



Richard Berry
Transport Committee Scrutiny Manager
City Hall
Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Mike Brown MVO
Commissioner of Transport
Transport for London
Windsor House
42-50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL
Phone 0343 222 0000
www.tfl.gov.uk

15 June 2016

Dear Richard

Easy Rider: Improving motorcycle safety on London's roads

Thank you for passing on Val's letter of 4 March and the Committee's report. I want to assure you that the safety of motorcyclists remains a top priority. This letter responds to the Committee's recommendations in turn, and I hope reiterates our determination to make motorcycling in London as safe as possible.

Recommendation 1

We need a better understanding of why motorcyclist casualties occur. TfL largely relies on information recorded by police officers at the scene of a collision, which could be improved through the application of new technology by the MPS, and by supplementing it with information from the NHS.

We agree. Underlying all our efforts to improve motorcycle safety is an understanding of how and why collisions occur. We are currently looking at 2015 casualty data to identify what manoeuvres are resulting in collisions, where and when they are happening, what other road users are involved, and the demographics of collision victims. This analysis will ensure that our initiatives, marketing, education and enforcement are targeted where they are most needed.

Motorcycle safety is a key priority in our 2016/17 Road Safety programme, which includes a review of international motorcycle safety initiatives and technology to help us identify the next steps that will make the biggest difference for safer London motorcycling. A study that we undertook into motorcyclist fatalities in London using police collision files gives us a good understanding of the causes of fatal collisions¹. However, we will review the benefits of a second police fatal file study for our 2017/18 programme. In the meantime, we will continue to use the latest and most reliable data to assess motorcycle casualties and to inform how we address this issue.

Collision data collected by the police remains our most reliable and helpful source of information. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is a national leader for collision investigation and is consistently at the forefront of operational innovation and good practice. Examples of this include:

- The recent Joint Inspection of the Investigation and Prosecution of Fatal Road Traffic Incidents highlighted the MPS as a national exemplar of good practice in collision investigation.² The MPS is the only police force in the country to have a collision investigation unit that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The MPS Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) uses a wide range of forensic scientific instruments and camera equipment to collect data at the scene of a collision. They use sophisticated imaging and modelling software to analyse and process this information when establishing the cause of a collision.
- All police officers, whether it is the SCIU's forensic specialists or the first officers on the scene, follow the National Police Chiefs' Council's Road Death Investigation Manual for quality assurance in their collection of the vital data that informs our road safety schemes and initiatives.

We are also working with the MPS to improve on current practice:

- During 2010, the MPS participated in a Department for Transport-led trial of new laser scanning equipment to improve the accuracy and efficiency of collision investigation, by making a 3D image of the site, rather than investigators having to painstakingly log everything at the scene. We helped the MPS to fund the purchase of these laser scanners, and since January 2012 the whole of London has coverage from collision investigators with 3D scanning equipment.

¹ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/ppr621-motorcycle-fatal-files-report.pdf>

² <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/joint-inspection-of-the-investigation-and-prosecution-of-fatal-road-traffic-incidents/>

- Together with the MPS, we are currently reviewing how the current system for collision recording in the MPS can be improved and automated to allow the provision of even more comprehensive, timely and accurate information. This work is well advanced and will result in the introduction of an automated system in the MPS broadly based on the current national standard Collision Recording and Sharing System (CRASH) model. CRASH has recently been adopted by the City of London Police.

MPS Stats 19 data remains a comprehensive source of information, but we are aware that we can complement it with other research and analysis that interrogates wider issues. We have commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to carry out a study investigating hospital data that has then been linked to Stats 19 casualty data. When this study is complete in August this year, we will be able to assess whether this hospital data can further our understanding of motorcycle collisions.

Recommendation 2

The inconsistency across London in access to bus lanes for motorcyclists causes unnecessary confusion. TfL allows motorcyclists to ride in bus lanes on the roads it manages, but many boroughs restrict access on their own roads. While boroughs need to determine their own policies, a more proactive strategy is required from TfL to help ensure a common approach across the city (with a specific and timed objective set in an updated Motorcycle Safety Action Plan).

We agree, but we recognise it is the responsibility of the boroughs to determine access to bus lanes for motorcyclists. We want to see a consistent approach and while we do not have the powers to impose such policies against the boroughs' wishes, we continue to advocate consistency.

Additionally, we continue to promote the findings of our commissioned studies on the implications to the safety of other road users. The final study we commissioned on the use of motorcycles in bus lanes concluded that opening bus lanes to motorcyclists had no significant negative impact on road safety and that the main benefits were for journey time reliability and air quality. We will look to improve how we communicate the benefits of a consistent policy further, and work with the boroughs on road safety.

