

MCIA Response: Motorcycle Bus Lane Access Consultation

- **How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Local authorities should continue to be able to choose whether to allow motorcycles to use bus lanes on their networks'?**
 - Strongly disagree.
- **Provide an explanation for your reply.**
 1. The Government's 2021 Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) set an ambitious vision for powered two-wheelers (PTWs) and the entire powered light vehicle (PLV) sector, considering them crucial for achieving net zero.
 2. PTWs are more efficient in terms of energy, resources, and space compared to single-occupancy cars and lightly loaded vans, helping to reduce emissions and ease congestion.
 3. The TDP directed the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) to collaborate with the Government to create a joint Action Plan, identifying the challenges and opportunities to meet these goals. Integrating PTWs into local transport infrastructure and strategic planning is an essential part of delivering the Action Plan.
 4. Allowing PTWs to use bus lanes has been shown to improve road safety, reduce congestion, shorten journey times, and enhance air quality. However, currently, there is an inconsistent approach where PTW users can use bus lanes in some areas but not in others. This inconsistency often results in users unknowingly crossing boundaries and being fined, particularly in London where Transport for London (TFL) allows bus lane access but many boroughs outside its control do not.
 5. Making bus lane access the default for PTWs would eliminate confusion for users. Local authorities that do not allow access could use clearer signage to indicate where PTWs are prohibited.
 6. The MCIA has consistently urged the Government to be more directive with local authorities to ensure progress on its Action Plan and the broader goals of net zero and future mobility.
 7. Local authorities traditionally believe that trials are necessary before allowing PTW bus lane access. They often cite the costs of conducting trials and implementing new Traffic Regulation Orders as a major reason against allowing PTW bus lane access.
 8. Due to the high costs of providing access independently, local authorities are discouraged from aligning with the Department for Transport and broader UK transport goals.
 9. Local authorities should automatically align with national government policies on future mobility and decarbonisation. Failing to do so will impede progress towards net zero, limit the adoption of PLVs, and slow the transformation of urban and suburban areas in terms of reducing congestion, achieving cleaner air, and reaching net zero.
 10. Many local authorities already allow PTWs to use bus lanes. The positive effects of this policy are well-recognised, making it redundant and wasteful to keep conducting the same trials repeatedly.
 11. Following the Action Plan, authorities should generally promote the use of PTWs to modernise transportation systems and move towards net zero. This involves incorporating PTWs into both current and future infrastructure plans.

12. Granting PTWs default access to bus lanes would reinforce the Government's dedication to the Action Plan's Fourth Pillar, which focuses on integrating PTWs into local transport networks nationwide.
 - **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?'**
 - Strongly agree.
 - **Provide an explanation for your reply.**
13. Our joint Action Plan with the previous government is underpinned by the principle that it must be as easy as possible for road users to choose "the right vehicle for the right journey".
14. Allowing PTWs to use bus lanes encourages people to switch to more efficient personal transportation, reducing the number of less energy-efficient vans and cars that congest our roads.
15. Making bus lanes accessible to PTWs increases their appeal to a wider population, aligning with the previous Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Action Plan policies, and objectives for net zero and the future of mobility.
16. Providing access to less congested sections of the road, separate from cars and vans, makes it easier for first-time and novice PTW users to start using these vehicles.
17. A March 2018 report by the London Assembly Transport Committee on Motorcycle Safety in London highlighted that as road space competition increases in towns and cities, motorcyclists are being pushed into closer contact with other vehicles.
18. Allowing PTWs to use bus lanes reduces their journey times, making these vehicles more attractive to potential users, improving air quality, and reducing congestion.
19. Many local authorities recognise the benefits of PTWs and have permitted bus lane access while taking additional steps to include these vehicles in strategic planning.
20. Recognising the benefits of increased PTW usage, Northamptonshire County Council has adopted bus lane access as part of its strategy to shift transportation modes.
21. Cyclist and pedestrian casualties have significantly decreased in recent years due to the government's focus on dedicated infrastructure and separated road and pavement spaces.
22. PTW users are vulnerable on the roads. The Government must commit to increasing PTW usage, especially in urban and suburban areas. Allowing bus lane access is a crucial step toward making road networks more accommodating for PTWs.
 - **How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'There are benefits in allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes?'**
 - Strongly agree.
 - **[Multiple answer] In your opinion, what are the benefits in allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes?**
 - Improved journey times for motorcyclists.
 - Improved safety for motorcyclists.

- Reduction in congestion on routes currently used by motorcyclists.
- Making motorcycling a more convenient form of transport.

- **Another benefit:**

Fostering a more accessible route to PTW use for new and novice riders, thereby opening the sector up to a broader range of users. Supporting the resilience of the PTW sector and increasing uptake of its vehicles is pivotal to the Government's net zero and future of mobility aspirations.

Risks statement

- **How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'There are risks in allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes'?**
- Strongly disagree.

The Greater London Assembly Transport Committee's report into motorcycle safety in London, "Easy Rider: Improving motorcycle safety on London's roads", 2016 stated: "The design of London's roads is detrimental to motorcyclists in some respects. As competition for road space increases, there is a risk that motorcyclists are forced into closer contact with other vehicles. TfL's decision to open up bus lanes to motorcyclists on major roads has helped to rectify this situation in some areas, but the failure to convince many London boroughs to do the same has created confusion and inconsistency. It is time TfL finished what it started seven years ago, and secured motorcyclist access to all bus lanes. But access to London's bus lanes is a privilege and with it should be a reinforced call to motorcyclists to ensure they drive responsibly, staying within safe speed limits, for their own sake and for the sake of other vulnerable road users like cyclists."

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes - Monitoring of the Second TfL Trial, December 2011 along with the initial TfL trial concluded:

- Permitting PTW users bus lane access is popular, with an estimated 50,000 journeys a day now being made by motorcyclists in the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) bus lanes.
- Bus lane access supported key Mayoral priorities to smooth traffic, cut CO₂ across London and to improve journey time reliability for motorcyclists on the network.
- Collision rates in bus lanes in the second trial decreased by 5.8 per cent for motorcyclists and by 8.5 per cent for cyclists when compared with the first trial.
- There was no significant change in the collision rates for pedestrians in bus lanes between the two trials.
- When comparing the second trial with the period before motorcyclists were permitted access to bus lanes, there was a significant (11.6 per cent) decline in overall cycling collision rates in bus lanes and no significant change in collision rates in bus lanes affecting motorcyclists or pedestrians.

Leeds City Council Trial, A65 Kirkstall Road corridor, 2022 and **Leeds City Council, Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy 2023** granted permanent access further to the trial, noting:

- Motorcycle usage increased by 59%.
- There had not been "any adverse impacts on bus operations from the trial."
- No recorded "injury collisions" involving a motorcycle on the road since the scheme started.
- Motorcycle makes up less than 1% of road traffic but account for 18% of road collisions so any policy which could improve safety is warranted.

Coventry City Council, motorcycle bus lane access trial, 2014 granted access further to the trial, noting:

- The review of the personal recorded injury collisions showed none relating to motorcycles recorded in the bus lanes in the trial.
- Local bus companies confirmed they do not have any concerns or issues with motorcycles utilising the bus lanes.

- The majority of the responses received were in support of the proposals and requested that the scheme was extended.
- Extending the scheme to all bus lanes (lengths of bus lane, not bus gates) would also be beneficial as it would result in a consistent approach throughout the city.