

Pathways for Progress: Reducing congestion, improving mobility and cutting casualties

Improving policy for Motorcycling and PTW riders

Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) aka motorbikes and scooters offer more sustainable options to meet transport needs than cars or vans – and reduce congestion related problems. But, this mode and the interests and safety of riders is often overlooked or undervalued in the UK.

In response, the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) identifies five pathways for progress.

Urgent review of road furniture and 'safety' schemes to identify and eliminate elements that have potential for adverse impacts on PTW rider safety

The dynamics of road use by PTW, i.e. optimally safe positions to be on the carriageway, and especially on bends, are critically different to cars, bicycles and pedestrians. However, these differences are less well recognised or understood than they could and should be.

Many 'safety' schemes involve new hard engineered obstructions including build-outs or the widening of existing ones such as traffic islands, but these can act as trip hazards, especially when markings or illuminations deteriorate or fail – as regular they do.

Currently, there is significant room for improvement in this area for consideration by highway engineers and designers. And, as the DfT and TfL have acknowledged to MAG, this problem results in schemes that inadvertently raise risks of injurious conflict for PTW riders that have resulted in serious injuries or fatalities.

MAG's response is to request an urgent review of existing and proposed schemes and will pro-actively assist in that review process – and help propose refinements to reduce the impact of this problem. The DfT and TfL have also acknowledged that there are gaps in Road Safety Audit processes. TfL has initiated its own review as a Local Transport Authority (LTA) as a DfT review processes will take years to complete. MAG suggests that the LTAs in all UK regions should initiate their own review as a matter of urgency.

Lifting bans on PTWs in all with-flow bus lanes

An overwhelming bank of evidence (see attached notes) shows that PTW use of bus lanes has environmental benefits and improves the safety of riders of motorcycles *and* cyclists. And, no evidence has ever been produced to show any adverse impacts on bus services.

The benefits of PTW use of bus lanes are recognised in over 40 UK towns and cities including three of key importance:

PTWs have had highly scrutinised access to London's entire Network of Strategic Roads for the last six years. This followed more limited trials from 2004 onwards. And, after the most comprehensive and rigorous investigation of this measure in the world, PTW access to the entire strategic network across Greater London was made permanent in 2011.

In 2014, PTW access to bus lanes was also made permanent by Brighton and Hove council, which was the only Green led Council in the UK at the time.

PTWs have permanent access to all of the UK's busiest with-flow bus lanes throughout the City of Westminster which covers an extensive area of Central London. This follows successful trials run by the City Council on their roads since 2005, and by TfL on the strategic roads under

their control. The area covered includes includes Buckingham Palace and Covent garden in the south, the Houses of Parliament and Trafalgar square – and up to Abbey Road and London Zoo in the north of the City.

Arguments against motorcycle access to bus lanes do not stand up to scrutiny that is duly objective, appropriately well informed and evidence based. It is also increasingly clear that arguments against the concept never will be sustainable, as evidence to the contrary continues to mount up. Any proposal to 're-invent the wheel' of investigating this measure should be confined to the introduction of trial schemes under experimental orders – rather than spending time and resources on attempts to try to reject this tried and tested advance in road safety for vulnerable road users and network efficiency for all.

Provision of parking facilities for PTWs should be on a par with bicycles

Demand for parking PTWs should be treated in a similar way to demand for parking bicycles as use of both modes helps to cut congestion related problems. PTWs are not cars and should not be seen as such, or as a source of parking charge revenues, just because they have number plates and bicycles don't.

The provision of Motorcycle Parking space on public highways should be as extensive and free of additional charges as it is for bicycles. And, where ever possible, some anti-theft provisions should be provided like ground anchors or bars for riders to chain their bikes to.

MAG recognises that decisions about PTW parking in off-street car parks may be beyond local authority control, but all Car Park owners should be encouraged to exempt PTWs from charges when they do not significantly reduce space for cars.

Most UK LTAs allow PTW's to park free of charge in Council operated motorcycle parking bays and in many on-street car parking spaces. Some operators of off road car parks do not charge for bike parking and MAG suggests there are good reasons for this progressive approach to be encouraged and become a unified policy in all regions.

Ensure that PTW rider safety is considered as much as other vulnerable road users in all road scheme consultations - and from the outset of all scheme developments

A significant number of proposals for road schemes across the UK are initiated and developed with no input from representatives of PTW riders. This frequently leads to that area of due concerns being overlooked or undervalued. To resolve this problem, MAG as a representative of PTW riders should be added to all lists of consultees for all road scheme proposals – and invited to make input from the start of scheme development processes.

The introduction of a Motorcycling Officer in all LTAs

Currently, every LTA in the UK has a Walking and Cycling officer but very few have an officer with specific responsibility for PTW riders – and even though they form one third of the main groups of Vulnerable Road Users.

Moves to rectify that omission have begun in some LTAs, the most recent being Kirklees council in Yorkshire and that followed a productive and ongoing engagement with MAG. Both parties have direct contact with each other and speaking frankly and honestly about problems has already proved to be a highly efficient way to address problems and deliver progress for all concerned with road safety and casualty reduction.