

## **Call for Evidence: Road Safety Strategy**

The Government has published a Road Safety Strategy, the first in over a decade. The strategy sets out the Government's intended approach to reducing death and serious injury on Britain's roads. across four different themes: supporting road users, using technology, data and innovation, safer infrastructure and robust enforcement. A series of consultations has been launched under the strategy on measures designed to improve driver competence, support safer driving in later life, strengthen rider safety, and enhance vehicle safety standards.

The Transport Committee is launching an inquiry to examine the ambitions and potential effectiveness of the strategy. We will examine the Government's proposals and consultations, and evidence on wider issues raised by the strategy, including speed limit management, safety on rural roads, and lessons from international and UK practice.

### **This response**

This response is submitted on behalf of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport. ADEPT is the voice of local authority place directors and their teams. Our members manage vital local services - from highways, waste, recycling and planning - while also preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

ADEPT is a membership based, voluntary organisation with members across England. We bring together directors from county, unitary, metropolitan and combined authorities, along with sub-national transport bodies and corporate partners. Collectively, our members provide services for more than 42 million people, manage 164,000 miles of road and handle around 65% of all recycled waste in England. We develop, support and represent members to make their places more resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous, leading the transformation of local authorities. We proactively engage with central government on emerging issues, promoting initiatives aimed at influencing policy, regulation and funding, developing best practices and by responding to government initiatives and consultations. We also drive leadership development, foster innovation through programmes and initiatives. Find out more [about us](#).

### **Ambitions and evidence**

a. The strategy sets targets of a 65 per cent reduction in people killed or seriously injured (KSI), and a 70 per cent reduction in child KSIs, by 2035. Do these targets reflect the right level of ambition?

We welcome the new strategy; the targets are challenging and ambitious but reflect the view that death and serious injury are not acceptable as part of use of the highway network. With a high level of political and financial support from central government they are achievable.

b. Are governance, delivery and resourcing arrangements across Government departments and key partners strong enough to achieve these targets?

Not currently – the proposed board, panel and road safety investigation branch do not yet exist, though plans are in place for this to happen. The required guidelines/guidance and commitment to funding improvements over and above existing activity are not in place.

c. Are the measures set out in the Strategy collectively sufficient to deliver its targets? What further measures, if any, would strengthen its impact?

The strategy is a good starting point and statement of intent; it is clear within the document that much of the detail which will be required to achieve the targets have yet to be developed. Manual for Streets3, new speed limit setting and camera use guidance and engagement recommendations are awaited. Only when they are in place can this question be fully answered.

d. Are the measures set out in the Strategy based on robust evidence?

Yes, the use of injury collision data is robust and the links with health data will show the links that are missing. This may need revisions to the targets as more information emerges. Leading rather than lagging indicators would assist in speeding delivery, based on risk rating, connected vehicle data and telemetry. These should be collected centrally and provided to highway authorities and other interested groups to ensure consistency.

e. The Government has said its Strategy is informed by Sweden's Safe System approach. What other international or UK examples offer the most relevant lessons for reducing deaths and serious injuries?

Safe system is a good option, as informed by the need to support active travel. There is a need to link activity by the Department for Transport, Home Office, Department of Health and Social Care and the Treasury to balance the need for safe travel against active travel and health improvements it can make possible as well as how schemes are

assessed for value for money by moving away from travel time as the key economic driver.

### **Theme 1: Supporting road users**

f. What measures would be most effective in reducing deaths and serious injuries involving new and novice drivers? What are the likely impacts of introducing a minimum learning period for learner drivers?

Graduated driving licences have worked well elsewhere. In many cases, the minimum learning period seems to track with the time it takes to obtain a test date. Logbooks showing leaning undertaken will show whether any learning period is effective.

g. What is the right approach to safe driving later in life? What safeguards are required to protect both safety and independence of older drivers?

Retesting for all drivers at licence renewal would be ideal, showing what areas of driving or riding need attention. Eye testing and medical checks rather than self-certification would ensure drivers and riders are well enough to use the road. Some alternatives to car use, particularly for rural areas would assist when licences have to be given up.

h. What should the proposed work-related road safety charter require of organisations that employ people to drive or ride for work?

This should follow the principles of 'Driving for Better Business' which is already in place on a voluntary basis.

i. To what extent does fear of traffic danger deter certain modes of travel, particularly walking and cycling, and what measures would be most effective in addressing this?

