

A Safer Way: Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World

Vision and targets (Chapters 3 and 8)

1. Do you agree that our vision for road safety should be to have the safest roads in the world? (Chapter 3)

Yes, such a target is a bold initiative by Government. Its attainment should place Britain back at the fore of road safety research and practice although Sweden's 'Vision Zero' will be hard to beat.

2. Do you agree that we should define a strategy running over twenty years to 2030, but with review points after five and ten years? (Chapter 3)

Yes, because, as other countries "rise to the challenge" of reducing casualties on their roads, the proposed British targets may need to be reviewed if we are, indeed, to have "the safest roads in the world"

3. Do you agree that our targets should be to reduce:

- deaths by at least 33 per cent by 2020 compared to the baseline of the 2004–08 average number of road deaths;
- the annual total of serious injuries on our roads by 2020 by at least 33 per cent;
- the annual total of road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people (aged 0–17) by at least 50 per cent against a baseline of the 2004–08 average by 2020;

Such targets at first sight appear to be "challenging" but as the progress against the 1994–98 base line shows with the "40%" reduction being reached two years ahead of schedule, a multi agency approach **can** deliver challenging targets. In particular, a more significant reduction in serious injuries is probably achievable.

Strong consideration should be given to revising the targets "upwards" (50% +) at the 5/10 year review points if the proposed targets are likely to be achieved early. As an example, the killed casualties for 2008 are already 19% lower than the base line for 2004–2008(financial years), possibly indicating that the proposed reduction will be achieved early and hence is not sufficiently "challenging"

IHIE believes there is value in setting a target for slight injury. The focus on Fatal and Serious injury is welcomed but the hoped for reduction in the severity of collisions may lead to an then slight injury.

- by at least 50 per cent by 2020 the rate¹ of KSI per km travelled by pedestrians and cyclists, compared with the 2004–08 average? (Chapter 8)

¹ Expressed as a three-year rolling average

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Whilst welcome, care should be exercised. Traditionally it has proved “difficult” to measure walking and cycling KSI rates per km consistently as traditional snap surveys are affected by a wide number of factors. The DfT should give guidance on how such data is to be captured consistently across the widely varying networks of local authorities. The statistics should separate pedestrians from cyclists. (Kate Carpenter)

4. We are proposing a set of indicators in order to help us to monitor performance (Appendix A). Do you believe these cover the right areas? (Chapter 8)

Whilst the indicators seem logical they will in turn need review at 5/10 year milestones. Some members of IHIE are concerned that road safety generally reports on more targets and performance indicators than probably any other single function already and we should be wary of “target fatigue”.

Context (Chapters 2, 3 and 4)

5. We have identified a number of factors that may affect our ability to deliver road safety improvements in the future world we are planning for. Do you think we have taken account of the key risks and opportunities? Are there others you would add? (Chapter 3)

5.1 As identified in “Project Brunel” the existing shortage of qualified highway engineering staff is likely to continue. More qualified, highly experienced staff, who have the experience of having helped deliver the previous targets, are retiring each year than are being replaced by new, less experienced, entrants. In particular there are likely to be significant shortfalls of staff in such specialist fields as signing and signalling and **Road Safety**.

Government, working with local authority employers, the professional bodies and other interested partners, should explore ways in which this shortfall in highway engineering and in particular the “specialist” fields can be assessed and then addressed. This MUST include ways in which “core” highway engineering as well as “specialist” knowledge can be provided for staff. Many who may come from a non “engineering” background, if we are to address the problem of recruiting, retaining and motivating those professionals involved in reducing road casualties. IHIE’s specialist training and identification of knowledge and competence requirements in its Professional Certificates offers a lead. It is vital that more assessed specialist courses in highway design, traffic management and road safety are developed.

5.2 The reliance on individual Local Authorities to set their own targets, albeit “guided” by central government, may lead to a fragmented approach. There is a danger that the most significant reductions will be made by those with an established road safety “culture” (and staffing?) and less by those who see their key concerns elsewhere.

