

**To Regional Development Minister Danny Kennedy**

The concerns of cyclists were wrongly ignored in the taxis in bus lanes consultation, despite 86% of responses being negative.

Cycling is growing in Northern Ireland and this decision will harm that growth. In Belfast alone, commuter cycling has grown by 60% over the last 10 years, while taxi commuting has fallen by 24%. If that trend continues, rush hour cyclists will outnumber rush hour taxi commuters in just 2 years' time.

For all the reasons ignored in the consultation..

* a more hostile environment for cyclists in bus lanes
* safety concerns
* DRD prioritising unsustainable transport
* slowing bus journeys across the city
* endangering the efficiency of bus rapid transit

..stop and think.

Do not allow all taxis in bus lanes. Revisit the consultation outcome. Set Northern Ireland on the correct course - protect cycling and public transport, not the interests of taxi companies.

Sincerely,

[**500+ signatures**](http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/department-for-regional-development-northern-ireland-stop-a-plan-to-allow-all-taxis-into-bus-lanes)

**Comments by petition signatories grouped by area of concern**

**Comments**

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| I cycle to and from work mainly on bus lanes. I have to deal with intimidating buses, but would say that the vast majority of Translink bus drivers are courteous to cyclists. My concerns are how profit drive. Taxi drivers are going to interact with a cyclist that is holding them back from their next fare, how much space are they going to give a cyclist when trying to pass them on a busy road.But most importantly, our main cycling infrastructure in Belfast is based on bus lanes. It is acknowledged that more cyclists using roads, equates to safer roads for cyclists. How are we to encourage new cyclists onto the roads (or possibly keep the ones we have) when the perception will be of taxis racing down bus lanes at the speed limit. How safe will commuters, families and leisure enthusiasts consider that?And finally the report says that when I commute by bus, it will be slower too. It looks to me that the majority of Belfast ratepayers are in a lose-lose situation should this proposal be put in place. A sad story for a compact city that has the geography and the means to be so much more sustainable. |
| I am a cyclist and commute to work every day along a main arterial route from East Belfast. There is little room on the road for cyclists and the only space you get is in the occasional bus lane along the way. If taxis were allowed to use the bus lane then I would probably just end up cycling on the footpath as there would be no room for me on the road. I understand the anger that people feel toward cyclists using footpaths, but where else are cyclists supposed to go when the roads are at a standstill with traffic in the morning and evening rush hours? There would be no point in cycling if we were to sit in the traffic too. At least we can cycle in relatively free bus lanes without fear for our safety at the moment. |
| There are few enough SAFE places to cycle on Belfast streets without removing that which is provided for cyclists to use the bus lanes. They provide a safe haven for cyclists and this will be completely destroyed by allowing "racing" taxi drivers who have little or no respect for any other road users, let alone cyclists in the bus lanes. Cyclists always seem to suffer when it comes to decisions like this and it is time for Belfast to waken up to the needs of cyclists who are citizens that care about public health and the environmental wellbeing for everyone. This is a retro step and will set back the Cycling Culture here, when it needs all the help it can get. I am very much against this proposal. |
| It would appear that the positive impact of allowing this change is minimal, the vast majority of consultees did not support the change and It is also contrary to DRDs aims of increasing cycling journeys. The consultation says that women take more journeys by taxi than men. It fails to note that women are in the minority of cyclists and the fear of danger is a major factor in keeping women from choosing the healthy, sustainable option to cycle instead of taking taxis. By increasing the traffic in bus lanes this will make "the safest place for them (cyclists) to be" less safe. Please reconsider this change in light of the facts and opinions of all road users.  |
| I am commuting to Belfast by bike as often as I can. Drivers, in general, are quite aggressive and do not give cyclists a space wide enough. A car, lorry or bus flying past your handlebar with 3 inches to spare is very intimidating and extremely dangerous.Cycling is a winner on all fronts - economically, environmentally and health-wise! Why put people off cycling by allowing taxis to use bus lanes when so much has been invested into Belfast's cycle lane system?!  |
