



House of Commons
Transport Committee

Cycling safety: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2014–15

Seventh Special Report of Session
2014–15

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Gordon Clarke (Clerk), Nick Beech (Second Clerk), Alexandra Meakin (Committee Specialist), Adrian Hitchins (Senior Committee Assistant), Stewart McIlvenna (Committee Assistant), and Hannah Pearce (Media Officer)

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Seventh Special Report

On 10 September 2014 we received a response from the Government to the Transport Committee's Third Report of 2014–15, cycling safety, which we publish with this Special Report.¹

Government response

The Department for Transport is pleased to have the opportunity to respond on behalf of HM Government to the conclusions and recommendations of the Transport Committee (“the Committee”) on Cycling Safety. The Department welcomes this report, and the contribution it has made to the debate around cycle safety.

The safety of cyclists, and all other road users, is an important issue and one the Government takes seriously. The latest available annual road casualty figures for Great Britain² show that in 2013:

- The number of pedal cyclists killed decreased by 8 per cent from 118 in 2012 to 109 in 2013. This is 16 per cent lower than the 2005-09 average.
- However, it is not possible to tell whether this latest annual change is simply a one-off fluctuation or part of a longer term trend because the number of pedal cyclist fatalities each year has fluctuated over the last six years.
- Seriously injured pedal cyclist casualties decreased by 2 per cent to 3,143 in 2013. This is the first decrease in seriously injured cyclist casualties since 2004, though again it is not possible to tell whether this is the start of a long term trend or a single fluctuation.
- Total pedal cyclist casualties increased by 2 per cent to 19,438 in 2013 due to an increase in slightly injured pedal cyclist casualties. This is 18 per cent higher than the 2005-09 average.
- The reasons for the recent trends in pedal cyclist casualties are not clear, but we do know that pedal cycle traffic has been on the increase. DfT's National Travel Survey suggests that pedal cycle traffic in 2013 was around 20 per cent higher than the average for the 2005-09 period.

The latest provisional quarterly road casualty figures for Great Britain³ (for the first quarter of 2014) show that:

- In the year ending March 2014, pedal cyclist KSIs increased by 7 per cent to 3,400. Total pedal cyclist casualties increased by 14 per cent to 20,740.

1 HC 286, published on 18 July 2014.

2 Reported road casualties in Great Britain: main results 2013 (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-main-results-2013)

3 Reported road casualties in Great Britain provisional estimates: Jan to Mar 2014 (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-provisional-estimates-jan-to-mar-2014)

- Comparing the first quarter of 2014 (Jan-Mar) to the same period in 2013, pedal cyclist KSIs increased by 27 per cent to 690.
- The latest results show cyclist casualty increases for both the rolling year (year ending March 2014 vs year ending March 2013) and quarter on quarter (Jan – Mar 2014 vs Jan – Mar 2013). The reasons for this are not fully clear. It is worth noting that quarter 1 2013 was a particularly low quarter for casualties, due in part to the very cold and prolonged winter in this period (reducing the numbers of vulnerable road users particularly pedal cyclists and motorcyclists on the road and thus reducing their exposure to accidents). Although quarter 1 2014 had milder temperature, it was one of the wettest on record, with some severe flooding. We might have expected this to have reduced exposure for vulnerable road users, resulting in fewer casualties. The large quarter-on-quarter increase seen in cyclist KSIs suggests that the wet weather did not have the expected effect.
- As more 2014 data becomes available later in the year, we will get a clearer picture of the latest trend.

Per mile travelled, a cyclist is no more likely to be killed than a pedestrian- in 2013 for both modes of travel there were 34 fatalities per billion miles travelled.

Relative risk of different forms of transport, Great Britain: 2013

Casualty rate per billion vehicle miles		
	Killed	Killed or seriously injured
Car driver	2	24
Pedestrian ¹	34	463
Pedal cyclist	34	1,036
Motorcycle rider	119	1,853

¹ 2013 NTS data used to calculate 2013 pedestrian rates.

Of the 109 pedal cyclist fatalities in 2013, 14 occurred in London. This figure was unchanged from 2012 despite a high profile spate of deaths over a short period in London in late 2013.

