



House of Commons
Public Accounts Committee

Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Great Britain

Forty-ninth Report of Session
2008–09

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

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The Public Accounts Committee

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Summary

Great Britain is one of the safest countries in the world in terms of road deaths and the Department for Transport (the Department) is on track to achieve its overall road safety targets for 2010. It is unacceptable though that, when compared internationally, Great Britain's record on pedestrian and, particularly, child pedestrian deaths per head of population is some way behind the best. There is nothing worse than a child's death and we welcome the Department's commitment to making it a priority to improve performance, but its approach must be one of zero tolerance for child deaths.

More generally, pedestrians and pedal cyclists (cyclists) are among the most vulnerable road users. They have little or no physical protection and have a higher rate of fatality per distance travelled than for any other mode of transport except for motorcyclists. In 2007, over 30,000 pedestrians and 16,000 cyclists were injured, with 646 pedestrians and 136 cyclists killed.

The Department leads the promotion of road safety with a budget of £36 million in 2008–09, although most of the measures to improve road safety are carried out by local highway authorities with whom it must work closely.

There is a perception that the anti-social behaviour of some cyclists increases their risks and makes other road users feel unsafe. There appears to be some misunderstanding among the public and some police as to the laws which apply to cyclists, for example, on cycling on the pavement. Deaths and serious injuries among cyclists have fallen overall since the mid 1990s, but they have risen by 11% since 2004 despite little change in the amount of cycling.

The Department uses data collected by the police to measure its performance on road safety but research suggests that serious injuries are under-recorded. To clarify this, the Department is taking steps to match hospital data with the police data.

The Department knows about the success of its own projects, but there are others it does not fund, for example in Scotland, which might also provide valuable lessons on the importance of speed cameras, signs and road humps. Other organisations can have a strong influence on road safety issues but this may not be their prime role or priority. The Department does not have an explicit strategy for working with them. It needs to improve the way in which it disseminates information to local highway authorities and other interested groups.

On the basis of a Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General,¹ we examined pedestrian and cyclist safety in Great Britain, the Department's strategy and activities, its work with other organisations and data on road casualties.

1 C&AG's Report, *Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Great Britain*, HC (2008–09) 437

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. Child pedestrians from the most deprived areas remain four times more likely to be killed or injured on the roads than those from the least deprived areas.** The Department should give priority to promoting targeted road safety schemes in deprived areas that suffer most from child pedestrian casualties.
- 2. Speed is an overwhelming factor in the incidence and severity of injuries to pedestrians and cyclists, whose chances of survival diminish rapidly at speeds over 20 miles per hour.** The Department should promote measures to reduce speed, including the use of speed cameras, 20 miles per hour zones and road humps, to encourage local highway authorities to adopt them and to influence the attitudes of all road users.
- 3. Despite its leading role in the promotion of road safety the Department does not always know about successful schemes undertaken by local areas, such as the Lothian Borders, and does not engage sufficiently with practitioners.** The Department should actively seek examples of successful road safety schemes run by local highway authorities and issue guidance on how these can be used more widely in ways that practitioners find easy to accommodate.
- 4. It is surprising that the Department was unaware of a strongly held perception that, through the irresponsible behaviour of some cyclists, they are a hazard to themselves and other road users.** The Department should devise education, training and publicity measures to target such anti-social behaviour, particularly when it breaks traffic laws.
- 5. There is substantial evidence that fewer people would be killed and seriously injured on Great Britain's roads if this country were to put the clocks forward by one hour throughout the year.** The Department should take the lead in re-examining the practice of changing clocks at the end of British Summer Time with other central Government departments.
- 6. The Department recognises that the police data used to measure its road safety performance consistently understate the numbers of road casualties each year and it is attempting to clarify this by matching these data with those collected by the National Health Service.** When it has completed this work, planned for Summer 2009, it should devise a formula for adjusting the police data in reporting progress against its targets each year.
- 7. Road safety is not the first priority for some organisations with which the Department works, for example other central Government departments, but they can be influential.** The Department should develop an explicit strategy to promote its road safety priorities more effectively among those who can influence the success of road safety measures.

1 Measures to help the most vulnerable road users

1. Great Britain is one of the safest countries in the world in terms of road deaths, which have fallen by 18% since the mid-1990s, while road traffic increased by 16%. Despite this improvement, pedestrians and pedal cyclists (cyclists) remain vulnerable, having little or no physical protection, and over 30,000 pedestrians and 16,000 cyclists were injured in Great Britain in 2007, with 646 pedestrians and 136 cyclists killed.²

2. There is nothing worse than a child's death and the rate of deaths among pedestrians aged under 15 cannot be tolerated, with Great Britain comparing unfavourably with many other countries.³ The Department explained that child road safety statistics are particularly volatile, so Great Britain's position compared to other countries varies year on year. Particular circumstances in Great Britain also influenced performance. For example, some housing is on or near busy roads, whilst more children walk and play on the streets than in some other countries and make fewer crossings using designated crossing sites.⁴ Despite sustained improvements in child pedestrian casualty rates over the Department's two most recent road safety strategy periods, it accepts that the current casualty rate is unacceptable. It intends to pursue policies to reduce further the rate of pedestrian deaths, including amongst children, during its third strategy period from 2010 to 2020.⁵

