



House of Commons
Transport Committee

**Ending the Scandal of
Complacency: Road
Safety beyond 2010:
Further Government
Response to the
Committee's Eleventh
Report of Session
2007–08**

**Second Special Report of Session
2008–09**

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The Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Transport and its associated public bodies.

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Annette Toft (Clerk), Jyoti Chandola (Second Clerk), David Davies (Committee Specialist), Marek Kubala (Inquiry Manager), Alison Mara (Senior Committee Assistant), Jacqui Cooksey (Committee Assistant), Stewart McIlvenna (Committee Support Assistant) and Hannah Pearce (Media Officer).

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Second Special Report

The Committee published its Eleventh Report of Session 2007–08, *Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010*, on 29 October 2008. We received a memorandum from the Department for Transport dated 8 January 2009, setting out the Government's interim response. The memorandum explained that the Government was in the process of developing a new road safety strategy, due for publication this spring. In these circumstances, we were content to accept an interim response in January, with a full response before the publication of the new strategy for consultation. The interim response was published on 19 January 2009.

We received the Government's full response in the form of a further memorandum on Monday 20 April 2009. The response is published as an Appendix to this report.

Appendix — Department for Transport Further Response

This is the Government's substantive response to the Transport Select Committee's report on road safety, "Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010" published on 29 October 2008.

The Department for Transport wrote to the Committee on 8 January 2009 with its response to recommendations 4, 22 and 23 and promised to respond to the remaining recommendations when it published its consultation paper on the new road safety strategy for 2010 and beyond.

The consultation paper, "A Safer Way: Consultation on making Britain's roads the safest in the world" is to be published on 21 April 2009 and this response is best read in conjunction with that paper. It can be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/roadsafetyconsultation>.

The consultation period will end on 14 July 2009 and following that, the Department will review the responses it receives and intends to publish a final strategy document by the end of the year.

Please note that where it makes sense to do so, we have brigaded together questions which cover similar ground.

Progress towards the 2010 targets

1. We commend the Government on having set and maintained ambitious road traffic casualty reduction targets. We also commend it for recognising that road safety needs to be integrated with other important policy objectives such as promoting good health, reducing carbon-dioxide emissions, tackling deprivation and improving quality of life. The Government has not sought to reduce casualties by discouraging vulnerable road

users from taking to the streets; but some trends, such as increased traffic, have had this effect. We recommend that in the forthcoming White Paper on sustainable transport, road safety objectives should be integrated with these wider objectives. We also recommend that the road safety strategy for beyond 2010 be explicitly set in the context of wider policy objectives. This should help to ensure that road safety is seen as relevant in other policy areas and that road safety policies do not have unintended consequences on other important objectives, such as improving public health by encouraging walking, cycling and play. (Paragraph 15)

The Government welcomes the Committee's support for its road safety targets and for the work it is doing to integrate road safety into the wider policy context. Improving health, safety and security is one of the five key policy goals for the Department for Transport, alongside supporting economic growth, tackling climate change, quality of life and the natural environment and equality of opportunity. We have sought to integrate road safety policy fully with the Department's wider goals.

We want the new road safety strategy to have an overall positive effect on public health, taking account of the health benefits of walking and cycling. This is why we are taking steps to support the delivery of more 20mph zones in residential areas, which can encourage more active travel, as well as reducing road casualties. We are alive to the need to avoid unintended consequences, which is why for the first time, we are recommending a target for walking and cycling casualties which takes account of the distances travelled, so as to avoid militating against work to encourage growth in walking and cycling activity.

We have rigorously assessed the interventions proposed in the road safety strategy consultation document and are clear that their overall impact is not detrimental in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Maximising the synergies between reducing emissions and improving safety is also important—road safety measures can often have a positive environmental effect, by encouraging eco-driving, for example. We will also make sure that road safety measures pass the test of better regulation and are proportionate in terms of their economic impacts on different sectors of society.

2. We urge the Government to renew its focus on tackling the appalling level of child road traffic deaths associated with deprivation. (Paragraph 20)

We have always maintained our focus on tackling the higher casualty risk in disadvantaged areas. Although we met the specific target for this in 2005, it has continued to be a priority. Our child road safety strategy published in February 2007 identified road safety and disadvantage as a cross-cutting theme:—<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/child/childrdsafetystrategy2007>.

Projects to address the higher casualty rate in disadvantaged areas have been one of the priorities for the latest round of our local authority partnership grant scheme. Three of the eight projects we are supporting will target disadvantage. We will be supporting work in Oldham to engage with adults in disadvantaged communities to improve road safety skills and knowledge. A project in Hounslow will support road safety engagement with the Somali community. And in Bristol, we plan to assess the effect of social marketing on young drivers in deprived areas.

We are also undertaking a major research project on road safety and disadvantage, with Faber Maunsell and Loughborough University. We are working closely with DCSF to take forward broader work on child safety as part of PSA13, in particular, on preventing unintentional injuries. This has found that other types of unintentional injury are also more prevalent in disadvantaged areas, such as those related to safety in the home, and some of the underlying causes are connected.

The consultation document proposes new targets and performance indicators to drive effort to reduce child road casualties and pedestrians (often children) in disadvantaged areas.

3. The Government should establish a British Road Safety Survey to track overall casualty and safety trends. This would be a structured survey, gathered from a statistically significant sample of households, similar to the National Travel Survey. It would, therefore, not rely on levels of reporting by road users or police. It would be akin to the British Crime Survey which is seen as a more reliable long-term monitor of crime than the police crime statistics. This would involve original survey work, and might also draw on existing data sources, including police, hospital and insurance company data, to obtain a more rounded picture. A survey would have the additional benefit of being able to monitor attitudes to road safety including, for example, the fears of vulnerable road-users. (Paragraph 31)

Questions on road safety were added to the National Travel Survey in January 2007, and the first results were published in 2008. Over time, these data will provide useful extra information to supplement STATS19, which remains the main, detailed data source. Additionally, analysis of hospital admissions data (Hospital Episode Statistics (HES)) is now adding to our detailed understanding, though HES data are not yet suitable for monitoring trends in road safety. We will continue to explore the potential of other data sources to extend our understanding.

The Department also monitors attitudes to road safety through an annual survey to track attitudes and self reported behaviour over the long term and shorter surveys to track campaigns pre and post advertising activity.

In addition, the British Social Attitudes Survey is an established survey which has monitored public attitudes to road safety for a number of years. The Department has recently entered into a new agreement to extend the use of the survey for a further three years.