The publication “Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report 2013” (for release 25 Sept 2014) will include a chapter with more detailed analysis on cycling casualty trends and circumstances.

Recommendations

The Government welcomes the Committee's recommendations included in their report. Our response to each recommendation is set out below.

20mph Zones

Recommendation

Local authorities should be encouraged to consider introducing 20 mph limits, accompanied by traffic calming measures, in high-risk areas to improve the safety of all road users. A lower speed limit in residential areas could not only improve safety, but could also contribute to creating town and city environments that people of all ages can enjoy as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. We note, however, that lower speed limits will not be appropriate or necessary on all roads, and in all areas and consultations with local residents to endure local support for lower speed limits will be critical to their success. It is also for local police forces to consider how much priority is placed at present on the enforcement of lower speed limits.

We ask the Government to consider what steps it could take to make it easier and cheaper for local authorities to introduce lower speed limits.

Government Response

Following the Traffic Signs Policy Review, we have already made it easier for 20 mph zones/limits to be installed. The area-wide authorisations issued to every local authority in England in October 2011 relaxed signing requirements for 20 mph zones/limits so that all local authorities can now use repeaters or roundel markings instead of physical features. While not specifically a cycling measure, reducing speeds and improving the street environment through implementing 20mph limits and zones can make conditions safer and more attractive for cyclists and pedestrians.

In addition, the Department has recently commissioned research into the effectiveness of 20 mph limits. The study will cover many aspects including effects on speed, collisions, casualties and modal shift. The research will also consider best practice, road users' perceptions and effects on the quality of the environment. A literature review is due for publication later this autumn whilst the final research will complete in 2017.

Education

Recommendation

Training on cycle safety for both cyclists and drivers will not eliminate casualties on the road, but could contribute to a culture of mutual understanding and respect between different types of road users.

Cycle training should be available to all cyclists: children of primary and secondary age, adults seeking to gain confidence, and those looking to refresh their road skills. Local

authorities should work with local cycling organisations and retailers to fund and promote this training and ensure that it is best suited to the local environment.

We call on the Government to set out in its response to this Report how it will use the data on road safety and cycle usage to monitor the effectiveness of cycle training on both safety of cyclists on the road and cyclists' perception of their safety.

We welcome the Government's statement that cycle safety is part of the driving test, with drivers assessed on their approach to sharing the road with cyclists – In the practical test if possible, and certainly through the theory test.

As part of its next revision of the Highway Code the Government should consider amending the code to promote cycle safety and to ensure that it reflects the rights of cyclists to share the road with drivers.

The Government should reassess its approach to road safety awareness and set out, in its response to this report, the steps it will take to ensure a clear and consistent message of mutual respect between all road users and compliance with the law by cyclists and drivers.

Government Response

The Government recognises the importance of education and training for all road users to ensure a culture of mutual understanding and respect. A number of initiatives have been implemented that will increase the awareness of both drivers and cyclists, as set out below.

THINK! campaign

The current THINK! cyclist campaign takes an even-handed approach to target both cyclists and drivers alike. The campaign uses a series of practical tips to advise and remind both groups of the rules of the road and the positive actions that they can take to help reduce cyclist casualties. These messages were used in a recent advertising campaign (spring 2014) that ran in roadside locations and bus backs to reach drivers and cyclists at the point of action. THINK! also works closely with stakeholders and partners to deliver these key messages to our target audiences.

Driver CPC

The DVSA will be encouraging the further and greater consideration of road safety issues within future training for driver CPC. It continues to evaluate the training and will consider what could be implemented better in the future, in the context of the European Commission's review of the legislation, which may progress further later this year.

The *national driver and rider training standard*, which describes the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to be a safe and responsible driving instructor, and the *national standard for driving cars*, which sets out what the DVSA believes is needed to be a safe and responsible driver, are very clear about the importance of the need for drivers and motorcyclists to be aware of vulnerable road users like cyclists.

Two of the UK's largest driving schools – the AA and BSM – teach specific modules of cycle safety to their pupils. The modules have been created with input from cyclists.