3. No child death on our roads is acceptable. Lessons can be learnt from successful schemes such as that in the Lothian Borders which used speed cameras, speed humps and 20 miles per hour zones and had no child deaths for a number of years.⁶

4. We are very pleased that serious injuries and deaths among cyclists have fallen overall by 31% since the mid-1990s, but the more recent rise of 11% from 2004 to 2007, despite the amount of cycling staying broadly constant, is worrying.⁷ Some cyclists are perceived to behave irresponsibly, such as riding on pavements and disregarding red traffic signals, thereby posing a danger to themselves and making other road users including elderly pedestrians feel unsafe.⁸ The Department considered that irresponsible cyclists were in a minority.⁹

5. There appears to be a lack of understanding amongst the public and some police about the legal requirements for cyclists, including, for example, whether it is illegal to cycle on a pavement. The Department confirmed that it was illegal and undertook to consult its police liaison officer about how it might draw this to the attention of police forces across

2 C&AG's Report, para 1.2

3 Q 5; C&AG's Report, Appendix 3, Figure 15; Ev 17

4 Qq 2, 8; Ev 18

5 Q 10

6 Qq 93–94

7 C&AG's Report, paras 1.6–1.7

8 Qq 18, 42–43, 61

9 Q 22

the country.¹⁰ Legislation also requires new bicycles to be fitted with bells but it is not illegal, subsequently, to remove them. The Department agreed that it could devise new rules to constrain irresponsible cyclists but said that it would need to be satisfied that the police could enforce them. Enforcing cycling offences was typically not high on the agenda of most police forces due to competing demands on their time.¹¹

6. The Department is committed to reversing the decline over the last 30 years in the distances that people walk and cycle, and considers improving the actual and perceived safety of these activities will help to achieve this. But research in 2006 indicated that only one in five people agreed that roads were safer now than they were five years ago.¹² The Department has, therefore, undertaken a range of activities in the last two years. For example, it is investing £140 million in Cycling England to promote a number of activities, including training 500,000 children to the National Standard to use bicycles safely on the road by 2012 and to invest in safer routes to schools. There are currently 250 safer cycling routes to 500 schools, and the Department wants to increase this to 1,000 schools by 2011. The Department has also invested money in sustainable travel towns and sustainable cities for cycling, in order to promote lower carbon forms of movement such as walking, cycling and public transport.¹³

7. In 2002, the Department set a three-year target, which it met, to reduce casualties in deprived areas in England faster than in the rest of the country. But in 2007 there was still a higher proportion of casualties in the most deprived areas and, particularly of pedestrians and cyclists. For example, pedestrians under 17 in the most deprived areas are four times more likely to be killed or injured than those in the least deprived areas (**Figure 1**).¹⁴ This may be because children from deprived areas are more likely to be unsupervised and to be on or around roads when they return from school. This is especially true of the 12 to 15 age group. The Department is committed to reducing child casualties in deprived areas and it has sought to focus local government's attention on improving road safety by providing specific targets in local area agreements.¹⁵

8. Speed determines the severity of injuries to pedestrians and cyclists, whose chances of survival diminish rapidly at speeds greater than 20 miles per hour. For example, there is plenty of evidence that 20 miles per hour zones where the speed limit is enforced by physical measures, such as road humps, reduce the incidence and severity of casualties. A Transport Research Laboratory review of 250 such schemes found that they reduced average speeds by nine miles per hour (compared to only one mile per hour if the speed limit was indicated only by signs), with the average number of accidents involving

10 Qq 42, 44–46, 61

11 Qq 22, 24, 54–55, 59

12 Q 15; C&AG's Report, Summary para 2, paras 1.3, 2.18

13 Q 15

14 C&AG's Report, para 1.18

15 Qq 12–14, 122

pedestrians, cyclists and children falling by 63%, 29% and 67% respectively.¹⁶ Speed cameras also have a significant effect on speed which, in turn, improves road safety.¹⁷

16 C&AG's Report, paras 1.25, 2.10

17 Q 51

Figure 1: Pedestrian casualties per 100,000 population in the 10% most deprived areas and the 10% least deprived areas, England 2007

Age of pedestrian casualty	PEDESTRIAN CASUALTIES PER 100,000 POPULATION		
	Most deprived	Least deprived	All areas
0–16	121	32	65
17–19	101	40	68
20–25	74	29	51
26–59	47	13	26
60+	39	19	27
All ages	70	21	39

Note: The Department's analysis splits England into over 30,000 small areas ranked by an index of deprivation, which takes many factors into account including income, employment and health deprivation. The above analysis shows the average for the 3,200 most deprived areas and the average for the 3,200 least deprived wards within this definition.