In the light of these additional data sources, we do not consider a new stand alone survey is needed.

4. There is a significant body of evidence to suggest that the current methods for recording road-traffic injuries are flawed. We recommend that the Government commissions an independent review of the STATS19 system in order to establish its strengths and weaknesses, bearing in mind our recommendation above for a British Road Safety Survey. The review should also examine ways in which the system could be simplified, with a view to promoting greater consistency, and consider ways of routinely linking police and hospital data. (Paragraph 34)

Please see the Department's response to the Committee of 8 January 2009.

Priorities beyond 2010

5. The systems approach to road safety, now adopted by the Netherlands, Sweden and elsewhere is different to that pursued by the UK. We believe that it is time for the UK to move towards this more fundamental approach which is accepted for other transport modes. The Department for Transport needs to explore this approach further and to engage the public in a discussion of the ideas and implications. (Paragraph 51)

We agree that there is merit in taking a “systems approach” to road safety.

We propose an approach which makes our roads, vehicles, drivers and riders safer, through ensuring that each of these elements of the system takes account of the limitations of the others.

For example, vehicle safety technology can help drivers to avoid making mistakes. Highway design can help to mitigate the consequences if a vehicle does leave the carriageway and vehicle structures and safety features can protect vehicle occupants and other road users in the event of a collision. And we all have a responsibility as road users to adjust our behaviour to reduce the chance of collisions happening.

In particular, we appreciate the importance of understanding:

- *the limits of human physiology and perception;*
- *the impact of collisions of different recurring types;*
- *the effect of road design in reducing the likelihood and severity of collisions.*

The proposals in our consultation document aimed at achieving lower speeds in streets with high pedestrian populations and on the more dangerous rural single carriageways with poor casualty records, for example, are based on problems which we have identified in the system. First, that pedestrians in collisions with cars at above 20 mph have eight times less chance of dying than where the car is going at 30 mph. And second, that common accident types on rural single carriageways have an unacceptably high likelihood of death at the current 60 mph speed limit. For example, in a head-on collision in which two cars crashed at 60 mph a driver would have a 90% chance of dying. This is reduced to 65% at 50 mph. That is why we are making sure that highway authorities have the accurate risk information and the support they need to alter speed limits and zones where this is the right thing to do.

6. The emphasis needs to shift from treating localised problems to one of long-term improvements to the safety of the infrastructure. At the same time, it is essential that a multi-disciplinary approach is taken to ensure that safety measures are compatible with a good quality local environment. (Paragraph 57)

Long-term improvements to road infrastructure play an important part in achieving casualty reductions and we believe that a targeted, evidence-led approach is best. We want to enhance safety on the parts of our network that are known to be less safe than the norm.

However, there is also plenty of scope for local highway authorities to identify and treat points on local roads with known casualty problems. Evidence from stakeholders and from new research suggests that on average, these schemes result in casualty savings whose value to society in one year after implementation, exceeds their construction costs. For this reason, we

feel that the current balance between treating localised problems and long-term improvements is reasonable.

We have also proposed to support the Road Safety Foundation in identifying high-risk routes, through their process of producing risk maps. These can help inform highway authorities, central Government and the public about the risk of particular sections of road and help to focus investment in engineering and enforcement. We propose to ask highway authorities to create partnerships of relevant authorities to improve the casualty records of the riskiest routes.

We fully agree that road safety measures should be compatible with a good quality local environment. Conversely, measures aimed specifically at improving the local environment should be at least as safe as would be the case in their absence. These principles are embodied in the Manual for Streets which we published in March 2007. The Manual covers the design and provision of residential and other streets. It presents a radical change in approach compared with that of the 30 year-old guidance it superseded.

7. Ways must be found to satisfy the desires of local communities for safer streets. We recommend that local authorities be given the powers and resources to introduce 20-mph limits much more widely. Flexibility is required to avoid the prohibitive costs associated with some approaches. The balance of engineering measures, technology, policing and community influence should be a local matter. Systems, however, must not rely on high levels of fines or draconian enforcement. (Paragraph 60)

Too many pedestrians and cyclists continue to be killed and injured by cars in residential streets. There is an established 'toolkit' of measures which can help protect pedestrians and cyclists, which local highway authorities can use to improve safety in such areas. We agree that the balance of measures used in any particular area should be decided at a local level.

The 'toolkit' includes appropriately engineered 20mph zones, which are proven to make our streets safer. Our consultation paper proposes that we should amend our guidance on speed limits, recommending that local highway authorities, over time, introduce 20mph zones into streets which are primarily residential in nature, or other areas where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high.

We will research the effect on speeds and casualties of wide-area un-engineered 20mph limits. Our previous evidence has suggested that these reduce average speeds by only 1–2 mph, but we will re-examine this issue.

We agree that 20mph zones and limits should not rely on heavy-handed enforcement measures and that enforcement should be an issue for local decision.

8. The Government should take a more proactive approach to determining the safety benefits of new vehicle technologies. It should make clear which ones it believes have most safety benefits and encourage their adoption into the UK vehicle fleet. The Government should use the various tools at its disposal, including fiscal and financial incentives, to encourage employers to use vehicles with additional proven safety features. Government departments and agencies should also give a lead in their fleet purchasing decisions. This would help to reduce work-related casualties and speed up the adoption of these features into the wider UK vehicle fleet. (Paragraph 66)

20. The Government should work with employers' organisations and trades unions on the issue of work-related road accidents, including an evaluation of its Driving for Better Business initiative. It should use the tools at its disposal, including fiscal and financial incentives, to encourage employers to use vehicles with additional proven safety features. This would help to reduce work-related casualties and speed the adoption of these features into the wider UK vehicle fleet. (Paragraph 109)

The Government is committed to influencing the development and implementation of advanced vehicles and technology and securing the early take up of existing technologies across the vehicle fleet.

We will extend and improve our evidence base to assess the effectiveness of existing measures and identify new areas where technology can deliver improvements, particularly in the area of primary safety. This will include trialling new systems; working in international fora to obtain the best available data; and exploring ways to get new safety systems into car fleets. We will continue to promote regulatory solutions where this brings greatest benefit in a timely manner.

We also think that market-based measures, such as providing better consumer information and raising awareness of safety technology will complement regulation and speed up the penetration of the safest vehicles into the market. We are determined to work closely with all our partners, including employers and fleet operators, to encourage the wider take-up of safer vehicles.

The Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA), which provides a car service for Ministers and other public officials, is keen to act as a flagship for road safety. Safety is already taken extremely seriously by the agency and it takes care to provide high quality training for all its drivers. Its fleet of Toyota Prius's and hybrid Honda Civics already achieve 5 and 4 star NCAP (European New Car Assessment Programme) ratings respectively and it is committed to making NCAP ratings a key criterion in its purchasing decisions.

The Department is pleased with the initial progress of the Driving for Better Business project but, given the time needed to establish something of this sort, it is too early to evaluate its impact properly. We have renewed the grant arrangement for Roadsafe to continue to manage the project for a further three years up to March 2012, and intend to undertake an evaluation during that period.

9. There are clear links between uninsured and unlicensed driving, and crash involvement. A twin-track approach is needed. The Government should encourage greater partnership working at local level to prevent offending by young people. At the same time, greater levels of enforcement are needed to prevent uninsured and unlicensed driving. The Committee recommends the Department for Transport identify projects of this type that have been successful and disseminate these more widely. (Paragraph 71)

24. The connections between unlicensed, untaxed or uninsured vehicles, crime and antisocial behaviour, and road safety need to be more widely acted upon. We welcome the recent increase in enforcement activity by VOSA. This must be continued and consistently applied in all areas. The lack of congruity between the priorities of the

Home Office and the Department for Transport on road safety continues to be of great concern to us. (Paragraph 124)

The DfT and its agencies are fully committed to tackling unlicensed, untaxed and uninsured vehicles and to this end we work closely with the police, other agencies and the insurance industry.

People who drive with no licence or insurance or who fail to register and tax their vehicles are more likely to be involved in other types of criminal activity and collisions. We estimate that uninsured and untraced drivers kill 160 people and injure 23,000 every year. Uninsured drivers add £30 a year to every motorist's insurance premium.

On unlicensed driving, we assist the police and the courts in detecting and prosecuting cases of unlicensed driving, for example by providing the police with 24 hour access to accurate driver licensing information at the roadside to assist detection and enforcement.

In 2005, police access to the Motor Insurance Database was improved.¹ This enabled them to have data on uninsured vehicles for use with their automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) equipment. The police were also given powers to seize, and in appropriate cases destroy, vehicles being driven uninsured.² Under these powers the police removed in excess of 175,000 vehicles in 2008.³

The seizure programme has contributed to improved compliance. In 2006 and 2008, the police forces carried out spot checks on vehicles and found:

- *the level of unlicensed drivers stopped fell by half over two years*
- *the proportion of uninsured drivers stopped fell to 1.2% from 1.9%*
- *the level of vehicles stopped which required but were without a current MOT fell to 1.5% from 4.2%*
- *the proportion of drivers stopped without valid vehicle tax fell to 1% from 2%*
- *the level of drivers committing a serious offence, such as no insurance, or driving whilst disqualified, fell to 3.4% from 7.5%.*

The Road Safety Act 2006 introduced a new offence of being the registered keeper of an uninsured vehicle.⁴ Further regulations are required to bring in the provisions into force and our consultation on the detail of the scheme closed on 16 April. The new offence will allow enforcement action to be taken where it is shown from the record that there is no valid insurance in place, rather than by police observation of an uninsured vehicle in use.

In August 2008, a new offence of causing death by driving while unlicensed disqualified or uninsured which carries a custodial sentence of up to 2 years was introduced.⁵

¹ Disclosure of Vehicle Insurance Information Regulations 2005 (SI 2005:2833) made under section 153 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.

² Sections 165A and 165B of the Road Traffic Act 1988 inserted by section 152 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. See also the Road Traffic Act 1988 (Retention and Disposal of Seized Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005:1606) made under section 165B.

³ Source: Association of Chief Police Officers

⁴ Section 144A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (not yet in force) inserted by section 22 of the Road Safety Act 2006

⁵ Section 32B of the Road Traffic Act 1988 inserted by section 21 of the Road Safety Act 2006

DVLA has established a significant number of partnerships with local authorities and police forces which have proved very successful in tackling unlicensed vehicles using devolved powers to undertake direct enforcement action. Devolved powers partnerships add approximately 30,000 unlicensed vehicles per year to the 120,000 unlicensed vehicles wheel clamped or impounded by DVLA's own contractor. Additionally the Vehicle Operators and Services Agency (VOSA) carries out substantial compliance and enforcement activities for commercial vehicles and drivers.

We agree that the relationship between DfT and the Home Office, and through them the police, is vital to delivering road safety. We work closely with the Home Office where appropriate. We recognise that road safety is one among many competing priorities for the police. Our collective aim is that the police should give appropriate weight to road safety issues, as well as recognising the benefits of road policing to other areas of enforcement. The joint roads policing strategy gave a clear statement from DfT, the Home Office and ACPO that roads policing is a key priority, and we continue to collectively support that message.

10. We support the Government's efforts to revise the driver training system and to place greater emphasis on attitudes and behaviours as well as driving skills. The proposals in Learning to Drive are steps in the right direction, but we are not confident that they will be sufficient to arrest the carnage of young drivers on our roads. We recommend that the Government takes bolder and more urgent steps to cut the number of collisions involving young drivers, particularly young men. We urge that it reconsiders its response to our recommendations in Novice Drivers regarding a graduated licensing scheme and, in particular (p36), restrictions on young drivers carrying teenage passengers between the hours of 11pm and 5am. (Paragraph 75)

The issue of additional regulation of the way that people learn to drive or post-test restrictions on newly-qualified drivers was examined in our consultation document, Learning to Drive. The consultation prompted almost 7,000 responses, which showed general support for the Government's view that education and incentivisation through improved training and testing is the best way to improve the safety of newly-qualified drivers. The placing of restrictions on newly qualified drivers would indicate that the learning and testing process is failing to produce safe drivers. Furthermore such restrictions would aim to protect them by keeping them away from risk. However, the Government's view is that young people ought to be learning how to handle risks before taking the driving test. Our Learning to Drive proposals therefore sought to improve learner drivers' attitude to road safety and driving, and ensure that they learn and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to drive unsupervised in a safe and responsible manner after passing the driving test. This approach also considers the needs of all young drivers, the majority of whom want to drive safely and responsibly, whereas restrictions are aimed at a minority who behave badly, but would have many adverse effects for the responsible majority such as restricting access to education and evening jobs.