Both the theory and practical elements of the driving tests assess a candidate's awareness of, and knowledge of, how to deal appropriately with vulnerable road users. The theory test contains specific questions to assess a candidate's awareness of cyclists and whilst the DVSA cannot guarantee that a practical test candidate will encounter a cyclist during their test, many of its test routes include roads with cycle lanes.

Highway Code

The Highway Code is intended to promote the safety of all road users, including cyclists. It is amended at least once each year to ensure factual alignment with existing Government legislation. It has historically undergone a major revision approximately every ten years (with the last major revision occurring in 2007). We will consult with cycling groups on the content of the code – including the rights of cyclists to safely share the road with drivers - at the point of the next major revision.

Bikeability

Bikeability not only provides trainees with riding skills suited to the road, but also covers the relevant sections of the Highway Code, bicycle checks, the correct use of safety equipment, understanding driver blind spots – particularly those of large vehicles, route planning and sharing the road with other cyclists.

The Department for Transport provides funding to Local Highway Authorities and School Games Organiser Host Schools for the delivery of Bikeability training to children between school years 5 – 9 (ages 9-14). A contribution of up to £40 per training place is made to cover the costs of delivering Bikeability Levels 1& 2 combined, Level 2 and/or Level 3. The Department for Transport seeks to accommodate as many bids as possible and to date none have been refused. Local Authorities may also contribute additional funding to cycle training subject to local priorities.

Bikeability is also for adults. The Bikeability website contains further information for those wishing to find a suitable cycle training provider. Some local authorities provide free or subsidised adult cycle training. In addition, 48 projects funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund contained adult cycle training, while of the 44 successful schemes recently announced as part of the LSTF 2015/16, over half (24) of the packages include measures for adult cycling provision.

It is at the discretion of the Bikeability grant recipient whether to deliver training in house or via a third party Bikeability scheme. They are also free to consider further opportunities to work with local cycling organisations and retailers to fund and promote further training that it is best suited to the local environment.

With regards to the call on Government to set out how data on road safety and cycle usage will be used to monitor the effectiveness of cycle training on both cyclists' safety and their perception of safety, it is not possible to establish from current road safety statistics whether a cyclist has completed Bikeability training. However, the Department for Transport is currently undertaking research to explore how Bikeability impacts on safety considerations, in particular an individual's ability to perceive and respond appropriately to hazards.

The Department for Transport's Bikeability brand awareness surveys (conducted between 2011 and 2013) had some encouraging results with respondents recognising the importance of formal cycle training schemes. The following benefits were also associated with Bikeability: improved road awareness, improved safety on the road, improved participant confidence, giving participants a realistic experience and teaching participants the skills they need.

Cycle Infrastructure

Recommendations

Safe cycling should be an integral part of the design of all new infrastructure projects. Local authorities should be able to demonstrate that the cycling has been considered and incorporated into the design of new roads at the earliest stage, and that local cyclists have been consulted as part of this process.

Cycle-proofing should not necessitate a blanket design and protocol for cycle lanes, which would inevitably fail to reflect local circumstances. Instead there should be an emphasis on sharing best practice. For example, to improve cycle lanes the Department for Transport should set out different options for local authorities to adopt, each designed with cyclists and meeting or going beyond minimum standards of safety. We ask the Department to report back on progress on the sharing of good practice between local authorities.

Government Response

Decisions on how best to provide for cyclists on local roads are matters for the local authority – not only do they have a duty to balance the needs of all road users when considering how to design and manage their road networks, but they also have a detailed understanding of their roads.

The Department for Transport's guidance in Local Transport Note 2/08: Cycle Infrastructure Design is comprehensive and allows councils to design good, safe schemes within current legislation. It already includes most of the measures highlighted as good practice by, for example, the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group.

Appropriate training of designers and engineers is essential to the delivery of high quality cycling infrastructure. The Department for Transport believes that this is a key area to be addressed and has had initial discussions with professional bodies such as the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, and the Institution of Highway Engineers.

