



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Regional Development

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy:  
Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) and Northern Ireland  
Cycling Initiative

28 May 2014

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## Committee for Regional Development

Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy: Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) and Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Jimmy Spratt (Chairperson)  
Mr Seán Lynch (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr John Dallat  
Mr Ross Hussey  
Mr Declan McAleer  
Mr David McNarry  
Mr Cathal Ó hOisín

**Witnesses:**

Mr Barry Flood	Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC)
Mr Roger Geffen	Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC)
Mr Roy White	Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative

**The Chairperson:** I welcome Roger Geffen, the campaigns and policy director of CTC; Barry Flood, a CTC council member for Northern Ireland; and Roy White, the chair of the Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative (NICI).

Before we start, I note that you have dedicated your presentation to the late Tom McClelland. I paid tribute to Tom McClelland after the Minister did so in the Chamber on the day of his funeral, but I will place it on record that Tom was a friend to this Committee and a frequent guest at your end of the table. He was extremely knowledgeable and passionate about cycling. I had the pleasure of opening a seminar in Londonderry around February last year, during the year of the City of Culture. Unfortunately, I had to leave quickly to come back to Belfast, but Tom persuaded three of my Committee colleagues to cycle over the Peace Bridge and back again, over the Foyle and back, and had them suitably attired for the journey. We note that you have dedicated your presentation today to his memory. I applaud you and join with you in those sentiments, and I am sure that other members do likewise.

You have 10 minutes to make your presentation, and then leave yourselves open for questions.

**Mr Roger Geffen (CTC):** Thank you, Chairman, and thank you to the Committee for inviting us here this morning. Thank you for those very kind words about Tom. I cannot echo them more strongly. Tom was an amazing character, and he is very greatly missed. A phone call from Tom was always a good spiritual uplift to the day. He was an incredible guy — fantastic. I cannot think of anybody who was more full of life. It is remarkable that he is no longer with us. He is greatly missed, and I hope

that we can do justice to his memory today and with the outcome of your report, which, I hope, will effectively be his legacy.

I want to run through a bit of background and to introduce CTC: The National Cycling Charity. We are a membership organisation. We have been around since 1878 and have around 66,000 members. We have an elected council for which Barry Flood is the elected member representing Northern Ireland. We have local campaigners around the UK, as well as my team, which heads up on national campaigning at a UK-wide level. We have local volunteers throughout the UK. Roy has been very closely linked with us and also worked with Tom through the Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative. As well as campaigning, we run various membership services. We provide a magazine, legal support, activities for local ride groups, activities for people to take up cycling, such as people with health problems and people with disabilities. There is a whole range of activities, and we are a pretty wide-ranging organisation.

The extraordinary thing about cycling is the number of political boxes that it ticks. It is good for the economy, the environment and people's quality of life, it makes for safer streets and for places where children want to be and businesses want to locate. We outline a whole range of benefits in the briefing.

I will pick up specifically on the economic benefits, the first of which is the obvious one of reducing congestion. A typical lane of a typical road can carry 2,000 motor vehicles an hour or 14,000 bicycles, which is the more effective way to get people to where they want to go. There is a range of local economic benefits. Those are outlined in the briefing and include house price values, retail footfall and businesses being able to cluster and have synergetic benefits from being able to feed off one other. It also creates a more resilient national economy, reducing our dependence on foreign oil supplies. There are economic benefits from other types of benefit, notably the health benefits.

I will move on to the health benefits, and it is worth highlighting current transport costs. The UK Cabinet Office produced a report about five years ago that stated that congestion and road injuries, air quality and physical inactivity all have economic costs in English towns. I am sorry that the evidence is from England, but it gives you a feel for the sheer scale of the magnitude of the effects. They all typically cost the economy around £10 billion. We have been planning transport as if congestion is the only thing that matters in relieving congestion. In fact, we also need to relieve the other three: physical inactivity, injury collisions and poor air quality. Their economic costs are of comparable magnitude to congestion, so we need to plan our transport systems accordingly.

The really large figures for increasing cycle use in pound signs come from the health benefits. A person who cycles regularly in mid-adulthood has a level of fitness that is equivalent to being 10 years younger with an extra two years of life expectancy. It has been documented that CTC members have a life expectancy of two years longer than the average: join CTC and get two extra years on your life expectancy.

