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Department for  
**Transport**

From the Secretary of State

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*Tessa*

Thank you for your letter dated 27 May to my predecessor regarding the issue of safety in numbers for cyclists and asking for support for cyclists and their safety on the roads.

We are aware that it is possible that increased cycling activity may help to improve cyclists' safety as other road users become more used to them and aware of their presence. However, the extent of this effect is not clear. It cannot be seen in isolation from other measures that improve cycle safety. Even in cases where cycling activity increases and casualty numbers fall, there are other factors that can contribute to that fall in casualties.

We therefore think it is the right approach to pursue a range of measures to improve cyclists' safety and reduce casualty numbers. We also want to promote more cycling and do not want to adopt measures that will put people off cycling. So these two aims need to be balanced.

We know concerns about cycle safety are one of the barriers to people taking up cycling. One way to address those concerns is to give cyclists advice on how to reduce the risks involved, as well as measures to create a safer environment for cyclists, whether through the actions of other road users or by improvements to the road environment.

You may be interested to know that there are a number of initiatives underway at present aimed at improving cycle safety. These include promoting Bikeability cycle training for children; providing advice to child and adult cyclists on safe road use through the Highway Code and the Think! road safety campaign, including use of protective equipment such as high visibility clothing and cycle helmets; providing more safe cycle routes to schools and other locations; guidance to local authorities on the design of safer road infrastructure, including effective cycle-specific measures as well as more general measures that benefit all road users such as 20mph zones; improvements to motor vehicle driver testing and training; and new measures on lorry mirrors to improve the visibility of cyclists and pedestrians.

The Government agrees that cycling has a major role in any sustainable transport strategy. Cycling is both an environmentally friendly and healthy way to get around. 23 per cent of car trips are less than two miles, a distance easily cycled in 15 minutes. Transferring some of these trips could have real beneficial impacts on congestion, local pollution, carbon emissions and health.

In addition to the investment made by Local Authorities, the Department for Transport is supporting a £140m programme over three years put forward by its advisers, Cycling England. This investment is being focussed on two main areas. First, a cycling demonstration programme where we are supporting England's first major cycling City, Bristol, and 17 other towns and smaller cities with around £48m. This in turn is being match funded from local authorities meaning that this adds up to a package of almost £100m. Second, investment in a number of programmes to encourage children to cycle including an infrastructure programme which will deliver at least 250 safer links to approximately 500 schools and providing funding to enable an extra 500,000 children to take part in Bikeability training by 2012.

*Yours*

*Andrew*

**ANDREW ADONIS**