



Transport Committee

Oral evidence: Cycling safety, HC 852

Monday 10 February 2014

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 10 February 2014.

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Members present: Mrs Louise Ellman (Chair); Sarah Champion; Karen Lumley; Jason McCartney; Karl McCartney; Mr Adrian Sanders, Chloe Smith; Graham Stringer; Martin Vickers

Questions 113-212

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Chris Boardman** MBE, Policy Adviser, British Cycling, **Roger Geffen**, Campaigns and Policy Director, CTC, and **Edmund King**, President, AA, gave evidence.

Q113 Chair: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could we have your names and, where appropriate, organisations, starting at the end?

Roger Geffen: I am Roger Geffen, campaigns and policy director of CTC, the national cycling charity.

Chris Boardman: I am Chris Boardman, British Cycling.

Edmund King: I am Edmund King, president of the Automobile Association.

Q114 Chair: Thank you very much. Mr Boardman, earlier this afternoon you launched British Cycling's vision Time to #ChooseCycling. Could you tell us the main points that you would like to see implemented and the main issues you would like this Committee to be aware of?

Chris Boardman: The document is a 10-point plan to embed cycling as part of a normal method of transport in our country, but in essence what underpinned the whole document was a push to get a commitment from Government for long-term funding to make it part of the strategy. We have had a significant amount of money for cycling in the last couple of years, but always committed very short term and as one-offs. We want to see it committed long term, to change the way we travel and to get 10% of trips in this country made by bike by 2025, and to do that we want a financial commitment of £10 or more a head.

Q115 Chair: Are there specific things that you think Ministers could and should do?

Chris Boardman: To come back to the same point, we have seen a lot of interest in cycling. Our surveys have shown that 64% of people would cycle more if they felt safe. Safety is the biggest barrier; I am sure you have heard that a lot during these sessions. To get that to happen we need infrastructure, and infrastructure takes investment. For local authorities to invest in that infrastructure, they need to believe that this is going to be a long-term thing and that the funding will not stop in one or two years' time. So commitment from Ministers and leadership are the two things we want.

Q116 Chair: Mr Geffen, do you agree with that? Is there anything you want to add? Could you give us your views about targets or measurable activities? I think you made some reference to that in the written information you gave us.

Roger Geffen: Indeed. I absolutely echo what Chris has just said. The key point about leadership is absolutely important; it was what Jon Snow, CTC president, said when he gave evidence to this Committee's road safety inquiry in April 2012, and you picked that up as your headline recommendation. It is absolutely crucial that we have all Departments of Government getting behind a vision to make cycling a normal mode of transport that anybody of any age and ability can do for any journey, safely, comfortably and enjoyably. That requires good infrastructure and it requires action to tackle the sources of danger that intimidate and endanger cyclists, particularly lorries, major roads and junctions and bad driving. It requires the positive promotion of cycling in workplaces and schools and for health—patients—all the groups in society who normally would not take up cycling; and it needs the consistent funding Chris has rightly talked about to make sure local authorities can plan for a future in which we have consistent, cycle-friendly conditions throughout the road network, supplemented by good off-road routes.

Q117 Chair: To make sure those things actually happen, should there be defined targets in any areas?

Roger Geffen: Absolutely. We would very much like to see targets along the lines that all the cycling organisations and parliamentarians signed up to in the "Get Britain Cycling" report, which Chris has in front of him; this was the all-party parliamentary cycling group launch report that all the cycling organisations got behind. It called for targets to increase cycle use to 10% of trips by 2025, which are roughly German levels of cycle use, and to Dutch levels, 25% of cycle use, by 2050.

In terms of road safety targets, I would put in a note of caution. The Committee has rightly called for road safety targets too; but in terms of cycle safety, and indeed pedestrian safety, it is important not simply to have targets that say, "Let's reduce cyclist casualties," because, historically, that has created a perverse incentive for local authorities to think, "Well, if you've got to reduce cyclist casualties, let's get rid of the cyclists." It is really important to measure cycle safety in rate-based terms—in other words, the risk of cycling per mile or per trip—so that, if you measure it the right way, it incentivises more, as well as safer, cycling. There is very good evidence that more and safer cycling go hand in hand through what is known as the safety in numbers effect. We have to get the targets right that incentivise local authorities to aim for more as well as safer cycling, and that means tackling the barriers that

deter people from cycling, rather than thinking of cycling itself as the dangerous activity. It is not.

Q118 Chair: Should that measurement be done nationally or should it be done locally? In our last report on this we referred to the importance of local statistics. Is that something you would agree with?

Roger Geffen: We would like to see both. To give them their due, the Government have made some moves towards at least putting in place rate-based indicators for cycle use, even if not targets. We would also like to see local authorities doing that, but there is a problem for local authorities, particularly in shire county areas. If you are going to do rate-based measurement, you have to have a reliable measure of cycle use as well as of cycle casualties. Many local authorities do not yet have the capacity to do that. The thing they can do is to measure public perceptions of safety. There is a survey that many of them are already taking part in—but they have to pay to take part in it—which assesses the public's perceptions of safety. If that was backed by the Government and all local authorities were taking part in it, it could be used to compare progress in tackling people's fear of cycling. If we can overcome people's fears of cycling, we will get more people cycling, and then the safety in numbers effect will start to cut in. That is a way in which we could get progress on measuring performance on improving cycle safety at local level as well as nationally, without having to wait for a lot of local authorities to develop and improve their capacity to measure cycle use. That should happen too, but perception of cycle safety can be done quickly.

Q119 Chair: Mr King, you are representing motorists. Do you agree with the general drift of what is being said?

Edmund King: On the representation of motorists, there are some 15 million AA members and we survey them on a monthly basis. We have the biggest dedicated motoring panel in Europe, the AA Populus panel, and we get responses from about 24,000. Of those people, 19% of AA members say they cycle regularly every week. That equates to just under 3 million. When you go into the detail and think about targets and how to get more drivers and more people cycling, it is interesting that 50% think that currently there is less courtesy shown to cyclists on the roads than 20 years ago; 44% think that you can cycle safely during the day and close to home; less at night—only 16% think you can cycle safely at night; 45% think more cycle paths would be effective in reducing crashes; and a vast majority—76%—think that children should be encouraged to cycle more. They are not just drivers; they are parents. They have kids, and if their kids are encouraged to cycle to school they want to see it is done safely.

In terms of changing attitudes, targets can help generally as an aspiration. If you are running a business, like our breakdown business, without having targets, you would not be doing very well; it concentrates the minds of the directors and it shows people what needs to be done to catch up with those targets. Targets would help, but we need to look at the issue much more broadly, starting from education at a young age, in primary school, and looking at cycle safety as part of the national curriculum, as a real life skill. Bikeability is part of it, but it is a broader life skill about being safe on the roads. Death on the roads is still the leading cause of accidental death of teenagers, so what better life skill to have? You start there, then you go to Bikeability, and then you look at learning to drive and at what can be done to make drivers more aware of potential dangers around cyclists. That is

something we have started to do at the AA, with AA and BSM driving schools now having a separate awareness module about cycling that every learner driver is taught as part of learning to drive. Things like that can start to change attitudes, because a 17-year-old can start to think that a cycle is another alternative. In particular, with the increase in fuel costs, when we have surveyed our members we have found that, linked to the price of fuel, people are cutting back on car journeys but they are looking at other means, whether it is cycling, walking or taking the bus. There is much that we can do as a country to encourage that and break down what are artificial “us and them” barriers.

Q120 Sarah Champion: I would like to lead on from what you were saying. I was very struck at the last session by Katja Leyendecker from the Newcastle cycling group. She was encouraging us to look more holistically at the problem and basically at what we want from our cities. Taking that approach, thinking that this is about transporting people from A to B and looking at the congestion in our cities, would you advocate the solution of shutting bits of our cities to anything other than cycles at certain times? Are there examples in the world where that works? Is that a way forward that we should be looking at? With the situation we have at the moment, I cannot see how we can make things that much safer for cyclists.

Edmund King: Absolutely. Despite representing a motoring organisation, we are realistic enough to believe that in many towns and cities you cannot have the capacity to allow only car drivers to come in and out. It is about picking the right place at the right times. I never drive into central London; I think I have done it once since the congestion charge came in. It is not sensible to, because there is public transport, and you can cycle and walk—as long as it is targeted in the right places, because, as we describe, in towns and cities you still need some roads for movement. Those are roads freight needs to use to get goods to the shops, or perhaps buses need to use them to get people in and out, or they are a bypass. As long as you have those roads for movement—it was originally tried in London with the red routes—you can then target other areas, as they have done in the centre of York and in Exhibition road, to try to calm those streets, so cyclists and pedestrians can get on. In our research, if that is done sympathetically, it is not opposed by drivers.

Q121 Sarah Champion: Mr Geffen, you were frantically nodding.

Roger Geffen: It is useful that Edmund is reflecting that. I do not think it is in any way an anti-car thing to say we want fewer cars in our town centres. People would much rather live, work and shop in an area where there are fewer cars. We heard some good evidence from the OECD at a cycling conference the other day, where the Minister also spoke, that large businesses are choosing to move to cities that have reduced car use and made themselves more walking and cycling-permeable. This is potentially not just about quality of life, environment, health and all those things; it could be a really important part of our economic competitiveness to create the sort of cities where people want to be and want to shop and live. That is not anti-car; that is just good for our quality of life, good for our health, good for our environment and good for our economy too.

