



Urgent request for action on infrastructure hokey-cokey in Edinburgh

Dear Ministers

This letter is on behalf of BEST: Better Edinburgh for Sustainable Travel. BEST is a collective of community groups and businesses from across the city seeking an Edinburgh where everyone can travel easily by sustainable means, whoever they are and wherever they need to go.

We are contacting you as Minister for Transport and Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport requesting your urgent action and attention to legal issues around traffic regulation orders affecting Edinburgh's Forrest Road and George IV Bridge.

On 19th August 2021, the City of Edinburgh Council's Transport & Environment Committee (TEC) voted to remove the temporary protected cycle lanes on Forrest Road and George IV Bridge that had been provided through funding from Transport Scotland's Spaces for People scheme. This is notable because, in both cases, the decision is an unwanted by-product of the TRO process and was made to ensure legal compliance rather than further substantive policy goals on safe active travel. The City of Edinburgh Council had already prepared ambitious new street layouts with enhanced pedestrian spaces and protected cycle lanes for both Forrest Road and George IV Bridge, but because there is no legal mechanism to extend the temporary TRO while the new TRO is sought, the temporary cycle lanes will have to be removed only to be reinstated once the new TRO is in place. The unfortunate recent fire on George IV Bridge is a significant additional blow, and of course we understand and support the decision to keep the road closed while safety work is ongoing.

The BEST deputation at the TEC highlighted the perverse scenario, calling it *infrastructure hokey-cokey*. It would be inconceivable to have this sort of in-out-in scenario for any other mode of transport, and we seek **urgent Government action** to resolve this legal problem.

The Scottish Government has recently conducted a consultation about TRO processes in Scotland. The BEST response to that consultation noted that the TRO procedures have their origins in law from forty years ago and are unfit to support the rapid decarbonisation of our transport system or to further policy goals on air quality, physical activity, health inequalities,