That also has huge economic costs. Cardiovascular disease costs the UK healthcare system about £14 billion annually. Overweight and obesity healthcare costs are about £5 billion, which is set to double by 2050 if we do nothing about it. Cycling could make huge inroads into those costs; UK-wide, we are talking about tens of billions of pounds. In Northern Ireland, if we got more people to walk and cycle, that would mean hundreds of millions of pounds at the very least.

I will move on to the local economic level. Business interests sometimes think, "What happens if we lose all those cars?" For one thing, cycling shoppers spend more. They spend less on individual shopping trips, but they make more shopping trips. When you introduce good cycling provision, retail values skyrocket. I will bring in some US evidence. As a country that is associated with low levels of cycle use, it was found that, when high-quality cycle provision started to be introduced in New York on 9th Avenue, Manhattan, retail sales increased by 49% compared with 3% in the surrounding area. That was the effect of a quality cycle facility. In Australia, a car parking space has been found to generate \$27 of sales per hour. Use the same space for cycle parking and that becomes \$97 per hour. So it really is of massive benefit to local economies. Recently, Boris Bike stands have even been found to increase house values. Of course, that is before we even begin to touch on the economic value of tourism. Scotland found that cycle tourism contributes £258 million to the economy annually. Mountain biking contributes £237 million in addition to conventional cycle touring. So we are talking about large sums.

I do not have a great deal of time to outline in detail the solutions. The booklet circulated to you is a recently produced campaign document titled 'Space for Cycling'. We are running this UK-wide

campaign to encourage local politicians to sign up to high standards of cycle planning and design and the funding needed to implement that.

Broadly speaking, we are talking about three broad categories of solution. For main streets — the faster or busier roads — there needs to be some kind of protected space. There is a variety of solutions for providing that protection. The higher the traffic volumes and speeds, the greater the need for protection. That is, however, the minority of the road network. For the majority of the road network — the local streets or rural lanes — it is about lowering speed limits and reducing traffic volumes, reducing "rat running" through residential streets, reducing motor vehicle access to town centres and creating more attractive town centres and nicer places for people to live. Supplementing a cycle-friendly road network are the traffic-free routes — the greenways. When done well, they are, if you like, the deluxe element of a cycle network. They must, however, be seen as additional to a cycle-friendly road network because, let us face it, most of the places where people want to start and end their journey are on the road network. So it has to be cycle friendly, and comprehensively so.

It is not just about the physical infrastructure. It is important to tackle safety; address people's fears of road danger and tackle the sources of that danger; promote responsible driving; liaise with the police to tackle bad driving; and tackle the threats posed by lorries — they may not injure many cyclists per mile driven, but they are a major killer of cyclists. All of that must be complemented with positive promotion: good advertising and awareness campaigns; activities in schools and workplaces to encourage people to cycle; and projects such as those that CTC runs for patients, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups to broaden not only the number of people who cycle but their diversity. That will start to get us from being a low-cycle-use country to a high-cycle-use country. That would have huge benefits for our health, our streets, our communities and the wider economy.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you very much for that presentation.

**Mr Lynch:** Roger, you mentioned that lots of people have been killed, particularly by lorries. Recently, in London, several cyclists were killed in one week. When trying to get people to take up cycling, such casualties can be fairly off-putting. The safety of cycling among cars and lorries is a huge issue. I, like other members, come from a rural area. It was OK to cycle to school 30 or 40 years ago, when it was safer and cars were not as fast. Now, you take your life in your hands on most roads. What is the best way to alleviate those fears?

**Mr Geffen:** There is no single magic bullet for improving cycle safety. Key issues include tackling the volume and, in particular, the speed of traffic, with 20 mph speed limits for the majority — not all, but certainly the majority — of urban streets. For rural lanes, we would like much greater use of networks of 40 mph zones. That is an important part of it, as is tackling driver behaviour, as I said, through a combination of driver awareness campaigns to promote responsible driving. People do not like to be lectured about bad driving. They like to be encouraged with messages about good driving. That needs to be complemented by good traffic law and enforcement. The police need to be behind all of this, including the enforcement of 20 mph speed limits and, more generally, to enforce road traffic law to ensure that the messages about responsible driving stick.