Q122 Chair: But should there be areas where cars are banned and cyclists are allowed? Would you go as far as that?

Roger Geffen: I think Edmund has got this absolutely right. It has to be sensitively done. We already do it. We already have large areas of city centres which, in various ways, are either motor vehicle-free or have limited access at certain times only to certain types of vehicles. As to how you actually do it, all these things are case by case, but the principle of creating areas which are car-free at least some of the time, or either completely or largely car-free for large parts of the day, is good for our economy as well as for our quality of life and for the environment. Yes, we should be doing that. It has become absolutely normal in Dutch, Danish and German cities. Their economies have not ground to a halt. Leicester has done it. Plenty of city centres in Britain are doing it, creating really good cycle and pedestrian-friendly town centres, and their economies still work fine. In fact, it is a positive boost to the local economy to do that.

Q123 Chair: How can we secure mutual respect between different road users? Have you any ideas or proposals?

Chris Boardman: As far as I understand it, mutual respect effectively means treating other people as you would be treated yourself, but the basis for that to happen is a clear understanding of what the rules are, how we interact and, to an extent, enforcement of those rules.

To segue slightly to something that is perhaps not wholly related, I am very interested to watch out for the results of Operation Safeway. I have spent some time with Andrew Gilligan, the London cycling commissioner, in the last two weeks. He was noting how much accident levels had fallen, with no deaths since the tragedies that we had before Christmas, as a result of everybody knowing what the rules are but also knowing that there was somebody there to enforce those rules. I will also be interested to see the financial impact of it. Is it more cost-effective to have people on the street to enforce whatever rules we have than to clean up the mess of accidents and injuries?

Q124 Jim Fitzpatrick: To pick up the point that Mr Boardman just made, after the rash of six deaths within two weeks, there was mass publicity and criticism of various organisations. Then we had the police blitz and 10,000-plus motorists got spot fines or charges, and 4,000 cyclists were also taken to task for breaking the rules. I know it is very early to say, but have you been able, either as a motoring organisation or as cycling representatives, to get a feel for whether it was the publicity or the enforcement, or whether there was a reduction in cycling because people felt it was less safe? The weather has been pretty consistent for several months, so there has not been a big change in the climate. It is probably asking you to crystal-ball gaze, and I am sorry, but if you have any views, they might be helpful.

Roger Geffen: We are definitely in the realms of having to speculate, even when we get results back. We will see numbers, and then we will have to speculate and make educated assumptions as to why those numbers are. It is a dangerous area, particularly around cycling. There are an awful lot of unintended consequences from well-meant actions, but fundamentally we are a very good nation. We are very good at queues and lining up. Everybody stands in the queue, and, when somebody starts to muscle in, we get very frustrated and angry and then we start to take action. Then you have a police officer there enforcing the queue and how it is supposed to work. As to who is prosecuted, I watch the numbers with interest. The laws of the road should be enforced equally for everybody. I

get as incensed, probably more so, if I see a cyclist jumping a red light as I do a motorist, because it does not do the cause any good. The only caveat I would add is that, where you cannot enforce rules on everybody, it would seem logical to start on those that can do the most harm, and work downwards.

Edmund King: This is a very important issue. It is about going forward with mutual respect. In a sense, we need a new deal about how road users interact with each other. Our members say that, on each journey, they see 30% of drivers using a mobile phone or texting when they drive. That is not good for anyone's health: drivers, pedestrians, cyclists or whoever. There are things that need to be targeted. Likewise, if we are going to say to drivers, "You've got to follow every rule of the road," let's do the same for cyclists. Let's all agree that we stick to the rules of the road. I think that is the way going forward. You will get more drivers cycling and you will get more drivers giving way to cyclists if they see that. Many cyclists acknowledge the fact that a car has let them come in, or given them more space. Motorcyclists often raise their foot if you have given them more room to pass. It is smaller things of that kind that can lead to change. Part of it is policing. There are calls for drivers using mobile phones to be banned for 12 months, and everything else. Fine, but let's police the current rules and stop the drivers who flout them on a daily basis. Give them a £100 fine; give them penalty points. Let's police those rules first, because it is still happening far too often. A driver on the phone is one of the biggest dangers to cyclists. In a way, it is all of us agreeing to the rules of the road and not saying, "We'll abide by the red lights but you won't." I think that would help.

Q125 Chair: You are all talking about a very wide range of actions that you consider need to be taken. Would having a cycling tsar or cycling champion help?

Chris Boardman: Personally, I do not think so. I was asked this question in the press; I think it was somebody trying to stir it up a little bit. I do not think I am qualified for the job, but I am not sure that it is even needed. I had an experience on the national cycling strategy board a decade or so ago. I was rather naive, but the action largely was to set up a strategy board. Whoever took on that role, be it a Minister or somebody from outside, would need to have the proverbial teeth and a mandate from above, from their political superior—"This is something I want done, and you've been employed to do it"—rather than the employment of the person being the action. They would need at least some influence, if not control, over a significant budget, as has Andrew Gilligan and as has Jon Orcutt in New York under Mayor Bloomberg. That works. I think it could work, but I do not think it is strictly necessary. If it is the Government's intention to do so, the mechanism is already in place to make it happen.

Q126 Chair: Are you saying you think that the London and New York models work?

Chris Boardman: If an officer was employed with a mandate to carry out some actions to get to a specific end point, it works, but that officer does not necessarily have to be outside the Government.

Roger Geffen: If there is to be a cycling commissioner, their power has to come from the top. Andrew Gilligan's role as Boris Johnson's cycling tsar works because everybody knows that effectively he is Boris Johnson's eyes and ears on cycling matters. Therefore,

he is basically speaking for Boris Johnson and he has that authority. The Prime Minister has said he wants to launch a cycling revolution; he wants to see cycling soar. If there is to be a cycling tsar, his authority would need to come from the Prime Minister, so that he has prime ministerial backing to go into all the other Government Departments that need to contribute to a cycling revolution, to make sure that not only the Department for Transport is playing its role, but that the Departments for education, planning, businesses, employers, rural access, culture, media and sport, traffic law enforcement, the justice system and, ultimately, the Treasury are all playing their roles; and so too are public transport operators, the police, the criminal justice system and so on. If a tsar has the authority from the Prime Minister to do those things, that could be useful. Without that authority, the role would be a poisoned chalice.

Q127 Chair: I want to ask about heavy goods vehicles. A lot of concern has been expressed about their safety, or lack of it, in relation to cyclists. What do you think should be done to improve the safety of HGVs, and who should be doing it? Is it for Government or is it for the industry itself?

Chris Boardman: I was in Brussels two weeks ago with Andrew Gilligan to express support for EU directive 96/53/EC to design safer lorries. I will not go into the details of it, we certainly do not have time; but there is an opportunity within this amendment to change the design of lorries—to lower the cab and make life easier for HGV drivers. They have come under a lot of flak because the vehicles have been involved in so many cycling accidents, but effectively they are driving vehicles that are not fit for purpose. They cannot see a large portion around their cabs, and they are trying to address that with more mirrors and gadgets, but our road system functions because there is a plan A and a plan B. If I make a mistake, you compensate; if you make a mistake, I compensate. One of the participants, certainly at junctions, cannot participate, and therefore all the onus is on one person, so you have a 50% higher chance of having an accident straight away. That opportunity is there, and I would strongly suggest that that directive be supported.

Q128 Chair: Are there any other views about what should be done? What is the industry's responsibility and what is the Government's?

Edmund King: Part of the industry's responsibility, which is being addressed well by some parts of the industry and not so well by others, is about education of drivers as well, to make them well aware of their blind spot, particularly when turning left at junctions. The Met police have been working with industry in doing quite a lot on this with their Changing Places scheme, whereby they put cyclists in a truck, and vice versa. That helps. There is also an awareness among cyclists about the dangers of being on the inside, particularly at junctions. It is about training and awareness as well.

The industry can also look at technology, whether or not it is by legislation, but hopefully before legislation because that takes time. There are various camera devices, warning devices and side barriers that can mitigate the loss. The best in the industry are doing that. There has been a particular problem in places like London with tipper trucks and dump trucks that do not have side-skirt barriers. It has been a design fault present in quite a few vehicles, and there are talks about those being amended or banned. It is a combination of education, improving technology and awareness by both truck drivers and cyclists.

Chris Boardman: Can I add one point about the training side? At the moment we have a conflict. We have cycling infrastructure that understandably goes down the side of the road; we have an advance stop zone for cyclists at the front; and we have DfT guidance that says these lanes are for cyclists to get to the front. So it is saying, “Go down the inside of traffic,” when the normal rule of traffic is that you will not go down the inside of somebody who could be turning left. We could see significant improvements in guidance to road users. We have to have a directive where somebody says, “Don’t go down the inside,” or the vehicle driver has to be directed to look in their left-hand mirror. There is already in the Highway Code reference to the fact that you should give way to anybody in a cycle lane or a bus lane, but that is not adhered to.