6. We think that the key challenge for road safety from 2010 is better and

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more systematic delivery, rather than major policy changes. Do you agree?
(Chapter 4)

Whilst evolutionary change is generally better than revolutionary change, if we are to achieve the vision then perhaps something revolutionary needs to happen. Consideration should be given to making Road Safety Partnerships a statutory body.

7. This consultation document sets out the current evidence on the key road safety challenges. Do you agree with our analysis? Would you highlight any others? (Chapter 2)

A significant number of killed/serious casualties occur on this country's "rural" network and whilst this will be informed by the recent extension of the EuroRAP study, such roads will, by their very nature, be more "resource intensive" than sites in urban areas. Although as noted in the report significant FYRR's can still be achieved there is a danger, with likely reductions in public spending, that insufficient resources will be available.

New performance framework (Chapters 4 and 8)

8. We are proposing a number of measures to support the effectiveness of the road safety profession. Do you think they will be effective? What else might need to be done? (Chapter 4)

The measures identified, in the main for the dissemination of more detailed and relevant data, are to be welcome but will not be realised if the existing and projected shortfall in staffing is not actively addressed.

When it comes to roads, most road users are "experts" and the low professional status that society accords to engineers means they are often not minded to accept the recommendations of transport professionals. Elected Members may also overrule recommendations on the basis of "local politics".

To be effective road safety needs to be a 2nd-tier responsibility. however, as more highway authorities are subsumed into combined planning and environment departments, the senior highway "expert" is often no higher than 2nd tier and road safety often at 4th tier.

Whilst professionals from engineering and education have been brought together in the Road Safety Partnerships they are generally some way from adopting a "road safety system".

9. Do you agree that an independent annual report on road safety performance, created on an annual basis, would be a worthwhile innovation?
(Chapter 4)

If framed in a constructive, informative, manner it could be argued that such a report, combined perhaps with a number of independent reports such as

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EURORAP, to would be valuable (focusing as it should public and professional attention) but IHIE believe there is a danger that this might inadvertently lead to a culture of annual targets and appraisal in an area where, goals are often measured over several years.

10. Do you agree that the Road Safety Delivery Board should be tasked with holding Government and other stakeholders to account on the implementation of a new national road safety plan? (Chapter 8)

Whilst a central oversight of the future targets is appropriate, it should include ALL stakeholders responsible for delivery of the targets. Care should also be taken that any RSDB is not used to “blame” under-performing LAs but rather used to encourage them and identify where further resources should be allocated centrally.

Roads and local authorities (Chapter 5)

11. Do you agree that highway authorities reviewing and, where appropriate, reducing speed limits on single carriageway roads will be an effective way of addressing the casualty problem on rural roads? Are there other ways in which the safety of rural roads can be improved? (Chapter 5)

Yes, it such actions MUST be data led with a danger that elected members may overrule recommendations in the belief that longer, lower limits must be safer.

12. How can we most effectively promote the implementation of 20 mph zone schemes in residential areas? What other measures should we be encouraging to reduce pedestrian and cyclist casualties in towns? (Chapter 5)

Unfortunately residents within 20 mph zones are often greater offenders than strangers and some residential areas are often short cuts or offer ways of avoiding congestion. In addition 20 mph zones can be expensive as they are supposed to be self-enforcing. Police do not and will not enforce limits of less than 30 mph.

IHIE believes consideration needs to be given to amending legislation to introduce “Residential Road” alongside “Restricted Road”, to relax requirements for 20 mph zones and to allow LAs to designate such residential roads.

13. How can we provide better support to highway authorities in progressing economically worthwhile road safety engineering schemes? (Chapter 5)

Transport schemes are often developed over several years. The identification and resolution of casualty reduction schemes, providing resources are

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available, rarely takes this long and the FYRR's are exceptional.

Travel time and other factors are often the responsibility of others who have little impact or say and their own budgets

Well-meaning elected representatives and pressure groups can subvert programmes.