Source: Department for Transport data

9. The Department does not specify the measures local highway authorities should use to limit speed, since these are decisions for local government to make in line with local priorities. For example, 20 miles per hour zones are primarily for residential roads which are almost wholly owned by local highway authorities and are not the direct responsibility of the Department. The Department provides local government with around £600 million each year to spend on local transport priorities, which may include 20 miles per hour zones, and, through local area targets, to encourage local highway authorities to focus their spending decisions. In addition, it provides a road safety grant of some £110 million each year which local authorities are free to spend as they see fit. The Department's recent strategy consultation document has made clear that 20 miles per hour zones are an effective way of reducing pedestrian deaths.¹⁸

10. There are clear seasonal patterns in collisions which injure pedestrians, with peaks generally in October and November. The end of British Summer Time appears to be a significant factor. On average for the years 2000 to 2007, there were 10% more collisions leading to the death or injury of a pedestrian in the four weeks following the clocks going back than in the four weeks before the clocks changed. Research has shown that the period immediately after the clocks go back is more dangerous for road travel, even compared to other dark months such as January.¹⁹ The Department has strong evidence that more than 80 fewer people would be killed each year on Great Britain's roads if the Government amended the arrangements for changing the clocks in the winter and summer. But amending the practice of changing the clocks carries different considerations for different occupations such as farming, construction and postal workers.²⁰

18 Qq 48–51, 94, 123

19 C&AG's Report, para 1.21

20 Qq 33–35

2 The Department for Transport's role

11. The Department leads the promotion of road safety although local highway authorities carry out most of the measures, including those for pedestrians and cyclists. The Department leads national strategy in association with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government. It funds innovative schemes in England and disseminates lessons so that local highway authorities know what improves road safety, leads research, develops and manages the *Think!* national road safety publicity campaign, and monitors and reports on road safety casualties in Great Britain. It is also responsible for the legislative framework.²¹ The Department is the principal funder of road safety initiatives in England, which are paid for by taxpayers' money even if the funds are spent by local government.²²

12. The Department has included advice in its recent strategy document about road safety measures that it considered worked. But it accepts that it could do more to engage with interested parties such as local highway authorities. It knows the benefits of schemes that it has helped to fund but is not always aware of other successful schemes, such as that in the Lothian Borders area.²³

13. The Department explained the difficulties of establishing the cost effectiveness of measures, such as 20 miles per hour zones, speed cameras and speed humps. For example, speed cameras might get immediate results in a given area, while money spent on child cycle training might result in a lifestyle change producing other benefits such as reduced obesity levels.²⁴

14. The Department uses road casualty data collected by the police to measure road safety. This is a long-standing time series but not all accidents are recorded or reported to the police. There have been a number of studies of under-reporting, dating back to the 1970s, and from the limited data available, some research has estimated that there may be about twice as many casualties as are reported, although very few fatalities are not recorded by the police. The estimates are not yet reliable enough for the Department to adjust for under-reporting and it does not know if the levels of under-reporting have changed over time. Other data series such as hospital admissions and motor collision compensation claims also suggest that injuries may be understated.²⁵

15. The Department has known about the disparity between the police and hospital data for some time, and had examined hospital data on pedestrians and cyclists in its annual casualty reports in 2007 and 2008.²⁶ It accepted that casualties would not always be recorded but, from its detailed matching of police and hospital data collected over five years, was confident that the police data captured most fatalities and serious injuries that

21 C&AG's Report, Summary para 3, para 2.7

22 Q 128

23 Qq 38, 83, 93–94, 123

24 Qq 106–107

25 C&AG's Report, paras 1.9, 1.11, Appendix 2, paras 1, 8

26 Qq 85–86; C&AG's Report, para 1.12

involved people staying in hospital for more than two days. There is more doubt about whether the police data recorded serious injury statistics for people who were admitted to hospital for up to one day, partly because hospital statistics were affected by whether casualties were treated within four hours in Accident and Emergency or were admitted to hospital. Based on its analysis of different sources, the Department considered that the police data provided the most robust information, including trends over time. The Department intends to publish in Summer 2009 the results of its further attempts to match police and hospital data.²⁷

16. The Department spent £17.6 million on its *Think!* campaign in 2007–08, nearly half of its annual road safety budget. Of the 12 media campaigns under this brand in 2008, two were aimed directly at improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Unlike engineering measures such as road improvements, it is very difficult to link education directly to casualty reductions. To gain this information would require expensive long-term research across fixed groups of people with similar characteristics that is rarely feasible for short-term education measures. As a result, there is no direct evidence of the contribution that the *Think!* campaign had made to reducing casualties.²⁸

17. The Department has sought to measure the effectiveness of individual *Think!* campaigns by undertaking research into changes in attitudes before and after each campaign. An example of changed behaviours was provided by the campaign on drink driving. Since that campaign began there has been a 72% reduction in drink-drive deaths and the number of people admitting to driving after drinking had fallen from 51% in 1979 to 17% today. In supporting its efforts to drive its message home, the Department is increasingly running more explicit campaigns on the effects of dangerous driving, including on pedestrians, and it is finding that these are shifting attitudes.²⁹

18. For the road safety projects which it sponsors, the Department requires each participating authority to fund its own evaluation of its scheme. The Department has provided guidelines to help the local authorities to choose the evaluation methodology, but it has not required them to comply with the guidance or to achieve a specific standard of evaluation.³⁰ The Department has reduced the number of individual partnership projects it funded from 27 schemes in Tranche 1 to 19 in Tranche 2 and 10 in Tranche 3. The third tranche schemes are larger and each has an evaluation plan.³¹

19. The Department has to engage with many organisations to promote the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. Other Government departments and public sector organisations set policies and strategies which affect the Department's work and the priority that other organisations give to road safety issues varies. The Department's approach to working with other organisations to date has been informal and ad hoc. It has to rely on its expertise and specialist knowledge to persuade others to direct resources to

27 Qq 85–88, 92

28 C&AG's Report, paras 2.7, 2.9, 2.17–2.18

29 Qq 52–53, 126–127

30 C&AG's Report, para 2.21

31 Q 37

tackle the areas of greatest strategic importance to the Department, but it lacks an explicit strategy for doing so.³²