The Department for Transport will consider endorsing the revised London Cycle Design Standards, drafted by Transport for London, and the Active Travel Guidance drafted by the Welsh Government. Public consultations on both of these documents were held recently, and the Department has been in discussion with both organisations as part of those processes.

In addition, the Department recognises its role in sharing information about good quality cycle infrastructure design amongst the local government community. The Minister for Cycling, Robert Goodwill, has directed Officials to work with the Department's Cycle

Proofing Working Group to shape a programme of work that will capture and share best practice in cycle proofing roads.

The Department for Transport is currently working on revising the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) to include many changes aimed at helping authorities provide better cycling facilities. These changes have been developed in conjunction with cycling stakeholders over the last five years. Measures being considered include:

- Removing the requirement for a lead-in land for cyclists at advanced stop lines making it easier for highway authorities to install advanced stop lines at junctions;
- New traffic lights to give cyclists a head start at junctions;
- Options for joint crossings for used by both pedestrians and cyclists;
- Options for bigger cycle boxes (advanced stop lines) to accommodate the growth in cycling, and to make it safer for cyclists at junctions;
- Removing the requirement for Traffic Orders for some cycling facilities, to help make it easier for local authorities to install them.

A public consultation on the draft TSRGD 2015 was held between 1 May - 12 June 2014. The Department for Transport received many responses from cycling stakeholders, broadly in favour of the measures proposed. A consultation response will be published this autumn, and the aim is to bring the new regulations into force by March 2015.

However in advance of these revisions, the Department has already made changes which will help local authorities provide for cyclists without the need to wait for new regulations. For example, the Department has given every local authority in England permission to:

- Use 'no entry except cycles' signing which can facilitate contraflow cycling.
- Use 'trixi' mirrors to help lorry drivers see cyclists in their blind spot at junctions; and
- Implement 20 mph speed restrictions with greater flexibility.

This followed other changes made in revisions to TSRGD in 2011, including other options for providing contraflow cycling and new signing for cycle routes.

As well as changes to traffic signing legislation, in October 2012 Transport for London (TfL) commissioned TRL to trial measures including low level mini signals, new roundabout designs and new ways of helping cyclists turn right at traffic lights. The Department for Transport has been working closely with TfL on this, and were on both working and steering groups for the trials. In September 2013 the Department gave Cambridgeshire County Council permission to trial an 'early start' signal for cyclists, as an alternative way of allowing cyclists priority at traffic lights. Since then, other authorities including Transport for Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Council have applied for similar authorisations. The Department has also been working directly with the Cycle City Ambition Grant authorities to help overcome regulatory issues with implementing their schemes.

We would encourage local authorities to consider and make use of all these innovative measures when designing cycling facilities, to ensure their infrastructure benefit cyclists as much as possible.

HGVs

Recommendation

We are greatly concerned by the number of cyclists killed in collisions with HGVs. The disproportionate number of HGVs involved in collisions with cyclists demonstrates that the industry must improve its road safety record. We are particularly concerned by the number of construction vehicles, such as concrete and tipper lorries, involved in fatal collisions with cyclists and the failure of some haulage companies to follow best practice around cycle safety.

We welcome the European Parliament's approval of changes to the design of HGV cabs to reduce drivers' blind side. We call on the Government to ratify these changes which will improve safety for cyclist and other vulnerable road users.

We are not persuaded that a ban on HGVs in town centres would be workable in practice. Instead we endorse the Minister's call for a culture of safety for all HGV drivers and support the education of HGV drivers and cyclists about road safety.

We call on the freight industry to create a culture of safety among HGVs. We recommend a timetable for the development of an industry wide code of conduct, and a clear programme of work to promote the enforcement of HGV safety regulations. The effectiveness of these measures must be monitored and demonstrated by a reduction in the proportion of cyclists' collisions involving HGVs, and by the number of cyclists injured or killed in collisions with HGVs. If such a reduction is not forthcoming once safety measures are implemented, we expect the Department to consider and set out the steps it will take to ensure the safety of cyclists on our roads.

