for pedestrians and cyclists by increasing investment that supports active travel from £40 million per year to £80 million per year from 2018-19. We have also stated that the A9 dualing project will include 35 km of new cycle track to connect the A9 route with the wider National Cycle Network. Also, the forthcoming Active Travel Task Force report, which is due to be published by the end of February, will include recommendations for better planning processes, improved community engagement and better alignment of policies at a national and local level.

The Trunk Road Walking and Cycling Strategy has been drafted but was put on hold until after the Active Travel Task Force reported. We will be taking cognisance of the findings of the report and updating the document where required. We will then present the document to various policy teams within Transport Scotland before circulating to wider stakeholders. Once we have taken on board all their comments we will publish the document on the Transport Scotland website around April.

Finally, the review of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) which is currently taking place, and which aims to set out a compelling vision for transport over the next 20 years, has in its scope a focus on active travel. National working groups will be advancing policy proposals on this and other areas of interest for the new NTS later this year, with a view to a full public consultation on those proposals taking place in early 2019.

I hope this is helpful.