20. As part of their local area agreements with Government, local authorities now agree a set of up to 35 indicators from a menu of around 200. Only two of the indicators are road safety targets.³³ We are concerned that only 51 of the 152 English local areas included at least one of these as a statutory target in their 2008–2011 agreements. The Department stressed that it was for local authorities to judge the most important priorities for their areas. It did not necessarily follow that because an individual authority had not selected a road safety target that it was a poor performer in this field. A well-performing local authority with a good road safety record might judge that it needed to focus its resources elsewhere. The Department assured us that it has encouraged those local authorities that it regarded as having poor road safety performance to adopt one of the road safety indicators.³⁴

32 Q 117; C&AG's Report, paras 3.3, 3.10–3.11

33 C&AG's Report, para 1.29

34 Qq 14, 121–122

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 15 July 2009

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Keith Hill

Mr Don Touhig

Mr Austin Mitchell

Draft Report (*Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Great Britain*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 20 read and agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Forty-ninth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134

[Adjourned till Wednesday 14 October at 3.30 pm

Witnesses

Wednesday 10 June 2009

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Mr Robert Devereux, Permanent Secretary, and **Mr Mike Fawcett**, Head of the Road User Safety Division, Department for Transport

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Oral evidence

Taken before the Committee of Public Accounts on Wednesday 10 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Richard Bacon
Mr David Curry
Nigel Griffiths

Keith Hill
Geraldine Smith
Mr Alan Williams

Mr Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General, **Ms Caroline Mawhood**, Assistant Auditor General and **Ms Geraldine Barker**, Director, National Audit Office, gave evidence.

Mr Marius Gallaher, Treasury Officer of Accounts, HM Treasury, was in attendance.

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN (HC 437)

Witnesses: **Mr Robert Devereux**, Permanent Secretary, and **Mr Mike Fawcett**, Head of the Road User Safety Division, Department for Transport, gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Good afternoon. Today, we are considering the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report *Improving Road Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists in Great Britain*. We welcome back Mr Robert Devereux, who is the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport, and we welcome Mr Mike Fawcett, who is the Head of the Road User Safety Division. Perhaps we can look at international comparisons. If we turn to page 35 of the Comptroller's Report and look at Figure 15, we see a figure there usefully entitled, "Road deaths—international comparisons", and we see that, whilst our record is quite good for road deaths per 100,000 population where, I see, we are ranked fifth out of 24, if we go further down and we look at child pedestrian deaths per 100,000 population, we see that we slip to 17 out of 24, which really is not very good at all, Mr Devereux. Why are child pedestrian deaths so much worse in Great Britain than in many other countries, do you think?

Mr Devereux: I wonder if, before we start, you would just let me at least acknowledge that this subject, of all the ones I have been in front of you before on, I just wanted to make sure that you accept my recognition of the pain and grief that goes with this particular subject. I am sure you will know of friends and constituents who have suffered from this, and I have myself, and I do not think I want to spend the entire afternoon going through all this without at least acknowledging the pain that comes with this.

Q2 Chairman: That is why I asked the question because it is obviously particularly what any parent, and I am a parent, fears more than anything else. It is a particularly horrible thing, a child pedestrian death, and that is why I take a particular interest in anything to do with children obviously and that is why I am asking the question really.

Mr Devereux: You quote the figures which are indeed, as the NAO Report says, 2006 figures. The numbers of child deaths are a reasonably volatile series and I think we have just sent you a letter to show you where the 2007 figures are. We were, as you can see, at 1.35 child deaths per 100,000 population in 2006 and the most recent data shows that that has been reduced to 0.88 and we are second in position rather than being 11th for child deaths. Sorry, it is child pedestrians you were asking about and on child pedestrians we were at 0.62 and we have reduced to 0.4 for 2007 and we are now ninth in the table. That is, in part, because actually for each of these ones we go on to the main road deaths per 100,000 population and the series is relatively volatile, so our position in the international leagues will move around a bit, but there is, as far as I can see, a substantial improvement from 2006 to 2007.

Q3 Chairman: Mr Devereux, you are referring to, and I want to ask you about this, a note which was only sent to the Committee on Friday. It is dated 5 June from Mr Mike Fawcett and it was not cleared with the audit team which advises us. All the members of the Committee have now got this letter, but it was sent very late and the whole point of these hearings is that we have to work on agreed figures, but there is something much worse than that, that we now look at these figures, which you allude to, and for child deaths per 100,000 population, as you have just said, we move up to nine, but these figures are completely inconsistent and incomplete. Figure 15, which I was quoting from and which this hearing is based on, is based on full figures for 24 nations. The figure that you have just referred to only refers to 19 nations and, therefore, a lot of these countries have clearly not reported, so you have alluded to, in your defence which I entirely deprecate, I have to say, a

document which arrived late, was not cleared with the audit team and which is incomplete and inconsistent.

Mr Devereux: Well, I apologise that it arrived late. When I found that we had the information, I thought it would be better for you to have it than not to have it.

Q4 Chairman: Well, if you are going to send us information, let us have at least complete information. How can we possibly adduce any useful benefit from figures which only refer to 19 out of 24 nations?