| For me, there are 2 aspects of this proposal. One is the obvious increased risk to cyclists as many taxis drive above the speed limit and with consequent less regard for other road users. The other relates to a more general point relating to taxis. Why are these vehicles given any advantages over other cars (locally, they are not even classified as cars when it comes to 'no car' lanes? I view them as private buses and should have no priority over other cars. |
| Not only does the DRD decision evidence lack of concern related to issues raised in the recent public consultation, but also highlights the paucity of long term planning/consideration given to a sustainable transport network for NI within government policy thinking. With the road network of Belfast already struggling with peak traffic, new options are required to ensure the city stays on the move at all levels, for all modes of transport, in all areas.  |
| It’s hard enough to survive on the roads when you’re on a bike, what Danny Kennedy needs to remember is that most cyclists are car owners as well so we understand as drivers the traffic problems that exist on our roads. This policy change however is going to put lives at risk just so a taxi driver (which are not public transport and should therefore be treated the same as other road users) can skip through traffic while the rest of us pay for it. |
| As a frequent bus user I fell the less traffic allowed in bus lanes will facilitate a quicker journey into work and encourage less use of personal cars which will help environment and congestion. My observation of taxis is that they will park anywhere they want and this will also cause hold ups. I also feel there should be more safe areas for cyclists to travel and adding more traffic to bus lanes will hinder this.  |
| This plan makes no sense whatsoever. The DRD should be encouraging low cost commuting by bike or promoting efficient mass commuting by bus. This proposal deters both. As a frequent cyclist my experience is that bus drivers are generally respectful of cyclists in the bus lanes. Taxi drivers however simply want to get there as quickly as possible and pay little heed to cyclists. This plan is not safe and not necessary. |
| Bus lanes provide me with what I would deem the necessary safety for my daily commute by bicycle. I cycle to and from work to reduce my carbon footprint and for the health benefits gained through daily exercise - the distance is too long to walk. The allowance of taxis into the bus lane is a severe and unnecessary risk to me and other cyclists who depend on bus lanes for commute.  |
| 99.9% of NI cycle lanes are advisory lanes. This is denoted by the broken white line. This is why Cars, Vans, Lorries etc... can park in them for whatever reasons they want. The only restriction that may apply is if any clearway is enforceable. I would also like to see more safe cycle only lanes. The DRD minister (then John O'Dowd) slashed the cycle lanes budget by 98% I think!  |
| I commute 4 out of 5 days. Taxi drivers are the least mindful of all road users and are aggressive towards cyclists. Negative impact on cyclists and public transport. Minimal positives for taxis who are in a very small minority of users. Restrict growth in sustainable transport. Backward step for Belfast. Decision driven by business interest not the interest of the people.  |
| I cycle to work every day and about half of my journey is on bus lanes. Although they are already unsafe, adding hundreds of the most aggressive types of drivers on the roads might leave me with no other option but to start driving to work again. Why would DRD want to introduce a policy that will result in more cars on the roads and reduce safety for any remaining cyclists? |
| I commute in Belfast every day and enjoy the relative safety that the bus lanes afford. Taxi drivers are one of the two main groups of inconsiderate road users I encounter regularly. Don't give them the rubber stamp to think that they have more rights than cyclists on the road. Because they will, and they will endanger and intimidate cyclists as a result. |
| I don't understand why taxis should be allowed in bus lanes at all. They do not reduce the number of cars on the road, they do not qualify as public transport nor do they reduce the carbon footprint. It's another ridiculous motion to be passed with little or no forward thinking. Northern Ireland continues to go backwards if this proposal goes through. |
| I am a commuting cyclist - all taxis in a bus lane is madness. Commercial taxis!The more runs they make, the more money they make. This reduces safety for cyclists in a bus lane. Please please please don't allow all taxis in bus lanes. This will frighten cyclists off the road.. Optionally, create proper separated cycle lanes. |