Government Response

The Government supports measures to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries arising from collisions between Heavy Goods Vehicles and cyclists and other vulnerable road users, including regulatory changes where appropriate. In particular, we support the inter-agency industrial HGV Taskforce in London, and value its work cracking down on non-compliant and unsafe HGVs.

Department for Transport officials have negotiated improved requirements in international (UN-CE) regulations for mirrors on the passenger side of vehicles, which will mean that drivers have a better view of the area adjacent to the cab, which should improve safety for cyclists.

Stephen Hammond MP has written to Commissioner Kallas urging him to implement these changes in the EU, and officials have also engaged with the European Commission. We understand that the Commission intends to mandate the improved mirror requirements later this year, and that HGVs registered after 30 June 2015 will have the improved mirrors.

Officials are continuing to work in the UN-ECE to develop the technical requirements for camera monitor systems to replace existing mirrors. These systems should enable the driver to have a better view of other road users around their vehicle.

The Department is working with SMMT, Transport for London and other stakeholders on HGV safety, including manufacturers of aftermarket proximity sensor systems. This will provide relevant timely information and could help to improve safety on a wider basis and valuable insights for manufacturers to improve their products.

The Government supports the proposed amendments to the General Circulation Directive 96/53 agreed by the Transport Council in June 2014, which will allow additional maximum vehicle lengths specifically for features that improve safety, as well as fuel efficiency, of large vehicles. The next stage in the legislative process, negotiations to agree a final text with the European Parliament, are due to take place in autumn 2014 under the Italian Presidency. We would then expect the necessary detailed changes to type approval legislation on specific vehicle designs within these new maximum dimensions to be taken forward as soon as possible.

The freight industry operates within a well-established regulatory framework that encourages safe and professional operations and most operators perform to a high standard. However, there is clearly scope for even better performance in this area and the Department for Transport is pleased to see that the industry is taking steps to improve its culture and practice with regard to the safety of vulnerable road users. This includes the work of many freight companies and initiatives to spread these approaches such as the Road Haulage Association's "Good Practice Guide on Managing Risk Related to Vulnerable Road Users" and the Freight Transport Association's "Cycling Code". The Department would like to see more companies across the industry adopting such practices.

The Department for Transport will continue to monitor the number and rate of casualties (including cyclists) killed or injured in incidents involving HGVs and would expect to see a continuing reduction in casualty numbers. National statistics record this information and the strategic framework for road safety identifies some key indicators related to safety.

For information, the number of HGVs involved in fatal accidents has decreased by 53%, from 570 in 2002 to 270 in 2013, in line with the 50% reduction for all vehicle types involved in fatal accidents over the same period, from 5,647 to 2,846. The number of HGVs involved in fatal or serious accidents has fallen by 53% from 2,692 in 2002 to 1,277 in 2013, while the number of all types of vehicle involved in fatal or serious accidents fell by 37% over the same period, from 57,509 to 36,020.

So, while the number of HGVs involved in fatal accidents has reduced significantly, the proportion of vehicles involved in fatal accidents that are HGVs has fallen from 10% in 2002 to 9% in 2013. The proportion of vehicles involved in fatal or serious accidents that are HGVs has reduced from 5% in 2002 to 4% in 2013. Given the larger size and weight of HGVs relative to all other road users, the outcome of any collision is likely to be more severe and so they are likely to be involved in a greater proportion of fatal accidents, even when the number of such accidents has halved.

The Committee has acknowledged that removing HGVs from the roads by banning them from town centres is not a workable option and may in fact increase risks by encouraging a

larger number of smaller vehicles instead. However, the Department for Transport is supporting measures that should help to reduce the number of HGVs in busy areas at peak times, such as the new guidance on quiet out of hours deliveries, which was published earlier this year. Where such quiet deliveries schemes are implemented, this should help to reduce the number of goods vehicles on the roads in peak hours and reduce the risk of collisions with cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

The Department's trial of longer semi-trailers is also helping to reduce the number of HGVs on the roads. The evaluation published earlier this year estimated that over the 15 months to December 2013, the 600 or so longer vehicles in use by then had saved an estimated 600,000 to 900,000 vehicle kilometres. The evaluation has also found no increase in safety risk from the use of these longer vehicles. These benefits can be expected to increase as there are now over 1,100 longer semi-trailers on the roads and several hundred more are expected to come into use over the coming months. Grants to support modal shift from road to rail and water are also removing in excess of 800,000 lorry journeys from the roads each year.