The threat from lorries needs to be tackled. As I said, they are a major killer. In Britain as a whole, they account for around one fifth of cycling fatalities. In a city such as London, that rises to about half. Better designed lorries will, hopefully, come through from legislation that has just gone through the European Parliament, but driver training and routing solutions are also required. We need to find solutions to reduce the number of lorries getting into town centres and then tackle junctions as well as the main roads. Those are the infrastructure solutions that help, particularly with major roads and junctions.

**Mr Barry Flood (CTC):** It is also worth adding that, time and time again, figures from London show that, as cycling increases, the per capita casualty rate decreases markedly. In Amsterdam, for example, that number is virtually zero. That is an easy model: the more people there are cycling, the safer it gets.

**Mr Geffen:** There is very good evidence of what is known as the safety in numbers effect. We ran a campaign on that around five years ago.

**Mr Roy White (Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative):** In London, there was a spike of cycling deaths, but, overall, that year was basically the same as the year before.

**Mr Geffen:** It was a statistical freak for which no one has an explanation. People have looked at every possible explanation. There is no evidence that it was connected to the experience of the cyclists. It happened in winter, but there was no similar spike in November in other years. No one has found an explanation for that sudden spike of five fatalities in just under a fortnight.

**Mr Flood:** When Dublin banned lorries from the city centre during the day, its lorry-related casualties fell off the edge. Recently, the traffic control division in Dublin told me that cycling casualties as a result of lorries simply disappeared.

**The Chairperson:** You would agree that when it comes to road safety, it is not always a lorry or another vehicle at fault. I often see cyclists disregarding traffic signals.

**Mr Geffen:** As an organisation, we are not in the business of defending irresponsible cycling, any more than you would expect the AA or the RAC to defend irresponsible driving. We promote responsible road use by all. Statistically, though, we should not exaggerate the contribution of cyclists' misbehaviour to their or anybody else's injuries. In London, and I am sorry for using London statistics again, of the pedestrians injured when on a pavement, 2% involve cyclists; the other 98% involve motor vehicles. Similarly, of the pedestrians injured in an incident involving jumping a red light, 4% are injured by cyclists and 96% by drivers of motor vehicles, so let us not exaggerate this.

**The Chairperson:** I was not exaggerating; I was making a point about something that I see frequently as a road user. I think that all of us around the table frequently get complaints about cyclists using footpaths and disregarding pedestrians on footpaths. All of those issues need to be put on record as well.

**Mr Geffen:** We are very much in favour of road policing. We have a campaign called Road Justice, which is all about strengthening the legal system's response to irresponsible behaviour. We want more policing of the roads; more driving that causes danger to be treated as dangerous driving; and the greater use of driving bans rather than long prison sentences. We are fully in favour of increased policing of the roads because that is in the interests of cycle safety. If someone comes down on the errant cyclists, that is fair game.

We are also very keen on cycle training. Teenage cyclists in particular often behave irresponsibly because they have never been taught the skills to have the confidence to ride safely within the law. Cycle training is a very good way of getting through to people why it is important to respect the safety of pedestrians, particularly those who are older and/or more vulnerable.

**Mr Flood:** Over the past few months, I have been out with the PSNI's cycle patrol on the Lagan embankment. We had speed cameras, and we stopped and gave gentle reminders to cyclists whose behaviour was not all that it might have been, so we are very alive to that. However, there is a difference between someone misbehaving on a bicycle and someone misbehaving in something that weighs three quarters of a ton and moves at 30 mph. It irritates us to see bad cycling behaviour, but it is not usually lethal.

**The Chairperson:** I was going to say was that it is not usually professional cyclists who misbehave; it is those who are probably not regular cyclists or who might not use them for the enjoyment that most others do.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** As one of the few Members who took up the cycle-to-work scheme, I have an increasing interest in matters cycling. However, I live 60 miles from Stormont, so I do not know about the practicalities of cycling to work. A colleague who lives further away takes his bicycle on the train. There is an issue with marrying public transport and cycling. I think that, currently, the trains take only four bicycles at any one time.

