

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: [Road Safety Strategy](#), HC 81

Wednesday 15 July 2026

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Ruth Cadbury (Chair); Dr Scott Arthur; Daniel Francis; Olly Glover; Alex Mayer.

Questions 154–217

Witnesses

I: Lilli Matson, Chief Safety, Health and Environment Officer, Transport for London; Adrian Berendt, Director and Community Champion, 20's Plenty for Us; Dr Rob Török, Doctor in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance; and Phil Jones, Chair, Phil Jones Associates.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Transport for London](#)
- [20's Plenty for Us](#)
- [Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Lilli Matson, Adrian Berendt, Dr Rob Török and Phil Jones.

Q154 **Chair:** Welcome to this morning's evidence session, which is the third of our inquiry into the Government's road safety strategy. We will focus on speed as a road safety issue. We are aware that references may be made to distressing topics or incidents, so please do not mention individual cases where there may be ongoing legal proceedings. We are joined by a panel of four. We also invited the Road Haulage Association to join us but unfortunately they pulled out. Could the panel please introduce themselves?

Adrian Berendt: Good morning. I am Adrian Berendt, a director of 20's Plenty for Us CIC.

Phil Jones: Good morning. I am Phil Jones, the chair of PJA. We are a transport planning, engineering and environmental consultancy.

Lilli Matson: Good morning. I am Lilli Matson, the chief safety, health and environment officer for Transport for London.

Dr Török: Good morning. I am Dr Rob Török. For 14 years I have been a pre-hospital critical care doctor with Dorset and Somerset air ambulance, and for 20 years an emergency medical consultant.

Q155 **Chair:** Welcome. Is the primary commitment on speed in the Government's road safety strategy—to update local guidance on setting speed limits—ambitious enough?

Adrian Berendt: It is certainly very welcome. The guidance on setting local speed limits is well over a decade out of date, and is based on data that was even further out of date than that. We think there is not enough in the road safety strategy about speed. There are 37 mentions of the word "speed" in it, but most of those are about the risks of speed; it is acknowledged as a risk, but the actual measures are not enough, in our view. We think it needs to go further. Certainly, strengthening the guidance is a way of achieving an effective national policy default, but 20's Plenty has long argued that we should have a national default of 20 mph on residential streets.

Phil Jones: The model in Wales, which I was involved with, was to set a national default, and that gave a very clear point in time when roads would change their speed unless action was taken. That would clearly be a more ambitious and welcome step. In the absence of that, I agree with Adrian: improved guidance can take us a long way forward. At the moment, the guidance is quite regressive. It places far too much emphasis on compliance as the aim of setting speed limits, rather than speed reduction and achieving a safe speed.



The strategy goes quite a long way, but I think it could be much clearer in setting out what it expects the new guidance to achieve, and how the changes it is using as its main instrument on speed will be established to make the changes we are looking for.

Lilli Matson: It is very welcome to have a strategy that discusses this. I would support the calls that it could and should have gone further and been more consistent about the benefits of reduced speed in civilising towns and cities, in particular, and making them places where people want to live, walk, cycle and play. In central London, for example, we made 20 mph the default on the main road network in 2020, and that quickly delivered a tangible reduction of around 24% in the number of people being killed or seriously injured. More importantly, it changed the feel of roads for the people who want to use them.

There are real benefits in creating more consistent and a broader range of measures. That was, as we are hearing, perhaps a missed opportunity in the strategy itself. The guidance could pick up that opportunity and go further, and be clear that reducing speed is at the heart of making roads safer. It is the first and most important systemic change that the Government and local government can make.

Dr Török: It is not bold enough as far as action and interventions go. From what we see at the roadside—the severity of trauma and the numbers killed—there is a massive gap between what is actually happening on the roads and the levels of harm and cost, and the priority we give to achieving a reduction. Having 20 mph limits, nationally set or prioritised, urgently, would save countless people from injury, harm and cost.

One key thing, parallel to whatever the Government decide on policy for setting limits and guidance to achieve a widespread increase in reductions in speed, is an awareness campaign, so that the public and policymakers understand how very small changes in average speed have a massive impact on the severity of injuries, the risk of death and the costs. At the moment, we are out of balance with the real harms and costs and the priority and urgency that is focused on saving lives.

Q156 **Chair:** Adrian, the written evidence from 20's Plenty for Us said that you "doubt that the proposed measures will deliver the casualty reduction targets". Why is that?

Adrian Berendt: Because there is no commitment to a 20 mph speed limit on residential streets. Since around 50% of KSIs occur on 30 mph roads, without reducing that speed limit to 20 mph you simply cannot achieve the target of 65%. It is interesting. We have modelled it, and I think you heard it from an earlier witness that the contribution of 20 mph to the Government's target is far and away the biggest single measure that could help. I think Dan Campsall said it is something like 10% to 15%, and we would concur with that.



But it goes further, because 20 mph not only brings down casualties but enables other measures to come in much more cheaply. I have seen that in projects that I have been involved in. Once you have the lower speed limit it enables you, for example, to do an informal crossing, rather than a formal one. It makes all the other measures much easier to implement.

It also changes the relationship between road users—between the driver and the cyclist, or the cyclist and the pedestrian—so that they look out for each other more. Your field of vision widens when you are doing a lower speed. Rather than being surprised that somebody suddenly jumped out in front of you, you have anticipated it. It has a sort of cumulative effect. It is not instead of all the other measures; it is complementary to them.

Chair: We will drill down a bit more into the mechanics of 20 mph.

Dr Török: Can I add in the moral duty part of achieving the 20 mph limit? Urban areas and villages, and roads with vulnerable, innocent, unprotected pedestrians—children, the frail, cyclists and non-motorised vehicles, horses and horse-drawn vehicles—are disproportionately within the areas where we would consider 20 mph limits. There is a moral obligation and duty to protect the unprotected, to rebalance things away from a focus on motorised vehicles and to save our children and the unprotected. There is a host of other health benefits in terms of active lifestyles, mobility and the climate, the sense of security and lack of isolation of people that then allows community involvement, access to health and so on—there is such a raft of other benefits. I would just like to emphasise that.

Chair: Thank you.

Q157 **Dr Arthur:** The Department told us that the strategy is evidence-based, and there was recognition of that in a lot of the submissions. While organisations like Brake recognised the evidence base of a lot of the strategy, they thought it did not go far enough in looking at best practice in terms of speed. What is the assessment of the evidence-based nature of the strategy when it comes to speed? Is there more evidence out there that the Department could draw on, perhaps to have a slightly more nuanced strategy?

Lilli Matson: Let me look at some of the evidence we provided to the Government on speed, to make sure that everyone is aware of it. At Transport for London we analysed the impact of 20 mph speed limits across London boroughs over a very long period of time—about 10 years. The results were unequivocal and showed that over that time the introduction of 20 mph speed limits achieved a reduction of around 34% in people being killed or seriously injured. That was set against comparator roads, so it was controlled for. For children, there was a much greater 70% reduction.



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When you look at the detailed nature of that evidence—it is the most comprehensive piece of evidence about 20 mph limits, across areas—I do not feel that it was pulled through clearly enough to demonstrate the area-wide benefits of 20 mph limits and the real need to put that at the heart of a strategy that reduces danger on our roads.

Phil Jones: I will add to that. It is surprising that there is no reference to the outcomes of the full 20 mph speed limit in Wales, which is effectively the largest application of 20 mph that we have seen in the UK.

Q158 **Dr Arthur:** We have a broadly one-third reduction in Edinburgh as well because of 20 mph, and that has been subject to peer-reviewed research. I guess the challenge with Wales is that it may be too soon to work its way through the peer-review process.

Phil Jones: No, I think the evidence is quite clear.

Dr Arthur: But in terms of peer review and independent analysis. Lilli, is the evidence you were talking about TfL's analysis, or was it done independently?

Lilli Matson: It was done by one of our analytical teams and peer reviewed by academic institutions.

Dr Arthur: And you feel that that has not been taken on board, despite the real results there, particularly for children.

Lilli Matson: Clearly, the strategy mentions that they are looking at this. I really know, through our Vision Zero action plan, that to move forward you need clear and unequivocal determination that you are going to do something. We are very clear at the London level that we will move residential roads to 20 mph and work with London boroughs to do that. Now, 21 out of 33 London boroughs have this, and that is what is continuing to build and deliver further changes.

I feel the strategy is currently a bit hesitant at the national level, and that there is an opportunity with the policy to really go further and be much clearer. If you do not do that, too many people will find reasons not to do it, and we are back to the moral choices we have been hearing about.

Dr Török: You asked about the strength of evidence. The evidence has been there internationally. The World Health Organisation signed off many papers on the importance of speed, and even the real impact of 1% or 2% reductions in speed, which significantly reduce the number of killed and seriously injured. My favourite paper is a comprehensive unified framework for analysis by Rune Elvik. It really goes into the detail of not just the average speeds but the distribution of speeds. You have theory, and we have—

Q159 **Dr Arthur:** We are guilty of talking a lot about 20 mph; does that paper go beyond 20?



Dr Török: It specifically looks at the incremental changes. I think 20 mph is a mechanism to make people more aware of how important speed is, and it also achieves a reduction in speeds. Where it has been implemented in other areas, it has not always been preceded by capture of the public's understanding and awareness of it, initially, with focused interventions to make them more aware and understand the central role of their choice of speed, and then their support for and engagement with the measures. If we did that, and got it right, they would be demanding that we introduce 20 mph limits in their areas and would be much less resistant and form much less opposition, because it is absolutely clear. You have theory and observed effects of the actual power of small reductions in speed wherever it has happened internationally. There is not a lack of evidence. There is a lack of willpower, following through, and putting it into action and intervention.

Dr Arthur: I cut you off earlier, Philip—sorry.

Phil Jones: I was going to say, in terms of academic peer review, no, but in the sheer scale of the change that has been made—let us call it the experiment—there is no doubt that it has had the effect. It was entirely predictable, as Rob said. The evidence is clear. The report of the taskforce that I chaired was very clear. The evidence was collected and it said this will happen and this will benefit. The relative changes in speed and the reduction in casualties were in line with what was predicted. We know there is absolutely no doubt that this can and will be successful. The road safety strategy, in my view, does not pay enough heed to that evidence.

To your point, urban areas are hugely important. I just looked at the numbers, and 45% of KSIs are in built-up areas, so we have to focus on built-up areas. We have to think about 20 mph as central, but we must not ignore the contribution that we need to make on rural roads, particularly single carriageways.

Q160 **Chair:** We have some specific questions about the Welsh experience. Rob, you referred to an international study. Could you name it? If we do not already have it, could you send it to us?

Dr Török: It was in the submission. It's by Rune Elvik. It is not an international study; it is the expertise that the World Health Organisation based its speed impact tool on. Its formal title is "A comprehensive and unified framework for analysing the effects on injuries of measures influencing speed", by Rune Elvik, in *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 2019.

Chair: And it is referenced in the written evidence you submitted so it is discoverable on our website.

Phil Jones: Can I add something briefly? It talks about the effect of small reductions in speed—I think 1 kph is an 8% reduction in casualties. The focus of so much speeding policy is on compliance. It is interesting



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that one of the indicators in the road strategy is about compliance. Compliance is not the end. You can be complying with the wrong speed limit. We should be measuring actual speed and reductions in speed—the small changes in speed that have a disproportionate effect on reducing casualties. That is the key message from that Elvik paper.

Adrian Berendt: Can I add to what Phil was saying about Wales, and whether the evidence was peer reviewed? It is interesting that if you compare the 20 mph and 30 mph roads in Wales with other roads, those other roads did not see any change in casualties. By the same token, you can compare it with England. Again, there was no change in that period. I think the benchmarking is pretty clear.

It is interesting that when the Wales default was declared, we were slightly nervous at 20's Plenty for Us. We had seen the evidence from Bristol, London, Edinburgh and all sorts of places, and we thought, "Is this also going to happen in Wales?" Of course it did, so we were absolutely delighted. After a year we thought, "Maybe next year's results are not going to be quite as good," and they were. If you look at the change quarter by quarter, it is very consistent. I am almost certain that a peer review would come up with that.