Following the Learning to Drive consultation, we have announced a programme of measures that will strengthen the way that people learn to drive and are tested, and create a culture of continued and lifelong learning. The Learning to Drive programme will be delivered through a phased implementation programme, which supports progressive improvements whilst avoiding disruption to those currently learning to drive. The first phase aims to deliver, over

the next two years, real changes focussing on an improved learning process; improved theory and practical driving tests, and further options for learning and qualifications.

Full details are set out in Learning to Drive: Report on Consultation.⁶

11. More link-up is needed between the various road safety education programmes. It is disappointing that, in a relatively wide-ranging review of driver training, the Government has not consulted on the possibility of strengthening links between driver training, and pedestrian and cyclist training in the ways that some local authorities are doing. We recommend that the Department for Transport and the Department for Children, Schools and Families consider ways in which a range of road-user training schemes might be targeted at school students of the appropriate ages. (Paragraph 77)

15. We note that there is a wealth of educational materials aimed at pre-school and primary age youngsters. However, we are concerned that similar efforts have not been made to produce material for pupils in secondary school. We believe that there needs to be a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of such materials and a consolidated approach to risk education across the age range. (Paragraph 91)

We have recently commissioned a comprehensive set of road safety educational materials for all stages of primary and secondary school, being developed by EdComs. This work is being dovetailed with DSA's work on pre-driver education, including the new voluntary qualification, which is being introduced under a managed roll-out as part of their Learning to Drive programme to provide young people aged 14 -16 with a solid grounding in safe road us—including, but not confined to, preparation for learning to drive.

This will give us a seamless suite of educational materials on road safety from pre-school to pre-driver, for deployment in the education system.

The EdComs materials are based around lesson plans for classroom based activities, but will also take account of practical on-road training such as the Kerbcraft pedestrian training scheme for 5-7 year olds and Bikeability cycle training, which is mainly being delivered to 10-11 year olds. While both Kerbcraft and Bikeability aim to improve children's road user skills, they may have benefits in later life if they go on to learn to drive. However, take up of all these materials and schemes is a matter for individual local authorities, schools and other providers. Our role is to make them available and encourage their use.

12. We recommend that the Government redoubles its efforts to improve the safety of motorcyclists and to ensure that their safety is seen as central to its road safety strategy. This needs to be communicated effectively to all parties involved with road safety. (Paragraph 81)

Motorcycle casualties peaked in 2003 and since then there has been an improvement, with the numbers killed or seriously injured declining. 693 motorcyclists were killed in 2003, falling to 588 in 2007, a fall of 15%, though still 26% above the 1994-98 baseline level. The large rise in casualties between 1996 and 2003 was largely due to an increase in motorcycling activity, with traffic rising by around a third in that period, so the casualty rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres peaked in 2000 and has been falling since then. Motorcycle traffic

⁶ Learning to Drive: Report on Consultation, published 21 April 2009

was at the same level in 2007 as in 2003, but casualty numbers were much lower. However, motorcycling remains disproportionately represented in the casualty statistics and tackling this is one of our top priorities. Our new consultation paper sets the rate of killed or seriously injured motorcyclists per 100 million vehicle km as a key performance indicator.

The new practical motorcycling test contains more-demanding manoeuvres intended to improve road safety for this vulnerable group. It is being introduced as a modular two-part test. Module One is based upon the specified manoeuvres, whilst Module Two is the road riding assessment. This modular approach is enabling DSA to provide the test from more locations than would be possible with a single-event test, which was a key concern of stakeholders.

We are continuing to take forward the measures to improve motorcycle safety set out in The Government's Motorcycle Strategy of February 2005 and the revised action plan published in June 2008—<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/vehicles/motorcycling/>. We are working with the National Motorcycle Council, including representatives of the motorcycle community, local authorities, police and others. A new strategy is now being developed and we hope to consult on a draft to seek a wider range of views later this year.

Projects to address motorcycle casualties have been one of the priorities for the latest round of our local authority partnership grant scheme. Four of the eight projects being supported are targeted at reducing motorcyclist casualties, including some route-based work in Staffordshire, better training led by Warwickshire, plus average speed cameras and data-led analysis and marketing in parts of the Peak District.

We also have evidence of the high returns still available from engineering schemes such as side barriers, anti-skid surfacing at junctions and other interventions designed to protect motorcyclists.⁷

Motorcycling is a major theme in our Think! publicity campaign. We have recently run the TV campaigns 'Perfect Day', aimed at leisure riders, and 'Take longer to look...', to encourage car drivers to be aware of motorcyclists at junctions (the biggest single cause of motorcycle collisions). We are also continuing our sponsorship of the British Superbikes Championship as a way to engage with leisure riders. We are currently undertaking a review of our motorcycling activity to inform further Think! activity.

We are also keen to encourage the development of safety technologies for motorcycles; technologies which had been largely car-based, such as ABS and driver assistance systems are now being seen more frequently in the motorcycle fleet. We will continue to work with our partners to take forward research to improve motorcycle safety, including conspicuity and the European PISA programme (Powered Two Wheeler Integrated Safety), where possible finding synergies with environmental performance.

We also believe that there is potential for safer motorcycle helmets to save lives. 80% of motorcycling fatalities involve head injuries. The SHARP (Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme) was launched in 2008 to provide motorcyclists with information about the safety performance of different motorcycle helmets. SHARP has been very well received

⁷ Sexton and Johnson (2009) An evaluation of options for road safety beyond 2010. TRL Publish Project Report PPR 379.

and involves a rolling programme of testing. We recently announced the latest batch of results, meaning that 125 helmets have now been rated.

13. The causes of motorcyclist accidents and remedial measures need to be thoroughly investigated and the results communicated to road safety professionals, motorcyclists and other road users. (Paragraph 82)

In November 2004 we published the research report “In depth Study of Motorcycle Accidents”, at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme5/indepthstudyofmotorcycleacc.pdf>. This identifies the most common causes of motorcycle crashes and has informed our subsequent work to address these, including the Think! campaigns mentioned above. We also continue to monitor and analyse more recent casualty and accident data.