**Mr Flood:** No; the new ones take eight. However, you are quite right that the majority take four.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** Thank you for that. Someone should certainly take that up with Translink in order to encourage perhaps not professional cyclists but those who want to take a cycle to, say, the likes of the north coast or the Fermanagh lakeland. What work, if any, have you done on that matter?

**Mr Flood:** I work with Mal McGreevy, the director of trains. He is from Portadown and a keen cyclist, so I got lucky there. The new trains that he ordered doubled the cycle capacity to eight. Mal is very

alive to the possibilities of linking bicycles with trains. It is a natural link. In the London commuter belt, it is natural for people to cycle to a station and take the train. Ballymena station is being remodelled. I talked to the staff there last night and asked them about the provisions for secure cycle parking. They laughed and asked why I did not talk to my mate Mal. So I will send him an email this afternoon to ask whether the plans at Ballymena station involve secure parking, preferably with a CCTV camera focused on the bicycles. It is a tremendous disincentive if you think that your bicycle could be nicked.

**Mr Geffen:** It is not just cycles and trains, although I agree entirely with that. Cycles and buses are one of the great under-used combinations, though it is one that works pretty well here in Northern Ireland. Few people know that, in the United States, there is a rack on the front of buses, usually inter-urban buses. American cities are, of course, quite sprawling, so the distances are quite long. I refer not to the urban bus services but to the inter-urban buses serving the rural hinterland of a larger town. In the States, those buses would normally have a rack for a couple of bikes. That could be very useful for supporting not just cycling and public transport as a day-to-day travel option but the rural tourism economy.

**Mr Flood:** We have the lead over GB on this. In fact, Goldline buses routinely take bicycles. I was in Newry the other day and took a bus to Belfast and then one to Ballymena. It is a brilliant service.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** Do any of the park-and-ride schemes and parks have —

**The Chairperson:** That is one of the issues we need to bear in mind for the next evidence session with the Department.

**Mr Ó hOisín:** Perhaps, Chair, you will forgive me for publicising a unique challenge being undertaken by two friends of mine on 22 June. One, who is quite an accomplished cyclist, will cycle from Derry to Belfast, and the other will take the train. The challenge is whether the cyclist can complete the journey more quickly than the two hours 20 minutes that the train takes. That will be interesting, and we might want to follow that.

**The Chairperson:** We will watch the programme to see how it works out.

**Mr McNarry:** Londonderry to Belfast?

**Mr Ó hOisín:** That is too long.

**The Chairperson:** OK, members. I am pushed for time, as you know. I really want to move on.

**Mr Dallat:** The integration in New York and Plymouth is mentioned in this excellent booklet. Is there any integration in Northern Ireland in how the cycling programme, the road maintenance programme of roads or even the capital programme for roads is evolving?

**Mr Flood:** I can give you a figure that might answer your question in an oblique way. Last year, the budget for the eastern roads division in the Department for Regional Development (DRD) was about £250 million. Of that, £100,000 was allocated to cycling facilities. Do the maths: less than 1% is not a serious involvement. Look at the cities that have spent money, such as London and Dublin. We have watched cycling take off in Dublin and London over the past few years. If we want a return, there has to be some seriousness — dare I say it — in political circles about the amount that we spend. It cannot be done for nothing. You get us for nothing, and we are here to try to encourage people, but I am afraid that, without the help of people like you, we can do only so much.

**Mr Geffen:** I think that the point was specifically on the use of maintenance funding to deliver cycle provision. Did I catch that right?

**Mr Dallat:** Yes.

**Mr Geffen:** There definitely needs to be a distinct capital budget and a revenue budget for cycling. My director, who has just left, spoke to DRD staff about that very point, and they were very receptive. I am heartened that DRD has now set up a cycling unit that seems keen to act. In that respect, the inquiry is very timely and should help them to forge new plans to take over from the previous cycling strategy. One element that would be very useful is a recommendation to seek to synergise the road

maintenance and cycling programmes. In other words, when a street is being resurfaced, can it be redesigned to be more cycle friendly? That is how New York introduced some of its really high-quality cycle schemes in recent years. It is a very cost-effective way to introduce new high-quality cycle provision at marginal extra cost.

