

Who is responsible?

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My CV is entirely appropriate for driving, road safety and prosecution expertise and can be found at <http://bit.ly/HhaOnE>

I will focus on roads and driving because of my expertise. But on the assumption that the Commission is attempting to compare roads transport with air, rail and shipping in order to achieve more interference, legislation and control of road transport.

Question:

- 1) Leadership & Responsibility: Yes there are clear lines of responsibility in road transport and they are with the DfT., The Home Office , ACPO, and the various police forces. One only need to see the daily magistrates & Crown courts lists to see that road legislation is being rigorously applied .
- 2) Objectives & targets: A nonsense question. Is The Commission suggesting there are to be targets on plane, train crashes and shipping accidents? It implies that the sinking of boats, can be stopped with targets. So the only way we can apply a target to any transport mode is to stop it all together. Then we can have safety Nirvana. The trick is to set a reasonable and cost/ benefit level of casualty rate where, if we aim too low, we kill more people from the economic effects of our tampering and hindrance of a major infrastructure. In road transport, we have long past that level already. We are directly and indirectly doing more harm than good. And here we see in the question that this enquiry is really all about road transport. How can you compare road traffic, with 35 million lumps of high speed machinery, sharing confined space with opposing like machinery, walkers, children, animals, cyclists and operated by very average people, with planes, shipping and trains, which are separated from each other, not mingling with the community and operated by very highly qualified and monitored individuals? Is this a serious question?

The driving and road transport is an integral part of the other three types of transport. Trains, planes and shipping depend on road transport. Any road accident in connection with the operation of any of them, must be counted as one of their accidents. A driver would not be on the road if he were not travelling to his plane, his boat, his train. Any accident during these drives must be counted as part of that transport mode then.

- 3) Public perception: We shouldn't tell lies for a start. Dishonest spin and sound-bite. When this can be easily challenged and disproved it discredits the objective and exposes it. We should not exaggerate or be false about flawed policy. This is a life and death issue, so we must tell the truth.

- 4) Funding: There are already many billions of pounds being spent on road safety and very little of it stops one single road accident. There are far too many bogus charities, pressure groups, lobby groups, partnerships foundations all taking money and most with no CV or qualification in the subject. Many are just ideologically motivated by green agendas and are anti driver too. After 300 billion driver miles a year, there are less accidents from all causes on the road than from accidents in the home, 5 times less than from NHS failures and 37 time less than from smoking disease. So clearly none of this interest is about genuine road safety or saving life. If it were, we would be focussing on people's kitchens. These charities are being fed and supported by the multi billion pound Road Safety and Speeding Industries in one glorious money go round. We need to fund genuine expert road safety but not amateurs without any CV and with other agendas. You will never achieve good road safety based on profiteering and or ideology. Both are easily identified currently behind most road safety policy.
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation: Road safety is already highly monitored and discussed. The previous paragraph explains how there is far too much focus on it compared with other causes of casualties.

There is already far too much investigation of road accidents that are entirely counter productive and probably cause more casualties and cost more lives than they save. When a motorway is closed for many hours it costs many millions of pounds that could be better spent in emergency services and NHS and saving more lives. But no-one counts the knock on accidents that day and elsewhere from stress, or making up time. The accidents stats don't ask: 'Were you held up or delayed by police road closures during your journey?' or as in 2) 'Were you on your way to catch a plane?'

There is very little chance that these investigations actually achieve anything at all. Lincoln was closed for most of a day for an accident that the local News reporter was able to accurately analyse immediately and confirmed nine months later by The Coroner. We all knew from the start that the massive M5 collision that it was caused by smoke across the road. The subsequent months of costly investigation didn't find anything different nor were they able to make out a prosecution either. Of course train crashes and plane crashes are entirely different. They do all have common denominators that can repeat but note how the priority with rail is to get the track clear and up and running as soon as possible, whereas planes usually don't crash on busy commercial areas or highways or impede other air traffic. Even then, the object is to take the debris away as soon as possible for clinical examination. So should the debris of motor accidents then.

How can there be independent investigators? Where would all the staff come from? If they are paid, they will not be independent.

- 6) Research: We already lead globally in road accident safety in the UK. 'Someone dies on the road in the world every 30 seconds' goes the mantra. But here in the UK, it's only every 16000 seconds. So why the Commission?

Transport Safety Commission. A submission by Keith Peat, Drivers' Union
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