

Council's cycling training for HGV drivers to be highlight at cycling conference



Officials from the City of Edinburgh Council will address a national cycling conference later this year as other organisations look to follow Edinburgh's lead in a pioneering cycle training scheme for lorry drivers designed to help them safely interact with those cycling on the roads.

Following the success of a two-day pilot initiative in May, the Council has now been granted the right to run the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) course in Safe Urban Driving and Cycle Skills for Professional Drivers over the next 12 months, making it home to the only training centre in Scotland and outside London to devise and run such a course.

The Council has also been invited to send a representative to the Cycling Scotland Conference, being held at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow on 14 November, where, as part of a Bikeability and Beyond workshop, they will highlight the benefits of giving Council drivers firsthand experience of cycling on the road.

A total of 14 lorry drivers from the Council took part in the pilot course in the Spring, the first of its kind in Scotland, with participants responding very positively to the experience.

The pilot initiative consisted of theory and practical sessions, created to encourage drivers to empathise with

vulnerable road users and the safety considerations they experience. The practical sessions were developed with the support of Cycling Scotland, the country's national organisation for cycle training and promotion.

All participants agreed that the course had made them more aware of vulnerable road users. Their comments included:

"It makes you more aware of cyclists and the need to constantly check your blind spots for other vulnerable road users."

"Opened your eyes to vulnerable road user types and all the different scenarios."

"Made me understand how bike riders feel."

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport Convener, said: "The Council is committed to promoting cycling as a primary mode of transport, and as such we have pledged to invest 7% of our transport budget this year into developing cycling infrastructure across the Capital.

"But if we are to encourage our citizens to take to two wheels, we absolutely must ensure that they are given a safe and accessible environment in which to do it. This pioneering course will go a long way towards creating an equal relationship between drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and other road users, making our city's roads as safe as possible for all."

Keith Irving, chief executive of Cycling Scotland said: "Developing mutual understanding is paramount for the safety of all road users and the Safe Urban Driving and Cycle Skills for Professional Drivers courses for HGV drivers is a great example of an initiative designed to do just that. By putting lorry drivers in the position of those who travel by bike, both in theory and in practice, they will become much more aware of people on bikes while out on the road.

“Cycling Scotland welcomes City of Edinburgh Council’s initiative, and is pleased to support the delivery of the practical element of this training. We are committed to making this training available to other local authorities and organisations responsible for the operation of large goods vehicles in Scotland in the months and years ahead.”



ABOUT THE COURSE

Participants return to the classroom to learn about vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, motorcyclists and scooter riders as well as cyclists, and how best to share the space with them.

Drivers are also given tips on how to prepare for journeys and on the safety devices fitted to their vehicles.

A second practical element to the course, delivered by Cycling Scotland, gives class members the opportunity to develop their own cycling skills, and as a result formulate driving plans to ensure other road users’ safety, by putting themselves in their position.

By learning basic on-road cycling skills, carrying out bicycle safety checks and negotiating road junctions and traffic, drivers will develop a better understanding of road use from a cyclist’s point of view, aimed at reducing the risk of accidents.

CYCLING SCOTLAND CONFERENCE

The Cycling Scotland Conference 2014 will take place on 13 and 14 November 2014, at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, Glasgow. On 13 November delegates will be invited to take part in a series of study tours followed by a civic reception at the Glasgow City Chambers.

On 14 November, the conference will continue in the celebrated

setting of the infield of the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome itself, with an inspiring schedule of talks, exhibits and workshops.

Tickets, further details of speakers and programme along with exhibition and sponsorship opportunities are available at www.cyclingscotlandconference.org