**Mr Dallat:** Your booklet includes a very interesting picture of how cycling could be promoted in rural areas. Have you asked or can you influence DRD to run a pilot that might be used to encourage the wider public to support it?

**Mr Geffen:** I gave a presentation to DRD staff about two years ago, but I cannot remember whether it included that picture. I have brought with me plenty of copies of the booklet, so I hope that we can get some to DRD staff. I encourage the Committee to recommend exactly that point. Cycling needs to be seen as both an urban solution and a rural solution. It can work in so many different settings.

**Mr Dallat:** I asked this next question of the previous witnesses as well: do we need legislation to bring all of this about? These booklets are nice and glossy, but you know where they will go.

**Mr Geffen:** Legislation can undoubtedly help and provide impetus. The Active Travel (Wales) Act spurred on local authorities to start planning, identifying and prioritising their cycle networks. However, it cannot provide the funding, which is, potentially, a serious weakness of the Welsh legislation. Some legislative or, probably more accurately, regulatory change is definitely needed to facilitate some of what is shown on page 4 of the booklet: a variety of solutions to give cycle tracks priority at junctions. The UK Government are looking at that. Some legislative changes for driving offences are required. Legislation would certainly help, but, crucially, it needs to be backed up by funding, which is the one element that the Welsh have not yet put in place.

**Mr Hussey:** Nearly everything that you are presenting here today is of a positive nature. You mentioned legislating against driving offences. What about bicycles that are not up to standard? Quite a few do not have proper brakes, a bell or the proper lights. I leave Omagh quite early in the morning to head to Stormont and see some bikes with only a reflector. Should the police enforce more legislation in cases like that? What about cyclists who cause an accident? You cannot take away their licence and stop them cycling.

**Mr Flood:** For a start, you do not need new legislation. The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 covers everything that you mentioned. Therefore, police can currently prosecute for all of those things, and they should. Such people send out a bad message for the responsible people whom we represent. We talk to the police constantly about it. They are, let us face it, well down in strength from what they used to be. Their resources are stretched, so cyclists on pavements are not the highest priority for them, much as we would like them to be. We have no sympathy for the people whom you were talking about.

**The Chairperson:** The police may be down in numbers but there are still more officers per head of population in Northern Ireland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. However, I do not want to get into that; I am just making a point.

**Mr Flood:** Can I tell you one funny thing? Northern Ireland has far fewer speed cameras than any other part of the United Kingdom, and you do not need police for those.

**The Chairperson:** Thankfully, but remember that they are a tax-collecting measure for local councils across the water. That is why they are there.

**Mr Flood:** That is undoubtedly true.

**The Chairperson:** That is why I am opposed to them and will remain so. I am opposed to having any more speed cameras in Northern Ireland, given that they are just a revenue-gathering device.

**Mr Flood:** Sorry, I did not respond to your second point about the damage that a cyclist can cause. Any member of the CTC is automatically insured for third-party damage. In other words, we have the same cover as a motorist. If we damage a person or thing, we are covered.

**Mr Hussey:** Having an insurance background, I assure you that most people with home contents insurance have similar cover.

**The Chairperson:** Let us move on.

**Mr McNarry:** I very much welcome what you said about the contribution to health. I would like to see some evidence, if you can provide it at a later date, on how you propose to save hundreds of millions of pounds in Northern Ireland. It is quite a sweeping statement, so I would be more convinced if I could see the evidence.

You say that spending on cycling is cost-effective. I am particularly interested in this idea that you propose of reallocating money from local transport and economic development. Particularly when money is tight — it is not going to get any better — how do you propose going about reallocating funds from local transport and economic development? In our case, that would mean taking funds out of the Executive Budget. How will you do that?

**Mr Geffen:** That is a political decision.

**Mr McNarry:** Hang on a second. You have it here — this is your manifesto.

**Mr Geffen:** Sure.

**Mr McNarry:** You make a sweeping statement that you will reallocate funds. I would be hung out to dry were I to make a statement like that, so I am asking you to back it up. How will you reallocate the funds?

**Mr Flood:** The figure that I gave you earlier was that £100,000 out of the £250 million went to cycling. If that figure was raised to £2 million, it would make an enormous difference to cycling, and it would not make an enormous difference to motoring.