Roger Geffen: On the question of whose role it is to do this, Edmund has covered a lot of the territory. As he rightly said, there is a lot of good practice in some parts of the industry. Transport for London is also doing an awful lot to encourage good practice and effectively drive it through by its contracting powers under things like the Crossrail contract. If you are not signed up to what is a voluntary code of practice, there is a very strong incentive to sign up to it because otherwise you will not get to work on Crossrail, which is obviously a very important contract for anyone in the construction business. That sort of incentive does work, but ultimately the players in the industry, who want to make this stuff work, are all scrabbling around for the best answers. There is now a plethora of warning systems: detectors, sensors and so on. They are all trying to work out which one works best, and how to design lorry cabs so drivers can see, not by having to rely on mirrors, but by having a lower cab height and a lower seating position more like a bus driver has, with more window around them, again like a bus driver.

Those sorts of things could be driven through by EU legislation. There is a role for Government in securing better design of lorry cabs through EU legislation, but there is also a role for Government to pull together the research on which of these camera and sensor systems works best, because at the moment the industry has to work it out. The one player who has not been involved in this so far is the Government. They need to step in to provide some of the co-ordination that the better players in the industry are looking for.

Chris Boardman: I have a one-point comment on that—it was actually Andrew Gilligan who pointed it out. This is the only vehicle on the road that has to be immediately modified after buying it to make it safe, and that is not right. It is not right that, when you buy a vehicle, you then have to modify it to make it safe. That says the design is not right.

Q129 Sarah Champion: Looking at infrastructure, one of the things this Committee realised was that, while there is guidance on the infrastructure on cycle lanes and the height of buttons at crossings, it very much falls on the local authority to make the decision on where to invest their money and which bits of that guidance they are going to follow. We heard about cycle routes through London where, when you cross over the borough line, the offer changes dramatically, just on one route. Do you think there should be a national set of cycling infrastructure rules or standards, rather than just guidance, and where do you think the money should come from to pay for these changes?

Roger Geffen: Yes, we would very much like to see a consistent set of standards.

Q130 Chair: In answering Miss Champion's last point about the money, would you bear in mind that many local authorities are facing drastic funding cuts? That is a factor they have to deal with.

Roger Geffen: I will come to that. I have not lost the importance of that question. We would like to see a consistent set of standards. Local authorities themselves have to do an awful lot of unnecessary duplication of one another's efforts in the absence of a consistent set of standards, so they are all writing their own standards. I have no doubt that we shall have some standards that will come out from Transport for London, and they will probably be very good. There is another set of standards coming out from the Welsh Assembly, in conjunction with the Active Travel (Wales) Act, as it now is. Greater Manchester is working on a set of standards, and lots of different local authorities will doubtless try to follow. They will all probably come up with different standards and they will probably all be well-intentioned, but they will all be different. That creates a mass of uncertainty about what these different things all mean for drivers and cyclists alike. Cycle facilities are blue in one place, green in another, red in a third and no colour in another. The sheer inconsistency helps nobody. For those reasons, we would like to see a consistent set of standards.

The other thing is that there are conflicting standards; that is often the case—different minimum widths and different standards. The Highways Agency has one standard, the Government have a different standard, and Transport for London has a third. Inevitably, local authorities will choose the lowest standard—the one that is easiest to meet. We have to sort out the issue of consistency; it is in nobody's interests to have inconsistency.

To pick up the final point about funding, in London, they are spending money on cycling. It needs to be reallocated from other transport budgets to make that happen. Cycling is incredibly cost-effective, not just for getting people from A to B but for improving people's quality of life, health and so on, but there are two really important ways in which we can do things at minimal cost: by getting the maximum out of the planning system and by getting the maximum out of road maintenance. When resurfacing a road, every local authority should be encouraged to think how they can put the road surface back in a way that is more cycle-friendly. While you have a work gang out there, could they be putting some planters to the side of the road to create a segregated cycle lane? That is how New York has done it. Some of their major streets—9th Avenue and so on—have been absolutely transformed at minimal cost by using the road maintenance budget, and making sure that, whenever there is a new development, opportunities are taken to secure improvements for cycle provision in the surrounding area. Those are two ways in which it does not all have to fall on the public purse.

Q131 Chair: Does anyone want to add any other points?

Chris Boardman: On the funding front, we were calling for £10 a head. I think £18 a head is being spent in London by Boris Johnson; £24 a head is the regular spend in the Netherlands, but we were asking for £10 a head. Today I have been putting that into context by saying that for the entire nation for a year it adds up to pretty much the same price as refurbishing a single tube station in London, so I think it is a perfectly reasonable ask. It is not additional; it comes out of transport funding. It is about ring-fencing part of the transport budget and using it to encourage a mode of transport. Every extra regular cyclist contributes £590 a head per year when you roll together congestion, health and emissions, so it is incredibly cost-effective.

Edmund King: On funding, there is a consultation out at the moment from the Department for Transport, “Gearing up for efficient highway delivery and funding.” In section 2.38 they are seeking views on whether to top-slice around £50 million a year to be made available for local highway authorities to encourage cycleway and footpath maintenance and improvements.

Q132 Chair: I am aware of that. I am seeking your views on how you think the money should be spent. Do you agree with that proposal?

Edmund King: That is one way—to take money from that fund, dedicate it and ring-fence it for cycling and pedestrian improvements.

Q133 Martin Vickers: Can I broaden the discussion a little, because it has become very London-centric? I can understand that to some extent, because of the focus on the recent tragedies and so on. If we are to encourage and support cycling in our provincial towns, we have to take a slightly different approach. For example, public transport is—I won’t say inadequate, but not as adequate as it is in London. In my experience, from my time as a councillor responsible for highways, whenever you talked about bus lanes, cycle lanes and so on, quite understandably, concerns were expressed by industry and commerce, particularly the retail trade, who rely on attracting customers to the high street. High streets are very vulnerable at the moment, with online shopping and so on. Have you surveyed industry and commerce to get their views? What do they feel is the cost lost to the local economy?

Roger Geffen: Surveys have been done on this. The answer is that local businesses tend to be wary of these changes before they are implemented, and then, when the changes are implemented and they see the results, they tend to be very supportive; they come round and realise that actually they work really well. To go to the earlier question about creating more car-free areas in our town centres, you can find all sorts of places where people object at first, but when it is done they find that retail footfall increases. Cyclists are very good spenders. They visit shops more often. Because they cannot take as much home, they come to the shops more often. It is very good for footfall and for the retail economy to have a more cycle-friendly town centre, and a more pedestrian-friendly and people-friendly town centre. That is why I am very pleased that Edmund King agrees with us. There is plenty of evidence from continental Europe, and from cities around this country too, that you do not kill off the high street economy by reducing car use; you usually boost it.

Chris Boardman: Every paper that I have read—I’m afraid I cannot reference them right now but I can get that to the Committee within the time frame—shows an increase in business, because people passing the shops are slowed; bikes are much easier to park; and obviously pedestrians are walking past the shops. It boosts business; it does not take it away. There is a fear that taking away parking zones will lose clientele, but it does not take into account the amount of slower traffic and the amount of space a single car takes up.

Chair: It would be helpful if you could make that available to us.

Q134 Martin Vickers: I agree that the evidence is that pedestrianised areas in retail high streets and the like are advantageous, but I was also referencing getting people to the

town centre. My experience from one or two experiments carried out in my area was that there was a deterrent. It takes a long time for culture change, but as things are at the moment we are concerned about the viability of town centres, at the moment. People want to be able to get to their town centres simply and easily. Whether we like it or not, that usually means in the family car. My point is: what research has been carried out that may tease out from industry and commerce whether they support it in that broader context?

Roger Geffen: I will certainly come back and reference some of the research on both the economic benefits to the high street but also the point about business opinions. One of the things surveys have shown—this has been done both on the continent and in Bristol, where Sustrans did some research—is that local retailers greatly overestimate what proportion of their customers arrive by car and they underestimate how many people arrive by foot, on cycle and by public transport.

Chair: If you could let us have the information, that would be helpful to us.

Q135 Karen Lumley: I want to move on to training. Do you think we train our young people, and perhaps older people like me, enough on how we should be riding safely on our streets? I've got a bike in my constituency in the midlands and I am quite happy to ride around there, but I would be very concerned about riding here. I am sure that as a mum I would be very worried about my children riding bikes around here as well. Do we train our youngsters and older people enough? If we don't, how can we?

Chris Boardman: Bikeability, which is on-road training, is now in 50%, I think, of schools. I think that is the best place to start. It is tragic that we have lost it as a life skill and I would like to see it back in schools. It has been demonstrated that it certainly boosts confidence dramatically. The same type of training is available for adults as well. For interest, for the cost of 4 kilometres of dual carriageway we could give Bikeability training to every primary school child in England. It is doable at a very reasonable cost and with a tremendous return.

Edmund King: There seems to be a lost generation in between, from the time when I was at primary school in Norwich and we all did cycle proficiency, and then there was a period in between when people had no training at all. Of the AA members who regularly cycle, only 25% have had any training at all. There is that lost generation, some of whom will be put off cycling because they have not had the training. Chris is right about targeting Bikeability and making it available at all primary schools, but there is more we can do with born-again cyclists, offering courses there, perhaps in the way we have seen with motorcycling.

Chris Boardman: They are also our future drivers. That is the point. It is an investment in all aspects of road transport.