Following the finding of the 2004 research project that car drivers colliding with motorcyclists at junctions was the biggest single cause of motorcycle casualties, further work was commissioned on how this type of collision occurs and what can be done to prevent them. The first phase report Car Drivers’ Skills and Attitudes to Motorcycle Safety: A Review was published in May 2008,⁸ to establish current understanding of the issues. Further work on this project is now under way to study exactly how and why car drivers look for and respond to the presence of motorcyclists. Another research project has considered the motorcyclists’ point of view. “Passion and Performance: Understanding motorcyclists’ attitudes to safety” is due to be published shortly. This study was commissioned to provide a better understanding of the needs, motivations and perspectives of motorcyclists themselves with respect to road safety. This gives a more sophisticated view of the variety of different types of motorcyclist, which improves our understanding beyond the previous distinction simply between urban / commuter riders and rural / leisure riders, as it is clear that there are distinct groups within these broader categories. This work will help us to target future interventions to communicate with motorcyclists in ways that address their needs and take account of their motivations.

In April 2005, the Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers published its Guidelines for Motorcycling, which give practical advice on how the different characteristics of motorcycles can be recognised and addressed in highway and traffic design and management. We have placed these guidelines on our website so they are more accessible to local highway authorities, at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/vehicles/motorcycling/Motorcyclingguidelines>.

14. It is unsatisfactory that so few children are given pedestrian or cycle training at school. Whereas there is a plethora of statistics on school-related matters, the percentage of children receiving road safety training is not monitored. We welcome the Department for Transport’s support for Kerbcraft and, more recently, for Bikeability training. However, the Government should frame its targets in terms of the percentage, rather than the absolute number, of children in the target age group to be trained. The timescales for implementing these schemes must be reduced; and they should be properly monitored and supported with long-term resources to ensure that they are available to all children. We recommend that the Government investigates the effects that the compulsory wearing of cycle helmets by children would have on casualties. (Paragraph 89)

⁸ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme2/rsrr85.pdf>

Between 2002 and 2007 we piloted the Kerbcraft child pedestrian training scheme and a thorough evaluation was published in March 2008. We are now working on a dissemination programme to encourage local authorities to adopt this scheme more widely, including an update of the Kerbcraft manual, new guidelines that are applicable to a wider range of child pedestrian training schemes, and a series of regional seminars for local authority practitioners in spring 2009.

We are aware that most local authorities involved in the Kerbcraft pilot have continued with child pedestrian training, though most have modified the Kerbcraft model. A number of other local authorities have taken up Kerbcraft or other schemes. Modifications are designed to make the scheme less resource-intensive, such as reducing the number of roadside sessions, reducing the number of skills taught or combining skills, or increasing adult:child ratios. Such modifications may make the scheme less effective in achieving lasting improvements in the real skills of the children being trained. They aim to make the scheme less resource intensive, in some cases with the aim of delivering a smaller scheme to more children. That may be counter-productive if all those children are receiving less effective training.

Our new guidelines aim to highlight these issues, including the option of targeting training on high priority areas such as the more disadvantaged parts of a local authority or others with a high casualty rate, just as our pilot was targeted on disadvantaged areas. This should help local authorities to make more informed decisions about whether to follow the Kerbcraft model or other schemes.

We do not have any specific targets for the delivery of child pedestrian training by local authorities. We have estimated that to deliver Kerbcraft to every child would cost something of the order of £50 million each year. That blanket coverage may not be the most efficient use of resources as some areas have much higher casualty rates than others. We encourage local authorities to make decisions about the delivery of road safety interventions, including child pedestrian training, according to local priorities.

The same is true of child cycle training. To supplement and support local authority delivery we set ourselves an objective in “A Sustainable Future for Cycling” (DfT, Jan 2008) to make National Standard Bikeability training available to 500,000 additional year 6 children by 2012, over and above that already delivered by local authorities.

Between 2007/08 to 2009/2010 we have provided approximately £15m to fund additional child training places. This has increased each year, with £9.5m allocated for 2009/10.

In terms of training places, this means we have funded an additional 46,000 training places up to the end of March 2008, and grants made available for 2008/09 will fund an estimated extra 100,000 places. For 2009/10 the DfT funding allocated through our latest grant bidding round will be £5.4m which will enable local authorities to deliver a further 138,000 places. In addition we will fund the training of between another 75,000—100,000 children through a £4m grant to the Youth Sport Trust for dispersal to the various School Sports Partnerships around the country.

Given an approximate average Year 6 population of just under 600,000 children, this means that in 2009/10 we will be making training available for around a third of children in addition to existing local authority delivery. This also means that with funding available to train over 200,000 additional children by March 2010.

We are also taking steps to increase the capacity of the cycle training sector. This includes providing £500,000 in 2009/10 to fund bursaries for the training of an additional 1,600 instructors. We will also continue to fund and put in place accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms to support the national standard and we will continue to provide support to help local authorities and schools deliver even more Bikeability training in the coming year.

As for cycle helmet wearing, our 2002 research report “Bicycle helmets: review of effectiveness” at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme1/bicyclehelmetsreviewofeffect4726> showed that cycle helmets do have benefits in protecting riders, especially children, from head injuries, although this finding was not universally accepted. It also found that in some cases (e.g. Victoria, Australia) compulsory use of helmets could lead to decreased cycle use, especially by children and teenagers.

The Department has recently commissioned a new research project looking at a range of road safety and cycling issues. It will examine the following topics: road user safety and cycling data; cycling infrastructure; attitudes and behaviours of cyclists and other road users and bicycle helmets, including an updated evaluation of their effectiveness, including potential effects on casualty numbers and cycling levels. The research project as a whole is likely to take 3 years, but we are aiming to complete the review of cycle helmet effectiveness by the end of 2009. The work includes an advisory board to ensure that a range of interests is involved in the work, including cycling groups and campaigners for legislation on compulsory cycle helmet use.

16. Elsewhere in this Report, we have identified the apparent mismatch between data sets in terms of the number of actual casualties compared with those recorded. We believe that it is important for local highway authorities to have as accurate a picture as possible of the number of people killed or injured in their area and of the costs of preventing these injuries. We encourage these authorities to gather and publish such information in addition to the STATS19 data. (Paragraph 95)

DfT routinely publishes STATS19 data on the number of people killed or injured at local authority level in England. The STATS19 data is then used for two of the national set 198 local indicators, which are published for all local areas. We agree with the committee that local authorities can publish more data if they wish, but that they should not be required to do so by Government, as the set of national indicators represents an already substantial set of requirements.

We are keen to improve the use of data to allow for more targeted use of road safety resources. We will work to provide an online database combining accident and socio-demographic data for local authorities. This will allow ready local analysis of collision statistics by social and geographical groupings.

