



SCOTTISH AUTO-CYCLE UNION LTD.

28 WEST MAIN STREET, UPHALL, BROXBURN

WEST LOTHIAN

EH52 5DW

Tel: (01506) 85835 Fax: (01506) 855792

Mr Franck David

Assistant Clerk of the Public Petition Committee

Scottish Government

Response to External Comments relating to Petition 1100

In response to the submissions to the Petition Committee from the Royal Town Planning Institute and COSLA

In response to the COSLA submission

Across Scotland, local authorities are fully committed to developing innovative methods to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour. It would however be inappropriate for COSLA to comment on issues relating to specific councils.

Yes local authorities across Scotland are fully committed in attempting to address anti-social behaviour. I know, as I am contacted by many various LA Departments and Agencies seeking advice. The drive to make provision, normally attracts full support by local MSPs, Councillors, Senior Officers and other Government Agencies such as SNH and the Police. The answer to the problem can only be truly dealt with through current Planning Legislation being changed.

COSLA, were invited in 2007 to be part of the SACU National Steering Group, set up to deal with the issue of illegal motorbikes in Scotland. They declined the invitation, saying that the subject covered so many issues, that they didn't have any one with the expertise to represent COSLA.

(My personal thought were that surely that was a good reason to come to the table, as a voice of all local authorities in Scotland, as this petition is not about any one Council but for all Councils in Scotland)

Royal Town Planning Institute Response

“The designation of particular sites for off road motorcycle activities may lead to social benefits as noted. In addition, such sites may be beneficial in guiding participants to well managed facilities and in so doing, protect against damage which may result from informal and unsupervised use of areas of countryside. However, any plans for the location of safe local and national off road motorcycle facilities will need to balance and take into account a range of concerns regarding accessibility, noise, and impacts on local environments”.

Response to the RTPI

We welcome the reconnection by Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) that creating particular sites may lead to social benefits

Yes motorcycle sports are required to meet planning regulation. There is also a need for the Scottish Government to review the current status and consider the wider benefits needed for providing new guidelines for Professional Planners and others, to allow a level playing field in promoting an understanding that by creating proper facilities there are many other benefits for the wider society.

To cover this response we have looked at the New SPP11 Open Spaces and Physical Activity (November 2007) but also the NGG11 which it now supersedes, but by reviewing both within this submission, it highlights the difficulty in establishing facilities because of the complexity of issues related to acquiring land for this activity through planning.

I have attached a **report** which highlights sections of both Open Spaces and Physical Activity documents, which give the impression that the mechanisms are there to establish facilities, but in reality, either through professional perceptions of this topic, along with the need to establish proper technical support and guidance on facility design, there should be a modern approach to mitigation, and looking to the short and long term changes

Through the current development of Electric and Hydrogen machines, as they relate to the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2

The Government Planning Guideline SPP11 has within it, Government expectation of having equal opportunities for all sports, providing proper accessibility to quality. Provision for motorsport in the future, must be an urgent goal in making Scotland a Stronger, Fairer, Safer place to live

Our response to the North Lanarkshire Submission in support of the content of our petition

We are pleased with the comments and commitment by the Council in establishing the partnership in 2002 to address the illegal issue, and in creating a facility with ongoing support. This council is the flagship in the UK.

But as a council they also have identified that change need to happen within the current planning system, we welcome, and thank North Lanarkshire for supporting our petition

SACU Comments on Motorsports Planning

Only one Scottish Local Authorities Planning Department, North Lanarkshire have been in contacted the Scottish Auto Cycle Union, the National Governing Body in Scotland. Being advised by myself in seeking advice in reviewing a planning application about establishing a private off-road facilities

We have a situation in Scotland where some private facilities are working outside the 28 day planning consent. Some tracks are poorly maintained and fall far outside conditions required by the national governing body rule book.

We recently have also experienced a Local Authority Planning Department seeking technical advice, concerning a planning application re the private sector building track facilities. These facilities after being constructed by owners, then sought retrospective planning permission after the track is completed

The question to be asked, is, where do Professional Planners acquire the technical information concerning design and required managing of such a facility and to who and what guidelines are adhered to?