Wandsworth Council is the latest London borough to open its bus lanes to motorcycles.

Recommendation 3

Education is essential for increasing safe riding behaviour, such as riding at an appropriate speed and wearing protective equipment, to reduce casualties among both motorcyclists and other road users. Ongoing campaigns aimed at raising awareness of motorcyclists and preventing collisions are also vital. The BikeSafe scheme from TfL and the Metropolitan Police appears to be effective at increasing safety awareness among motorcyclists and attendance is growing. A key priority is to increase the participation of young riders. TfL should set a specific target for this objective, and consider how it could work in partnership with organisations to reach young riders.

We agree, and that is why we are keen to connect riders with the training that best suits their needs. Based on years of experience of engaging with younger riders, we believe that there are educational initiatives more suitable than BikeSafe for the skills gaps of the 'hard to reach' segments of young riders, and more likely to be attended by these groups. We are keen to understand how we can better attract these younger groups into training. We are therefore trialling and funding educational initiatives with this market in mind, which we hope will act as gateways to more rigorous training like BikeSafe and ScooterSafe.

For example, with funding from us, Lewisham Council offers an e-learning course with a theory-based, hazard perception focus, on a trial basis to those living or working in the borough. On completion of the e-learning course, Lewisham Council pays 50 per cent towards the cost of Compulsory Basic Training (CBT).

For riders that are less likely to attend BikeSafe or ScooterSafe, we are working with partners on three projects:

- Pre-CBT online training – this short online training module for pre-CBT riders will be made available on our website in late 2016/early 2017;
- CBT Commuter Skills (pilot) – currently being trialled in partnership with Croydon Council, commuter riders can choose a route on which to get one-to-one advice from the trained rider observing them;
- Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) Accreditation – the objective is to increase the number of training companies/instructors accredited via the MCIA over two years, aiming for 33 new training sites and up to three instructors per site.

While these trials are underway, we are actively working to increase the number of BikeSafe London (BSL) attendees:

- BSL workshops were attended by 1,599 people in 2015/16 – exceeding our target by 39 per cent. Almost a third of all attendees registered via a promotion we ran to engage businesses.
- We issued vouchers for BSL at the Excel Motorcycle Show in February this year, resulting in a record-breaking 520 bookings over the three day event.
- In partnership with us, two BSL courses are now being run every month from the Ace Cafe, London's most popular social venue for motorcycle enthusiasts.
- We will promote BSL at a stand during racing events at Brands Hatch in May, August and October this year.

We are greatly encouraged by our partnership work with London boroughs, 17 of whom are now offering BSL vouchers to riders who live, work or study in the borough.

Recommendation 4

Good road design takes into account the needs of all vulnerable road users, and TfL's new design guidance for motorcycle safety is an opportunity to embed this principle in all road schemes. Motorcyclists have expressed concern about the impact of segregated Cycle Superhighways on London's roads, particularly the reduction in road space for other traffic. The Committee strongly supports the Superhighways programme, but recommends close monitoring of segregated roads to assess the impact on safety for other vulnerable road users, and the application of new design guidance for motorcycle safety to all schemes where road layouts are being modified.

We agree, and we are carrying out a range of programmes to ensure our roads are fit for safe and reliable motorcycle journeys:

Design:

- All permanent highway schemes on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), including Cycle Superhighways, undergo a rigorous road safety audit (RSA) to identify and address any potential road safety issues. This ensures that all TLRN schemes operate safely for all road users by minimising the potential for collisions.
- We have our own RSA procedure specifically tailored to meet the needs of London's roads. This procedure is updated periodically to ensure that it remains best practice, aligns with the DfT's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and takes account of changes in the use of London's roads.

- We have our own RSA team, ensuring that audits are conducted to a consistently high standard. The team delivers RSAs on both TLRN and borough schemes, where requested.
- The recently published Urban Motorcycle Design Handbook sets out the key highway design requirements for motorcycle safety in London. It explains how road and traffic conditions affect motorcyclists and how risks can be reduced and hazards minimised. We ran nine skills workshops, covering the Urban Motorcycle Design Handbook's principles, attended by our own staff, representatives from 18 London boroughs and the police. More workshops are planned for later this year.
- The London Cycling Design Standards were revised to ensure that new cycling infrastructure takes account of motorcycle safety.