We agree that hospital data could add to local authorities' understanding. However hospital data is complex and is owned by the local health organisations rather than local authorities. Any decisions about publishing data would need to be taken by the responsible local agencies together.

17. We recommend that cycle training should be offered as an alternative to fines for offending cyclists, just as driver retraining courses are now commonly offered to motorists who commit minor traffic offences. (Paragraph 96)

The running of a Speed Awareness course for motorists is a matter for the police, as would be any similar scheme for cycling offenders. On average, only 500 convictions per year have been recorded for cycling offences between 2004 and 2007, which will be an important factor for the police when considering the cost-effectiveness of taking a similar approach with cyclists.

Should the police choose to use cycle training as an alternative to fines or other penalties, the Department's investment in the quality, capacity and coverage of cycle training across England, will ensure that appropriate training is readily available.

18. We recognise the vulnerability of older drivers and their increasing numbers. We do not believe that automatic, mandatory retesting of drivers above a certain age is justified. We favour the more positive approach of simplifying the driving task and protecting drivers from the more serious consequences of their errors. Making walking and public transport more attractive to older people, with initiatives such as 20-mph limits and accessible vehicles, should also be encouraged. Schemes to provide assistance to older drivers are also to be encouraged. (Paragraph 101)

We agree that automatic, mandatory retesting of drivers above a certain age is not justified. Our consultation document, Learning to Drive, set out proposals for a Safe Driving for Life strategy, which encompasses drivers of all ages, including those reaching the end of their driving career. We are currently working with key stakeholders with the aim of establishing standards for schemes to help drivers assess their level of driving competence as they age. It is envisaged that these schemes will include elements of self-review, self-assessment and where appropriate lead to targeted refresher training from specifically qualified driver trainers. Again working with stakeholders, we shall seek to put in place arrangements to quality assure the standard of training offered.

We are keen to encourage everyone, including older people, to walk more, cycle more and make more use of public transport. This is because of the personal health benefits of active transport modes and also the wider environmental benefits of decreased car-reliance.

We are proposing to amend our guidance on speed limits, recommending that local highway authorities over time, introduce 20mph zones or limits into streets which are primarily residential in nature (see response to recommendation 7 above). We believe that these zones will offer greater protection for older people and children, since both groups are less able to withstand the impacts of accidents.

We recognise the link between age and disability and the difficulties this brings in relation to driving and access to public transport. We therefore support a variety of independent, mainly third sector organisations to provide information and advice to older people and disabled people, enabling them to make informed choices about future use of the car as a means of transport. We are undertaking research to map needs to service provision to inform how we continue to support these services in the future.

Travel training, an initiative designed to increase people's confidence when using public transport, is expected to be of benefit to many older people, for instance when they stop

driving. We issued a 'Strategy Outline and Discussion Document' in October 2008. Goskills are currently investigating training and accreditation needs for travel trainers. We will be undertaking work to construct a website containing guidance and best practice for travel trainers later in the year.

In relation to accessible taxis, we published a consultation exploring ways of making taxis more accessible in February. The consultation closes in April. A number of consultation seminars have been held, with key stakeholders and interested parties, to discuss the document and the options contained within it. We will publish a strategy to take the issue forward after the consultation closes.

On transport vehicles, we are spending around £169m on heavy rail to make them accessible by 2020. In addition, all buses and coaches used on scheduled services must be physically accessible, including to wheelchair users. Deadlines for all public provision buses to meet accessibility standards are 2017 for all buses used on local scheduled services and 2020 for coaches used on scheduled services.

We have also created the "Access for All" fund specifically designed to improve the accessibility of services. This fund is worth £370m and is available to improve accessibility at railway stations by making them free of steps. The funding is available until 2015 and is split into two parts:

- £35m a year targeted at improving access at the busiest stations to ensure that they have a route that all passengers can use; and
- £7m a year in 'small schemes funding' will be available to make smaller scale improvements at local stations such as installation of lifts, ramps and customer information screens.

The DfT will also be developing a toolkit on transport solutions for older people, full details of this will be announced in the Government's renewed Ageing Strategy planned for the summer.

19. We recommend that the Government urgently review the increasing use and safety of mobility scooters with a view to establishing whether safety guidelines or mandatory training would be beneficial. (Paragraph 104)

The Department published research in 2006 into the use of Class 2 and Class 3 mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs which can be viewed on the Department's website at www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/tipws/pwps/.

Overall, the research did not suggest that mobility scooters have a significant impact upon road safety. However, we are aware that the numbers of mobility scooters are on the increase and we recognise the need to review issues such as safety guidelines and training. We will take this work forward as and when resources permit.

21. It is anomalous that the vast majority of work-related deaths are not examined by the Health and Safety Executive, purely because they occur on the roads. The Government should review the role of the Health and Safety Executive with regard to road safety to ensure that it fulfils its unique role in the strategy beyond 2010. (Paragraph 110)

The general duties under health and safety at work law to protect workers and others from risks arising out of work activities are very broad and overlap with other legislation.⁹ It has been the policy of successive Governments not generally to seek to enforce health and safety at work legislation where public and worker safety is adequately protected by more specific and detailed law enforced by another authority.

Safety on the road is primarily regulated by road traffic legislation, which is enforced by the Police and others such as the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). The law also places specific responsibilities on employers not to 'cause or permit' employees to contravene road traffic legislation, for example, by setting unrealistic timetables or schedules which encourage an employee to break permitted speed limits.¹⁰

The police attend all serious road incidents, including those involving fatalities. It is both practical and efficient for them to continue to take the lead in investigating these incidents as they have both the necessary experience and expertise. Arrangements are in place for the Police to refer cases to HSE where they consider that serious health and safety management failures have significantly contributed to the incident.

HSE will take prosecutions under Health and Safety legislation. In June 2006 Produce Connection were fined £30,000, by Cambridge Crown Court, for failing to protect the health and safety of an employee who was killed in a road traffic incident when travelling home. The judge concluded that the deceased was suffering chronic fatigue having worked 3 consecutive shifts of nearly 20 hours.