Roger Geffen: There is some interesting anecdotal evidence—we would love to see the Department researching this formally—that people who have done cycle training make for better drivers. They probably learn to drive more rapidly as well, because they have gained roadcraft skills. I have heard it said that driving instructors can tell whether one of their pupils has also learned to cycle, because they are much more road aware. Therefore, we would like to see cycle training not thought of as being just for children aged nine and 10 in playgrounds, but to get them out on the streets and give them further training in their

teens as part of the preparation to learn to drive, because that gives them awareness of how to drive safely. It also gives them awareness that continuing cycling is another transport option.

Q136 Chair: Is there any evidence? There has not been any study on this, has there?

Roger Geffen: There is very good evidence that cycle training improves people's confidence and safety. What has not been researched is whether it improves their safety and their cycle awareness as drivers. We would love to see that done.

Q137 Mr Sanders: Mr Boardman, you mentioned just now where the money would come from to pay for people to have training, but I think you referred to capital expenditure rather than revenue expenditure. Where would the revenue expenditure come from, because it is not something that is done one-off like a capital project?

Chris Boardman: No; excuse me. I am just trying to draw a comparison to give people an idea of the costs we are talking about.

Q138 Mr Sanders: But it is an erroneous one.

Chris Boardman: I accept that. I am now in the area of speculation and opinion, but it comes down to investing in the future. How do you encourage people to ride bikes, with the financial contribution that makes to our society—looking at more confidence on the road and a study to see how many of them carry on using this as a method of transport later on? There is a financial return for the country there.

Q139 Mr Sanders: I did cycling proficiency many decades ago, but I do not remember having to pay for it. Do you know how it was paid for?

Chris Boardman: I do not know how cycling proficiency was paid for.

Edmund King: I think it came out of the education budget; it was done via the schools out of the education budget.

Chris Boardman: It was a different beast; it was not on-road training either, whereas Bikeability is on-road with the children.

Roger Geffen: This comes to the point about cross-departmental collaboration. The Department for Transport is, as you rightly picked up, predominantly a capital-spending Department. The Departments for health, for education and for business in particular could be playing a significant role with what are for them relatively small sums of revenue funding. In particular, the Department of Health could really promote cycling and active travel more generally through public health directors.

Q140 Chair: You are saying we should look to other Departments as well.

Roger Geffen: Yes. In particular, the Department of Health has a role in providing some of the revenue funding for the promotion of cycling, but also the Department for Education to promote it in schools.

Chris Boardman: That is not something we have done before. The NHS is spending just over £5 billion a year treating obesity, and 35,000 deaths are directly linked to obesity, so it is something that would be definitely worth looking at across departmental funding of different areas.

Q141 Mr Sanders: It is getting people early—getting children on bikes and parents feeling they are safe. I am amazed that there is not a standard for the width of a cycle lane.

Chris Boardman: So are we.

Q142 Mr Sanders: Everything else that is marked on the road comes with very strict regulations and guidance. Have you not taken this up in the past with the Department for Transport?

Roger Geffen: We certainly have. We have made the point—going back to the need for some consistent design standards—that the design standards we need are safety-critical. As you say, if you design a cycle lane that is too narrow, drivers respond and leave less space when overtaking. When cycle lanes are marked too narrowly, that is obviously safety-critical; so are things like visibility at junctions and how you provide cycle priority at junctions to not create conflict between turning drivers and cyclists moving straight ahead, particularly if you are going to create safe segregated cycle routes. There is a whole load of issues where we need consistent standards.

Q143 Mr Sanders: The cycle lanes I have seen in Westminster are extremely wide and I would feel very safe driving. The cycle lanes in my own local authority are very narrow and I would not wish to cycle. The problem is that there is not enough room on the road to widen the cycle lane. What would you prefer: no cycle lane at all or a narrow cycle lane? If you go for a national standard, you may well find that you lose cycle lanes.

Roger Geffen: If the road is busy and there is not space to provide decent, dedicated space for cycling, you need to go to the top of what is known as the hierarchy of solutions, which is to start by reducing traffic volumes and speeds. If it is a busy, fast road and there is not space for dedicated space, the local authority needs to look at how to reduce those traffic volumes and speeds, and make sure there is a 20 mph speed limit if it is an urban street, and how to reduce the traffic volumes, in whatever way is appropriate for the circumstances. You are absolutely right. We are not going to have mass cycle use if we continue to work on the assumption that the road space is predominantly for motor vehicles, and cyclists just have to squeeze into whatever is left over. That will never create conditions where people of all ages and all abilities feel able to cycle comfortably and safely. We have to do something about reallocating road space.

Edmund King: However, we need to be realistic, in that not all roads are appropriate for cycle lanes. There will be instances—Islington does it very well—where cyclists are directed on to quieter roads alongside the main roads that, for whatever reason, are not appropriate. I do not think one solution fits all. However, we need better design standards so that when we do put in cycle lanes they are beneficial, because currently there are some that run for 10 metres, stop and may or may not start again. They are not good for cyclists, and they are not good for drivers because they get a false sense of security, and that can cause more collisions.

Q144 Sarah Champion: There seems to be a logjam in this debate on infrastructure, training issues and perceptions of safety. Are there examples you know of, maybe round the world, where either public health campaigns or Government schemes are in place actively to encourage people to cycle? I know of only one in this country. When I was an employer, there was a grant we could give people to buy bikes to cycle to work. That is the only thing I know of on a national level that seems to be positively encouraging people to cycle. Do you know of other examples that have worked in encouraging people to shift perceptions—to shift the logjam?

Roger Geffen: Within Britain?

Sarah Champion: No; anywhere.

Q145 Chair: Can you give us any examples?

Chris Boardman: For me, New York is a very interesting example, because it is obviously a very car-centric society, and there is political will to change how people travel. I met Jon Orcutt, the director, and his solutions were very interesting. He had to deal with the same issues—people’s fear of changing the space and what to do with it. They went for very cheap solutions. They painted, and they put down planters to segregate road space. When he went to an area and said, “We want to put this in your area,” and there was resistance, he said, “If you don’t like it, it’s really cheap and we can take it out in a year.” That was the trigger and they said, “Okay, we’ll try it.” Then, inevitably, they wanted to keep it and extend it. That was very successful, and they have seen a 250% increase in cycling since 2007.

Q146 Chair: Are there any other specific examples?

Roger Geffen: The obvious ones are the Netherlands and Denmark. The Netherlands decided to go for this in response to the oil crises and mounting numbers of child, pedestrian and cyclist deaths in the 1970s.

Q147 Chair: What was the project? What was the initiative?

Roger Geffen: There was a grassroots public campaign around the need to stop child deaths. The name of the campaign was Stop der Kindermort.

Q148 Chair: But what was the nature of the initiative?

Chris Boardman: To change the way they travelled—to prioritise walking and cycling.

Roger Geffen: In their case, it was very strongly infrastructure-led, but it was backed up by all these other measures we have talked about: cycle training, the positive promotion of cycling by road danger reduction and making sure road policing backed it up. Good infrastructure is at the heart of it, but there has to be a whole load of positive supporting messages around it.

Q149 Chair: Finally, could you give me any specific examples of the changes you want to see in the justice system which would assist cyclists? Can I have brief answers? We

are running out of time, but this is an important area. Are there any specific changes that you think should be made?

Roger Geffen: We are running a campaign called Road Justice, which focuses on all three parts of the criminal justice system: policing, prosecutors and the courts and sentencing. We are handing in a Road Justice petition around the first of these areas. We have called for on-road policing, which is about more resources for roads policing. Road police numbers have been cut by 29% in the last 10 years, even though overall police force numbers have hardly changed.

Q150 Chair: Tell me what needs to be done.

Roger Geffen: What needs doing is more resources; better investigations; and better victim care from the police. As to prosecutors, stop dismissing driving that has caused obvious danger as merely “being careless.” There are ways in which that can be done within the current law. It might be better done by changing statute law, but we are talking to the Crown Prosecution Service about how to do it within the current law.

Q151 Chair: Just tell us what needs to be done.

Roger Geffen: Stop dismissing dangerous as “careless” and make greater use of driving bans as a sentencing option for the driver who has caused obvious danger but who is not necessarily a dangerous person a jury would want to imprison.

Q152 Chair: That is the list. Do you have anything to add, Mr Boardman or Mr King?

Edmund King: Mine is more about enforcing the current laws.

Chair: You did make that point.

Edmund King: But also things like offering awareness courses to re-educate errant drivers and cyclists. There is a lot of evidence that those courses are more effective than a fine.

Chair: Thank you. Thank you very much for coming and answering our questions.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Councillor Mike Haines**, Deputy Chair, Economy and Transport Board, Local Government Association, **Councillor Ian Davey**, Deputy Leader, Brighton and Hove Council, **Councillor David Hodge**, Leader, Surrey County Council, and **Councillor Helyn Clack**, Cabinet Member for Community Services, Surrey County Council, gave evidence.

Q153 Chair: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could you give us your names and positions, starting at the end with Councillor Haines?

Councillor Haines: Good afternoon. I am Mike Haines, deputy chair of the Local Government Association's economy and transport board. I am a district councillor from Teignbridge in south Devon, neighbouring your colleague from Torbay. I last came here for the winter resilience meeting, and I am glad to see that my neighbour got here today, as I have from south Devon, given that Dawlish is actually in Teignbridge—my district.

Chair: Just the name and position, please.

Councillor Davey: I am Councillor Ian Davey, deputy leader of Brighton and Hove and lead member on transport.