Mr Devereux: With permission, I sent it in because, for many of the other columns in that table, they are complete and, as you will see—

Q5 Chairman: Yes, but I was asking you, Mr Devereux, about child pedestrian deaths and I was very fair to you. I said right at the beginning of the question, which is why I did it, that, if we are looking at road deaths per 100,000 population, according to this Figure 15, we seem to perform fairly well, and indeed I see that actually there is some consistency there because, if we look at your latest document, we see that we are number six and in the main document we are number five. I was not asking you about that. I was asking you specifically about what is most distressing to many people which is the child deaths. In your defence, you have alluded to a document which arrived late, was incomplete and inconsistent and I would, therefore, ask you why you referred to it?

Mr Devereux: The one factor which I feel is true about the document is that the number for the UK is about a third lower than it is in the table you have quoted from.

Q6 Chairman: But it is meaningless. I am sorry, it is completely meaningless because all these countries have not put in their figures. The fact is that, if you look at that, they only go up to 19, whereas Figure 15 has 24 nations. When they all put in their figures, we might move down again or we might move up. That is why these hearings are on the basis of documents which are sent to the National Audit Office and which are agreed by an independent assessor, namely the National Audit Office, otherwise these hearings become worthless.

Mr Devereux: I was alluding to—

Q7 Chairman: So my question, Mr Devereux, I will ask you once again: why is it that our record on child deaths is so much worse than in other developed countries? I am now repeating the question, and I think I have established that the document that you sent us late is worthless, so I now want to repeat the question and I would like to have an answer please.

Mr Devereux: The reason why we perform less well in this is because there are circumstances in the UK which are different from some of the circumstances in other countries.

Q8 Chairman: Like what?

Mr Devereux: Well, for example, where our housing is located, where some of our families live relative to bigger roads and that the way in which the economic geography of the country works is not the same as for some of the other countries in this list. For example, more of our children are walking and playing on streets than in some of the other countries.

Q9 Chairman: Well, France is a busy country, Germany, the Netherlands is a very over-populated country. Some countries, and I know that you perhaps cannot compare us to Finland, but some countries, I think Finland, have no deaths at all. I agree that we are a very busy, very big and perhaps over-populated country, but it seems to me that there is something wrong here.

Mr Devereux: Well, I am not going to accept that it is absolutely right; I cannot possibly do that from the opening statement I made. We are working with a range of factors when it comes to children in this country which are different from some of the factors in other countries, and that is an explanation why, when you look at ranked tables and international comparisons, you will find us in a different place. The overall figures, and that includes children, show that overall we are in a better place now and—

Q10 Chairman: So what I would hope you would say is that this is really a matter of national priority now. One death of a child is too many. I want you, Mr Devereux, to say to this Committee, “I take this extremely seriously and I am now going to get a grip on this, and this is what I plan to do and I have the levers”, or you might say, “Actually, this is fundamentally a responsibility for local government, so it is very difficult for me”, but we would like to know.

Mr Devereux: I do take it very seriously and I believe we do have a grip on it. It is not acceptable at the level it is at, but we now have had two successful road safety strategies in a row; we have had very substantial reductions across the piece, including for child pedestrians, though it is not at an acceptable level; and we have put out a consultation document for a third strategy that runs 2010 to 2020 and which includes extensive further reductions in child deaths and serious injuries, including a reduction in the rate of pedestrian deaths. So, yes, we do have policies in place that will tackle this. If you ask me specifically about international comparisons, I have given you some reasons why we are different when it comes to some aspects for children, I believe.

Q11 Chairman: Well, if you want to send a note in to us, we are very happy.¹ The purpose of this is not to catch you out on a major point or anything, but the purpose is to try and get useful information from you so that we can make a difference; we are trying to help.

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Mr Devereux: I understand that.

Q12 Chairman: Figure 6 on page 15: why are children from deprived areas, Mr Devereux, still four times more likely to be killed or seriously injured?

Mr Devereux: For a variety of reasons. A great number of things are worse in the deprived areas than they are in other areas and one of the things which I have already alluded to in the international comparison story was about the extent to which children are unsupervised, they are on roads and they are not being watched beyond when they come back from school, typically. The highest rates of child casualties are in the 12- to 15-year-old age, it is secondary schools when people are coming back and in some communities they are as likely to be on the street as they are anywhere else. That is a principal reason why the international comparison figures—

Q13 Chairman: Again another priority for you because it is very alarming, is it not?

Mr Devereux: It is a priority.

Q14 Chairman: Four times more.

Mr Devereux: It is a priority and you will, I guess, be aware of the way in which we have sought to focus local government's attention on the things which are most important in each locality, and in the system of local area agreements, there are specific targets in there which local government can choose, and I think that it is 89² authorities have chosen to focus on this as one of the things they want to do.

Q15 Chairman: There is always a number of questions I have to try and get to in order to help us write our Report, but, because we have to spend so much time dealing with the non-factual basis of the note that you gave us late, I have now got to stop, but I will ask you one more question and that relates to paragraph 2.18 on page 24, which is an important one; it is education, training and publicity measures. This is what you are largely responsible for and you have a budget of over £36 million. Obviously, we want to encourage people to walk and cycle more, I would have thought, but how are we going to achieve that when only one in five people agrees that the roads are safer now than they were five years ago?