Fear and inconvenience do deter walking and cycling. The highway network has become motor-vehicle oriented with non-motorised users poorly served by infrastructure and attitudes. Slower urban speeds would assist, as will better crossing facilities and creating a view that pedestrians and cycle riders are legitimate road users. The details will depend on location but there must be a move away from motor vehicle dominance. This is probably even more of a challenge than the overall casualty reduction targets because it will require significant cultural shift over many years.

j. What should reform of motorcycle training, testing and licensing look like in practice?

N/A – others will be better placed to answer.

**Theme 2: Taking advantage of technology, data and innovation for safer vehicles and post collision care**

k. How can Government maximise the safety benefits of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and ensure they are used safely and appropriately?

Better explanation of their operation and use, more effective ADAS systems. New cars are not explained to drivers and systems are variable in how user-friendly and effective they are in use.

l. What is the right approach to strengthening vehicle safety standards? What measures should the Government prioritise in response to issues such as headlamp glare, increasing vehicle size and any broader issues not currently being considered by the Government's consultation?

Better protection and collision avoidance, particularly with respect to vulnerable road users. Vehicles should better protect those outside.

**Theme 3: Ensuring infrastructure is safe**

m. How should evidence on the relationship between speed limits and safety influence new guidance? Does the Strategy strike the correct balance between a nationally set direction and local decision-making regarding speed?

The proposed speed limit setting guidance is awaited. Nationally set direction will make things consistent across authorities; the balance is yet unknown. Lower default urban and rural speed limits would need to come from the centre and will be key in reducing the number and severity of casualties. The relationship between lower speeds and less severe casualties is already established. This will also relate to the proposed safety camera guidelines.

n. What measures would be most effective in improving safety on rural roads, and is the Strategy's proposed approach sufficient?

The guidance is awaited. As yet it is unclear what they may contain. Rural road segmentation, speed limits and local alignment improvements can address rural issues but will be neither simple nor cheap in financial or political will terms.

o. What scope is there for road design and maintenance to further improve safety?

Revision to the Road Safety Audit process to make improvements mandatory rather than subject to a project manager's decision. Increased maintenance of carriageway surfaces, road markings and signs are needed. Raised budgets across multiple years are welcome, but the backlog in all aspects of highway maintenance needs more.

#### **Theme 4: Robust enforcement to protect all road users**

p. What measures would most improve compliance and deterrence in relation to motoring offences? Which such offences have the biggest impacts on collision and casualty rates?

Increases in expectation of enforcement by camera or police officer. It is the expectation of being caught that modifies behaviour rather than the potential penalty. Speed reduction will help as will reducing impaired riding and driving and those who are careless or reckless in their road use.

q. What role do the type and severity of sanctions play in deterring dangerous driving, and which sanctioning approaches are most effective at changing driver behaviour?

As above, penalties matter, but the expectation of being caught matter more. Removal of the licence to ride or drive is rare. There is a public view that many infringements of the law are normal behaviour but those that result in serious or fatal injury are not punished harshly enough. Consequently, a need to remove the social acceptability of poor riding or driving through campaigning, the need for retesting and reviewing of licenced user ability and attitude to improve skills and behaviour will assist. Reinforce that driving is a qualified, licenced activity and that standards must be met at all times.

#### **Sending us evidence**

We recognise that road safety is not an abstract topic and you may want to share personal experiences. Please be aware that we cannot take forward individual cases or provide casework support.

Select committees are not able to investigate individual incidents, determine fault, overturn decisions, or intervene in live disputes. We cannot follow up on individual cases with the police, insurers, courts, local authorities, NHS bodies, or other organisations.

Please do not mention incidents which are or could become the subject of court proceedings, including inquests. The Committee cannot consider or publish material relating to cases that are active.

Please do not include information that could identify individuals unnecessarily (for example addresses, vehicle registration numbers or detailed medical information).

Road safety can be a distressing and sensitive topic, and you may find it helpful to reach out to a support organisation for advice and guidance:

- Samaritans (24/7): call 116 123 (UK and ROI)
- Brake, the road safety charity: support and information for people affected by road crashes: 0808 800 0401

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It is the Committee's usual practice, however, not to publish evidence where a submitter requests anonymity or confidentiality, which you can do when you submit online.

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