| I am a regular commuter cyclist in the Ormeau Road bus lane. I find it easy to co-exist with bus drivers as they are generally considerate of cyclists and, with bus stops, they are travelling at roughly the same speed as me. On the other hand, taxi drivers are often aggressive and show little consideration for cyclists. |
| I commute most mornings (+20miles) and I look forward to the progress I can make in the bus lanes in Belfast. I feel safer in the bus lanes as well, even though I am an accomplished cyclists. Allowing taxi drivers to use the bus lanes will be seen as a step backwards for Belfast in terms of promoting greener transport. |
| Taxis neither benefit public transport or the environment. The bus lanes were designed to speed up public transport journeys and therefore make them more attractive to commuters. Slowing the lanes by introducing taxis could nullify the purpose of the scheme. The bus lane also gives safe passage to cyclists |
| Retrograde step that is out of line with the rest of the UK. The idea of a bus lane was to enable better public transport and encourage its use. Allowing taxis into the bus lanes is contrary to this aim. Furthermore, it will endanger vulnerable road users. If allowed it will be anti-democratic. |
| Taxi drivers are often in a rush to get to the next job, being frustrated behind (or trying to squeeze past) a cyclist doing 15-20mph isn't going to make the roads any safer. If they're going to allow taxis into these lanes then they should at least build proper dedicated cycle lanes first. |
| If cycle lanes are important to protect cyclists then they need to be available to do so as we travel in the UK as well as the rest of the world. Taxi drivers can be very aggressive drivers. We need protection - and not its continual erosion. Our safety, even our lives, are at risk. |
| As a cyclist in a UK capital city, I feel that cyclists are always considered last when it comes to transport decisions. Governments and councils need to be doing everything they can to promote safer, hassle-free cycling, not discourage and endanger cyclists or would-be cyclists. |
| Allowing taxis into bus and bike lanes totally negates the idea and will make it as dangerous if not worse than normal roads. Taxis are not a sustainable form of transport unlike bikes and buses. I have visited Belfast and one reason to come back would be good cycle facilities  |
| I visit N Ireland regularly with my bike and view this proposal with some concern. Buses are different from taxis whose aim is to collect as many fares as possible thus putting pressure on them take 'short cuts' and behave as though cycles are an imposition Gordon Geikie |
| It's a ridiculous idea. It will slow down bus lanes as taxis just appear to sit there when the driver needs a "rest". Taxis also weave in and out of bus lanes with little or no thought to other users. They are a law unto themselves as it is. GIVE THEM NOTHING ELSE. |
| 1. Safety for cyclists, 2. I don't think taxis, carrying no more people than a normal car, should be able to use bus lanes given that they generate as much traffic as private cars. Bus lanes should be reserved for vehicles that reduce congestion i.e. buses and bikes.  |
| I cycle regularly in Belfast. The cycle lanes are tokenistic and in many cases impractical. Motorists tend to treat cyclists as pigeons: they don't try to kill them, but if they hit one, well, it's only a cyclist. Bus lanes are a rare refuge for defenceless cyclists. |
| I'd rather keep as FAR away as possible from taxis when I'm most vulnerable on two wheels in the city; I tend to see a LOT of taxi drivers doing selfish and dangerous things every time I'm cycling so I'd rather they did it in a lane I'm NOT in thanks very much! |
| The plan is senseless - biking is cheap, convenient and clean. It should also be safe. Taxis show scant regard for other road users and their disregard for the illegality of their using bus lanes has been cited as a reason to allow them to do so. Madness. |
| I commute by bicycle every day. This will make my journey even more dangerous. Taxi drivers are NOT trained to overtake cycles safely as some bus drivers appear to be. taxi drivers are the most aggressive drivers and the biggest risk takers on the roads |
| I fear for my safety as I cycle to work every day and use the bus/cycle lane on the Ormeau Road between 7.30 and 9.30. I already have to contend with cars illegally using this protected space as well as some delivery vehicles parked or double-parked. |
| Belfast taxi drivers seem to be averse to the idea of sharing the road with anyone, and are frequently abusive and hostile toward cyclists. Allowing them to use bus lanes will increase user conflict and have a detrimental to the safety of cyclists. |