Q161 **Dr Arthur:** I always think it is a shame that we do not know which lives have been saved. If you were able to present that, it would change everything.

Phil Jones: You can't identify them.

Adrian Berendt: We're not going to rerun the model—sorry. *[Laughter.]*

Dr Török: Can I put it very briefly in numbers? The paper I referred to is behind the speed impact tool, which is a way of predicting what a change in speed would achieve. I will give two figures. Drivers choosing to travel at 27 mph rather than 30 mph reduce the risk of fatalities by 33% and of seriously injuring people by 26%. If we look at an average speed going from 30 mph to 20 mph, which obviously is not the same as applying a 20 mph limit, but if we achieve compliance, it reduces fatal collisions to 72% of what they were and reduces serious injuries by 62%. That is the magnitude that the models predict, and it is the best model that we have at the moment. Wherever it is actually seen—those reductions in actual speeds are average speeds—it replicates the model.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Q162 **Olly Glover:** You talked about your views on the strategy's level of ambition for reducing killed or severely injured rates. One thing that is not talked about much in the strategy is Vision Zero. Do you feel that adopting Vision Zero at national level is realistic, and should have been considered in the strategy?

Lilli Matson: I am the author of the original Vision Zero strategy for London and worked on this for many years with other international cities



and countries. I can understand the hesitation, perhaps, of officials and Ministers at that point, because when we launched the Vision Zero action plan in London and set the goal of eliminating death and serious injury from the roads by 2041, it was considered quite audacious. Yet driving that through and changing the tone of the debate to say, "This is not an everyday occurrence, or an acceptable outcome of how we use the road network," has fundamentally changed the way we make decisions as a city, both in London boroughs and in Transport for London. As the chief safety officer I know that, because it allows intolerance of an acceptability that death and injury will happen. Clearly, things are not perfect in London and road danger still exists, but there is that intolerance of it, so when something happens you go further and question every investment decision you make.

I feel, emotionally—which is at the heart of what politics is ultimately about—that it is hugely important to have that kind of commitment and strength. Actually, do we really want to change things? Yes. What number is acceptable: 13 or 25? Last year 96 people were killed on London's roads. To me that is unacceptable. It will not be acceptable until it is zero.

Olly Glover: Any other thoughts?

Phil Jones: As Lilli said, what other number would you choose? Yes, it is audacious—a really good word. It is ambitious, but it has to be, in the end, doesn't it? In any other industry or mode of transport, what would be an acceptable target for killing people—for the railways or airlines? We could not put a number on it, so why would we say anything else as the long-term objective?

Dr Török: I have a slightly different take on that. Yes, absolutely, it has to be the principle, because there should not be a level of harm that we accept, but I think messaging, public engagement and the understanding of drivers are important. In some areas, if you say "Vision Zero", people react against it, because they see zero as absolute; it is never going to be achieved and is unrealistic. It is so far away from where we are that it seems impossible, so they give up. It should absolutely be the principle driving things—it is zero avoidable deaths. Even if you just put that little "avoidable" in, it makes it more understandable to people, because it is not so absolute or like saying infinity or zero. Yes, it should be the principle, but it is brilliant if we achieve a 65% reduction in the next 10 years and a 70% reduction in children. That would go further than we have in the last couple of decades. So the principle is absolutely right; how best to engage policymakers and the public is a different question.

Q163 **Olly Glover:** We are going to be exploring some of that a bit later. Adrian, do you have any thoughts on Vision Zero?

Adrian Berendt: I would just echo what other people said. You need that as a long-term goal, but 65% by 2035 is pretty ambitious and gets you a long way. We probably need some interim targets as well. How are



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we doing by 2028 and 2030? It is a journey that we are going towards. Yes, absolutely, Vision Zero must be the end goal.

Chair: Thank you very much. We are now going on to speed and road danger.

Q164 **Dr Arthur:** I will ask a slightly leading question. We have established that speed is a factor. Is that because when we reduce speeds the severity is less significant, or is it because accidents themselves are less likely?

Lilli Matson: Both.

Dr Arthur: Does anyone want to expand on that one-word answer?

Phil Jones: Kinetic energy is $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$. That's how it works—you cannot argue with physics. A small increase in speed, as the square of the velocity, is the energy that is dissipated on impact. It is simple. In terms of reaction time, it changes the driver's perception of the road ahead. It gives them more time to look, to avoid a casualty and to brake. If you are doing a certain speed and you stop a metre from a child, no injury takes place, while at 1 mph faster you might not be able to do that.

Lilli Matson: To expand on that, we talked a lot about 20 mph but it is also manifest on strategic roads as well, and we have reduced top-level speed limits on some strategic roads in London. It allows more time to react and reduces the severity, because of the physical impact. On both those factors, it is absolutely critical.

Q165 **Dr Arthur:** Rob, you said in your written evidence: "Speed is the predominant risk factor and controllable variable within our road safety system." The predominant risk factor is different from the cause, isn't it?

Dr Török: I would probably equate them.

Dr Arthur: Lots of people tell me they are great drivers and should be able to drive in line with the road conditions, but you are saying that speed is an issue.

Dr Török: Speed is the predominant issue, because increased speed increases the risk of collisions. Unexpected things happen on our roads every day. Sometimes when we are thinking or talking about speeds there is an assumption that everyone else is obeying the rules and driving sensibly, and that there will not be children or vulnerable adults doing odd things, or vehicles or animals, or trees down, or anything of that nature.

If we can reduce the speed at impact, that relates to the forces on the human body. Our frail mammalian bodies of blood and bone have a biomechanical tolerance, which is pretty much 20 mph for pedestrians. If you exceed that, the risk of death and injury is much greater than if you can achieve enough safety reserve in our systems when there are



collisions—and there will be, as errors happen. But errors are different from people choosing to ignore the rules and drive too fast for the conditions. That is the absolute key.

Lilli Matson: We know from the analysis of collisions in London that excess speed—which does not mean exceeding the speed limit; it is speeding too fast for the conditions—is involved in at least 50% of serious and fatal injuries. It is the main causal contributory factor, to go directly to your question.

Dr Török: Coming back to the control, we have a system. Roads and mobility are a system—a man-made construct. Every bit of it is in our control. We create the cars, regulate the human drivers and decide how often they are licensed and checked, and the regulation, enforcement and penalties are the outcomes when people transgress the rules. It is a balance between mobility and speed, and a choice of restrictions and regulation, versus safety for drivers and other road users. At the moment, the pivot point—where we are on the seesaw—is far too much away from safety.

If we introduced a ban on speed—zero speed—there would be no injuries. Clearly, that is not viable or practical, because then we would lose mobility and all the other benefits, but we need to come much more back towards the realities of safety. That is where Vision Zero really has power, because you really start to think, every time there is an incident or even a near miss, that there are things you can learn. Why did those drivers choose, and think it acceptable, to drive at those speeds or undertake that risk, or cause that risk to others and themselves?

Phil Jones: Causation is always very subjective. Accidents, collisions and casualties always have multiple causations: if this happens, this happens. Yet speed—the energy embodied in the moving vehicle—is common to every collision. Some factors, whether they are drug driving or drink driving, are only a subset of the population and of incidents, but speed is common to everything. It is the most important factor, in our view.

Adrian Berendt: I have seen a report that was sent to me just this week by a local council, about a particular road where there have been six incidents. In the detail it says that in three of them speed was a cause. When I looked at the detail I thought, “Speed has been a cause or a factor in all six.” If one of the people had been driving a bit slower maybe it would not have happened. I think it is under-reported, which is part of the problem. We feel different when we are walking from when we are cycling and when we are in a car. Yes, when I am in a car, I feel a bit invulnerable, and I probably do not always drive as well for the conditions as I think. It is that perception of how you are doing. The average driver thinks they are better than the average driver. That is what all the data tells us. I am not going to say whether I am or not.

Q166 **Dr Arthur:** Yes—the rules are for other people. If we have established that speed is a big factor, what other things can we manage to improve



road safety?

Lilli Matson: I am glad you asked, because it is really important to see speed as part of the system. Our Vision Zero action plan clearly sets out a range of actions across all elements of what we call a safe system. In terms of vehicles in particular, one thing that we think the strategy could go further on is the safety of heavy goods vehicles. In London, for example, we have required additional safety features to enhance the visibility of the surroundings for the driver, through what we call our direct vision standard. That halved the number of casualties resulting, so on average six fewer people are now killed by heavy goods vehicles and around 15 or 17 fewer people are seriously injured. The European Commission has adopted that as part of vehicle standards. That ethos needs to drive through into the strategy.

Similarly, we have a bus safety standard that goes much further than a normal safety standard, so you can do things with vehicles. One great thing in the strategy was the recognition of technology. All those measures should be required and adopted because, with very little impediment or hindrance to drivers, it would make the drives easier, more relaxing and definitely safer, so all those measures are hugely important.

You need to change the roads. You will see outside Parliament that there are cycle lanes. There are ways of creating and segregating vulnerable road users from main roads. That is essential, as is education.

Finally, there is enforcement. The role of the police is critical. Our plan is a joint plan between the London boroughs, which manage 95% of the road network, London police, Transport for London and other agencies. Collaboration is a key part of it, and I think that could come through even more strongly in the strategy.

Dr Arthur: It is a shame that the Road Haulage Association is not here today to answer some of those points.

Lilli Matson: Yes.

Dr Arthur: Is there anything else on that?

Dr Török: Essentially, what we were talking about was speed. Of course, there are other factors. The safe system, which is referenced in the strategy, divides it into the five pillars or components. I believe that insufficient focus is placed on the writing around the circle. You have your five components—safe roads and roadsides, safe road users, safe speeds, safe vehicles, post-crash response—but the leadership, co-ordination, messaging, public awareness and attitudes and cultures around road safety are missing elements. Not enough is put into that. There are behavioural scientists and research academics who have tools to measure where a population is, introduce interventions in real time, not causing



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waiting and delay, and observe the impact. We need to harness those to a much greater degree.

As I said earlier, if we got it right and people understood the harsh realities out there, they would demand this and they would not choose to drive in the manner they are because they would understand that the driver has ultimate responsibility. At the end of the day, we have a system with all sorts of components, but, ultimately, the final decision is that a driver decides consciously to get into a car, whatever condition it is in and whatever condition they are in, and chooses at what speed to drive around other human beings. This is not about blaming a driver. We see it in the context of the system and try to understand why they are making unwise decisions where they are, and we have put in awareness enforcement regulation that will reduce the tragedy that is happening out there.

Phil Jones: It is also the choice of car people buy. In particular, people do not understand the relationship with bonnet height and the impact it has on pedestrians, particularly children.

Chair: That is important, but we will come to it later.

Q167 **Dr Arthur:** On people's attitudes to speed, it is interesting that sometimes when someone is caught speeding and fined it is treated as being unlucky. It is not unusual to see on a local community Facebook page a warning that the speed cops are out trying to catch criminals. We don't warn burglars or shoplifters that they might get caught, but for some reason it is acceptable to speed, isn't it?

Dr Török: There are a couple of points on that. The reality is that we are in a blind spot. We have evolved, lived and grown up with vehicle mobility as part of the background of our everyday lives. Somehow, things have got out of kilter, and we have got out of touch.

I would like to introduce some concepts from Professor Ian Walker, a British environmental psychologist, who uses the term "motonormativity". One of the Committee's previous inquiries made reference to it. He describes it as society's unconscious bias towards cars. It refers to a cultural blind spot where people automatically accept driving as the default and normal transport mode, often suspending their usual ethical and moral standards when judging driving behaviours. It explains how people are able to apply double standards to road use that would be completely unacceptable anywhere else, like flying and drink or drugs. They ignore alternative options to driving that are often healthier and possible, and they defend the status quo. They are resistant to our introduction of measures that will make it safer for everyone. I think there are some really interesting things in there.