We are aware of one LA Planning Department looking at twelve site and finding them all unsuitable (was this a case of we look, but sorry?)

We have a situation on a full planning application where permission has been denied on a site which has live planning permission for motorsport “because someone may complain”

One club got planning permission from their planning department, they built a track at their expense, using it only at weekends, due to complaints they were stopped, then given an extension of six months. After the period it was closed

It would seem that while the planning act gives the impression that there is a mechanism to deal with the provision, in reality that is not the case

Recreation Biking club are about Communities or a Community having a local facility to provide opportunities for young people to benefit in the following areas, Training, Coaching, Safety and Health through engagement in this sport /hobby, reducing anti social behaviour, being diversionary and promoting Citizenship

Requirement:

That event site be provided, and to be suitable for a track being established in agreement of frequency and time of use. The conditions being agreed as to the surrounding on the facility

Differences between Race and Recreation Sectors

Race Clubs events are on a national round robin where each club only need to provide four to five events each year, normally on one site, so there is limited disturbance to surrounding communities.

Recreation Biking is non competitive and is about fun and enjoyment and is different to mountain biking, football etc being able to access a local facility, while noise may be a problem, mitigation can be achieved through proper track design and conditional agreements being imposed.

What is the future concerning this topic if we choose to ignore the problem? If the Government does not address this problem in a positive way by recognising the wider benefits that there is an urgent need to provided facilities through Local Authorities in Scotland, then many young people will be criminalised for having a hobby. Is this how we intend to continue to treat the young people of Scotland?

We are in great need of joined up thinking on this matter. The topic is part of a multi million pound industry equating in thousands of jobs, income and VAT taxes and fuel duty to the Exchequer.

At present we have a major negative cost associated by policing the matter and along with local Authorities having to commit staff and meet the repair costs.

Many countryside enhancing programmes are experiencing damage to the investment of Government grants which is in the region of millions of pounds

Plus the impact on Society

Having proper facilities with a national recreational club structure supported by SACU- Parents and Volunteers have been established for six years in North Lanarkshire and Fife winning many national accolades and meeting all the Scottish Government targets Fairer, Safer, Healthy

Review opinions

Look at Grants/Allowances / Subsistence to Farmers /landowners in releasing ground to clubs to develop either through a leasing /rent or in partnership Review Government support where the Farmer diversifying into Bio-fuel makes the Farm and Track facility Carbon Neutral

Centre of Excellence

North Lanarkshire Centre of Excellence Plan would be designed to a policy on a Sustainable and Renewable Centre. Develop Solar, Wind, Rain Water Storage Water Sewerage Treatment Filtration System, This full time facility will strive in its design and operation to be also 100% carbon neutral

It will also be an Experimental Centre in trailing various developments

Electric and Hydrogen bikes which are silent

The centre will be established as a baseline Research Centre for Universities and Colleges

Priority-Topics identified to be included to Monitor

Impact on the sites Biodiversity

Centre Conservation Plan - Habitat Management

Impact and benefits on Public Health

Impact of the Centre ability to deliver Social Diversionary Programmes

Technical Research into using Renewable (site, track, drainage etc)

Training

Establish a Partnership with Colleges in using the facility for students from Mechanical Courses

Students Work Placements

Rider Training and Assessment with National Recreational Licence

National Comprehensive Programme of Training in establishing support of local clubs

Riders and Officials

Centre Opportunities

Provide Club Event

Opportunity for rider train and practice

New Rider Induction Classes

Cooperate Days

National Race Events - possible International events

Job Opportunities

Full and Part Time, also Voluntary placement

This positive approach of addressing a major national problem, is being held up on a Planning Department's attitude of "may be, someone may complain"

In Conclusion

Over the last six years we have develop a quality product in Scotland, which engages young people with a passion for their sport, to give them sporting opportunities, keep them within the law, to be good citizen and learn new skills and ability

A programme which is being adopted by parents and communities, be it, in Cities Townships, Rural and Island Communities

This module is being copied throughout the UK

We need our Government to build for the future, to let young Scots develop their potential by having proper facilities

Please read our attached report

Yours sincerely,

Bob Reid.

SACU (Director of Leisure)

April 2008

