



Greater Cambridge Partnership – Making Connections

Response from the British Motorcyclists Federation

Introduction

The British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF) welcomes the opportunity to give their views on the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) *Making Connections* consultation. The BMF is a lobbying group with 64,000 individual and club members that campaigns to pursue, promote and protect the interests of riders.

The consultation

This response focuses on the proposed Sustainable Travel Zone, particularly the proposal to charge £5 for cars, motorcycles and mopeds, as this will impact our members who ride in and around Cambridge. This does not accurately reflect the benefits that powered two-wheelers (PTW) offer, such as reducing congestion and emissions. The BMF have corresponded with the GCP, we approached Councillor Eliza Meschini for comment, attended multiple webinars and put questions to Councillors on the radio. We welcome their encouragement to put forward this response.

One concern raised in the proposals is safety of PTW. At a webinar, one of the BMF's representatives was informed that the GCP were keen to avoid uptake of PTW as they are significantly less safe than other modes of transport. Especially in urban areas a high proportion of motorcycle collisions are caused by other vehicles; the increased visibility of motorcycles resulting from a higher proportion of them in the traffic mix would make motorcyclists safer. The same principle applies to bicycles. Riders are wearing personal protective equipment and hold a licence, and we cannot find evidence proving that motorcycling is more dangerous than pedal cycling in Cambridge.

In the proposals, it is mentioned that motorcycles and mopeds "conflict with cyclists". We are not aware of any credible evidence for this. We note that Transport for London allowed motorcycles in bus lanes following a [study](#) commissioned by TfL which showed that cyclists and motorcyclists could share the bus lanes with buses safely. Also, in our article which you can find [here](#), it shows that [research](#) from the University of Westminster names poor cycling infrastructure as the greatest risk to cyclists; motorcycles were not mentioned. Furthermore, Anna Zee – BMF Political and Technical Services Director – was a guest on BBC Radio Cambridge alongside a representative from the Cambridge Cycling Campaign (CamCycle). When asked about conflict between motorcyclists and cyclists, the response from CamCycle's representative was that cycling infrastructure was the problem rather than motorcyclists. Without clear evidence, the BMF cannot accept this supposed conflict as a valid justification for charging PTW the same as cars.

Trials for the rental of e-scooters in Cambridge were recently extended, and may soon become legal for private use. The Department for Transport's recent [report](#) on e-scooters

outlines that e-scooter users are three times more likely to be involved in a collision than pedal cyclists, yet they are encouraged in the consultation brochure, rather than being raised as a safety concern.

The proposals for the Sustainable Travel Zone aim to reduce congestion. Motorcycling offers a form of transport which drastically reduces congestion due to their smaller size which gives them the ability to filter through traffic, particularly when they are given access to bus lanes. The BMF recommends that Cambridge allow motorcyclists access to all bus lanes in order to further reduce congestion.

Another issue raised by GCP representatives was noise pollution. Noise pollution is regulated and the BMF supports its enforcement. Motorcycles must abide by this regulation as all other vehicles do, and in urban areas PTW do not emit as much noise due to the lower speeds.

The BMF appreciates the need for local authorities to promote active travel in order to reduce pollution, however other schemes being put in place to reduce congestion and pollution exclude PTW from charges, for example, Clean Air Zones in Birmingham, Bristol etc. *Making Connections* fails to recognise the lower emissions from PTW. Oxford Economics' published a [report](#) in 2021 which clearly shows the reduction in emissions due to modal shift from cars to motorcycles.

We understand that another justification that has been given for charging motorcycles is that it is more difficult to accurately capture rear number plates. If it were true that would be a reason for not charging motorcycles since you would be unable to identify them. In any case this may have been true 20 years ago but Transport for London does not have any problem with rear number plates in enforcement of the ULEZ boundary; current camera technology is perfectly capable of it.

Conclusion

The BMF does not accept the justification given for the higher charge for motorcycles and mopeds to enter the proposed Sustainable Travel Zone. Discouraging modal shift from cars to PTW, given the clear evidence that PTW are less polluting and reduce congestion, seems to contradict the aims of the STZ.