One other thing mentioned was the concept of pluralistic ignorance. That is really interesting. I think it arose in the previous session. It is not a term I had been familiar with, but I think it is real. It is described as a



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number of vociferous opponents who are much louder in their expression of opposition and resistance to interventions like 20 mph limits and anything else that makes things safer. People who hold the majority view and are in favour and support of more safety and 20 mph limits remain muted and quieter because they believe they are part of a minority and might be ostracised. For policymakers and the general perception, it seems that the minority louder group are the majority, but they are not. It's actually the reverse. We have lots of questionnaires and surveys showing how important road safety is to people and how they want their communities to feel safer and reduce the costs, deaths and injuries.

Q168 Dr Arthur: Within that context, the Government are devolving powers to local authorities across the UK, in Scotland and Wales, to look at speed. Is that the right thing to do? Do you think they should just do what happened in Wales and take that central decision?

Phil Jones: They did not do that in Wales.

Dr Arthur: Apologies. Do you think devolving it is the right thing to do?

Dr Török: Personally, I do not. I think it should be nationally set. How the Government and things like that work something out, I do not know—I am a frontline clinician and I do not know how the Governments work—but I think it has to be nationally set, delivered and prioritised. I do not understand the dynamics of how that gets localised to an appropriate degree, so I defer to your expertise on that.

Lilli Matson: I think national leadership and policy setting is absolutely critical, but it is clear that regions and cities can make progress in the absence of it.

Dr Arthur: It is happening, isn't it?

Lilli Matson: Yes. Fatalities have fallen faster and further in London than in any other national city. That is a clear trend year on year because of policies, but you need that leadership, and that commitment in the strategy to set policy, review it and be bold.

There is something very important about what Dr Török said about challenging the tenor of the whole discussion. If reducing road deaths is never talked about at national level as a priority—it is now that we have a strategy, but there was a period when we did not—it is very difficult for regions to make the progress they need. Local highways already set the standards. That is what happens now. I believe there is some merit in that, but it definitely needs national leadership.

Q169 Dr Arthur: The UK Government could set a national limit of 20 mph in urban areas and individual local authorities could opt out of that. That is happening, isn't it?



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Dr Török: What is the most effective and urgent way we can do this? Every day we do not, more people are dying and their deaths could have been prevented.

Lilli Matson: There are some things that require national action. For example, if they were to mandate the 18 safety technical features in all vehicles, at a stroke you would have vehicles being intelligently adapted to the speed limit in their area.

Chair: But only in new cars.

Lilli Matson: Well, we have retrofitted our vehicle fleet at Transport for London.

Chair: It will take time for most cars to have this.

Lilli Matson: It would, but that reduced speeding incidents by 63% in our fleet. Very quickly, if you take the leadership and mandate those kinds of technological changes, you will already reap the benefits from the limits we have, and then you reduce those to lower limits. That kind of speed of action needs to be aligned with the targets we have set at national level.

Phil Jones: On the question of public attitudes, we must not think that public attitudes are immutable. They change. What we are seeing in London and Wales increasingly is that, once we have wide areas of 20 mph and that becomes the norm, there is increased normalisation. The view at the taskforce stage was that we would see compliance increase over time. At the moment, it is pretty flat. There was a concern that we would see a dip and it would creep back to normal again. That is not happening. It is certainly flat and we will get increasing vehicle technology.

On the pace car point, we recommended to the Welsh Government that if all the public fleet—there are millions of vehicles run by the public sector—were retrofitted with ISA and acted as pace cars, we could also get the public themselves to opt in and become pace car drivers. We do not need every vehicle to obey the speed limit to influence the majority of the traffic flow. We can do a lot.

Interestingly, on the point about pluralistic ignorance, there was that concern. There was a view that this was tremendously unpopular. Actually, a silent majority in Wales supported this, but we had this very loud minority. There was reluctance on the part of public authorities to take those steps, because of the fear of backlash. The point about having leadership to show the need for this is hugely important. Whether it is an immediate law change, as was done in Wales, or a policy change that sets a very clear sense of direction, that is what is needed, and local authorities will be given support to make the changes.

Q170 **Dr Arthur:** On the attitude point, the big criticism of the 20 mph scheme



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in Edinburgh is that it has reduced average speeds by less than 2 mph, but it has also reduced the speeds of the fastest vehicles. I guess that on the attitude point maybe the counter-argument is: why bother reducing speed limits? Should we not just be educating drivers to stick to the existing speed limit?

Phil Jones: Because you cannot achieve that through education.

Dr Arthur: You have to reduce limits—

Phil Jones: Would you rather be hit by a car doing 29 mph in a 30 mph area or a car doing 25 mph in a 20 mph area? It is about speed, not compliance. Compliance with the wrong speed limit is no success, which is the point I made. The indicator in the road safety strategy that it is going to measure speed compliance is in my view the wrong measure, unless we have the right speed limits to begin with.

Q171 **Dr Arthur:** There is no hope of changing attitudes, then.

Phil Jones: No, I am saying the exact opposite. I think there is huge hope for change.

Dr Arthur: But you would do it via changing speed limits. That is how we change attitudes.

Phil Jones: It is one way. The two go hand in hand. We need to change public attitudes. If we demonstrate to politicians that there is a silent majority in favour of this, they will make the right choices, because of the pluralistic ignorance point that Rob made.

Dr Török: Recruit the expertise of the behavioural scientists to get them to understand and map out what the current attitude is, because we do not know. I do not think that work has been done. You get windows into it. Once you know where the starting point is, you can launch campaigns and educational awareness, try to change it and understand which identities people are relating to that are keeping them in unsafe decision-making modes. It is about doing both.

Compliance is really important. We have a technological, behavioural and social system of road use, don't we? It is roads, vehicles and people. If the message we are giving is that we are setting speed limits, but we are not really going to take them seriously and it does not really matter whether you comply, we totally lose control of the whole system. It is the predominant factor that can change this.

You mentioned Vision Zero. We could have zero tolerance for excess speeding. Zero tolerance for breaking the speed limit would be a start, and for speeding in inappropriate conditions would be more complicated but desirable. But zero tolerance for wilful choice in exceeding the speed limit would be a brilliant start, and it is doable. There is technology out there and data in vehicles that measure how fast they are going and know what the speed limits on the roads are. It may be seen as



unpopular and there may be hesitancy from a popularity and support point of view, but if you have road safety literacy and consistent messaging, understanding and awareness and people saw, understood or realised how the impact of their choices to go a bit faster or closer massively increases the risk of serious injury and death, they would choose otherwise. It is both—it is all these components acting together. The big missing component at the moment is public awareness and attitudes, and focusing on that to gain support for everything else we are talking about.

Q172 Dr Arthur: In your evidence you said that drivers do not always understand the impact of relatively small increases in speed.

Dr Török: I do not think they do and I do not think policymakers do. That is partly what that paper and others referred to as well. It is intuitive to all of us that if someone speeds massively there is massively increased risk. You need a broader understanding of systems and whole-systems behaviour and risk levels to appreciate it.

It has been understood only fairly recently, in the past few years, that a greater number of people going a little bit too fast across our network massively increases the risks to everyone in a way that is probably more significant than the few who are exceptionally speeding. Part of it is the number of interactions, because there are so many more vehicles on the road, they are driving much closer together and people are behaving in slightly different ways. The net effect across the system of small changes in averages is really impactful in reducing injuries and deaths. You have to focus on the excessive speeds as well—don't get me wrong: they are disproportionately high—but it is a much smaller number of interactions than people who habitually choose to go a bit faster.

Phil Jones: I am not saying that compliance is not important. I am saying do not start by measuring compliance, because if you are measuring it with the wrong speed limits, you may get the wrong measure of success. I am not saying that 25 mph in a 20 mph area is acceptable, but let us set the speed limits first and then achieve compliance later in the long term, whether it is through technology, greater enforcement or whatever.

I want to pick up what Rob said about public attitudes. What we recommended in the Welsh taskforce was that before the Welsh Government brought in the legislation to change the default speed limit, they would carry out what was called a national conversation with the Welsh population about what residential roads and streets were for. The expectation was—

Dr Arthur: We will come to Wales later, won't we?

Chair: We are going to come on to Wales. I also have a question on behaviour.



Phil Jones: My point is that they did not do that. That understanding of the motivation of people speeding and their attitudes to speed was exactly what was recommended, as Rob said, by university behavioural scientists, but it was not done.

Q173 **Chair:** We talked about the more carrot side and the behaviour side. Obviously, in outer London, where I am, there are lots of 20 mph residential roads. What I do not see is much enforcement. Am I right that there is not much enforcement? If so, why is that? I have been caught doing 24 mph in a 20 mph area. You see an awful lot of people clearly proceeding on the basis of, "I know there's no speed camera and I've always driven at 30+ mph, so I won't slow down here now." I know why the roads have been designated as 20 mph, but that is because I live and breathe this stuff, but where does enforcement fit into the 20 mph element?

Lilli Matson: I will pick up the position in London, but it would be the same everywhere. It is really important from an educational point of view. We do have a lot of marketing and communications that make that critical point—"I didn't know I was going a bit too fast," and that that can have devastating outcomes.

We work with the Metropolitan police who enforce in 20 mph areas. London is a very big place with around 27 million journeys taking place every day. One objective they took on in the last Vision Zero action plan was greatly to increase the number of enforcement notices issued each year. That increased from around 150,000 or 200,000 to over 800,000 notices of prosecution. Those are not just on high-speed roads; they include 20 mph roads. We have also now remodelled and changed the deployment of the roads policing force in London with the road danger team, which will be much more mobile and will be moving around. That will create more of a presence that hopefully you will see and feel.

Nevertheless, to go back to the point Phil was making, there is too much speeding in those 20 mph zones.

Chair: You can see it.

Lilli Matson: You can see it, and it really annoys me and local citizens. Those are still delivering safety benefits. We know that from the 10-year research we have done, because those results were delivered with the current deployment and less enforcement happening, just because you bring down average speeds. I want people to drive at the speed limit or less, so that would really get me towards my Vision Zero goal. That is why we will continue to work really hard with the Met police on this, but it is also about technologies such as speed limiters. We will come later, hopefully, to much greater access to new camera technology, which is being blocked through the Home Office-type approval system. We need to be able to use that much more intelligently and unlock the power of enforcement.



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Dr Arthur: It would be good if you could give a breakdown of those tickets for speeding to see what proportion arise in 20 mph zones.

Lilli Matson: We absolutely can do that.

Q174 **Dr Arthur:** That would be really good. Just for a bit more detail, if I live in London on a street with a 20 mph limit and the average speed is way above that, how do you react to that? Do you just phone up the police and hope they will enforce, or do you come along and think about installing physical measures on the street?

Lilli Matson: It depends on which highway authority it is. Ninety-five per cent of the roads in London are owned and managed by the local borough.

Dr Arthur: Apologies, okay.

Lilli Matson: No, don't worry. The main roads are Transport for London. This is what local communities do every day. Probably the biggest postbag of a ward councillor is about speeding and road danger concerns. They will work with the local policing forces. The new road danger reduction team, in terms of their deployment, can go in and do mobile camera enforcement, for example, on your road, if that were the case. If there is a need for physical changes, the local borough can introduce them or maybe do mobile deployment. There is a range of measures, but obviously it is very seldom that you will have an impact road by road; you need to think about it across the whole borough. But sanctions do apply and people do get speeding notices.

Dr Arthur: It would be good to see that data.

Lilli Matson: We will send that.

Adrian Berendt: To add on the data for enforcement, 20's Plenty for Us has made a freedom of information request to all police forces in Great Britain over the past three or four years. The level of enforcement of different speed limits does not relate to the risk in those speed limits. It is highly variable.

Q175 **Chair:** Lilli was saying that in London they are being more nuanced about where they place enforcement based on risk.

Adrian Berendt: London is showing us the way. There are other forces. If you go to Avon and Somerset, they are good about this stuff. Other forces are not relating the enforcement to the risk.

Chair: There is a clear message there.