| Nothing must impede with the smooth flow of public transport. Motorcycles and cycles have a dispensation which seems to be working well, but taxis would be a step too far. The buses may have to go out into the traffic just to avoid the taxis. |
| More needs to be done to provide a safe environment for cyclists in the city. Also, this will have a detrimental impact on those using buses, and is a blatant u-turn on the recent work done to improve public transport system in Belfast |
| I am a cyclist, but am too scared to use major roads like the Lisburn Road, Malone or Ormeau, because cars just ignore you, and I had a few close shaves. Sharing bus lanes with buses only would provide a safer space for us cyclists. |
| Sustainable transport is important to me. We need more cyclists and more people on our buses, not less. Allowing taxis in the bus lanes will discourage cyclists already intimidated on dangerous roads and slow down bus journeys. |
| Taxi drivers are quite possibly the poorest drivers around whether its fellow car users or cyclists. When cycling in a bus lane a taxi stopping for a fare or drop off in front me in a bus lane puts mine and others safety at risk |
| The purpose of the bus and cycle lane is to encourage people to adopt 'greener' modes of transport. To reduce carbon emissions etc. I don't understand how transporting, usually, one person, in a taxi supports this.  |
| It would be nice to think that NI was keen to encourage people to cycle. This proposal would seem to suggest that the DRD is trying to discourage people from cycling. What's the reasoning behind these proposals? |
| I'm a regular cyclist in Belfast. Taxis show little regard for cyclists, frequently ignoring road markings like advance stop lines and cycle lanes. Allowing taxis in bus lanes would make my journey more dangerous. |
| Opening bus lanes to taxis will make journeys for cyclists less safe. I've been hit by a taxi and hit by a car while cycling in a bus lane. Additionally, increased risk will dissuade people from cycling.  |
| i tried to cycle to work as often as possible through Belfast city centre. Taxis anywhere are a hazard to cyclists so anything to do with additional taxis only adds to the increasing danger to cyclists. |
| Because cycling needs to be encouraged, for so many reasons; e.g. health, combatting obesity, and combating climate change. Putting people off cycling by having taxis in the bus lanes is a retrograde step. |
| My bus times will be increased. The buses are a sustainable mode of public transport. This will delay the journeys of many to facilitate the (richer) few. It goes against the stated aims of the bus lanes. |
| Taxi drivers in general believe that the road belongs to them as displayed by their disregard for other road users - as a cyclist bus lanes should give us a slight bit of protection by keeping taxis out |
| There is no point having bus lanes if the busses and cycles have to continuously pull out into traffic and encourages other road users to also use bus lanes as private taxis look more like other cars. |
| Commuting to work every day means that safer cycle lanes are in my best interest. I do NOT want to share cycle lanes with taxi drivers, who are probably the most inconsiderate drivers on the road. |
| I ride my bike to work and use the bus lanes, it’s dangerous enough on the stretches with no bus lanes without adding the number of vehicles allowed to use these lanes. Buses and Bikes only please. |
| Taxis already stop and use the bus lane as a taxi rank, if they can’t respect their function now it will only get worse if they are given official permission to use them. Not a good idea at all! |
| I'm a cyclist and bus passenger. Taxis will slow down buses due to congestion, and cyclists will be discouraged from using them due to perceptions of being unsafe due to taxis. |
| Belfast City Council are putting forward a mixed message. Do you want a more commuter and public transport friendly city or not? I take my bike to work between 3-4 days a week.  |
| Because it has the potential to set a president for many other cities who may try to follow suit and defeat the original objects of making cycling safer for all road users.  |
| The consultation shows that this proposal does not have the support of over 90% of respondents and works against departmental strategies for sustainable transport growth. |
| I am a driver, a bus user and a cycle commuter. This bizarre move will increase the congestion problem in an already gridlocked city, and endanger the lives of cyclists.  |
| Those of us on bikes are not contributing to congestion or fumes in the city, never mind the climate change and its hard enough cycling in NI without making it harder. |
| I feel that cyclists should have a designated cycle lane in which they feel safe in. In addition to this, novice cyclists children need to be protected from traffic.  |
