Transport Committee motorcycle safety event

15 December 2015

Attendees

Assembly Members: Valerie Shawcross CBE AM (Chair), Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Murad Qureshi AM

Assembly staff: Alison Bell, Richard Berry, Steve Wright, Mary Dolan, Rebekah Canning

Visiting: Inspector David Osborne, PS Emma Poston, PC Laith Alqasar, PC Ian Hadcocks, PC Andy Bevis, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

Harvey Sahota & Mark Hazelton, Group Manager for Fire Safety, London Fire Brigade (LFB)

Lilli Matson, Head of Strategy & Outcome Planning, Transport for London (TfL)

Doug Wilson, GLA

David Scott and Shomik Panda, Deliveroo

Overview of Visit

The Transport Committee visited LFB Southwark Training Centre to hear about different motorcycle safety initiatives taking place across London, including the BikeSafe programme from TfL and MPS, and Biker Down! programme from LFB and the London Ambulance Service (LAS).

BikeSafe

Committee Members heard about the BikeSafe course run by the Motorcycle Safety Team of the MPS, which consists of 12 officers.

Bike Safe is a national programme, which has been tailored for London by the MPS. It is designed the ‘bridge the gap’ between compulsory instruction motorcyclists receive, and the more advanced courses available. It costs £45 to attend, for a one-day course.

The course aims to improve behaviour management among motorcycle riders. The course consists of a classroom-based theory session and an observed ride with MPS officers. During
the classroom activity, the most common types of collision are explained, and riders are shown what to be aware of on the road (for instance, vehicles turning right into the path of a motorcyclists is the most common type of collision). BikeSafe’s five training centres are based on the outskirts of London so that they can take riders on different types of roads.

The course was aimed to recruit 1146 participants for 2015; they have exceeded target with 1319 riders taking part this year. The 2015 target was based on the average attendance of the past three years. In a survey of attendees, 93 per cent said their road behaviour had changed as a result of the course.

The MPS seeks target commuters and young riders, to attend the course. Young riders, however, are particularly hard to engage with – this may be partially a result of tensions with the police. Young riders are offered a discounted rate to attend the course.

If a motorcyclist is involved in a slight collision – with no further action taken – they are offered a free place on the course within the next 12 months. Take-up for this, however, is not particularly high, possibly because riders are injured or their bikes are damaged.

BikeSafe has also provided tailored courses for bus drivers, specifically for Metroline drivers, to increase their awareness of motorcyclists.

The Motorcycle Safety Team undertakes a range of other enforcement and engagement activities as well as BikeSafe. It works with London borough safety officers, and has engaged with 11,000 commuter motorcyclists in total. Officers conduct ‘pit stops’ with riders to give them advice – not primarily to identify offences. They also produce exhibitions at motorcycle shows.

The five priority boroughs for the team, based on the level of risk and number of collisions, are Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, Wandsworth and Westminster. These change in response to changing conditions and collision levels.

**Biker Down!**

Biker Down! is a course run by a multi-agency road safety partnership involving the LFB, TfL, MPS and LAS. The course provides advice on what to do in the event of a collision involving a motorcyclist.

The course covers scene management, immediate aid, trauma care and guidance for safer riding. Biker Down! focuses on how to deal with an incident and includes practical first aid training. The course is aimed at motorcycle and scooter riders, and car drivers.

Biker Down! was created by Kent Fire Brigade, and is being rolled out by other services. LFB has tailored it for London. The programme currently runs in Lambeth as a pilot, as this was a priority borough with the highest number of collisions with motorcyclists killed or seriously injured (KSI). The programme is coming to the end of its pilot, and LFB hoping to secure funding to continue.
Committee Members heard that motorcyclists are at greater risk than pedal cyclists on London’s roads. There were 526 motorcyclist KSIs in 2014, a rise of 16. Meanwhile there were 432 cyclists KSIs, down by 57.

The LFB attends shows to promote the course, taking a distinctive ‘fire bike’. It is arguably easier for LFB to engage with young riders than it is for the police.

The briefing covered the key principles of ‘scene management’ — what to do if arriving at the scene of a collision. This included the need to engage bystanders, warn approaching traffic, and look for obvious dangers rather than becoming too task-focused. The LAS presentation sought to address common misconceptions about giving life-saving aid to motorcyclists – in particular, it is very important to remove the helmet in order to manage the airway, despite the risks to the spine.

The briefing covered the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), showing which areas of the body are most at risk. Overall, PPE can reduce the risk of injury by 70 per cent. Legs and hips are most at risk, accounting for 46 per cent of injuries. Arms and shoulders account for 38 per cent. A TfL study has recently revealed that only five per cent of motorcyclists in London wear protective trousers, while 20 per cent wear protective gloves.