HSE also has an interest in incidents on the public highway where:

- *work vehicles are engaged in specific work activities, for example: refuse collection, vehicle recovery, loading and unloading etc.*
- *workers are engaged in specific work activities (not in vehicles), for example: construction work, refuse collection, street cleaning etc*
- *vehicles are manoeuvring in and out of work premises and in close proximity to those work premises.*

HSE continues to work closely with Government and industry stakeholders, to promote the benefits of managing the risks to employees when driving at work. Examples include the continued promotion of the joint HSE/DfT guidance on managing work related road safety, involvement with Transport for London's Freight Operator Recognition Scheme, Participation in DfT's Beyond 2010 Road Safety Steering Group and influencing Sector Skills Councils to incorporate health and safety requirements in their training modules. HSE also works closely with police road deaths investigation units to help them better understand employer's responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation.

22. We understand that the Department is to shortly consult on proposals to address the problem of drink-drive collisions. As in our report on Novice Drivers, we welcome this much-needed investigation and look forward to a thorough examination of what should be the permitted blood alcohol concentration for drivers. Should our

⁹ The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 SI 1999/3242 (as amended by SI 2003/2457 and SI 2006/438)

¹⁰ Section 89(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

recommendation for a lower alcohol limit for novice drivers be implemented, this would provide further useful evidence on the impact of a lower alcohol limit for drivers in general. (Paragraph 118)

Please see the Department's response to the Committee of 8 January 2009.

23. It is unacceptable that such a major element of the Government's road safety strategy can be given such a low priority by a key department. It is imperative that the Home Office gives much higher priority to enforcement of drink-drive and drug-drive offences. This should include the type-approval of roadside evidential breath-testing devices and development of equipment to assist the police to identify and prosecute drug-impaired drivers. (Paragraph 119)

Please see the Department's response to the Committee of 8 January 2009.

Delivery

25. It is vital that the Government provides leadership on road safety at the highest level and ensures that all Government departments play a full part in the future strategy. We are encouraged by the discussions going on between the Department for Transport and other departments. This needs to result in action across the board. (Paragraph 129)

The Government is committed to providing strong and inspirational leadership on road safety.

Road safety improvement is an issue across the whole of Great Britain and we have worked closely with Scottish and Welsh administrations and other Government Departments to develop the new strategy consultation document.

It is clear that the Department for Transport needs to work in partnership with many other organisations to achieve real progress. We are committed to establishing and maintaining fruitful relationships with all our key partners in road safety and to working increasingly in partnership with others, who are perhaps not self-evidently associated with road safety, such as educationalists and the Probation Service.

In addition to this, the Road Safety Delivery Board will continue to bring together the main road safety delivery agents and the Road Safety Advisory Panel will continue to bring together a range of stakeholders to offer support and advice.

26. We do not believe that the Department for Transport's forthcoming road safety strategy review will have sufficient profile or the necessary cross-governmental authority to bring about the fundamental and long-term change that is needed. We therefore recommend that the Government establishes an authoritative and independent road safety commission that has powers to work across the whole of Government. The role of the commission should be to ensure that the Government gives high priority and adequate resources to road safety and that all government departments and agencies give active support. It should also have responsibility for monitoring progress, and developing more rigorous and holistic assessments. It might also investigate good practice, particularly in those countries that have overtaken the UK in road safety standards. (Paragraph 132)

We are committed to ensuring that the new road safety strategy will have the necessary high profile and widespread support to achieve real and lasting change.

As part of this, the consultation document proposes that a new independent expert panel should be appointed, which will be tasked with providing an annual report on road safety to Ministers and Parliament. This would provide an independent overview of road safety performance and draw out potential recommendations to delivery agents in the light of real world experience. The panel would have particular responsibility for advising Ministers on the trends and new issues relating to fatal accidents.

The Road Safety Delivery Board will continue to play an important role in delivering the road safety strategy and new targets. We will also draw up a new integrated national road safety delivery plan, and ask the Road Safety Delivery Board to manage its delivery and provide an annual assessment of progress.

The Delivery Board will comprise representatives of highway authorities, the police, the fire service, and interested Departments of national Government. The Board will be charged with delivering the target and challenging Ministers in Westminster, Scotland and Wales to provide the leadership and resources to ensure that the targets are met.

In order to ensure progress on this strategy and proper public scrutiny, we will also submit to Parliament an annual report for road safety in Great Britain, to include the report from the independent expert panel. This will assess progress against our targets and the national indicator set, providing analysis of accident trends at national, regional and local level.

32. Greater independent monitoring and scrutiny of progress is required. Progress should be monitored against a range of indicators, not all of which need to be targets. This would include the British Road Safety Survey. The main casualty reduction targets must be monitored against both police and hospital data and overseen by the independent commission. (Paragraph 150)

We are consulting on the idea of setting up an independent expert panel to advise us on road safety trends and policy. This would include monitoring progress against targets (see Recommendation 26 above). We also propose to submit to Parliament an annual report for road safety in Great Britain. This will assess progress against our targets and the national indicator set, providing analysis of accident trends at national, regional and local level.

We agree that progress should be monitored against a range of indicators as well as the main casualty reduction targets. Our consultation paper suggests publishing annually a set of key indicators of progress on road safety, combining:

- *measures of casualties by road-user type, demographics and geography, including absolute numbers and rate-based indicators, to allow for modes where traffic volumes may fluctuate to a greater extent;*
- *measures of key risky behaviours and compliance with the law.*

More detail can be found in Annex A of the consultation paper.

As indicated in our response to recommendation 3, hospital data are not yet suitable for monitoring road safety trends or targets, though it is expected that these data are settling

down into a more consistent series that will eventually provide a useful extra monitoring source. This will also be true of National Travel Survey data over time.

27. A new vision is needed for road safety in Britain beyond 2010. This should be underpinned by a strategy that explains how casualty reduction, danger reduction and the various other important policy objectives, such as a sustainable transport system, economic efficiency, climate change, social inclusion and physical health are integrated. Priorities must also be clarified. Widespread consultation is needed that takes in the complexities of the issues. (Paragraph 136)

We agree that we need a new vision for road safety and we propose that the vision should be, “to have the world’s safest roads”. We think that this is inspiring but credible and provides the right level of challenge. We also think it is capable of being shared by all the key partners in road safety.

We are committed to securing improvements in road safety in the wider policy context, as part of the “Delivering a Sustainable Transport System” approach. (See response to Recommendation 2 above).

We are consulting widely on our proposals for a new road safety strategy.

28. The Government should adopt a national target for reducing deaths, which is separate from any targets for reducing serious or slight injuries. The Government should also adopt a national target for reducing deaths and serious injuries. This combined target should also be applied at local level where performance monitoring should take account of the inevitable fluctuations in casualties from year to year. (Paragraph 140)

We agree that there should be a separate target for reducing road deaths.