Volumetric Mixers

Recommendation

We note that Batched on Site Association's argument that there is no evidence that volumetric mixers had contributed to cycle accidents. We do not, however accept their argument that such vehicles should not be regulated as goods vehicles. By the Batched on Site Association's own evidence, the vehicles spend close to a third of their time on the roads, and should be regulated in the same manner as goods vehicles.

We welcome the Minister's commitment to closing the loophole around volumetric mixers and ask that the Department provides an update on progress, as part of their response to this Report.

Government Response

There are certain types of HGVs or types of operation of HGV that are exempt from the need to be annually tested for roadworthiness or specified on an operator's licence with the additional requirements that entails. Previous commitments have been given to review the current exemptions in support of road safety, proportionate regulation, fair competition and compliance with EU legislation.

The Government is planning to consult this autumn on the existing exemptions from annual testing and operator licencing for certain classes of HGVs, including in both cases volumetric mixers.

The consultation is expected to run for 13 weeks. It may lead to legislative change in 2015.

The role of the Government

Recommendation

As the Prime Minister has set out his ambitions for a cycling revolution it must be for the Government to champion cycling and not outsource it to a powerless, and inevitably short-term, tsar or champion. It is right for a minister in the Department for Transport to take on this role, and be accountable to Parliament for his performance. We welcome the Minister's willingness to take on this role.

To achieve the Prime Minister's ambition of a cycling revolution, it is necessary but not sufficient for cycling to be championed by the Department for Transport. Government must work across its self-imposed departmental boundaries to fund and facilitate a culture change supporting cycling. We ask the Minister to set out in his response to this report that specific steps he will take to coordinate cycling policy across the departments for Transport, Communities and Local Government, Health and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Government Response

In August 2013, as part of a wider cycling announcement, the Prime Minister committed the Department for Transport to the publication of a Cycling Delivery Plan. Officials have been developing this Plan, which will cover walking as well as cycling, in discussion with other Government Departments and in consultation with stakeholders.

The Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan is a key deliverable of the Government's Moving More, Living More programme to ensure a physical activity legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As such the Department for Transport is working closely with a number of Government Departments not just to develop the Plan but to ensure the actions within it are implemented. The Plan sets out Government's commitments to cycling and walking over the next 10 years, including setting out a number of actions for the Department, other Government Departments, local government and other delivery partners. The Plan will soon be published in draft to allow further discussion and comment prior to the publication of a final Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan later this year.

Funding

Recommendation

The cycling budget is currently fragmented between different initiatives with no consistency or clarity over funding sources. There is no confirmed figure for the annual spending per capita, but witnesses estimated it was just £2 per head, and compared this figure to the higher levels of funding in other European countries.

We recommend that the Government publishes each year the total budget for cycling to enable strategic and long-term planning of cycle infrastructure, training and promotion.

We have set out the improvements required to cycling infrastructure and training, and view these measures as essential to keep cyclists safe on the roads. To achieve these safety benefits, we need to see a steady and planned increase in per-capita spend on cycling. We call on the

Government to set out and ambition to reach £10 per head by 2020, with a timetable of how this will be achieved.

Government Response

The Government has more than doubled funding for cycling to £374m in 2011-15, or £622m with match funding. Spend on cycling is currently around £5 per person in England, and over £10 per person per year in London and the eight cycle ambition cities: Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Oxford. Funding for cycling is provided through the Integrated Transport Block, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, and specific cycling grants, including the Cycling Ambition Grants. The Government recently announced significant new investment with the Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister announcing in July the allocation of £3bn for local transport schemes as part of the Local Growth Fund. This long-term funding, which runs until 2020/21, included £700m for packages of schemes that include cycling and walking and a further £600m specifically for sustainable transport, which will enable the delivery of step changes in cycling and walking.