**Mr McNarry:** You are talking about taking money out of local transport and economic development budgets. How will you do it? That is what I am asking.

**Mr White:** David, should we not choose projects with the best benefit:cost ratio? Often —

**Mr McNarry:** I am asking you the questions.

**Mr White:** It is often the case that cycling schemes offer the best benefit:cost ratio.

**Mr McNarry:** We are short of time. OK. I do not mind advocating or making an argument for something that I do not agree with; that is part of my job. I would like to hear from you how I can explain to communities in my constituency that, for the benefit of cycling, I want to take money out of economic development funds. That is just such a sweeping statement.

**Mr Geffen:** A lot of economic development infrastructure tends to be road-based. That provides less benefit to local communities. It certainly has fewer quality-of-life benefits. That is not the best value for money when it comes to places where businesses want to locate and people want to live. It is certainly counterproductive in the health costs that we talked about. So that is why —

**Mr McNarry:** You need to stack up those figures etc with evidence. Can you tell me — I hope that you can — how many people cycled to work this morning?

**Mr Flood:** In Belfast?

**Mr McNarry:** In Northern Ireland.

**Mr Flood:** Well, have seen figures, but I do not particularly trust them. The way in which we gather the figures here is by having volunteers like me stand on Ormeau Bridge with a clicker. Can I tell you how they do it in Dublin? They have transponders in the roadways that count the cyclists as they go by, and they can tell you that information on a daily basis.

**Mr McNarry:** To take your argument further and make it more convincing, you need to be able to tell me how many people cycled to work this morning —

**Mr Flood:** I can send you that.

**Mr McNarry:** — and what benefit, if any, that had on the economy.

**Mr Flood:** I can easily give you the figures for our last survey; that is not a problem. With regard to your second question —

**Mr McNarry:** How many?

**Mr Flood:** I do not know at the minute. I can send them to you.

**Mr Geffen:** It is around 2%.

**Mr McNarry:** Of all the people who went to work, 2% went on a bike.

**Mr White:** That is a UK figure. The figure for Northern Ireland would be slightly less than that, probably about 1%.

**The Chairperson:** There are figures. In the presentation that we had from Connswater, there are figures on some of the cycleways. One of the conversations at the last meeting was about how many people use the new Thompson Bridge to go to the shipyard. However, we do not know how many of them were workers and how many cyclists out for an early morning ride. That is hard to define.

**Mr McNarry:** That is interesting information. Just finally —

**Mr Geffen:** With regard to the economic benefit, cycling is contributing a little short of £3 billion to the UK-wide economy so, on a pro rata basis, Northern Ireland will be somewhere between £300 million and £400 million.

**Mr McNarry:** That is very interesting. Finally, the thing that we need to be capable of is not making an argument. There are many motorists pissed off with cyclists, let us be honest. Absolutely, just the arrogance of them —

**The Chairperson:** Do you know how to spell that, Hansard? *[Laughter.]*

**Mr McNarry:** Sorry, I forgot that you were there. *[Laughter.]*

**Mr Ó hOisín:** It will be substantially verbatim.

**Mr McNarry:** I know that you are doing a very good job, but the question that I have to ask is how can we ensure that being pro-cycling is not being anti-motoring? I see "a them-and-us" problem developing.

**Mr Geffen:** It is very helpful that the AA agrees 100% with us that the tribal them-and-us thing is entirely unhelpful to everybody. I have made parliamentary inquiry appearances alongside the AA president and had many media interviews where we basically said exactly the same thing: we need to promote responsible road use by all road users. The higher the rate of cycling, the more likely cyclists will also be drivers and, conversely, over time, drivers will also be cyclists. Even as things stand, I think that 80% of CTC members also have a driving licence, so most adult cyclists are also drivers.

**Mr McNarry:** You are not saying that cycling is a replacement for motoring; it is a temporary alternative.

**Mr Geffen:** It is for some trips. It is not as if your whole life has to switch from being a driver to being a cyclist.