Councillor Hodge: Good afternoon, Madam Chairman. My name is David Hodge. I am the leader of Surrey county council and chairman of the County Councils Network.

Councillor Helyn Clack: Good afternoon, Chairman. My name is Helyn Clack, and I am a county councillor in Surrey with cabinet responsibility for communities, which includes cycling and cycling events.

Q154 Chair: What would you like Ministers to do to improve cycling?

Councillor Haines: Generally, one of the important things we have been asking of Ministers for a couple of years is that part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 be brought in, which I think this Committee asked for in 2011. When I attended bus partnership meetings with Norman Baker, when he was the Minister, that was one of our constant asks. From a cycling perspective, it means we would be able to enforce mandatory cycle lanes as well as bus lanes. The rule on turning, which is prohibited, could be enforced. Box junctions and all the things that would make the road safer for cyclists are encompassed in that. I noted that the three previous speakers were very keen on enforcement, so that very much ties in with that. That is the first thing.

Secondly, there is the funding issue. I am sure you are aware of the alarming road maintenance figures, with an annual funding deficit of somewhere in the region of £830 million—a cumulative deficit of over £10 billion over the past decade. The figures for this year will be coming out soon, and I am sure they are going to be even higher because of all the problems with road maintenance as a result of the weather we have been having recently.

There is the issue of uncertainty about the local growth fund when it takes over from the sustainable transport fund, and the fact that it will be going through the LEPs. There is concern about what the LEPs' remit might be in terms of cycling, compared with the other things they need to consider.

The final one is enforcement of parking where parking is causing a danger to cyclists. We now find that Ministers are telling us we should not be enforcing parking in the way we were. There is a consultation on that, but it would also help cyclists if we were able to continue to enforce parking where it is causing dangers for them as well. There is quite a range of things that we would like to see. I am sure I will come back to traffic management.

Q155 Chair: Thank you. If any of you disagree with any of those points, please tell us. Otherwise, are there any other points you would like to raise?

Councillor Davey: Of course, I echo all of that, but overriding everything is the need for strong, consistent leadership from central Government, and a funded strategic plan for

local transport. We see an awful lot of money going into road building, and as a local authority it feels very much that we are at the end of the line for that policy. That has a tendency to increase the demands on local roads. If more roads are being built, we get more demand on local roads, and local authorities are struggling to cope with that. I think there needs to be more focus on local transport, with, I would argue, clear ring-fenced funding for sustainable transport measures, particularly focused on walking and cycling.

Councillor Hodge: We would like to see the law changed in relation to sportive events which happen in the New Forest, Surrey and Yorkshire. Sportive events are where cycling clubs and cycling organisations suddenly decide to have an event at the weekend. One example was on 2 June last year when four such cycling events took place in a small rural part of Surrey. The first event had 600, the next had 1,500 and by the time we got down to it 3,500 people had all congregated at this sportive event. The law does not allow local authorities or the local police to control that, and I think this is one of the most important things going. We in Surrey are absolutely clear; we are absolutely sure we want to support cycling. We want more people out cycling, but what we also want is that the people who live in Surrey do not get hammered by three or four different sportive events. That is one of the reasons why—my colleague will explain it—we have changed things.

The other thing I would like to see is a serious communication campaign on sharing the road. Mr Boardman and the AA gentleman were very clear: there has to be an understanding about sharing the road. The road does not belong to cyclists and it does not belong to motorists; it belongs to you, me and every other person in this country, Madam Chairman. Therefore, we need to have a bit of respect. Too often we see that there is not enough respect from motorists to cyclists and from cyclists to motorists. It is just bad manners. Those are the two things I would like to see.

Q156 Chair: Councillor Clack, is there anything you want to add to that?

Councillor Clack: Only that we are investing in cycling in Surrey—that is really important to us—particularly in our small towns, and a lot of work has been done on that. I have brought with me copies of our cycling strategy, Madam Chairman, which I hope I will be able to leave with you. We hosted the London Olympic cycling events in 2012. As a result, cycling has grown enormously in Surrey; and so have our cycling accident rates. As my leader has just said, we would like to see more regulation to make sure that local authorities and the police can manage some of the offshoots of increased cycling, which, as he has just said, are around massive events taking place in some of our rural areas. I have brought with me the cycling strategy and also a framework of how we are—

Q157 Chair: Yes, that's fine. You can leave those, and we will look at them. How do we address the issue of mutual respect for different road users and deal with shared space? How can pedestrians, motorists and cyclists all have their space, particularly where there is conflict?

Councillor Davey: I do not think there is one answer to that. It is redesigning much of our urban areas really. There has been a shift over the years in over-segregating, with railings and creating space for pedestrians and space for the road. If we can move to a situation where there is much more a shared space layout, it has the benefit of calming the whole area. Recently, we have done a project where we have taken away railings and widened

the pavements, and it has had the impact of calming all road users: pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. That is one thing, but obviously it is quite expensive.

I would love to see a promotional campaign, run nationally, about mutual respect. I remember some of the public safety adverts that used to be on TV when I was a child, and they have stuck with me until now. The benefit of those types of public safety advertising should not be underestimated, and I would like to see some of that led from central Government.

Q158 Chair: Are there any other examples of how this can be approached, given the reduced funding that most local authorities are facing?

Councillor Haines: In our written submission we included the example of the London borough of Merton, where they are promoting it actively, but I accept your point about ongoing funding issues. I do not know, but they certainly might cause that to come into question, and they may prevent other authorities from doing it. The funding issue is going to be the problem in promoting it in the way Merton and others currently do.

Councillor Clack: The problem we have is that a lot of transport funding now is given directly to the local enterprise partnerships—the LEPs—and we have to bid to them as well. We are concerned that that might not be their top priority. However, in Surrey we have had a massive road improvement programme. Our select committee, which is at County Hall, challenged us quite directly to say that the new road improvement process should be considering cycling. As we are laying down new tarmac across our county, we should be considering how we can accommodate cyclists along it. That is something where again we have been challenged. We took on a cycling strategy last autumn. We had over 3,000 responses to that cycling strategy request in Surrey. It is very big in people's minds. We have taken a lot of the information that came back to us and applied it to our policies, not just in transport but also across our responsibilities for health and wellbeing.

Q159 Jim Fitzpatrick Councillors, several of you mentioned enforcement, and I think all of you have mentioned either enforcement or the police. Given the pressure on local authority budgets and police budgets, anecdotal evidence suggests that when the police are faced with cuts, roads policing is perhaps an area that takes more pressure than others. Do you detect an appetite in the police authorities in your area—from chief constables—that this is an area where they want to work in co-operation, and it is as much a priority for them as it clearly is for you, or are they under pressure from other areas and therefore not able to match your enthusiasm?

Councillor Hodge: We took evidence from the police at our select committees when we went through this campaign. It is interesting that the police were very keen to work with the county council on how we could do that. But it comes back to what I believe is a fundamental issue about national Government in relation to local government. Local government has a major issue because the amount of funding local government receives in this country is 1.7% of the total expenditure by Government. As a consequence, we are absolutely hand-tied in having enough funding to do the things we should do.

The way I look at it is that the people of Surrey voted for me and my colleague Helyn to represent them. The same goes for Brighton. We are representative of what the people want, and it is our responsibility to deliver the programmes they want. There is no doubt

about it. We are training 11,000 young people and some adults every year, which means that in 10 years we will have trained everyone in Surrey. Then we will have to start again, obviously. The point is that it comes down to training and to trust in local government to get on and take their responsibilities seriously. If we had the responsibility to allow us to set our budgets the way we would, with the money we need to run our services, you would find that local government, as the most efficient form of public service in the country, would show you that we could make a good difference. I am absolutely convinced that the police are definitely with us on this.

Councillor Haines: If part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 is implemented, it means that local authorities have the opportunity, if they wish, to carry out civil enforcements in the areas they identify as the ones that are a priority. It is going to be for them to choose. If they see that as a priority and a way of improving safety for cyclists and others, at least it gives them the option to do it.

Councillor Clack: Continuing that theme, in Surrey, because of the cycling strategy we undertook, we have set up a strategic cycling board and also local cycling plans of works with our districts and boroughs. One particular district which has been at the front end of an increase in cycling is Mole Valley where Box Hill is situated, famous now from the Olympic Games. Our local police have set aside funding to put police on bikes to interact with cyclists, who come and ride—and are welcome—in our beautiful areas, but also to manage the kind of code of conduct we would like to see between cyclists, drivers and local residents. We have a lot of complaints from local residents about cyclists coming into Surrey and behaving in a way that is not necessarily acceptable and up to their standards. I am very pleased by the way Mole Valley police have interacted to make sure cyclists are learning. They are also interacting with drivers. We could end up with a big fight on the roads in Surrey between drivers and cyclists. As well as all that, we have horse riders who are in between the cyclists and drivers, and they have a say in these matters too.

Q160 Chair: Have you ever had a big fight?