Mr Devereux: Chairman, we have a range of things that we have been doing over the last two years and with more to come, so let me run through some of them. We are investing £140 million in Cycling England, which is a body which is undertaking a number of activities around cycling, for example, and, in particular, ensuring that we have 500,000 children trained to the National Standard to use bicycles safely on the road by 2012, and are ensuring that there are investments being made in safer routes to schools. We have safer cycling routes now available to get to 500 schools and we are targeting 1,000 schools being on safe cycle routes by 2011. We

have invested money in sustainable travel towns, sustainable cities for cycling, and each of these things is actually producing an environment in which both cycling and walking—

Chairman: I did not actually ask you that. Mr Devereux, it does help in these hearings if you make some attempt to answer the question that is put to you. I did not ask you what you had done. What I was asking you was: how would you get people to walk and cycle more when only one in five people agrees with the statement that the roads are safer now than they were five years ago? However, there is no point in going on because Mr Curry wants to ask about cycling as well, so I will ask Mr Curry to carry on.

Q16 Mr Curry: Mr Devereux, we all look forward to Lord Adonis doing a tour of Britain by bike or walking from John O'Groats to Land's End and reporting back to the House. We are all delighted at the success of British Olympians in the cycling events in the recent Olympic Games, but why do you think so many cyclists think they are still competing in the Olympic Games when they are on the roads of Britain?

Mr Devereux: I ought to declare that I am a cyclist, so—

Q17 Mr Curry: And I have a bike, but that is different.

Mr Devereux: I am a cyclist and I come to work on a bike, so I know what you mean by "competing". How do I confess to competing? Some of the things I have just been going through with the Chairman about what we have been trying to do to make the environment within which cyclists can feel safer are exactly—

Q18 Mr Curry: No, you have got the wrong question, I am sorry. Why are cyclists such irresponsible and arrogant road-users? The only time I have been knocked down in my life was by a cyclist going like a bat out of hell outside the House of Commons, dressed like Darth Vader, as they all do! Many people think that cyclists are hugely irresponsible, that they do not take any notice of the red lights, they think that road traffic cones are not for them, it is very competitive and that they are dangerous.

Mr Devereux: There are, without doubt, some elements of the cycling community who are in that position and there are equally, I imagine, rather more people who are far more dangerous drivers as well. The population is not homogeneous, as you well know, and cyclists—

Q19 Mr Curry: If a cyclist or any driver of a car drove his car like cyclists ride their bikes, there would be nobody left on the roads of Britain at all.

Mr Devereux: Sorry, you are assuming that all cyclists cycle the way the dangerous cyclist who went past you—

² Note by Witness: 49 have chosen NI47; 3 have chosen NI48. Of these Wirral chose both. So it is 51 authorities.

Q20 Mr Curry: No, I am not. I am saying that far too many are. We seem to regard cyclists as living in some sort of superior moral category when they actually do not have any.

Mr Devereux: I do not accept that.

Q21 Mr Curry: Can I move on to rural roads. You live in Kilburn, which, I am sure, is a delightful part of the world. I live in the sort of deep sticks and I take my grandchildren and my dogs out on to country roads. You will then get from behind you a voice yelling, "Clear the road!" There is a battalion of cyclists, coming at you like bats out of hell, expecting you to get out of their way as if they own the road and you do not, and they are seriously dangerous.

Mr Devereux: They do not have a right to tell you that, sir.

Q22 Mr Curry: The point I am making is that they do not have a bell, they do not have a horn and they do not have a speedometer. Do you not think that cyclists should be equipped with that basic equipment, even if it does provide a bit of drag or add to the weight?

Mr Devereux: We do encourage people to have a mechanism by which they can warn people where they are on a cycle. If your questions are all around a particular class of cyclist who, I would assert to you, are a small class in the grand scheme of cycling—

Q23 Mr Curry: They are the ones who might knock over my grandchildren.

Mr Devereux: They are and—

Q24 Mr Curry: The point I am making is: can we not devise rules which would not be an offence to the responsible cyclist, but would actually be a constraint on irresponsible cyclists?

Mr Devereux: We may well be able to do so, and we would then have to make sure that we are in a position to enforce it when there are so many other things we are trying to enforce on the roads at the same time.

Q25 Mr Curry: Can I read you a piece from *The Times* from yesterday, and this is in Bournemouth: "Peering out from a beach hut was a police officer armed with a speed camera, taking part in an operation to clamp down on cyclists going over the 10mph limit on the promenade. Officials have no powers to punish offenders as cyclists do not have speedometers and so do not know if they break the law. Instead they were given advice on the dangers of cycling too fast. One of those caught", and I will spare his name, "said: 'They have too much time on their hands if they can spend the day on a beach with a speed gun'. Should he not have said, 'I am very sorry, indeed I am going too fast, and we ought to have far more policemen with speed guns getting hold of irresponsible cyclists when they mow down pedestrians on the promenade'?"

Mr Devereux: He should probably have said that, but I do not think there is any point in my pretending that the police have not got lots of other priorities.

Q26 Mr Curry: What is your view of these flat bikes, bikes which are parallel to the ground where the cyclist lies back on them with his feet above his head? Do you think they are safe, according to some Health & Safety Executive rule, in that they are likely to go sliding under a lorry or under a dog's nose?

Mr Devereux: I personally would not use one.

Q27 Mr Curry: But you see them increasingly and you really think that those must be incredible death traps.

Mr Devereux: I do not know that I see them increasingly, I am sorry.