Monitoring:

- We routinely monitor the collision reduction performance of new infrastructure on the TLRN to ensure that scheme safety objectives are being met, using the Traffic Accident Diary System (TADS).
- We will be paying close attention to any changes to the occurrence and severity of collisions – involving all road users – in the immediate vicinity of segregated Cycle Superhighways, and will take swift remedial action if necessary.
- There is also a comprehensive monitoring plan in place for the Cycle Superhighways to assess impacts on safety for all road users. This will prove useful when developing future highway improvement schemes.
- We continue to invest in our programme of on-going road maintenance to remedy the surface defects that can impact those on two-wheels, and to keep signs and lines clear and updated to ensure the safety of all road users.

Enforcement:

- We complement our road safety education and engineering efforts with a wide range of road safety enforcement activity, working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service's Roads and Transport Policing Command, the City of London Police's Transport and Highways Operations Group, and other agencies such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.
- As outlined in our *Motorcycle Safety Action Plan* we are aiming to increase enforcement activity and compliance with rules of the road, for the safety of all road users.
- The most recent phases of Operation Winchester, from September to November 2015 and again in January this year, have targeted additional enforcement activity at the key times and hotspot locations where motorcyclists have historically been most at risk.

- Operation Winchester is a specific example of the intelligence-led enforcement activity carried out by the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police, working in partnership with us, to make London's roads safer for motorcyclists. Over these two phases officers stopped 7,389 riders and 2,384 other motorists, issued 2,442 Traffic Offence Reports, 1,335 verbal warnings, seized 259 vehicles and made 91 arrests.

Recommendation 5

We call on the next Mayor to work with TfL to deliver these priorities. In addition, we also urge the Mayor to focus on the issue of traffic congestion in London. Heavy congestion is a danger to motorcyclists, as well as other vulnerable road users. Motorcycles may in fact be a part of the solution to this issue, particularly if more journeys by commercial vehicles can be undertaken by motorcycles. The next Mayor's transport strategy should set out long-term plans to reduce congestion.

We agree reducing congestion is a priority. Motorcycling's share of London's transport may be relatively small at one per cent, but many people rely on it for access to employment. That is one of the reasons we opened up bus lanes for motorcycle use, and are encouraging the uptake of electric cycles for deliveries.

We recognise that heavy congestion may prompt motorcyclists to take risks, in that it may lead to more filtering through traffic, another reason we are determined to tackle the number of vehicles on London's roads. The next Mayor's Transport Strategy will set out a range of short, medium and long term plans to reduce congestion, but in the mean time, we will continue our current programme of work to keep London moving, which includes:

- Our ongoing enforcement of bus lanes to ensure their reliable and safe use for two-wheeled transport;
- Our use of the Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (SCOOT) for traffic lights. This technology allows traffic signal timings to adapt to traffic conditions in real time meaning that traffic can pass through the area efficiently.
- Our Lane Rental Scheme to manage works on the TfL Road Network at traffic-sensitive places
- Our encouragement of businesses to use the most appropriate mode of transport for every journey, including motorcycling, as part of our Freight Strategy;
- The deployment of the new Road and Transport Enforcement Officers to key traffic routes across London to crack down on illegal road behaviour, adopting a zero tolerance approach to obstructions that cause congestion and road risk. This 80-strong team deal with problems such as illegal stopping or unloading of deliveries which cause delays for drivers and bus passengers;

- The prompt reopening of the road network following a traffic collision, as part of an agreed Roads Reopening Protocol with the MPS. This includes a target time for reopening roads after an unplanned closure, and a review process to identify any opportunities to improve incident response.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that TfL makes these recommendations a priority in an updated Motorcycle Safety Action Plan accompanied by a dedicated budget to reassure motorcyclists that their safety is being prioritised and allow for TfL activity in this area to be monitored effectively:

While we agree that we should continue to target specific motorcycle related issues, we remain convinced that these should form part of an integrated approach to road safety for vulnerable road users. We have made great progress on the commitments in the Motorcycle Safety Action Plan. As we focus our efforts on the few remaining open actions, we look forward to working with the new Mayor and our existing stakeholders on meeting current and future challenges through further motorcycle safety activity.

To ensure that we provide value for money, we monitor and evaluate our work to make sure we deliver on our priorities. All of our distinct motorcycle safety initiatives are evaluated as closely as possible, but there are a whole range of initiatives that deliver safety benefits to all road users, and so it is difficult to attribute improvements in motorcycle safety to motorcycle-specific initiatives, compared to initiatives aimed at all road users. We are keen to move away from measures for particular priorities, such as the amount of money spent, and focus more on outcomes, such as casualty numbers and rates, and the number of courses attended. We will continue to measure our comprehensive road safety programme against our target for reducing fatal and serious injuries across the board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Brown', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Brown MVO