Councillor Clack: I have certainly witnessed it, but personally not. For example, we have had situations where cyclists have abused village centres in a way that I won't go into in detail but I can leave to your imagination—as to their human needs, if you like—and that has upset local parents and residents. It is quite obvious that they do not really consider the rights of local people and their own amenities. I have had horse riders write to me saying that 200 cyclists come up, in packs of 20 or 50 at a time, shouting at the horses that they want to come past. All that shouting upsets the riders quite considerably. We have drivers who complain that cyclists block the roads, especially in our rural areas, and they cannot go past, so they take unnecessary risks. We have looked at a code of conduct to inform our cycling clubs, our drivers and the police, and we are all standing together on this. It is a new thing in Surrey. After all, we are hosting the Mayor's legacy event in Surrey for the next four years, which is a massive cycle ride; 24,000 people are going to cycle in it this year, but it is on closed roads and that is manageable. We have to manage cyclists on the open roads alongside other users. We need a code of conduct and I think it needs to be quite locally specific.

Councillor Davey: We work very well with the local police, but they have their pressures, so it is about targeting the response. We would always argue that it is not about

enforcement; it is about compliance, and encouraging compliance. One of the problems in encouraging compliance is when people know that a transgression will not be enforced. That is why it is so important that those powers for moving traffic offences come to local authorities, who are in the best position to be able to enforce them. The police do not have the resources to do that. I think it is absolutely essential that those powers come to local authorities. For example, we have introduced 20 mph speed limits locally. We are working with the police, and there will be a phasing-in of interventions, which will include education and things like that before we get to the point, some way down the line, of actually fining people. It is about compliance and education.

Q161 Mr Sanders: You might not be able to answer this but I would be really happy if you asked the appropriate person. You probably all have different widths for your cycle lanes, and I would be interested to know how that decision was taken. What determined the width of the cycle lanes in your area? There is a second one that you may be able to answer. Increasingly, you find unitary authorities within counties, and Brighton would be an example; is there any co-ordination between the unitary and the county on cycle lane etiquette, widths and all the other things associated with it, to ensure that cyclists are not confused when they cross a local authority boundary?

Councillor Davey: This is where national standards would come in. In our cycle lanes, anything that we have put in over the last few years is a minimum of 2 metres, because we consider that to be the minimum acceptable. Anything less than that is a compromise.

Q162 Mr Sanders: Do you know where you found that out? What determined it?

Councillor Davey: Good officers.

Mr Sanders: It might be worth asking.

Councillor Davey: Absolutely. I think there are accepted standards, but having it laid down in a national standard for infrastructure would be invaluable. We are starting to work more closely with our neighbouring authorities, but there is a long way to go. Locally, we have created the idea of a greater Brighton, and our cycle city ambition bid was based on the greater Brighton area. Unfortunately, that was unsuccessful, but for the first time it had cross-boundary infrastructure. That is part of our 10-year vision for cycling in the area, because we know that movements do not end at the city boundary.

Councillor Clack: My question back would be: if we had a standard and did not have wide enough roads, how would we manage cyclists on them? Some of our roads in Surrey, especially in the rural areas and smaller towns and villages, are not a standard width anyway because they have developed over hundreds of years, yet they are well used by cyclists. If you imposed a national standard, my worry would be how we would manage that, particularly in rural areas.

Q163 Mr Sanders: But there must be a minimum standard—that if it went so narrow it would be pointless. There must be a minimum standard considered safe that somebody somewhere ought to establish.

Councillor Clack: In Surrey, we do not have unitaries but we have district councils and borough councils. We have what we call local committees, and we delegate power of decision about local highways to those local committees. They are made up of a joint

committee of the county, the district and the borough. The cabinet, under the leader, has delegated powers on cycle lanes and other road infrastructure to those local people, who we think will probably know their area best; they will have that decision passed down to them. As to minimum standards, yes, probably; that is from a safety point of view, and I would hope our highways officers know that already. Certainly, introducing cycle-safe roads is very important to us, but it is very much a local decision.

Councillor Haines: My experience when I cycle from Devon into Torbay on the A380 is that it is a seamless change, so there is working together in that area. That road is a reasonable width, but on smaller roads you do not even have cycle lanes. Width is the problem for any national standard. You cannot say what the local circumstances are going to be, so there has to be local discretion. At the end of the day, it is the local council that is making decisions that it thinks are in the best interests, given the circumstances it finds before it.

Q164 Martin Vickers: Councillor Davey mentioned 20 mph speed limits a minute or two ago. The British Cycling document published today recommends that in urban areas 20 mph be the default speed limit, and therefore, presumably, local authorities would have the authority to determine which ones would be made 30 or 40, or whatever. What are your thoughts on that? Would you welcome having more local control over that? I also have a question similar to one I asked the previous panel. How do you think motorists, who form the vast number of people who go into town centres and so on, would react? Would it be helpful or disadvantageous to the viability of local economies?

Councillor Davey: I do not think that making roads safer has anything other than a positive impact on the viability of local economies. The argument for making 20 mph the default speed limit is that it is much easier and cheaper for local authorities, because they have to change away from the default. If the default was 20 mph in residential areas, it would be the arterial roads where the authority would need to put the work in, to mark them as an exception, whereas at the moment we have to mark all the 20 mph roads as an exception. It just means that, as it is, there is a lot more work—a lot more infrastructure, paint on the ground, signs and expense—so changing that default would make it cheaper, easier and safer.

Councillor Hodge: There may be a slight difference between me and my friend from Brighton. We have 398 schools in Surrey; we have a number of education establishments and sixth-form colleges, and probably 100-plus private schools. If we were to put a 20 mph zone in every one of those areas, there is absolutely no doubt that the cost would be quite high, because you have to do all sorts of different things.

The problem is that it is all very well putting in a 20 mph limit, but unless somebody is going to enforce it you have wasted a whole load of money. My view is that I have no intention of wasting public money putting in 20 mph zones. When I drove here today I went through Kingston and saw the extent of a 20 mph zone. Nobody was doing 20 mph, but 20 mph was painted on roads almost half a mile from the schools. It went on and on, and nobody was doing it. That is the problem. If you have a 20 mph limit and people obey it, that is fine, but I do not have the resources—I do not think the police in Surrey have the resources—to man nearly 600 different sites with a 20 mph limit, never mind looking at towns and everything else. It is an issue that is raised consistently in Surrey, but I have

always said it is down to the local committee and local members to decide. Do they really think that will help? They know the area better than I do, and that is why we do it that way.

Councillor Haines: We would welcome anything that gives greater discretion to the local authority to decide those things. Perhaps I ought to declare an interest. My house is on a road that has had a 20 mph limit for some six years now. I have seen improvements in traffic speeds. In part of my ward there is a rural village which was going to have 20 mph, but people did not want it because of the intrusive signs that would be all over the place. If it was seen as the default and you did not have to have such a large number of signs, it would be very welcome. It is also an area that cyclists use quite a lot. My wife cycles through there almost on a daily basis.

Q165 Chair: Cyclists complain that local authorities sometimes waste money by having ineffective infrastructure. I would like to ask both the Brighton and Surrey representatives: do you consult when you are looking at changing infrastructure to meet cyclists' needs?

Councillor Davey: Yes, we do. We have put in three significant projects in the last three years and we have involved local cycling groups in the consultation and also the detailed design. Our engineers have sat down with representatives of the cycle groups and gone through the detail inch by inch. It means that the projects that have gone in and gone forward have had their absolute support all the way through the process; and once they have been put in, they supported the end result. As a consequence, some of the schemes we have done have become national exemplars of how to do segregated cycle infrastructure. I think it is absolutely essential.

Q166 Chair: You have not had any complaints about schemes being implemented.

Councillor Davey: Not from cyclists, no. I would not say we have had none.

Chair: I am asking about cyclists.

Councillor Clack: Similarly, in Surrey where we have been able to get a specific grant for cycling infrastructure, and/or we have put money aside from our own budgets for it, consultation is very important to us. As the leader has just described, we have a local committee system whereby local people and local councillors decide what infrastructure they have. I would say though that—

Q167 Chair: But do they consult with cyclists?

Councillor Clack: I was just going to say that yes, we do. As part of that consultation, we consult with cyclists. We also consult with local people, and that can be a conflict. Sometimes it is quite hard to resolve that conflict, and decisions have to be taken at local level that are not always satisfying to all parties. Cycling needs sometimes mean there is a pedestrian issue around setting aside a path or part of an area for cycling.

Q168 Chair: Councillor Haines, is this a problem more generally across local authorities? Can there be a conflict of interest between what cyclists want and what pedestrians want?

Councillor Haines: Yes. Local authorities obviously consult all their residents—everyone in the area they represent—and clearly cyclists will be one of those groups. In my area we have a strong cycle group who are a vocal lobby for things that are coming forward. Fortunately, we get on with them well. We have had lots of cycle schemes recently in my area, so everything is done, but it is going to be a balance. There may be other members of society in the area who do not necessarily see it in the same way, but that is what local decision making is all about. It will be something that is very much peculiar to the circumstances of the area so you have to have local people deciding on that, having consulted the cyclists, but not in every case will it be what the cyclists necessarily want.

Q169 Karen Lumley: What sort of numbers are we looking at—of these people you are consulting—as a percentage of ordinary residents or car users? What sort of numbers do you think respond?

Councillor Clack: As I said earlier, we have undertaken a very wide cycle consultation on all these different issues. Overall, we have had a massive cycling conversation in Surrey, which has included the views of cyclists, drivers and residents, for and against. On particular cycle infrastructure work, we would consult the local area that the cycling infrastructure affected. That would include, as my colleague was saying, using the local cycle forums we have set up in most of our boroughs and districts, local residents groups, local councillors, and even things like Mumsnet. If you have a buggy, or double buggy, and are going down a footpath which is a shared cycleway, it can be a problem if you come upon a cyclist. It is quite difficult to manage these things.