Q28 Mr Curry: Well, come along my country lanes and I will demonstrate it to you.

Mr Devereux: You clearly have a wider range of exposure to poor cycling performance in your constituency than—

Q29 Mr Curry: That may well be the case. Mr Devereux, on page 5, number 5, we have some targets, and we all love targets. How did you arrive at the target which says that "the strategy is to reduce by 2010 the number of people killed and seriously injured by 40%", the number of children killed and the rate of injuries, but why 40% as opposed to 42.6%? How did you arrive at that? What is the actuarial calculation or whatever calculation which delivers that figure?

Mr Devereux: One of the things that characterises this particular subject is that it is very rich in evidence in the research about what might work, so, when these targets were set, a lot of work went in to trying to assess what sorts of things we should now actually be doing in the subsequent 10 years, with what effect we might expect them to have on deaths and, therefore, what would be plausible as resulting targets. So these were not dreamed up out of the air.

Q30 Mr Curry: But they all end in a nought, do they not? Real life does not obey decimals in that way.

Mr Devereux: No, but I do not imagine you would believe me if I said it was 41.6 either.

Q31 Mr Curry: It would intrigue me more, I must say, but it would not have aroused quite such suspicion.

Mr Devereux: By and large, targets are good if they are obviously memorable, so let us assume that 40% is rounded to be something which people can remember, but it is based on evidence of what was possible and, can I just stress, we are actually achieving this target. The most recent data up to September 2008 shows a fall of 39% in total killed and seriously injured on the roads. That was in 2008.

Q32 Mr Curry: I am certainly pleased about that. Could I refer you to—

Mr Devereux: For a long-term target, I regard that as quite an achievement.

Q33 Mr Curry: I am happy to accept that. Page 17, the chart which the Chairman has already referred to: November and December of course are the

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darkest days of the year pretty much, though we could add January to that, and August is the holiday period, I suppose. If we did not change our clocks and we stayed on summer time, what difference, do you believe, would that make from the evidence that you have on the number of accidents occurring?

Mr Devereux: We have done research on this several times and basically this all dates back to looking at the experiment which was done in 1968 to 1971 when we had precisely that timeframe. The Transport Research Laboratory estimate that it would save a further 82 fatal casualties in a year if we were to put the clocks forward one hour throughout the year.

Q34 Mr Curry: Would you welcome another experiment to enable us to look at this? There are far more users on the road, there are hugely more vehicles on the road than there were at the time they did that and the roads themselves have changed a lot, so would you welcome another one to get some up-to-date statistics so that this endless political argument might have some evidence which is irrefutable one way or the other?

Mr Devereux: I am not sure whether anybody refutes that such a time arrangement would save death and injury on the roads, but the reason why, as I understand it, it has been contentious is because of quite different considerations to do with what it is like being a farmer, a construction worker, a postman or milkman in the north of the country.

Q35 Mr Curry: But it is, as far as you are concerned, unequivocal that, if we remained on Continental time and did not change to British winter time, then fewer people would be killed on our roads?

Mr Devereux: That is the consistent finding of all the research.

Q36 Mr Curry: On page 6, there is something slightly alarming here which I do not think is your fault, but you fund innovative projects, but it then says that actually—

Mr Devereux: Whereabouts are you?

Q37 Mr Curry: I am at paragraph 11 on page 6. There is no point in funding projects if highway authorities do not have the expertise to evaluate the success. What can one do to make sure the evidence we are getting is much more firmly based evidence?

Mr Devereux: This is a finding which I completely accept and where actually our practice has been changing. You will see from the table a bit later on about how many partnership projects we have run over the last three years. In the first tranche we did 27, the next one 19 and in the third 10. I can assure you that all the 10 in the current tranche we have just started are projects where, partly because there are fewer of them and they are larger, we have got evaluation plans in place.

Q38 Mr Curry: So is the Government intending to put forward a document of some sort which pulls together the evidence as to what measures might add up to a significant reduction in road accidents, for example, pulling together the evidence about

summer time, pulling together the evidence about the evaluation of these trials you have here, pulling together the evidence about speed limits? Would it not be helpful to have that, a document which brought these into one place?

Mr Devereux: I do not know if you have seen the consultation document that we put out just a few months ago, but it begins by recording the things that we know do work, and there is a very substantial body of work, where another recommendation is about how you simplify that, which is provided to local government about the measures that actually work in their areas.

Q39 Mr Curry: Could I just go on to page 14. Yorkshire, bits of which I represent, the sort of bumpy bits, seems to have the worst record in absolutely everything there and quite significantly so, I think. Is there any particular reason for why we feature in all the league tables at the bottom because it ranges from Humberside where you can play billiards on it to the Pennine Dales.

Mr Devereux: There is a problem in that, whenever you disaggregate something which appears to have a nice smooth shape, it never does (for example, by another class of person), and that is the point I was making earlier about pedestrians, or indeed regions. Personally, looking at that variation across the English regions, I would not be surprised if that is as much noise as it is anything else, but it will make a huge difference.

Q40 Mr Curry: Noise?

Mr Devereux: Noise in the series, just random effects. We do have some fairly substantial urban areas in that area which actually will—

Q41 Mr Curry: Yes, we do, and I was not sure if there was a deprivation element playing into this.