| As a regular cyclist (4,000+ miles per year) I have experienced a lot of 'near misses' by taxi drivers - proportionately more than by any other group of drivers!!  |
| They should be making cycling safer and promoting more cycling journeys, not forcing cyclists to share a lane with angry taxi drivers, a recipe for disaster. |
| Belfast is a perfect city to cycle around - both for commuters and leisure cyclists. They should be encouraged to use their bikes more. It benefits everyone! |
| If a consultation receives an 86% negative response then it is hardly democratic if the Minister chooses to ignore the electorate by pushing this through.  |
| I am a cyclist and struggle to find safe space on Belfast roads- cycling lanes are either shared with traffic, parked upon or end abruptly and at random. |
| The more people in a cycle lane the more congested it becomes, the more congested it becomes, the more chance I have of being knocked off my bike again.  |
| cyclists need to feel safe on bikes in cities and towns, bus lanes help, don't spoil what little encouragement we have to cycle in a car dominated world |
| I cycle through Belfast and feel that taxis should use normal traffic lanes. They are not a means of public transport nor reduce the carbon foot print  |
| Help for UK cyclists is so far behind other European countries let’s not get any further behind. New cyclists getting healthy should be the priority. ! |
| I am a cyclist and think that safe cycling around our city should be promoted and encouraged. This proposal seems only likely to do the opposite. |
| To endorse the move would be a totally unjustified and cynical political movement in the face of logic and sensible long-term traffic solutions. |
| there is far too many taxis in this town, and spend more time moving from place to place looking for fares rather than actually moving people |
| There is little enough space on the roads for bikes already, taxi drivers already use bus lanes and cycle lanes as additional car-parking. |
| A poorly designed and destructive policy has been bulldozed through the consultation process. 86% against, yet it happens. Democracy? |
| I think this will put cyclists at risk and deter more people from taking up cycling as a sustainable means of transport and commuting |
| Cycling in urban areas is dangerous enough without putting more traffic onto bus lanes. This won't encourage people use to bikes! |
| Daily commuter by bicycle, would like to encourage more. This measure is simply not a plan for sustainable transport in the city. |
| Bus lanes are dangerous enough without taxi drivers, who show little regard for many other drivers, and none at all for cyclists. |
| As a cyclist, the Bus Lanes are the only safe option for commuting. Allowing taxis into the bus lanes will make them hazardous  |
| Taxis are one of the most dangerous vehicles on the roads. Bus lanes are a small safety haven for cyclists in this country. |
| Cycling is the very poor relation in the transport department. Please do not make cycling even more dangerous than it is |
| Don't want cyclists to be killed by taxis that think they own the road - please make cycling safer not more dangerous!!! |
| Cycling is unnecessarily risky as it is without giving Taxi's free reign to jostle with cyclists in a lane of their own. |
| I cycle every day to/from work, adding more traffic within the bus lanes during rush hour will increase accident levels. |
| Taxis will compete unfairly with cyclists for space, and increase the likelihood of accidents, injuries and fatalities. |
| Most of the time taxis do not follow the code for safe driving. What makes them any different to other car drivers? |
| I cycle from Bangor to Belfast most days to work and find the bus lanes great. I feel safer when I'm in a bus lane. |
| I am a regular cyclist and am concerned that allowing taxis in the bus lanes will increase the danger to cyclists.  |
| Safer commute & more chance of getting more cyclists to use proper bike lanes, thus reducing the carbon footprint.  |
| We need to ensure safe cycling routes to enable people to live healthier and more environmentally friendly lives |
| Io am a regular cyclist and feel that allowing cyclists into bus lanes would compromise road safety for cyclists |
| Bus/Cycle lanes shared with taxis will make my cycle into city too dangerous so I'll just bring the car instead |
| Belfast needs to take the issue of making cycling more safe seriously. This will only make cycling less safe. |
| I see no clear reason any taxi should be allowed in a bus lane. They are no different to other motorists.  |
| A dangerous precedent for the rare sanctuary that bus lanes currently afford cyclists from hostile traffic. |