Q170 Karen Lumley: Are we talking hundreds, thousands or tens? How many cyclists?

Councillor Clack: To develop our cycling strategy, we had 3,000 responses. It is a county of 1 million people, but that is quite a big response to a strategy. We also had two petitions: one for cycling, which was 3,500, and one against cycling, which I think was about 3,500 as well. Overall, we had 9,000-plus pieces of information about what Surrey should do in Surrey about cycling. When it comes down to local cycling infrastructure and setting aside roads, pathways and so on for cycling use, we consult locally. The consultation is open to anyone who would like to respond, and we make sure through our local networks that they are well involved in what is going on.

Councillor Hodge: Can I just clarify? We have actually invested in Surrey £3 million in cycling schemes in Guildford town centre, Woking town centre and Redhill. The Department for Transport gave us a further £1.5 million based on that to undertake two other cycling schemes where the roads were dangerous. We do work with the Department for Transport, and that is quite important. I would not wish Members to go away thinking we are not investing in it. We are investing, but I would like to invest more money in our highways and in cycling. I am restricted in doing that because Government have legislation that only allows me to do x and y—but we will not go into that now.

Q171 Chair: We understand that, but we are just focusing on this particular problem.

Councillor Haines: In my area there are different cycling groups as well. You have the ones that like to go out and do fast racing, but there are leisure users—I put myself and my

family in that category—and there are commuters as well, which I certainly used to be in the past. When you are consulting, you need to look at different types of cyclists as well and make sure that one group in particular does not necessarily think it is speaking for everyone else.

Q172 Chair: Finally, I would like to ask you about heavy goods vehicles. Could you tell us whether there is a problem with heavy goods vehicles in relation to cycling safety in your areas; and, if so, whether there are any additional powers that you think you should have to be able to deal with the situation? Councillor Davey, is there a problem?

Councillor Davey: I do not think we have the same level of problem as in London, but yes, of course we have a problem. What local authorities can do is junction design where funds are available, but again it comes down to enforcement and us having the powers to enforce manoeuvres at junctions, because with that we could help to make junctions safer.

Councillor Clack: From Surrey's perspective, it is very similar. HGVs are not the worst cause of all our casualties, so it is very similar to Brighton. We know what has been going on in London, obviously, but our cycling casualties have been more as a result of incidents with other users, and with cyclists themselves, having accidents in pelotons and things like that.

Q173 Chair: Councillor Haines, we have heard a great deal about problems with HGVs in relation to London. Is this a London problem, or is it found elsewhere?

Councillor Haines: It would be a particular problem in other major cities as well; less so, as we have heard, in areas that are less urban, but at the end of the day the local authority has to weigh up the economic arguments against the road safety arguments. Having enforcement powers again—

Q174 Chair: Is this a problem in all major cities?

Councillor Haines: As far as I understand it, yes.

Q175 Chair: It is a general statement; it is not just London.

Councillor Haines: It is not a yes/no answer. There are varying degrees.

Councillor Hodge: While I was listening to the gentleman from the AA, Mr Boardman and the other gentleman, I was thinking about when accidents happen with cyclists and HGVs. As I understand it, they seem to happen either when coming to traffic lights, or turning left, right or whatever it is. It just occurred to me: why don't we have a system whereby at traffic lights, where the first 10 metres or so is a box for cyclists to go in, the traffic lights start off with cyclists first for 10 or 15 seconds? You could easily work out a system. By the time they have taken off, any vehicle turning left can, because all the cyclists will have gone. It seems a very simple, logical solution. I just wonder whether that is something Members could think about for the future.

Q176 Jim Fitzpatrick: That has been introduced in London under new arrangements at some of the most significant junctions. I visited one on Friday at the Bow roundabout

where two cyclists were killed. They have advanced cycle-height lights and a starting frame within those lights for cyclists so they can get away. London is trialling that at the moment.

Councillor Hodge: I think that would be a really good thing.

Chair: Thank you very much for that comment. We will close this part of the meeting. Thank you very much for coming along and answering our questions.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Alex Fiddes**, Chief Operating Officer, Vehicle Testing and Enforcement, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, **Peter Weddell-Hall**, Head of e-assessment, Training and Accreditation, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, **Tom Baker**, Treasurer, Batched on Site Association, **Andrew Collins**, Committee Member, Batched on Site Association, and **Robert Armstrong**, Committee Member, Batched on Site Association, gave evidence.

Q177 Chair: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Could I have your name and organisation, starting at the end?

Alex Fiddes: I am Alex Fiddes, chief operating officer at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Peter Weddell-Hall: I am Peter Weddell-Hall. I too am from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. I am responsible for e-assessment, the driver theory test, and for driver CPC.

Tom Baker: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Baker. I am from Eastern Concrete, and I work with the volumetric concrete industry.

Andrew Collins: Hello. My name is Andrew Collins. I am managing director of EasyMix Concrete, and I am a committee member of the BSA.

Robert Armstrong: Hello. I am Robert Armstrong, managing director of Armcon. We are manufacturers of volumetric concrete mixers. I am also a member of the BSA—the Batched on Site Association.

Q178 Chair: Thank you very much. Recent enforcement action in London found that 622 of 821 vehicles stopped were non-compliant. What was the nature of the problems that you found? Mr Fiddes, can you tell us about that?

Alex Fiddes: The main problem we found with those vehicles was that they were badly maintained; there were defects such that they required immediate prohibition and that in some cases were so serious that the vehicles were immobilised. We also discovered that people driving those vehicles had exceeded the drivers' hours requirements, so generally those vehicles were posing a significant risk to road users, cyclists and pedestrians in London.

Q179 Chair: Aren't those figures shocking? What do you think they show about what ought to be done?

Alex Fiddes: I think those figures need to be taken in the context of trucks generally in Great Britain. The checks carried out in London by the industrial vehicle task force are targeted. We are deliberately looking at a sector that was involved in lots of accidents, and yes, it is shocking. Any vehicle our organisation encounters, regardless of its type of operation, should be compliant every single time it is used. Yes, I am extremely disappointed that, of those vehicles we stopped, we found them to be so non-compliant, when there are people operating in exactly the same industry sector who choose to be compliant. I am disappointed.

Q180 Chair: Don't you think it suggests that operators are not taking their responsibilities seriously?

Alex Fiddes: The evidence is clear that, for those vehicles we have stopped, the people who operate them are not taking their obligations seriously. Defects to vehicles do occur as they move, but, from the extent of some of the seriousness that we find, there is clear neglect by some of those people.

Q181 Chair: Are there serial offenders? Is it the same operators that keep being found out?

Alex Fiddes: Clearly, there people operating that we encounter on a regular basis.

Q182 Jim Fitzpatrick: Just to put the figures into perspective, if I may, Mr Fiddes, it was a fair answer, but your officials are targeting, and it is a very good targeting regime, because they are clearly hitting the targets. But on the volume of stops, prohibitions and enforcements that the Chair asked about, other anecdotal evidence says about 11% of vehicles are below standard. Is the percentage of stops operated in London about 11%—the figures the Chair referred to?

Alex Fiddes: No. Our organisation, nationally with the Department for Transport, carries out a fleet compliance check. If you were to do a random survey across Great Britain, generally you would find around 11% of those vehicles are non-compliant. To do so, clearly we have stopped a number of vehicles that are compliant, and it is only right and proper that my organisation stops vehicles that we know are at greater risk of non-compliance. The evidence shows that we are very successful in doing that, and that is what we will continue to do.

Q183 Jim Fitzpatrick: So 11% is a fair assessment of vehicles driving round the country that are not up to par.

Alex Fiddes: Yes.

Q184 Chair: What about volumetric mixers? What is the situation there?

Alex Fiddes: We encounter two sectors of that industry. Only on Friday, I was in Manchester at our testing facility to see one of these vehicles being put through its annual test. I commend the people who operate there. Of the six vehicles we encountered in our industrial task force, five were issued with prohibitions. One was so serious that there

were 15 prohibited items on that vehicle. There are sectors that are operating compliantly and they choose voluntarily to go into a regulatory regime, and there are those which, for whatever reason, wish to operate at the bottom end of the standards, and as such we will continue to target them, fine them and prosecute them until they get their house in order.

Q185 Chair: The Minister told us when he spoke to us on this issue that he wanted volumetric mixers to be brought under the same regulations as other HGVs, and indeed would be consulting about that.

Alex Fiddes: The Department is launching a consultation soon to look into those vehicles generally, under a European directive that is coming in. We consider that at the roadside these vehicles fall into the category of a goods vehicle. There is a debate as to whether they are engineering plant, but my view is that these vehicles could be made to comply with construction use, and as such I would encourage people to do so.

Q186 Chair: Could I ask the industry representatives their views on this? Aren't the figures we are hearing truly shocking? Shouldn't this loophole be closed?

Andrew Collins: I run 16 of these concrete mixers. Over the last eight years I have been stopped 120 times by VOSA, and not one vehicle has had a prohibition notice put on it. As a company we run new and up-to-date vehicles that are two years old, and we abide by the rules for a big lorry.

Q187 Chair: But there is a loophole, isn't there? The regulations are not the same. Do you agree that the regulations should be changed so that you cannot opt out?