Our consultation paper proposes targets to:

- *reduce the number of people killed in road collisions by at least 33% by 2020 compared with the average for 2004–2008.*

and

- *reduce the number of people seriously injured in road collisions by at least 33% by 2020 compared with the average for 2004–2008.*

At the local level, however, we will be encouraging our road safety partners to adopt a combined deaths and serious injuries target. This is because the number of deaths for an individual local authority is small and therefore volatile. It is not, therefore, sensible to plot trends or monitor progress on this basis.

29. It is essential that, at both national and local level, casualty reduction targets are seen in the context of promoting sustainable transport. (Paragraph 141)

The consultation paper on the new road safety strategy takes care to place road safety in the wider context of sustainable transport (see response to Recommendation 5 above). In particular, we are anxious to ensure that road safety targets do not create perverse incentives

to discourage sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling. This is why we are including a target for reducing cyclist and pedestrian casualties which takes account of the distance travelled:

- To reduce the combined rate of death or serious injury for pedestrians and cyclists, per 100 million km walked or cycled, by 50%.

30. We feel the suggestion of a long term target of 20–25 years, with intermediate 5-year targets and reviews, is something that the Government should consider carefully in arriving at new targets. (Paragraph 145)

We have considered the Committee's suggestion and we are consulting on targets for a 10 year period but having a strategy which covers 20 years, to encourage longer-term steps, particularly in the field of vehicle technology. We have put forward proposals for publishing an annual road safety plan and an annual report to Parliament on progress against our targets and indicators. As with the current strategy, we propose to have two systematic progress reviews in the period up to 2020.

31. There should be flexibility for local authorities and Local Area Agreements to set their own additional local road safety targets, to suit local priorities and needs. These might include indicators other than casualties. Whilst reducing deaths must be an overriding priority, deaths are not necessarily a meaningful indicator of performance or priorities at the local level where the numbers will be small. Reducing casualties in the most deprived areas may be a priority in some local authority areas. (Paragraph 147)

The Department agrees that it can be useful to set a range of local road safety targets, including targets for casualty reduction in deprived areas and using indicators other than simply numbers of casualties. We also agree that because of the relatively small numbers involved, local indicators that are numbers of road deaths are unlikely to be meaningful performance measures. Local area agreements already provide an opportunity for local authorities to set their own additional road safety targets. The Department also encourages local authorities to consider such targets for their new local transport plans, which need to be in place by early 2011.

33. Consistent and adequate long-term funding is required in order to attract and retain the calibre of road safety professional that is required to deliver the road safety strategy. (Paragraph 154)

The local transport capital settlement provides in excess of £1.3bn per year for local authorities outside London for integrated transport measures and highways capital maintenance and it is up to local authorities to decide how much to invest in road safety. A firm three year settlement for the 2008/09 to 2010/11 period was announced in 2007. Indicative longer term funding levels have been set out at regional level. In real terms (ie after inflation has been taken into account) the local transport capital settlement for 2008/09 was more than double what it was a decade before.

Local authorities' statutory responsibilities for road safety are also funded through the Revenue Support Grant. As a whole, the Revenue Support Grant increased in real terms by more than 40% over the decade from 1997 to 2007.

We have provided consistent and adequate long term funding for road safety. In 2006 we announced and finalised the distribution of £110m for each of the four years from 2007/08 to 2010/11. This specific funding for road safety replaced the netting off arrangements for the National Safety Camera Programme.

Supporting the road safety profession means more than simply providing funding. We want to support the profession by:

- *Improving the way we manage road safety information with a view to providing clear, relevant and evidenced advice to those who need it.*
- *Providing annual data on local road safety performance at local authority level and on key routes, to underpin a geographically intelligent approach to road safety.*
- *Working with local agencies to build capacity to reduce casualties.*
- *Encouraging self-help among local authorities, building on the Road Safety Timebank concept.*
- *Partnership with professional bodies to champion skills initiatives and continuing professional development among safety engineers, road safety officers, transport planners and emergency services personnel.*

We will also provide political advocacy and leadership—championing the road safety profession and the great work it does.

A key idea in the consultation paper is the concept of “smart delivery”. This means that that we want to work with those who deliver road safety locally, to target the areas where the potential for safety improvement is greatest; making maximum use of the available data and research.

34. The approach taken to investigating accidents differs sharply across the transport modes and there is insufficient cross-over between road and the other modes. The systems approach that is routine in marine, rail and aviation accident investigation and prevention is much less apparent in road safety. The Government should facilitate greater exchange of personnel, ideas and learning across the modes. (Paragraph 156)

We are keen to take a more cross-modal approach to transport safety and to create the opportunity to share best practice and information between the modes. A group has been set up within the Department which brings together safety representatives from each mode, to investigate issues of mutual interest and to identify areas where joint working would be most profitable.

We agree that there should be a more strongly system-based approach to road safety and we have set out proposals for this in our consultation paper (see response to recommendation 5 above).

35. The Government should establish a road accident investigation branch, to parallel those for aviation, marine and rail. Its purpose would be to draw together lessons from the fatal accident investigations undertaken by police and other sources. (Paragraph 157)

Given the existing roles of the police and coroners in relation to fatal road collisions, we think that a full separate investigatory body would be an unnecessary duplication of effort. But our consultation paper proposes that we should appoint a new independent Expert Panel which will have responsibility for advising Ministers on the trends and new issues relating to fatal road collisions. The Panel will act as a strong central intelligence to ensure that lessons from real world experience are learned and disseminated quickly to delivery agents. The panel will provide an annual report to Ministers and to Parliament.

We also intend to improve our systems for learning from the findings of police investigations into fatal accidents. There are current arrangements whereby this information is sent to TRL, but in many cases, this only occurs when all proceedings have been completed, which can take a long time. We want to take steps to speed up this process. Our consultation paper also proposes that we will explore the idea of creating an anonymised database of selected information from the police investigation which is not available from Stats 19. This would include such factors as seat belt wearing and licensing information. This information could be available within a very short time of the accident occurring. We are currently piloting this idea with a few police forces with a view to drawing up a specification for a national system.

The aim of these measures is to speed up the flow of information from fatal crashes so that at both the national and local level we can learn from them, so as to facilitate intelligent and targeted safety intervention.