Dr Török: Can I pick up on the enforcement and policing side of things? Particularly for 20 mph, I do not think we should lean too much on the police and enforcement to expect them to achieve that for us. If we get the messaging and public awareness right, it will drive itself. Police monitoring and enforcement is for occasional transgressors, not the



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mainstay. We know it is effective. We know that people currently have very low perceived risk of being caught and the penalties do not reflect the risks.

At the moment, the ACPO recommendation for speeding in 30 mph areas—I will relate to 30 mph—is that enforcement does not kick in until 35 mph. The risk of 35 mph rather than 30 mph is an increase in fatalities of 90% and an increase in severe injuries of 62%. The penalties we see that kick in only at 35 mph do not relate to those. People actually laugh about it and say, “I got sent on an enforcement campaign,” which is now online, isn’t it? It should be severe points and severe penalties so the negative consequences that people perceive and experience are true inhibitors.

Q176 **Chair:** Are the Government spending enough on the public information messaging that I remember in my youth?

Dr Török: We are not tapping into what is now known by behavioural scientists about behavioural change units.

Phil Jones: For me, this is where the strategy is really lacking. There is very little in there about what will be the strategy to increase compliance and reduce speeds. It could be about greater resources for police enforcement. It could be about local authorities being given powers to enforce speed limits, which has been proposed in London. It could be about community policing systems. It could be about pace cars and a stronger commitment to ISA. But it is really silent. What are we going to do to increase compliance? That should be an absolute focus of the strategy, but it is silent on that at the moment. It does not really talk about that at all.

Adrian Berendt: I have an anecdote. I used a Lime bike to get here today. I was zipping along at 15 mph on a main road and then I went off on to the Embankment where there are lots of residential properties, and I could not do more than 6 mph or 7 mph. Then I got back on the main road and could do 15 mph. That is great using bikes. We can do that with cars. The technology is not the problem. We could do that now. It is about education.

Dr Arthur: Along would come someone saying you are restricting their freedoms, but never mind—that is the world we live in these days.

Phil Jones: But it is freedom to harm other people.

Dr Arthur: Exactly.

Chair: Going back decades, I have an image in my mind of a TV advert put out by the Government around a child in a car. It is really our fault.

Phil Jones: They are completely absent. The public information film has disappeared. We just do not see them any more. There is a huge role for Government here to increase people’s understanding of the reality.



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Q177 **Dr Arthur:** To ask another slightly leading question, should we be doing 20 mph at scale? Or should we just do it where we know there have been accidents, or perhaps outside schools and things like that? Why not focus on outside schools and where there are accidents?

Phil Jones: It is as if children exist only at school. Rod King put this really well: we do not see children in the public domain any more. We just don't see them. The only time adults see children is at the start and end of school times. We think that is the only place where they exist so that is where you need 20 mph. That view is really unfortunate and it speaks to the loss of children's independence. I will leave Adrian to comment, but for me there is absolute evidence that a wide area of 20 mph is cheaper, more effective and more understandable.

Dr Arthur: Does the evidence show that?

Phil Jones: Yes, absolutely.

Adrian Berendt: I agree with Phil, as you would expect, but our analysis is that at least 80% of child casualties do not occur outside school gates. Everybody agrees that you should have 25 mph around schools—I do not think there is anyone in this room who does not say that—but that is not where the casualties are. They are in every other walk of life for children. Interestingly, the target for children reduced KSIs is 70%, not 65%, and something like 80% of those occur in urban areas. So if you are going to reach 70%, 20 mph is even more important for that particular target.

Lilli Matson: To add something as a highway authority, it is much cheaper and more efficient to introduce it on an area basis, in that your obligation is to indicate very clearly to the driver that they are entering that zone, but if you are doing it street by street you literally have to change the signs at the end of every single street and the cost is prohibitive and not effective.

Adrian Berendt: It is also confusing for drivers: I am driving down one street and it is 30 mph; I drive down the next street and it is 20 mph; I drive down the next street and it goes from a 20 mph limit to a 20 mph zone, so there is a big sign saying, "End of 20 mph." But it is still 20 mph. It's a complete mess. You have to do it by area. If you look at any town in England, Wales or Scotland, draw a kilometre radius around every school and say, "We're going to have 20 mph for a kilometre around every school," that would be the whole town. You then say, "We will do the whole town and set the gateways, but that road has protected cycleways and there are not many pedestrians or cyclists, so we can raise it to 30 mph."

Q178 **Chair:** I was going to come to signage later, but let me ask about it now. Living in and representing an outer London borough area, one of the most confusing things to drivers—asking for a friend, constituents and fellow London MPs—is the clutter. Seeing the signage, apparently 20 mph painted on the road is not a statutory requirement. The repeater signs



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are, yet as a driver the painting on the road is much clearer because it does not get messed up with the clutter. You can miss a repeater sign because there is a van in the way or a bush is overgrown. To me, how clear the signage is should be a factor, but there is also the disjoint. In Windmill Lane going up from Syon Lane towards Three Bridges it is 30 mph, 40 mph, 30 mph, 40 mph, or the other way round. The A4 going through the borough of Hounslow is 40 mph, 30 mph, 40 mph. That is a TfL road; Windmill Lane is an Ealing and Hounslow road. What can be done to make life consistent for drivers, even within a single local authority area? We will come on to different local authority areas later.

Lilli Matson: You articulated the problem brilliantly. Some of this is because highway authorities are required under the manual for street design to use signage in that way. The Government have committed to revising that guidance and it is a brilliant opportunity to streamline it and make it much simpler. We would welcome that and could bring your experience and that of others to do so.

Our experience is that a more consistent driving experience will improve that goal of compliance, which is what we are seeking to do. Our road network is not perfect and we have committed to reviewing speed limits and to bring them down on strategic roads where appropriate, so you get that more consistent experience. It also goes back to the original point about having default policies because of people's expectations. If we knew that residential roads were 20 mph by default, unless they were signed differently, you would not have to have all the clutter to tell you that. It is something you know because you are taught it. That is my point of view. I think there is an opportunity with the revision of national guidance to streamline this.

Chair: Meanwhile, will TfL look at the required speed limits on the A roads in London?

Lilli Matson: Yes, we are. The Vision Zero action plan definitely commits to doing that: both extending 20 mph by around a further 65 km and reviewing the speed limits on the other strategic roads to make sure they are consistent.

Chair: Because they are coming from 40 mph down to 30 mph.

Lilli Matson: They will not all do that, but there is an intention—

Chair: There are inconsistencies on the same stretch of road, which people see as just a money spinner for TfL or the council.

Lilli Matson: To be really clear, none of the speed enforcement money in London or elsewhere goes to the local authority.

Chair: We know that. It is the political pushback that we get.

Phil Jones: On the consistency point, there was a big backlash in Wales. We know that and we can explore the reasons. Much of that came from



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the inconsistencies. A big area of concern for drivers was that change from 20 mph to 30 mph to 20 mph to 30 mph. There is a real benefit to consistency as well as, as Lilli said, cost-effectiveness. On the roundels point, certainly our understanding is that a roundel—a painting on the road—is perfectly legal as an alternative.

Chair: It is not illegal, but it is not a statutory requirement.

Phil Jones: As an alternative to the upright sign—that is our understanding. The two are equated. I agree with you. A painted roundel is very hard for a driver to miss. It is much more effective.

To go back to the questions from Scott, I thought I would leave you with this lovely quote. I was at a road safety conference recently in Birmingham. Modeshift STARS work with schools to encourage more children to walk and cycle, and they have set up active travel ambassadors for schools and young people. There was a young girl on the stage and she said, “We can’t have a childhood that you can’t walk through,” which I thought was quite profound. We have to have a childhood that we can walk through. In other words, “We have to have an environment that we can experience. We can’t be in our bedrooms on screens.” This is about much more than areas around schools. This is about an urban environment that children feel able to be in and in which to have an element of independence. We have seen the loss of children’s independence. We must not ignore the benefits of lower speed limits, not just in terms of road safety but in the way in which people, young people particularly, can live their lives.

Adrian Berendt: To your point about street clutter, in terms of speed limit signing, this comes because we are setting national speed limits that are too high, and then you have to tell drivers you can only do a lower speed than that. If the national speed limits were lower but you could go faster on certain roads, you would not need a sign, would you?

Chair: We are coming on to who sets speed limits.

Q179 **Olly Glover:** You have all been very clear on the advantages you see in 20 mph speed limits and the benefits that they bring. Given that very clear evidence, and that most of the road safety and road design experts are of a similar view, why is there such a culture war? Why is there this resistance?

Adrian Berendt: It is change management. We have got used to 30 mph as the limit, and that has been with us for 100 years or so. Whenever you change, people are going to get uncomfortable. “Oh, why do we need to change? I haven’t been involved in a crash, and I’ve been quite happily driving at 30 mph.” It is just about getting used to it. We saw the petition in Wales. At the point of the change, over 400,000 people signed this. By the way, that was before many of the signs were in place, but leave that aside. There was an identical petition two years later, and it attracted 2,378 signatures. It was less than—sorry, I can’t



even do the maths. It was a tiny number of signatures. Of course on social media it is still there, but people just get used to it.

Dr Török: There is some truth in that. I come back to question the level of resistance. The fact that there are groups that are loudly opposing or resistant to this change does not mean that the majority are not in support. The surveys that the RAC and similar bodies do tell us that people want reductions in speed limits and safer roads. There are 1,600 people killed on our roads, 29,000 seriously injured every year, 134,000 involved in other injuries, and a potential saving to the economy of £54 billion. Is that not reason enough to make people more aware of the real costs of this and the benefits of increased safety, and whether it is popular or not to do the right thing to prevent that harm and those deaths? Allowing it to continue is within our decision making: what are the policies and legislation and how we align things to that reality.

Q180 **Olly Glover:** I completely agree with that. Of course, we should have policy that should be trying to do the right thing, but there is this tension. I am speaking in general, not just on this. There is that tension of people in democratic politics about how you strike the right balance between doing the right thing and then also not doing the thing that is going to get you booted out of office, or the thing that you think might get you booted out of office. That is why this whole public engagement and bringing people with us thing is important.

Dr Török: And it is important to depoliticise it. Give this decision making to a body like the RSIB. Make it cross-party, independent of politics or whichever Government happen to be in at the time. Give it the authority to review the evidence, what is already known and recommend actions and interventions that are going to save lives. There are barriers to this within the driving public and their decision making and within legislation and policymakers, and we need to understand that. What are the barriers? What are the opportunities? What are the enablers? Let us get everything lined up and achieve a reduction in deaths and serious injuries.

Lilli Matson: If you look at London boroughs that very recently will have introduced this, there are local politicians who are taking it on the chin and being very brave in introducing it. There is always a lot of local discussion. It has been most successfully framed when the limit is not what is so important but it is actually about what you want to do with your streets, and when it is married with creating safe routes to school, reformatting the high street, making the environment look nicer for people walking and cycling, or for older people to access shops. These are real, tangible benefits that people do not want to lose once they have them. There are lots of bits of communities that have been remodelled along this. We have seen in local elections that people have secured greater public support in the wake of doing this, and there is quite a lot of evidence of that. Being really clear on the benefits and what you are trying to achieve with it is absolutely critical, and you can see that rolling



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out. The point of the national strategy is that it creates that really helpful strategic steer at national level to say this is important and something that we are behind local authorities doing.

Phil Jones: A clearer strategy and technical guidance also enables officers. I know in some authorities you have pro-20 mph members, but officers may say to those members, "Yes, but of course if we follow the Government's current guidance you can't have 20 mph." We will perhaps come on to this, but there is the "Catch-24", which I will steal from Adrian. If speeds are above 24 mph, you cannot have 20 mph, which is a completely perverse position that we have in current national guidance. That certainly needs to be swept away urgently. That is holding back a lot of authorities where officers are strictly following the current Government guidance even in the face of elected members who want to bring in 20 mph. That is a real problem. We have to do something about that.

Q181 **Olly Glover:** I have one more question on this, and I would ideally like a couple of short sentence answers from each of you so that we can move on. A lot of the anti-20 mph rhetoric that one sees is that 20 mph limits increase journey times, increase congestion and have a wider economic cost. Is that supported by evidence?