**Mr White:** It is a reduction.

**Mr Geffen:** Exactly.

**Mr White:** It is fewer miles being driven and fewer cars being parked in city centres.

**Mr McNarry:** With that, you are able to change the weather for us and make it all better.

**The Chairperson:** Let us not get into the weather forecast now.

**Mr Geffen:** I will provide some figures on the extent to which even switching short commute trips would reduce the average Brit's carbon footprint. It is significant.

**Mr McNarry:** That would be very helpful, thank you.

**Mr Byrne:** Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation and the initiative that you have taken with the national cycling charity and the Northern Ireland cycling initiative. It is really apt at this time. About 15 years ago, a doctor was killed after he was hit by a lorry outside Strabane at about 6.00 am. I have great sympathy still for the lorry driver. It was a wet and windy morning, and the cyclist was blown out in front of the lorry.

How successful, or otherwise, have you been in your discussions with Roads Service about having the junctions realigned to improve the position of cyclists? Secondly, the Committee is also considering having further 20-mph limits in urban environments, particularly in residential areas. What is your attitude to that, and have you made a submission on it?

**Mr Geffen:** We have made the case consistently over many years for 20 mph to be the default position. I must stress the distinction between a default limit and a blanket limit. We are saying that 20 mph should be the norm, but with Roads Service and local communities having a say. In the minority of the road network, the busier through roads would have a higher speed limit, but 20 mph should be the norm. That has a major impact, not just on cyclists but on pedestrian safety and communities' quality of life.

Junction priority is one of the hardest things to tackle. We have been stressing to the UK Department for Transport the need for regulatory changes that would allow cycle tracks to have the sort of priority that they have in most of continental Europe. The Department for Transport recently announced a consultation on some of the rule changes that we are seeking. Assuming that that goes through — we expect it to take about a year to get the new regulations in place — that would add a new tool to the toolkit of what can be done to tackle cycle safety at junctions. Junction safety is important because 75% of cyclists' injuries happen at or near junctions.

**Mr Byrne:** Is there any evidence that one-way traffic systems in town or city centres are better for cyclists?

**Mr Geffen:** On the contrary: they are thoroughly unhelpful because they reduce cyclists' permeability. I should make the distinction between one-way systems on main roads and one-way systems on backstreets. A multi-lane main road is a very hostile place for cycling, particularly if you need to make a right turn. If a road is to remain a one-way system, you need to put a contraflow cycle facility in place to allow cyclists to get the other way through the one-way system.

Better still, though, is to take out the one-way systems to create much safer conditions not just for cyclists but for pedestrians who are trying to cross the road. Permeability is important for allowing cyclists to ride two-way on one-way streets. That is the norm in most continental countries. Over here we have an attitude that it is dangerous, but there is no evidence that there are risks involved in allowing two-way cycling. Again, there is a range of solutions; the busier and faster the traffic, the greater the need for a contraflow cycle facility to be segregated, but it can be done.

**The Chairperson:** I have just one final point. Your road justice campaign contains a map that excludes Northern Ireland.

**Mr Geffen:** I apologise for that.

**The Chairperson:** However, it shows that the vast majority of the UK police forces have chosen not to implement all or part of your campaign. Why is that, and what discussions have taken place with the Police Service of Northern Ireland on your programme?

**Mr Flood:** Unfortunately, what you have here is a very poor substitute for Tom. Tom, as you know, is our principal Northern Ireland campaigner. I work more on the national scene with CTC; essentially, I am the business director. I am having to step in out of loyalty to Tom, so I do not carry the figures with me, and I am sorry about that. I have talked to the police, but every time I do so, they tell me that it is all about resources.

**Mr Geffen:** That is also what police forces around the rest of the UK are saying. Police forces generally have seen steep cuts in roads policing. Police force numbers have been declining in recent years but only back to where they were about 10 years ago; whereas in Britain as a whole, roads policing is down by about 29%. It has borne a particularly steep brunt of cuts, and that is very bad for road safety. It is important to restore roads policing to its rightful place in the importance of road safety policy tools. That is the case here. Roads policing is now basically non-existent, and in many areas, enforcement, even motor law, is basically non-existent as well.

**The Chairperson:** OK, gentlemen. Thank you very much for your presentation. You will eventually see a report from the Committee. The Hansard report of your evidence will be available in the next two or three weeks. Thank you.