

Louise McLornan

From: NI Greenways <nigreenways@gmail.com>
Sent: 04 May 2017 00:52
To: Aileen Graham; Louise McLornan
Subject: Taxis in bus lanes CG&R Committee

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Dear Councillor Graham,

I'm writing to you in concern at moves by Belfast City Council to adopt the lobbying position of the private taxi industry in the matter of taxi access to bus lanes - and to ask to be allowed to present a strong counter position in person at the Committee meeting where the matter will be raised.

I edit Bikefast.org which reports on news and issues with the growing proportion of Belfast residents who cycle for everyday transport needs. Bikefast was initially set up in 2013 to protect cycling levels in the city from the threat of thousands of private hire taxis flooding bus lanes.

This vexed issue is complex and contested. This latest round was sprung upon cycling organisations and the public with no consultation or scrutiny as the Northern Ireland Assembly had dissolved. We were offered no voice to oppose the move. Tuesday's no-discussion Motion 11c *Use of Bus Lanes by Taxis* threatens to continue that exclusion of dissenting voices. We rely on the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to provide a democratic space.

Belfast City Council should not rush to take a firm position on this matter without carefully and fairly weighing all sides of the argument - not least for the clear evidence of harm which this policy will cause to growing city cycling levels and the Rapid Transit project. Council works best when it listens and reflects on the views of all citizens, not solely narrow vested interests.

I look forward to your response,

Jonathan Hobbs

www.bikefast.org
www.nigreenways.com