Adrian Berendt: No.

Lilli Matson: No, because most delay in London is incurred at the junctions, not on the road network.

Dr Török: You get more consistent, reliable, predictable travel times, which is of more benefit than the small reductions in some journeys, and you avoid the disruption when there is an incident and the delays and all that side of things. Commercially and individually it is positive.

Phil Jones: In preparation, I looked at the latest monitoring data of Transport for Wales up to March 2025, and it is showing for a whole range of journeys increasing journey time of no more than about two minutes on average, really small increases in journey times, and, as you said, Rob, an increase in journey time consistency so that you know your journey; all you have to do is leave another two minutes earlier and you will be there. In terms of the economic effect, there is lots of research. If you multiply millions of journeys by two minutes by the value of time that transport economics uses, you get a very big number. The reality is that makes no difference at all.

Dr Török: You have to take off the saving of the consistency and the lack of disruption from getting in a big tailback because there has been a big incident.

Chair: Reducing the speed limit on the M25 actually increased the capacity of the M25.

Adrian Berendt: Indeed. The net economic benefits of this are massive. We have a calculator that shows to each local authority how much it



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would cost to implement this and what the economic benefits would be. The payback is never more than six months, and it is often one or two months.

Q182 Chair: While we are on the subject of economic payback, we are going to come on to the concerns raised by a Conservative Member of the Senedd, who said that the Welsh Government's own figures stated it will cost the Welsh economy about £8 billion. Where did she get that from?

Phil Jones: That is exactly what I was saying. If you take small slivers of time like two minutes over 60 years and over millions of journeys, times the value of time that transport economists use, you get a very big number. That is not a real—

Chair: It has not taken into account the other costs.

Phil Jones: No. Regardless of that, it is not a real figure.

Chair: I see.

Phil Jones: It is not real money. In theory, what would you pay to get to your destination two minutes earlier? You put a number to that—50p.

Chair: I see.

Phil Jones: There is lots of academic research. People cannot use that two minutes. They get there and they sit down and watch "Neighbours" for two more minutes.

Chair: It is the same as the old-fashioned WebTAG.

Phil Jones: Exactly right. It is just WebTAG. It is nothing to do with the economy.

Q183 Dr Arthur: That is, I guess, the consequence of the change. In terms of the benefits, does the same analysis put a monetary value on a life saved?

Phil Jones: Of course, yes. In my view, those are much more tied to the real costs of the economy like the health service. It really costs money to patch people up. It really costs money to send out investigators and to clean up the road. These are real costs, regardless of the human suffering that is caused. The value of time savings, in my view, is entirely illusory. The Welsh Government's impact assessment that came up with that figure quoted academic research to say it does not really matter, but of course people ignore that and they just focus on the £8 billion.

Lilli Matson: Even if you believed it, a full business case would absolutely take on board the quantified value of lives saved plus the additional potential public health benefits and lives saved through enabling more journeys to be made actively. When we do a full business case, we will look at all these costs in the round. As Adrian said, there is



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a very strong business case and very strong cost-benefit assessment for 20 mph.

Adrian Berendt: It is not just to the authorities; it is to the individual driver, because they use less fuel and their insurance costs come down. I do not think that has come across to people. "Oh, if I had 20 mph in my area and everybody was driving a bit slower, my insurance would be £50 a year less." I think I might buy that.

Olly Glover: The insurance thing is the real sell, actually. It has not been made enough of.

Chair: Yes, I have only just learned about that. I didn't know. I will have to tell him indoors as he is in charge of insurance.

Q184 **Daniel Francis:** Should England follow Wales and move towards a 20 mph zone as a national default speed limit on roads?

Phil Jones: First, let us get away from the word "zone". The 20 mph zones are hopelessly confusing. We need to get rid of 20 mph zones. They are a nonsense. In Wales now, there are no 20 mph zones. They are not lawful in Wales. The idea of a special little zone and everything else is 30 mph is—

Chair: Getting over the border is problematic.

Phil Jones: It is not even that. Even in England, the days of the 20 mph zone have gone. Let us just treat 20 mph as a speed limit. Should England do what Wales did? Ideally, I would say yes. It was extremely effective. Will it do it politically? I do not know. It was interesting that Scotland was minded to make the same legislative change that Wales did, took fright politically and decided not to do it. What Scotland now has is a much firmer policy default: 20 mph is the norm and town by town we will implement this. That is where England certainly should go to. I would like it if England did what Wales did but, realistically, it may just be too much of a political ask at the moment, it's sad to say.

Dr Török: Can't we do it, but do it better? Do it with that awareness and public campaign beforehand so that you have support and achieve all the benefits.

Phil Jones: Indeed. I alluded earlier that the intention was that the Welsh Government would roll the pitch, carry out that engagement with the public and almost gain consent of the public to bring in the legislative change, but they did not do that partly because of covid and partly because of budgets or whatever. They only began to engage with the public once they had taken the decision and then were informing the public about the change rather than gaining their consent. England could perhaps do that. We do not talk enough about Northern Ireland, which recently consulted on changes to its speed limit guidance, and I am hopeful that that will also move. The Republic of Ireland also has a default policy of 30 mph.



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Chair: The Republic of Ireland has default 30 mph—

Phil Jones: In urban areas. It has defined urban areas in legislation.

Chair: That is what we have in England.

Dr Török: Is that not in kilometres per hour?

Phil Jones: Sorry—kilometres. It is 30 kph, which is 19 mph. Very soon, England will be the only nation in the British Isles that does not have a policy default of 20 mph, or 30 kph, in urban areas.

Adrian Berendt: 20's Plenty for Us was set up to advocate for a 20 mph national speed limit actually across the UK. We were clearly delighted with what Wales has done. One of the reasons why Wales had to go down that legislative route was that there were very few 20 mph places in Wales already. In Scotland and England, you have many more areas of 20 mph. Sixty-eight out of 154 local authorities in England are already committed to 20 mph. We have already made huge progress. You could argue that a national legislative default would therefore be easier because a lot of people are already doing it. You could also say we are setting a national value of 20 mph, an expectation that it is going to be 20 mph, and assume that everywhere, and let local authorities exempt out without changing the legislation. You could get almost the same effect. It might be a bit more expensive, but it might be a bit easier.

Phil Jones: And it might take longer.

Adrian Berendt: It might take a bit longer.

Phil Jones: That is what will happen. That is the price to be paid.

Adrian Berendt: We have extrapolated the Welsh results to England, and our calculation is nine fewer KSIs. There are nine more KSIs per day in England because we have 30 mph rather than 20 mph. There are nine people being seriously injured or dying today, tomorrow and every day until we make the change. Speed is of the essence in this context.

Q185 **Daniel Francis:** We have talked about Wales a bit. I am an even more out-of-London MP than you, Chair. My borough, Bexley, does not have many 20 mph zones, and if you go on Facebook groups, you will see they say, "Don't go to Lewisham. It's terrible. It's all 20 mph." How do we learn from Wales—you touched on this a little bit—in terms of communication and engagement if we were going to spread that across England?

Phil Jones: We learn how not to do it.

Daniel Francis: What lessons would we learn in terms of communication and engagement?

Phil Jones: We learn how not to do it. It had a very strong politician who carried it through and is no longer a Member of the Senedd. He took the



political hit and was willing to do so. Not all politicians are like that. There needs to be much more engagement to gain the demonstrable consent of the silent majority so that politicians can say in the face of the vociferous opposition that will come, "We're doing this for these people. We're holding up a mirror to society, and this is what people want." We are very confident that if you do representative surveys and proper market research that is balanced across the community of every age, every gender, disability and ethnicity, you will get probably about a two-thirds majority in favour of 20 mph. You do that before you then make the change. You do that change, and when the loud voices come, you can say, "Yes, but you are the minority. Look, we know that you are the minority. We are doing this on behalf of the silent majority."

Lilli Matson: What you will find will strengthen every politician who then has to implement this. There are two things. One, if it is a policy default, you have to argue why you are not doing it as opposed to why you should. In many of our outer London conversations, that would change the balance quite significantly, because the evidence is so clear now. You are literally having to argue why it is acceptable that your children and citizens on your streets are more at risk than they should be.

Dr Török: It is not just that. You mentioned earlier selling and promoting all the other benefits to communities and linking it to other agendas, particularly the physical health and mental health of the whole community and nation. There is really something in that. That is a really positive approach to it.

Adrian Berendt: Can I give you some examples of what 20's Plenty for Us has experienced in Kent? First, it is worth saying that KCC did a study a few years ago in which it did representative market research and found that across all the districts in Kent between 60% and 80% of people were supportive of 20 mph, and that helped to change the policy. The KCC policy is not perfect, but it has gone as far as it can within the existing guidance.

At the time of covid it introduced two 20 mph places, one in Tonbridge and one in Faversham. The level of opposition in both places was about the same. The difference was that in Faversham there was a huge amount of support, which there was not in Tonbridge, and that was simply because of much better engagement at a local level. In fact, 20 mph has gone into both places, and it has been just as successful in both and it is accepted and so on. That level of pre-engagement is really important. I think I am right in saying that, when 20's Plenty for Us was part of the initial thought process in Wales, there was a recommendation that 10% of the budget should be on marketing, advertising and PR. If you look at places like Cornwall, the marketing and PR around lower speeds, particularly 20 mph, is really good. There are lots of examples around the country as to how we can do this better.

Q186 **Chair:** On marketing and PR, you mentioned the covid regulations and



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funding that are no more. There is a local example to me where there had been prior concerns about rat running and speeding in a residential area. The covid regulations and funding were used to do what had not been possible before. An election switched on that basis and it turned out that people quite liked it once it was in. Is there some justification for looking at the way regulations can be done on a temporary basis in areas where there is already a certain amount of popular ask? Have we gone back to experimenting with overly restrictive regulations?

Phil Jones: This is a little technical point.

Chair: I am thinking of low-traffic neighbourhoods.

Phil Jones: Yes, but it applies to speed limits, too. We were involved in the Faversham scheme that Adrian mentioned. Kent County Council during covid introduced a whole town 20 mph limit using an experimental traffic regulation order. It monitored that and it was popular, and then it made that permanent. Some traffic engineers and highway engineers point to very arcane bits of law and say you cannot use experimental orders for speed limits. Some people think you can. Some people think you cannot. There is a difference of view among traffic engineers.

Chair: We are Parliament, so we make the laws.

Phil Jones: I see no reason why you could not have experimental speed limits. That would be very valuable. You could see how it works and monitor the journey times. That was certainly very powerful in Faversham and then it made it easier. It is done in London. It is done in lots of places. I have heard it said in many cases that you cannot do that. Clarification would be really helpful on that.

Q187 **Dr Arthur:** Are experimental schemes part of the solution, then? The general thing people believe is that you make a change that might not be universally popular but after six months they get used to it. The problem with the experimental schemes is that the campaign against schemes can grow because there is a feeling that there is still a hope that it can be changed or reversed. Is it not better to take that traditional approach where we consult, we have a well-designed scheme, we implement it, we know there are going to be some initial issues, but we get through it? I am speaking through experience. I have scars on my back.

Phil Jones: There is a value in it, but you do not make it a referendum. You say these are our expected outcomes, this is what we think is going to happen, and we monitor against those. We monitor against the evidence, not against people's opinions. We can do them as long as it is done in a very careful and controlled way.

Lilli Matson: Don't forget we are trying to get to an outcome. Sometimes what we as highways authorities introduce does not work. The benefit of having an experimental scheme is that you can make changes.



Dr Arthur: If there is a genuine question that you are asking.

Lilli Matson: Yes. You could get perverse travel outcomes that you did not understand. Experimentation can be extremely powerful, and it also allows an ongoing and more mature dialogue with local communities, so I am very supportive of it. In the low traffic neighbourhood experiment it proved to be very helpful in getting better outcomes. You do not need it universally, but it has its role.