| Bus lanes are an important part of my 'safer route' when cycling. Taxis should not be allowed to use them. |
| If anyone in the DRD rode a bike, taxis would be the last people they'd consider to allow in a bus lane. |
| I am a cyclist and believe that sustainable transport solutions should be supported by the government.  |
| It will inevitably lead to less use of bus lanes by cyclists and result in fewer cyclists on the roads |
| I am both a commuter cyclists and a recreational one so road safety for cyclists is paramount for me. |
| As a keen cyclist I would like to see these lanes with as few as little traffic on them as possible! |
| you are trying to encourage cycling, fitness, etc. and now you are acting contrary to all this effort |
| To preserve cyclists safety and maintain cycling facilities to encourage greater numbers of cyclists |
| As a cyclist I feel we do not need taxis on the bus lanes as they are always in a hurry somewhere. |
| I cycle to work and it is already dangerous enough without taxi drivers being in the cycle lanes. |
| I cycle to work every day and the dangers from motorists are quite enough without adding to them. |
| Concern that there will be greater risk for cyclists unless individual cycle lane made as well.  |
| I commute to work by bike. This change would make my commute more dangerous and less convenient. |
| This will inevitably lead to accidents. Surely we should encourage safety and greener travel?  |
| I'm a keen cyclist and more traffic in the bus lanes will mean increased risk for the cyclist. |
| We should be encouraging bike journeys and this will put people off due to safety concerns. |
| I want to see Cyclists safe on the busy roads and to encourage more people to use bicycles  |
| I am a cyclist, and allowing taxis in bus lane threatens my safety while commuting to work. |
| Too much vehicular traffic in the lanes already. More would be detrimental to bike safety. |
| This will make cycling in Belfast a worse experience, when we should be making it better |
| I want a safe space to ride a bicycle. Sharing that space with a taxi isn't acceptable. |
| Because we need to make cycling safer to entice more people to get out of their cars |
| Anything that endangers cyclists or even just puts them off cycling is a bad idea. |
| A taxi can travel much faster than a bus further endangering cyclists in bus lanes. |
| Bus lanes feel dangerous enough as it is without allowing more traffic in them.  |
| My Claud Butler bike still bears the scars of a mad driver at Holywood Arches! |
| It means cyclist can cycle safely in the bus lanes when empty. Free from taxis. |
| this is important to keep cyclists safe and to encourage more people to cycle |
| Safety - more vehicles in the bus lanes mean more potential for casualties. |
| Letting taxis in bus lanes will make them far more dangerous for cyclists. |
| Taxies are not public transport. They do not help to reduce car journeys |
| cycling is hard enough without careless private hire in the cycle lane |
| I cycle when I can and Belfast cycle lane network facilitates this |
| I'm a cyclist, concerned with safety for cyclists and drivers. |
| I cycle to work every day, and it's dangerous enough as it is! |
| it will influence the future for cycling everywhere in the UK |
| Belfast is awful enough to cycle in without making it worse! |
| I’m a cyclist concerned for myself and fellow cyclists safety |
| Allowing taxis to use bus lanes will be lethal to cyclists! |
| Why should taxis be given priority over ordinary motorists |
| Disgraceful plan which should be immediately dropped |
| Because I want to be able to cycle safely in the city | I want to be able to cycle safely. |
| Cycling in the city is difficult enough without this | It'll discourage beginner cyclists |
| Opening cycle lanes to more cyclists is a daft idea. | I don't want knocked off my bike! |
| Because we need to make the roads safer for cyclist | Promote cycling and make it safe |
| I am a regular cyclist and thus directly impacts me | to ensure safety of cyclists |
| This would make roads more dangerous for cyclists | safety for cyclists matters |
| I value ability to cycle safely in the bus lanes | Safety and sustainability.  |
| Tells cyclists they are not welcome in the city. | For the safety of cyclists |
| I want to stay safe and encourage fewer cars.  | This affects me every day! |
| Cycling is dangerous enough in Belfast already | will put me off cycling |
| Minimise risk of death and injury of cyclists | I wish to stay alive. |
| I would like freedom to cycle around the city | Road safety concerns |
| I commute through Belfast nearly every day. | Safety of cyclists |
| Common sense and safety should prevail! | Safety.  |
| I am a cyclist and want safer travel. | Safety |
| safe space on the rods for cyclists | safety |
| I cycle to work. I want to be safe. |