Andrew Collins: No, not at all.

Q188 Chair: Why not?

Andrew Collins: As we see it, the vehicle is 70% on site and 30% on the road. We do very little mileage with these vehicles; it is only about 30,000 kilometres. It is very little, so we are not actually on the roads a lot.

Q189 Chair: The Minister told us there was a tendency to overload this type of vehicle. Do you agree with that?

Andrew Collins: No. Not at all. Our vehicles comply with the design weight for a movable chassis, and we keep within that target.

Q190 Chair: But in recent enforcement activity in London, five of the six volumetric mixers stopped were immediately prohibited because of mechanical defects. Isn't that a terrible indictment?

Andrew Collins: We are not aware of that; we have not seen any evidence.

Q191 Chair: Well, those are the figures. Those are the official figures: five out of six mixers stopped were immediately prohibited because of mechanical defects.

Andrew Collins: We have asked our members, and, as we understand it, from our findings, there are only three stops that we can actually account for, and all three of them were in a roadworthy condition and have never had any prohibition notices.

Q192 Chair: But the figures I am quoting are official figures. Unless you are going to challenge the validity of the figures, surely you should have something a bit better to say. These are official figures: five out of six unroadworthy and stopped immediately. Isn't that something you should be very alarmed about indeed?

Andrew Collins: We are alarmed about it, but when we spoke to all our members we could find only three vehicles that had been stopped.

Q193 Chair: Mr Fiddes, do you have anything to say?

Alex Fiddes: I am happy to submit photographs of the five vehicles that were prohibited. We have that photographic and documentary evidence. If you wish, I will send a memo to the Committee and submit the photographs.

Chair: As far as I am aware, these are official figures that are being challenged. It is very serious.

Q194 Jim Fitzpatrick: I would like to make an observation to Mr Collins. Notwithstanding the fact that he indicated that his operation is run as well as it can be—new vehicles, compliance with standards and so on—he is asking people who clearly are running sub-standard vehicles that have been stopped and prohibited. When you say, “Who’s got these vehicles?” and nobody owns up, is there a chance that they might not be telling you?

Andrew Collins: They might not be telling us.

Robert Armstrong: I represent Armcon, the main supplier of this type of equipment. Over half the machines on the road were built by ourselves. There seems to be a little confusion here. If I understand correctly, six trucks were stopped and five were found. It has not been suggested that five of every six are unsafe. In fact, we have already heard that 11% of vehicles on the road are likely to have some prohibition. If you have stopped only six trucks, there are 500 or 600 out there, so I do not think it is an adequate sample to draw a conclusion from.

Q195 Chair: But five out of six is not a very good beginning, is it?

Robert Armstrong: I think it is quite unlucky, and it would be good to have more details of those stopped.

Q196 Chair: As an industry do you have any plans to make any changes in the way vehicles are maintained, or a different consideration of their roadworthiness?

Robert Armstrong: BSA as an organisation rules very strictly on its members’ behaviour. We have a code of practice, and we deal in detail with any prohibition.

Q197 Chair: Do you think there is a problem?

Robert Armstrong: Not at all. You mentioned a loophole. I do not know what that is. Perhaps you could tell us some more.

Q198 Chair: Well, we are here to ask you the questions. The Minister spoke to us about a loophole in regulations, so that you are able to evade regulations that apply to other HGVs. I am quite sure that you are well aware of that. I am going to ask one question again because I want to be quite clear about what you are saying. Do you think there is any problem about these vehicles in relation to safety?

Robert Armstrong: Particularly about these vehicles, no. I think there is a cowboy element with all parts of road traffic with trucks and we must try to monitor that, but, in particular for this type of machine, I do not see how it is different from any other lorry on the road.

Q199 Chair: Shouldn't your operators have to be licensed? They do not have to have regular MOT tests, do they? They are not licensed.

Tom Baker: We run our vehicles as if they were HGVs.

Q200 Chair: As if they were?

Tom Baker: Yes, because they are not goods vehicles; they are engineering plant. That is how they are classified. Our vehicles are inspected in exactly the same way. We inspect them every six weeks. We have an annual roadworthiness certificate, which is equivalent to—

Q201 Chair: Who is “we”? Do you do it yourselves?

Tom Baker: No. We take them to a Ministry-approved testing station to have an annual certificate of roadworthiness placed on them. Every day, the drivers perform their daily driver defect checks to monitor the roadworthiness of the vehicles.

Q202 Chair: Do you consider any further action needs to be taken?

Tom Baker: No, I don't. I think this debate has been brought into the cycling lobby to try to score a point.

Q203 Chair: What do you mean by “score a point”?

Tom Baker: I believe that it is not part of this actual debate—it is not part of the cycling debate we have come to talk about today.

Q204 Chair: You have come to answer questions from the Transport Select Committee, and we are concerned about safety issues, so I do not understand your point about somebody having brought it into some lobby. The Minister drew our attention to this issue. Are you suggesting that the Minister was unduly influenced in bringing that to our attention?

Tom Baker: I do not think he was unduly influenced, but I do not think it has been proven that any overweight vehicle is a cause of cycling incidents.

Chair: You sound extraordinarily complacent to me.

Q205 Jim Fitzpatrick: I want to go back to the numbers if I may, and perhaps approach it from a different angle. As the Chair said, 622 of 821 vehicles stopped—targeted stops—were below par and had to be issued with some kind of notice; and five out of six of your type of vehicles that were stopped had prohibition notices issued against them. Five out of six and 600 out of 800 is not very different, if you extrapolate it into the hundreds. It is still consistent with the anecdotal assessment and evidence that 11% of HGVs are not operating to a safe standard. That cannot be acceptable to a professional trade body, surely.

Tom Baker: It is not acceptable to us, and that is why in our code of practice we talk about the eight-weekly inspection regime and the annual certificate of roadworthiness.

Q206 Jim Fitzpatrick: But that is not doing it, because the figures clearly show there has been a problem and there is a problem, and just maintaining the present arrangements would not suggest that it is going to rectify the problem. I do not think anybody is blaming HGVs for every cyclist death, but a number of cyclist deaths have involved HGVs. We will find out in due course from the appropriate examinations whether they were defective vehicles, or what the real cause was. If 11% are defective or below par and your current regime is not addressing that, do you not think it needs to be reviewed and perhaps changed to try to drive down those numbers?

Chair: Is someone going to answer?

Robert Armstrong: Sorry. I think it is a very good point indeed. I think—

Q207 Chair: Does that mean you are going to do something?

Robert Armstrong: Absolutely, but please understand we are a minority in this. We represent a very small number of specialised machineries. There is a much bigger batch out there of ordinary trucks on the road. We are a little bemused as to why you choose our niche with only a handful of trucks and why we are answering this, but we do agree.

Q208 Chair: Let me say this again so that it is absolutely clear. It was not any cycling organisation; it was the Minister responsible who drew our attention to this issue. Therefore, we are pursuing it, and that is why we are asking you. I would have thought that was pretty clear. You should not be bemused. You might not want to come; you might not want to answer questions, but that is why we are putting the question to you. The Minister has drawn this to our attention. Would you like to retract any suggestion, Mr Baker, that somehow the Minister may have been unduly influenced by what you call the cycling lobby in raising this matter? Do you really believe that? Well, do you, or would you like to withdraw that suggestion?

Tom Baker: I would like to withdraw it in part. I certainly believe that the fact that overall our industry is not covered by regulations that apply to the general haulage industry is not a contributory factor to cycling safety. It has not been proven that our particular vehicles have contributed badly to cycle safety.

Q209 Chair: I would like to move on to training issues. It has been suggested to us that cycle awareness should be included in the driver training and testing process. Are there any plans to do that? Mr Weddell-Hall, can you help us on that?

Peter Weddell-Hall: Yes, certainly. In the theory test we already include questions on vulnerable road users. Cyclists come into that category, so it is already covered for categories A and B, cars and bikes, but also for larger vehicles as well. We already cover that in the initial qualification tests.

Q210 Chair: Do you think any changes are required, or do you think you are already doing enough in that area?

Peter Weddell-Hall: There are several groups of users we have to cover, of which cyclists are only part. We ask questions relating specifically to cyclists and large vehicles in particular about turning left and passing as well, those being the two main problems. If we ask more questions on that, unfortunately it is to the detriment of something else, and there is a limited number of questions we can ask in the theory test.

Q211 Chair: It has also been suggested that learner drivers should be encouraged, or even required, to spend time cycling as part of learning to drive. Is that something you have considered?

Peter Weddell-Hall: We set the standards for driving. We are not responsible for dictating the training that takes place for drivers. We would hope that drivers have experience on the road, and certainly that the accompanying driver, in the learning period, has shown them the correct behaviour, and that they have had experience of meeting cyclists as well as other road users. Hopefully, they learn that as part of the learning to drive process.

Q212 Chair: Do you think that cycling training, or more cycling awareness, should be part of an HGV driver's qualification?

Peter Weddell-Hall: In one of the CPC courses run for qualified drivers, they take drivers out and show them what it is like to be on a bike, so they do get that experience. They have also taken cyclists in the cab—the other way round—to show them how LGVs see cyclists. There is scope for that. There are certainly already courses out there that cover that, but none of the CPC courses for drivers is mandatory. It is up to the driver and the employer to choose which courses are attended.

Chair: Thank you very much, gentlemen.