Adrian Berendt: In the Tonbridge example, which was done under the same legislation, we removed small bits of one or two roads from 20 mph and put them back to 30 mph. That was helpful.

Dr Török: Can I step sideways on this a little? I completely agree that local experimentation can inform some things. I would certainly welcome experimental and exceptional legislation and policy because it is a proportionate response to the urgent level of problem that we have. If the Road Safety Investigation Branch was a national oversight body, not investigating individual collisions but looking at the global background factors, looking at different schemes and seeing what can be brought back and then nationalised and spread out, surely that would be a structural, systematic way of approaching this problem. The RSIB is absolutely key.

Chair: That has come up in other sessions.

Q188 **Daniel Francis:** The only other thing on Wales I want to ask is about the effectiveness of the policy where some roads moved from 20 mph back to 30 mph. I know we have touched on that.

Phil Jones: It is very few. Some of the press would have you believe that there was a wholesale reversion. It was really very small. We use the term “exceptions”. There is the default 20 mph, but you could set exceptions where you saved a 30 mph, as it were. The authority with the greatest number of exceptions in south Wales was Blaenau Gwent: 10% of its network was saved at 30 mph. Wrexham had the fewest, about 2% of the network. Interestingly, Wrexham is the authority that has probably put the most roads back to 30 mph. It is still levelling up—about 50 roads. Across the 22 local authorities in Wales, the majority have done five or 10 roads. Some have done none at all. It has really been a quiet tinkering. There has been a little bit of reversion, but really very small and much less than what you hear in some of the press.

Dr Török: That should not be interpreted as failure, should it? All those areas where it has been introduced will have been safer for that period where those lower speeds were achieved. If we then find that there are other reasons we want to de-restrict them a bit, that is fine. At the moment, we need to accept that we need to move things to saving people and injuries, and then where we can in a structured, systematic way release restrictions where that is possible without increasing risk disproportionately.



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Phil Jones: Some people say Wales is a failure because of all the controversy and so on, but it is a massive success. It is absolutely a massive success.

Dr Török: In saving people and injuries.

Chair: Right, okay.

Adrian Berendt: On the Wrexham point, they moved 55 roads back to 30 mph. Quite a lot of those should have already been accepted in the first round. That is the point of getting the design right, so you know which road you are going to except when you change the majority of roads to 20 mph. That is where the local information comes.

Chair: With exceptions and being clear about why the exceptions are there.

Q189 **Daniel Francis:** I need to go shortly, but I will talk about the greatest part of the world first—of course, that's London. Lilli, can you talk to us about the roll-out of 20 mph zones in London and the greatest challenges you have faced?

Lilli Matson: Again, they are not zones, they are limits. The local boroughs in London pioneered this, and then TfL came along. There were already 20 mph limits in large parts of London, right back in the late 1980s. This has been an early adopted policy. When we looked at our evidence, we were looking right back to that period up into current times.

With the introduction of 20 mph on all the strategic roads in central London from 2020 on and then Westminster going to a 20 mph speed limit, we now have all of central London and all of inner London being 20 mph as well. There are 11 boroughs in London out of the 33 that do not have at least 75% of their roads being 20 mph. That is generally aligned with political alliance. It tends to be more of the Conservative boroughs that do not have 20 mph, and that goes back to the conversations we have about the perceptions and attitudes in local areas to these kinds of measures. Many of them are working with us, and we are providing evidence as to how they might take forward those measures. There will be change in coming years to make sure that we continue to see the benefits. That is why we have talked about having a stronger national policy on this that really makes it clear that local politicians are making decisions within a context and against an evidence base now that is unequivocal: reducing speed limits on residential roads will save lives.

As highway authorities, you also have a duty to improve road safety. As a public servant, you have that duty. That needs to be brought out and made much clearer. If you can reduce risk, you should be reducing risk on your roads, and we now have the measures that we know can make it happen. As Transport for London, the other thing we do is to fund the local boroughs through their transport. We fund the local boroughs'



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transport plans so that money can be made available for 20 mph limits to be introduced.

Phil Jones: On the duty Lilli referred to, there are very few duties that highway authorities have. They have a lot of powers, but they do not have so many duties. Reducing casualties is one of them, and perhaps it is time that that was given greater emphasis by Government.

Q190 **Daniel Francis:** You said earlier there are 11 boroughs in London that do not have 20 mph limits, and in the main they are going to be the outer boroughs—boroughs like mine, of course. The last 20 mph area in my borough was introduced about 22 years ago. I was the cabinet member. It was a long time ago. Since then, the world has changed. We have social media. We have disinformation. I am sure like me, Chair, you went through the experience of ULEZ and what that did in outer London boroughs. What would we learn from that experience? It was full of different levels of information—let's put it that way—in a social media context, to the extent that in my borough there was a terrorist incident over it, as you may well know. What would we learn from that if we were then looking at trying to persuade a further roll-out in some of those areas?

Lilli Matson: We have already gone over some of the key lessons for success. With ULEZ, we got there. If we reflect, maybe we could have done more on the pre-communication as to why those measures were needed to bring communities with us. There are very high levels of compliance now and it is delivering enormous benefits to air quality in London. Looking in the rearview mirror, it is much easier to justify it.

With speed, we are now in a really good position that we have such good evidence from London. We need to help and support, and we are doing this now post the local elections in London to provide that evidence to all local councillors and say, "This is what works. This is how you can discuss it with your local communities." The demand is there. With ULEZ too, even though there was a very vocal campaign, that was not the majority. That was a minority that made their voices very loud. We know that most people comply, because we have about 90% compliance levels with ULEZ. We can have similar impacts with speed as well. It is really making sure of that voice and campaign, and knowing that that evidence is there to support local politicians in taking those measures forward.

Phil Jones: This goes way beyond 20 mph. It is about equipping local politicians to understand the backlash that will come, and perhaps making those politicians who have been through difficult experiences understand that it is not representative. Perhaps what they need to do is log off Facebook and stop looking at it, because it is not the truth. It is a distortion of reality. It is disinformation.

Chair: You have to ask the same people if they want to reopen a closed-off cul-de-sac that was done 40 years ago. They go, "Oh, no, we wouldn't want that."



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Phil Jones: Speed limits do not go back up. That is the lesson that we can all take away. Apart from one or two trimmings on experimental ones, as a rule of thumb, they do not go back up once they have come down and people have got used to it.

Adrian Berendt: If you set the national assumption at 20 mph, whether you do it legislatively or by values and encouragement, and then have the local authority justify where and how they can move it to 30 mph, you get a completely different question. It is a completely different discussion.

Q191 **Daniel Francis:** I have one last question. We politicians spend too much time looking on social media. The challenge always is how you convince Mrs Jones, because it is Mrs Jones when she sees you at the bus stop who gets convinced by what she is reading. The experience, as I am sure you know, Chair, was that the level of information out there was wild, quite frankly. There has been a lot of discussion about 20 mph limits. Are there other speed limit interventions that could produce equally beneficial effects?

Dr Török: Monitoring and the use of technology. Many modern vehicles integrate computers that monitor and can record speeds and all sorts of other parameters, and we are not systematically having access to those as part of our monitoring and enforcement structure.

Chair: Alex has some questions on new technology. Anyone else?

Phil Jones: The biggest one for me is 60 mph on inter-urban single-carriageway roads. It is far too high. We know that head-on collisions, which is what you get a lot, and run-off incidents on single-carriageway roads are not survivable with a combined head-on speed of 120 mph. So I think we have to do that. Scotland was considering reducing its rural speed limit again. It has kind of gone by the wayside. For me, that is the other one that we really should focus on.

Adrian Berendt: Surrey county council is doing some very interesting work on reducing its rural speed limit, but again it is constrained by the guidance. If the guidance were a bit more liberal, it would have been able to go even further.

Q192 **Daniel Francis:** Before I go, on London and the boundary issues, like your example, Chair, I can think of one on the Bexley and Dartford boundary where you go from 70 mph to 50 mph to 40 mph to 30 mph to 20 mph back to 30 mph within two miles. How do you see that working from a London perspective? How do we work some of that out under the current rules on the cross-boundary issues?

Lilli Matson: I am not quite sure how to answer that question.

Adrian Berendt: All that is because the initial speed limit is too high, so you are having to justify the lower speed. I can justify it there, but I cannot do it there. Oh I can do it there. Start lower and go up.



Chair: It is also to do with regs and boundaries, which we are going to come on to in terms of who is responsible.

Q193 **Olly Glover:** Adrian, the written evidence from 20's Plenty for Us argued that the strategy is "informed" by safe system principles but not truly aligned with those principles. Can you tell us what you mean by that?

Adrian Berendt: Yes. The human body could probably not survive an impact at 30 mph, yet in theme 3 there is a picture of a "Thank you" sign for somebody going 27 mph on what is clearly a residential street. It needs to say it is 20 mph unless you can justify a higher speed limit. That is the nub of it.

Phil Jones: I do not know whether anyone has introduced it in evidence so far, but has the Committee heard of the Stockholm declaration of 2020, from the third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety? Article 11 of that underpinned the Welsh guidance on setting exceptions. It says to set in Europe a 30 kph speed limit wherever "vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent...manner". That is absolutely core to the safe systems principle when it comes to applying to speed. That is missing from the strategy and it would be very helpful if that was in there, and then that could carry through into the guidance. It is a fundamental principle that underpins all the evidence. It goes back to Rob's point about the survivability of the human body, basically.

Dr Török: I agree with those points. I would like to make a point about the safe system as a whole and something that we do not capture between our organisations and the population. For a system to work, we need to have a really mature understanding and embedding of all its components in a balanced fashion according to a weighting of how they influence the injuries and deaths that occur, and that is rarely done.

Often, we will relate that we have a safe system because we are thinking about the independent components, but until you marry them up and they are singing in harmony the whole system is not as effective. If you put too much emphasis on some components at the expense of some other critical ones—I would put driver responsibility, speed and leadership at the top of those—you can put an awful lot of work into those other pillars, and you can say, "Yes, we have a safe system," but it does not achieve the outcomes you expect because it is not a mature, embedded, deep system.

That parallels something that we have seen across other industries. In medicine, we had it with risk and risk management maturity models. There are matrices that describe this concept that people are aware of safety, they talk about it a little bit, there are a few segments of it that are done, and then it is completely systematically embedded in our systems. Sometimes, this really has power across the outcomes that we are seeing. People are not marrying the whole system up, and therefore the system falls to pieces as far as the effectiveness that we predict.



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Lilli Matson: There is a danger of not treating it as a system. We really try to take a systemic approach. We will prioritise all our investment decisions by their ability to deliver on reducing the greatest risk, which is how you get that focus. If you do not do that and you just say we have elements of a safe system, you can focus on the really nice to haves and the easy to dos that do not have much impact. You really need to have a systemic approach, which is driving the greatest focus on the greatest change, which is why we have been talking so much and so passionately about speed limits.

Q194 **Alex Mayer:** We have covered this to some extent, so you can keep some answers short. Is there a contradiction in the Government's approach to reducing the number of those killed and seriously injured on our roads, given that speed management is a key lever for achieving this objective but is left to local discretion?

Phil Jones: Yes, there is a tension, isn't there? Is it possible for a national body or national Government to understand the right speed limit on every road and street across the country? There has to be a role for local decision making and local knowledge. We live in a world where the Government are probably pushing even further down the devolution role. The idea that we are going to take it completely out of the hands of local authorities to set speed limits on their roads I am not sure is practicable. However, we can set a framework in which those decisions are taken that is much more controlled and accountable.

I mentioned the road safety conference. There was a very impassioned ex-councillor who had just lost his seat in Felixstowe, I think. He had achieved a 20 mph speed limit in the town. It was all ready and set to go. Elections happened, a new individual came in—a new portfolio holder—and just scrapped the law. There is no consequence on that individual for taking that decision. We are talking about systemic action.

We need to set up a system of checks and balances and accountability. What would the impact be? What would that politician have to do to justify that decision? Let us make it more explicit: "Yes, I will sign this piece of paper and this committee report that says I'm going to set the speed limit 10 mph higher than the national guidance sets, and I am signing off that it will cause five more casualties a year. I am putting my name to that."