Highways Agency should consider local highway authority "needs" in addition to the core "trunk" network. Much good co-operative work between LAs & the HA, especially in the area of Road Safety Education, has taken place over the last few years but more can be done to explore the impact of HA schemes and guidance on the LAs road network.

Vehicles (Chapter 6)

14. What should Government do to secure greater road safety benefits from vehicles?

The Government scrappage scheme is seeing new cars on our roads, but the economics may mean that these are not equipped with the latest advance active safety systems. IHIE believes any future "incentives" by central government should actively prioritise vehicles so equipped.

15. Do you agree that, in future, crash avoidance systems will grow in importance and will have the potential to greatly reduce casualties?

Yes, electronic stability systems/crash avoidance systems have and will continue to prove to be a major benefit. However, IHIE believes that there should be monitoring of collision records to ensure that poorer driving is not negating the technical advances.

16. How can we best encourage consumers to include safety performance in their purchasing decisions?

The bottom line is price. Company car drivers seem to be able to select vehicles with all of the 'toys'. IHIE believes that consideration should be given to reviewing taxation on "safer" vehicles in the same way as it has been applied to "cleaner" vehicles.

Behaviours (Chapter 7)

17. We have highlighted what we believe to be the most dangerous driving behaviours. Do you agree with our assessment?

IHIE believes that proposals correctly identify the key driving behaviours that can precipitate crashes. In addition the inclusion of document and licensing offences as being indicative of anti-social driving behaviour is also correct. We think that the process of driving a motor vehicle is one that requires

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a clear sense of moral and social responsibility and that the pursuit of these violations not only contributes to casualty reduction but also rewards drivers who are correctly licensed by confirming their positive social attitude towards road safety. However, colloquial evidence suggests that we have losing the war as mobile phone use, bad/inconsiderate driving is endemic and seatbelt usage and drink-driving is more evident and a redoubling of effort in these areas is required.

Dedicated police traffic enforcement has been eroded. Police resources should be directed back into traffic

18. What more can be done to persuade the motoring public that illegal and inappropriate speeds are not acceptable behaviours?

The document makes the statement at Para 7.5 that "*Speed limits are set at a level to maintain public safety*". But in order to continue to encourage drivers to think positively about being responsible and about having a habit of compliance, that statement needs to be clear and self-evident in the minds of drivers. Elsewhere in the document, the importance of completing the proposed review of local speed limits has been stressed. We believe that it is vitally important that in delivering this review LAs ensure that road users "buy in" to the reasons why different speed limits applied using consistent criteria.

In the same vein IHIE believe that there is uncertainty and confusion over what constitutes "illegal and inappropriate" speeds in drivers' minds. The consultation documents tend to give the impression that "speeding" is different to other unacceptable or dangerous driving behaviour because it is so widespread. In order to persuade the motoring public that illegal and inappropriate speeds are not acceptable behaviour we need to do two things.

1. Apply appropriate and understandable speed limits consistently across the Country and ensure the road design reflects the intended speed.

2. Have a consistent message to drivers (delivered through the work place as well as socially) that:-

- There is no flexibility over compliance as far as speed limits are concerned, just varying degrees of penalty for violation
- Recognising and complying with speed limits is the hallmark of a competent driver
- Driving at or within the speed limit is the right thing for a driver to do and is socially acceptable

19. What more can be done to encourage safe and responsible driving?

20. Should more be done to reward good driving? If so, what?

Whilst an attractive concept in order to reward good driving it is necessary to define what "good" driving is.

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The majority of drivers see themselves as "good" drivers. The problem is that there is no real bench mark for what defines the qualities of a "good" driver. Is it care, caution and consideration, or is it the ability to use skill and experience to make progress through traffic? Whilst attempts have been made to set out what sort of behaviour is unacceptable, unlawful or collision causing, it is just as hard to define and promote what is the opposite in terms of good driving behaviour.

At the moment there are no real rewards for being a "good" driver. Only penalties for being a bad one.