Alex Mayer: There is the ballot box, I suppose.

Phil Jones: There is the ballot box, but that is a very weak check and balance. It needs to be much more explicit and much more in black and white accountability. Then the public attitude and those people who care passionately will see the evidence. "What do you mean, you signed off this piece of paper in the full knowledge that this is leading to a greater degree of road casualties?" We can change this. We can keep local decision making, but we need to think about the system and perhaps use things like the local outcomes framework. The Government are setting a



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local outcomes framework for every local authority to have targets and meet them in terms of KSIs per billion vehicular kilometres. Let us make those metrics front and centre in the decisions that politicians take at local level.

Dr Török: I have two brief points. We have covered a lot of this already, so I will not repeat that. As far as the ballot box is concerned, remove these decisions from popularity contests and concerns about ongoing votes and things. It is about the leadership, co-ordination, the accountability and governance structures we put around it. It can be local or central. As long as we have the correct governance mechanisms and accountability for the outcomes, the deaths and injuries, it does not matter how we do it. There are a number of ways of skinning the same cat.

Q195 **Alex Mayer:** Wales as a country is a reasonably large geographical area. The equivalent in terms of square miles in my part of the world would be the whole of the east of England. Yet these decisions are taken by individual local highway authorities. Is there a sense of how big a geography such a decision needs to be taken over for it to be unconfusing to the driver?

Phil Jones: Again, this is a misunderstanding. The Welsh Government did not set the speed limits across Wales. It didn't do that. It just changed the national default, at this moment in time, from street lights meaning 30 mph to them now meaning 20 mph. Local highway authorities across Wales are still completely empowered to change the speed limit on any road in their area. There was no central decision making. That is a fundamental misunderstanding of what happened in Wales. It was simply changing the national default. If they sat on their hands and did nothing, the speed limit would come down to 20 mph. So it is not quite the same thing.

You mentioned the east of England. A few years ago, Birmingham lobbied the Government for similar powers to Wales to change the default speed limit of street lighting in Birmingham. Street lights in Birmingham would mean 20 mph and in Sandwell they would mean 30 mph. I do not think that is feasible or possible. It could be changed across the whole of England, and we could do that. It was difficult enough for one nation within the United Kingdom to do it. There was talk at the time of European-style signs on the boundaries of "You are now entering this nation" and "In towns and villages we drive like this". That was not done. It is acceptable at that scale, but I do not think it is feasible to have a region or city where the default speed limit is set without any signs to tell drivers.

Q196 **Dr Arthur:** I am keen to understand to what extent road design has an impact on the speed at which drivers use the road. It is worth thinking about existing roads and how good we are at getting new developments and a place where speed is in a good place as well.



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Lilli Matson: Road design is critical to how drivers interpret and use the road, and to the choices that are available to other road users to decide whether they feel safe using it. It was traditionally a bit of a block on the introduction of 20 mph because the police would be hesitant. They would say, "If the road doesn't look and feel like 20 mph"—undefined—"we won't enforce on it." Certainly in London, we have moved beyond that conversation. Equally, to elicit the right psychological response from drivers, if you can use the reduced limits to build out sidewalks and to provide more facilities for walking and cycling or even to do more tree planting, you will get a better response in terms of compliance. I do not think of 20 mph as an end in itself. It is really not. It is about creating a healthy street environment that unlocks the kind of activity that we want to see in town centres, and that is economic activity as well as people travelling actively.

Dr Török: The ideal design structure would segregate pedestrians and other road users from vehicles, would it not, and separate vehicles in different directions? Britain does not really lend itself to that geographically.

Lilli Matson: I don't really like that road design.

Dr Török: There are different opinions, obviously. Roads engineering can be quite critical in hotspots. Where we find that there are recurrent problems, it is understanding what we can do to change the road design to prevent future incidents. In a previous session, it was mentioned that there are 192,000 miles of roads, and the cost and delays in managing all that makes it an impossible task, does it not?

Phil Jones: We know how we can design roads that reduce this. There is traditional traffic calming. We are learning that with more subtle, cheaper changes we can make a difference. Traffic engineers historically have assumed a design speed, and thinking through the needs of the motor vehicle have said, "We must engineer the road for drivers to be able to travel at that speed." If you look at the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, it says we should design our urban roads for 60 kph, which is 37 mph, just in case drivers want to go a little bit quicker. We have a problem: the central tenet of many highway engineers, the DMRB, is sending completely the wrong signal. We need to be much clearer and say, "The design speed is now 30 kph and we engineer our roads to achieve that." That is going to take a long time. There are many low-cost changes you can make in the short term.

Dr Arthur: Such as?

Phil Jones: Narrower traffic lanes. We have a standard traffic lane in this country that is oddly 3.65 metres, which is just a metrication of 12 feet. Many highway engineers believe there is something magic about the 12-foot lane. We know from lots of evidence that narrower lanes carry just as much traffic, are much safer and will lead to slower speed. Narrower traffic lanes would be one good thing, and then you could make more



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space for walking, cycling and all the rest of it. There are even things like removing the centre line. They are very simple things. If you resurface the road and do not put the centre line back, that will reduce speeds by 1 mph or 2 mph, and it is cheaper. People think it is less safe, but actually, no: drivers react to the environment. If there is no centre line, that does not give them quite that much certainty, and they react by slowing down a little bit. There are lots of little psychological cues.

Lilli Matson: Making the turns tighter is absolutely critical. You have to turn hard. Sweeping turns are incredibly dangerous. A very high number—I think it is about 50%—of serious injuries in London are people turning into side roads. We are tightening those turns up because it requires you to slow down to make the turn, and you are also more visible. These are not massively expensive design changes.

Q197 **Chair:** Is that in consultation with the fleet managers of large vehicles? Will they still be able to get round the corner?

Lilli Matson: Yes, you still need to make sure that the road width or the turn is sufficient for that. In terms of heavy goods vehicles or service vehicles, yes.

Chair: And buses, of course.

Lilli Matson: Yes.

Dr Török: There probably are opportunities wherever a new road scheme or a new road is being built or something is being maintained to ask, "Are we applying what road engineers know will achieve the outcomes we need?" I do not know the answer to that question, but that is a very valid point.

Q198 **Dr Arthur:** Are we getting new roads right?

Phil Jones: No. There is a document called Manual for Streets, which some of you will know.

Chair: It has been raised by witnesses in previous sessions.

Phil Jones: I was involved with the first edition. The new Manual for Streets, which some people call Manual for Streets 3, has been promised since 2019. It is good to see all these documents like the road safety strategy, Better Connected and all these things, and promising the new Manual for Streets. We so desperately need it. We know that. There has been so much learning since the first edition came out.

Chair: Some previous witnesses said that it is in contradiction to the current road safety strategy.

Q199 **Dr Arthur:** Is there a chance that the new Manual for Streets could lead to better design—to design for lower speed?



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Phil Jones: Absolutely. It should be front and centre. I would say this, wouldn't I? The first Manual for Streets is pretty good when it comes to designing for speed, but we have learnt much more, and we could go further.

Q200 **Olly Glover:** To what extent is fear of traffic among pedestrians, cyclists and other more vulnerable road users influenced by high speeds in cars? What does the evidence say on that?

Lilli Matson: We do an awful lot of interviews and understanding of behaviour in London of people who potentially would cycle or are walking. Fear of traffic is the main thing. Volume and speed are the main barriers to people walking and cycling. It is particularly the main barrier to allowing children to walk or cycle to school. We know that, when local authorities introduced measures such as low traffic neighbourhoods that either temporarily or permanently remove traffic, you get very large uplifts in people walking and cycling, and in safety outcomes.

Phil Jones: It particularly impacts on women, doesn't it? There is evidence of that. Disproportionately, women are more fearful particularly when it comes to cycling. In London, there is probably about a 2:1 ratio of male to female people cycling. If we are going to get the uptake in cycling that is Government policy, we have to get more women cycling. We have to do something about the fear of traffic.

Dr Török: That all links into mental health and that agenda as well.

Q201 **Olly Glover:** To come back to the discussion around the previous question, tell me whether I have misunderstood. Given that that is one of the main barriers, the logic would therefore be that you either have to significantly reduce speeds on roads consistently or you have to provide dedicated infrastructure.

Lilli Matson: Yes and yes. If you are the strategic transport authority of London, it is clear that the roads also have to function for volumes of traffic. Fifty per cent of journeys are made by car in London, and there is an enormous amount of vehicle traffic as well to service the city. In designing streets to make them safer, there is a clear set of guidance and advice that we have developed for our own network and for the boroughs. It helps them identify that, on strategic roads or roads where the volumes of traffic are higher, you physically need to segregate cyclists or pedestrians from moving traffic. On residential roads where speeds can be kept to 20 mph and there are lower traffic volumes, you can mix traffic safely. There is a very clear hierarchy of how you need to manage and physically change the road network depending on speed and volume, and it does not mean that in every case everything needs to be segregated.

Q202 **Olly Glover:** I am going to test the Chair's patience. For all that Transport for London is quite eager to boast about what it has achieved on this, I gently suggest that compared with comparable Dutch cities



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there is a long way to go.

Lilli Matson: There is a long way to go, yes.

Olly Glover: As someone who goes across it every day, the traffic light programming at Hyde Park Corner definitely does not seem to support the vast numbers of pedestrians and cyclists who go across. The wait times are unbelievable.

I want to make sure I understood what you said in the previous discussion, Rob, about how hard it would be to change these things in terms of road design or whatever. The Netherlands is more densely populated. Only one of its cities was destroyed in world war two, yet it has been able to do this. It has also provided for road traffic. It has the densest motorway network in Europe. It is not either/or; it is about the right tool for the job. What policy levers need to be pulled nationally or for devolved Administrations so that we can move further to address the fear of traffic that is the main barrier to walking and cycling uptake?

Lilli Matson: If we go back to the Government's road safety strategy, it had lots of good components, but it lacks the commitment to making change, the pace at which those measures need to be introduced and the clarity that they are committed to certain goals such as eliminating death and injury. The Netherlands has been pursuing very positive policies in terms of promoting cycling for a lot longer than we have. You need consistency of policy, you need consistency of investment, and you need very strong policy direction from a national level to support that local direction. That will drive through some of the inconsistencies and the sluggishness that you see both in London and elsewhere.

Q203 **Olly Glover:** Do you feel we are getting that clear policy determination from the national level?

Lilli Matson: The strategy is definitely a step forward, but I would really hope that we see less consultation and more action. We need to move through to delivery.

Olly Glover: That is a wonderful note on which to move on to the next question, Chair.

Chair: And now to new technologies.

Q204 **Alex Mayer:** What role should intelligent speed assistance play in helping drivers to comply with speed limits?

Dr Török: We should embrace the new technologies and particularly things like the absolute limit. It should be physically and technologically impossible for a vehicle to exceed a legal speed limit on the roads. We have the technical capability, we have the infrastructure, and where there are glitches they can be ironed out. That will be a starting point.

Q205 **Alex Mayer:** Would it be down to the private sector to do that?



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Lilli Matson: It is required on all new buses in London, and we are retrofitting all our buses; 3,000 of the 9,000 buses in London have what we call ISA. That is mandatory ISA. You cannot override it. We are a public body, and we are doing it. We also require that in our own vehicle fleet. It could be a national requirement.

Phil Jones: Absolutely. The Government are consulting on that, which is great, but we need them to take a step further. Vehicle manufacturers are required to do it for the EU. Because Northern Ireland is in the single market, if you hire a car in Northern Ireland it will come with ISA. It is already happening in parts of the UK, but we need to bring it in. It will probably come in with manufacturers, but the Government need to be much more positive about it.

It is not perfect at the moment. My car has it, but I have to choose to turn it on, which I do most of the time. It is not always reliable in detecting the speed limit. There is a credibility problem. It has to go hand in hand with making digital speed limits available so that the in-car systems can read them so that you get that consistency. If it comes in every new vehicle but does not work very well, there will be pushback against it. For me, it has great potential. One of the arguments against lower speed limits is always the enforcement argument. Over time, ISA removes that as a reason not to do it.

Dr Török: That is only proper ISA that is absolutely compulsory, mandatory and you cannot override it. At the moment, the ISA that is legislated for, I understand, is not absolutely compulsory, and you can turn it off when it does not absolutely adhere to the speed limits on the road. We ought to be careful about what we are talking about.

Q206 **Alex Mayer:** When you have a speedometer in front of you, the middle—the bit you look at as a driver—is around 60 mph, and there are a whole load of speeds that you are obviously not allowed to do on that side. Should that middle point be moved?

Adrian Berendt: That is a really interesting idea.

Phil Jones: Sorry, this is not my specialist subject, but it is completely bizarre that any car is allowed to be sold that can do more than 70 mph. That is really weird.

Q207 **Alex Mayer:** Do you think the strategy in any way overstates the potential impact of new technologies?

Phil Jones: No, I don't think so. It is there. To some extent, I feel it is too lukewarm on them. It points to their advantages, but it does not really—

Dr Török: I do not think it embraces enough the monitoring and behavioural change that could come from continuous data monitoring and dashcam footage. One of the things that we know from serious collision investigators is that, even after a fatality or a serious injury, they do not



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have access reliably and early to the data that onboard computers and mobile devices that people are carrying have, because there are all sorts of blockages from companies saying, "Oh, no, that's the car owner's data, and we have to have their permission to release it." It is not uncommon for serious collision investigators to have the option of having to pay £4,000 to have access to that data. It comes six months later, and there are reams of data that are uninterpretable without the expert knowledge of the motor manufacturer. That is a very simple example.

Why do we not align legislation so that it has to be immediately released in a meaningful manner for those instances where there has been a death or serious injury? Why do we not extend it to a requirement for the benefits of accessing vehicle use to have continuous telematics and dashcam footage that is recording all the time and is then reviewed, and the hour before reviewed, by investigating authorities so that they understand what part behaviour and the way that car was being driven played in the lead-up to the incident? At the moment, the event recorders only capture five seconds of data, and that is prior to an impact or incident. That only captures the engineering components. It totally misses the driver behaviour choices and all the other things.

I know there are issues around accuracy and precision, particularly if you are thinking about prosecution, but we are not necessarily thinking about that. We are thinking that, if you had a visual dashcam record of what actually happened, you can immediately understand what happened and then build your evidence around the appropriate bits of information from that. Chatting to police serious collision investigators, there is a real frustration at that blockage and that lack of access to information.

I would extend it. Can I just highlight new and novice drivers? Six per cent of licence holders are new and novice drivers—younger drivers. We know that in the first year 18% will have a collision. They represent 24% of the killed and seriously injured. They are killing themselves. They are killing other people. If we are a bit nervous about introducing widespread telematics and dashcams to everyone, which is what my preference would be but I know that is seen as extreme, why do we not at least start with saying that every new driver has to have it for the first five years of their journey? That would change their behaviour because they know they are being monitored. It would give us the evidence from this excess disproportionate number of collisions that we can then focus the RSIB or investigators on understanding what is actually happening and capture all these human elements.

Q208 Chair: On the disjoint between speed limits changing on the road, which presumably is the one the driver has to comply with, and the data coming in in real time in their car, I have driven a number of times on a road that I can see from the repeaters on it is 20 mph, but in my case Google Maps, or whatever technology one is using, says that it is still 30 mph. Why is there a disjoint? Surely, that is pretty important if we are to make use of telematics much more actively.



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Phil Jones: That was the point I was referring to. There is a credibility problem at the moment. They are not accurate enough.

Chair: Why is that, and what needs to happen?

Dr Török: Nobody has prioritised it and said, "This is how we are going to run the system."

Q209 **Chair:** Who is responsible for making sure what comes through on the sat nav, or whatever the generic name is for that now, and the actual speed limit? You have a legal process to change the speed limit. Should that not immediately switch the data over?

Lilli Matson: There should be a national digital speed map, which there is not, as far as I understand. We have created one in London that is available on the website.

Chair: Really?

Lilli Matson: Yes. Because speed limits change street by street due to traffic regulation orders, we then have to monitor every single TRO and make sure that we then update the map. That is how it is done.

Chair: That disjoint also happens in terms of road closures, lane closures and so on.

Lilli Matson: Absolutely. It is perfectly fit for a national view on this and a streamlining of processes.

Chair: It's not rocket science.

Lilli Matson: It is not. This could be digitised and made so much more straightforward.

Phil Jones: The Government many years ago considered how to streamline, improve and bring up to date the TRO process. It is an analogue process. It is very paper-based. It is very clunky, advertising in the *London Gazette*. We have to bring that into the 21st century.

On the digital point, it is astonishing that I cannot go on to the web and see the speed limit in this part of the UK. The Ordnance Survey has a map of speeds and speed limits, but you have to pay for it. It is astonishing. There is a gap there, and it has to be the Government that plug that gap.

Q210 **Chair:** You touched on EU vehicle safety standards. Should the UK adopt the current EU vehicle safety standards?

Phil Jones: Yes. That is the indication of the direction of travel. Manufacturers would find it difficult to make a special UK car. It is in their interest to bring it in, but it would make it again much simpler and more acceptable to the public if it said, "This is in conformity with regulation."



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Q211 **Alex Mayer:** Does the Department for Transport collect the right data to best understand driver compliance with speed limits?

Adrian Berendt: No.

Alex Mayer: What should it do?

Adrian Berendt: It should use in-car data, the connected vehicle data, which is available. It does not need these speed tubes down in various random places. Every time these free-flow speeds come out, we have to then explain to the people we talk to that they are not very relevant because they are in specific places. The connected vehicle data now is so good that we just do not need to do this free-flow speed analysis. We can get it from the connected vehicle data.

Dr Török: My understanding is that it is based on 77 automatic vehicle camera-type set-ups across the country. That is a fairly temporary small picture of the whole. I completely agree. The data is there within vehicles at the moment.

Adrian Berendt: For 20 mph places, it is only seven. Most of those are atypical of 20 mph places. They just happen to be where they have those speed tubes, and at some point in time the speed limits changed from 30 mph to 20 mph and so it is, "Oh, we can monitor them at 20 mph now."

Dr Török: We need a deeper understanding of the actual speeds and the range of speeds. It is not just speed limits and proportions, is it? It is the shape of the curve.

Phil Jones: It is interesting. In preparation, I went on the website to have a look at the latest data on compliance, and the Government have acknowledged that for 2025 they are no longer collecting data on the old basis. There is an acceptance by the Department that the system that it was using has 78 sites for the whole of Great Britain to monitor speed. It is really insufficient. Interestingly, Transport for Wales in its monitoring of the 20 mph speed limit in Wales is using in-car GPS data as part of its assessment. Wales is moving on a little bit there.

Q212 **Chair:** If there are no further questions, I am going to come to the final one. Naturally, we have heard from many families and people who have suffered a loss because of avoidable collisions. Looking specifically at speed, what is the single most important recommendation that this Committee could make to strengthen the Government's road safety strategy?

Dr Török: Get the RSIB launched and appropriately focused action interventions to specifically look at driver responsibilities and awareness about the influence that their choices around speeds have on the risk to others, and the public engagement and awareness piece.

Chair: I think that was two or three.



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Dr Török: The RSIB—one.

Lilli Matson: Making the policy on 20 mph clear and default in urban areas would be probably the most important thing that they need to lead on. I will leave it at that.

Phil Jones: Make speed limits fit the function, the users and the characteristics of the road, not the existing speed. Too many of our speed limits are set based on what drivers want to travel at, the old 85th percentile, and it leads to this nonsense of 24 mph being the barrier. Once you make the decision that the speed limit should follow the function of the road and who is using it, immediately 20 mph becomes the speed limit where there are people—back to my Stockholm declaration—and then everything flows from that.

Adrian Berendt: Can you guess what I am going to say? It is 20 mph at a national level, either legislatively defined or with very strict guidance about how you implement it at local authority level.

Q213 **Chair:** What would be the disadvantage of not doing it nationally but by local authority area? Would it be about clutter and confusion for drivers?

Phil Jones: No. If you went with the Wales approach, which is we change what street lights mean—street lights mean 20 mph; they do not mean 30 mph—

Chair: As you are moving from one local authority area to another.

Phil Jones: By its nature, that will iron out the differences because street lighting is there. Most 30 mph roads do not have a speed limit put on them by the local authority.

Chair: They have a default 30 mph.

Phil Jones: They have a default 30 mph because of the street lighting.

Q214 **Chair:** If that road passed from one local authority that had one policy into another authority that had another default policy, how would that be managed?

Phil Jones: If neither authority A nor authority B have a speed limit that they have set, and they have street lighting, the speed limit is 30 mph by default on the street lighting. If you change the national law, they immediately become 20 mph. That local authority would then have to take a conscious decision to raise the speed limit back up. That is more difficult.

Q215 **Chair:** I am obviously not being very clear. My understanding is that the road safety strategy is delegating to local authorities if they want to change the default speed limit in their areas—or it is just on specific roads as it is in London?



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Phil Jones: It depends what you mean by default. Is it a legal default or a policy default? At the moment, there is no intention in the road safety strategy to change the legal default.

Chair: No, that's correct.

Phil Jones: Ideally, that would be what we would do. If you did that, you would iron out most of the differences. If you leave it as it is and the Government set a clear policy default of 20 mph, which is what we have in Scotland, it will not eliminate the possibility of differences at the boundary, but if you bring in much greater checks and balances, things like a requirement to sign off, as I suggested, you place a greater burden and a greater degree of difficulty to not comply with the clear guidance that is written.

Q216 **Chair:** So you think the way the road safety strategy is worded at the moment gives the right sense of direction, but what I am trying to get at is that the Government are not going for a default. They are going for local area by local area. What do you see as the specific problems with that? Given, as we know from Daniel's examples from south-east London, that different local authorities have very different attitudes, they are therefore going to implement the policy differently.

Phil Jones: They are committed to new guidance, which is fine, so there is a tick in the box for new guidance. What it does not say is that guidance is going to be really strong, and strong enough to eliminate, as far as we possibly can, those boundary difficulties.

Lilli Matson: Nationally, it should set out that the evidence would suggest that the expectation is that it is 20 mph, and therefore if you are not implementing that you have to justify why that is acceptable in safety terms. If I was using the analogy of the railway, which I also look after, you have to reduce risk as low as reasonably practical. If you are not doing that through one measure, you have to have other mitigations. They need to demonstrate why that road is safe even though the speed limit was not the safest one we know it is. It creates a dialogue that does not exist at the moment because people can abdicate from making decisions on it because the default currently is 30 mph.

Dr Török: The risk is distraction and inefficiency, is it not, and, as a driver, inconsistencies and then confusion?

Q217 **Chair:** That is what I am trying to get at. This is not being consulted on. This is the strategy. It is quite clear that at the moment the Government are not likely to move away from that and are not going to move towards what you are all asking for, which is default 20 mph in urban areas. That is what I am trying to ask. Given that this is the Government policy, there are the practical difficulties of the way they have worded it rather than what you are saying.

Dr Török: Get the RSIB launched, and it can focus on this and manage that so that it is consistently applied in the best way possible.



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Adrian Berendt: If the guidance is sufficiently clear that this is what we are expecting you to do—20 mph—

Chair: The guidance is not there.

Adrian Berendt: They are committed to it.

Lilli Matson: They said they are going to do guidance.

Adrian Berendt: The second commitment is to a safe system, and you cannot have a safe system without 20 mph as a default in policy terms, even if not legislatively.

Chair: It is a contradiction. Okay. Thank you very much for your evidence and the time you spent preparing to come to us today. If there is anything you think you did not get a chance to cover or cover in sufficient detail, please feel free to write to us. We are going to resume our oral evidence sessions for this inquiry in the autumn, but for now that concludes today's meeting. Thank you very much.