Mr Devereux: Well, there will be deprivation, but also, precisely because it is a large area, you have got a lot of rural areas as well, so you may have paradoxically sort of a bad combination of a lot of urban areas and a lot of rural roads, but, to be honest, I do not look at those numbers and think, “Gosh, that needs a special task force for Yorkshire”, although, coincidentally, we have been doing quite a lot of work on that now.

Q42 Geraldine Smith: I would like to pick up where Mr Curry left off on cycling because I think sometimes with irresponsible cycling that there is an attitude where it seems to be dismissed as something trivial. I had four area forums in my constituency last year, over 100 people attended most of them, and what people were saying was that irresponsible cycling was an issue that they were concerned about. Can you tell me, first of all: is it illegal to cycle on pavements?

Mr Devereux: No, I do not think so. I will just check that. I have a feeling that it is a Highway Code recommendation not to do it rather than it being actually against the law.

Q43 Geraldine Smith: What sanctions are taken against someone cycling irresponsibly on the pavement because I have a constituent who was seriously injured by a cyclist and there was very little, it appeared, that the police could do about that, and this is becoming more and more a regular occurrence. I have had a few incidents in my own constituency where people have been injured and older people, in particular, are very concerned about this issue, and I think that sometimes it is dismissed, as I say, as being trivial, but a lot of people see it as something which more attention should be given to.

Mr Devereux: I do not think it is true, but I shall check whether—

Q44 Geraldine Smith: So what are you doing to improve responsible cycling?

Mr Devereux: Sorry, I have just checked this and it is illegal to be on the pavement. That being the case, there is no reason why a policeman should not—

Q45 Geraldine Smith: It is illegal? Do the Department for Transport make that clear to the police because a police superintendent was at this forum with me and he said that it was legal to cycle on pavements, so, if you are confirming that, I can go back and tell him that it is actually illegal.

Mr Devereux: It is page 22 of the Highway Code in red, which means it is illegal, “You must not cycle on the pavement”.

Q46 Geraldine Smith: Excellent! I am very pleased about that. I shall go back and tell him.

Mr Devereux: It is Rule 64. In terms of whether or not people are aware of it, and you have clearly caught me out, I was not expecting quite so many anti-cyclist questions, so forgive me, we have within the Department a police liaison officer and I will go back and make sure that he actually makes that clear to the police.

Q47 Geraldine Smith: Yes, if you would, because I was quite surprised at these forums that it came up, not just at one, but at every one of them, as an area which people were really concerned about, and I did expect it a bit, but I think there is a feeling that people in authority do not take it seriously enough. As I say, the superintendent that I was with said, “No, it is legal to cycle on the pavement, it is just illegal if it is irresponsible cycling”, and that is quite different from what you have said, so maybe there should be an instruction going out to every police force in the country making the position clear to people.

Mr Devereux: I will ask the liaison officer to do something appropriate to make sure it is clear.

Q48 Geraldine Smith: Thank you, that would be very helpful. Coming on to the issue of deaths and injuries for pedestrians and cyclists on the road, speeding seems to be one of the major contributory factors, and I notice on page 7, I think, that it mentions that the 20-mile-per-hour zones have been very successful in reducing deaths and injuries, so

can I ask why there are not more of those? If we can save lives, why are we not getting those in place at a faster pace than we are already doing?

Mr Devereux: The 20-mile-per-hour zones are primarily about residential roads, and residential roads are almost wholly owned by local highway authorities, so they are not roads for which the Department for Transport is directly responsible. What we are doing each year is putting of the order of £600 million worth of money into local government, to do what they choose reflecting their priorities on transport, and that will include things to do with 20-mile-per-hour zones, but it will also include improving bus interchanges and the like. What we have been doing more recently is trying to work out how to make this as effective as possible, and there is quite a big trial which has been taking place in Portsmouth to try to identify what the effect is of simply going at this with signs, which is the much cheaper way of doing it, but with a question mark over whether that is actually as effective as rather more expensive programmes. In answer to your question of how do you prioritise it, all those authorities which have a major problem with death and injury on the roads in residential areas will, as a consequence of the way they think about their local area targets, have been incentivised to be thinking about what funding to put into that. We are not, from central government, mandating that that is the most important thing to happen in any one particular area, it might not be and, if you are in Lincolnshire, it may well be that you want to do your rural roads, but we have certainly made very clear to people and very consistently in the strategy document we published two months ago that 20-mile-per-hour zones are an effective way of reducing pedestrian deaths.

Q49 Geraldine Smith: It seems such a high percentage to reduce pedestrian injuries and deaths by 63%. That is a really high level and I think it should be given much greater priority.

Mr Devereux: Well, that is the sense of the conversations we have been having with local government. It is their choice ultimately about what they regard as a priority.

Q50 Geraldine Smith: But you are certainly doing all you can to encourage them?

Mr Devereux: We are seeking to do that, yes.

Q51 Geraldine Smith: What about speed cameras because again they are unpopular with the public, but I think they are a necessary evil really and I think they really do help reduce people’s speed in cars and, therefore, help to prevent deaths on the roads. What is your feedback? Again, what are you doing in terms of education to make motorists aware of the importance of speed cameras and, rather than just hate them, to appreciate that they actually do save a great many lives?

Mr Devereux: My own observation is that many of us are actually rather in two minds about speed cameras. There are plenty of people who are against a speed camera when they are bowling along, but

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who want a speed camera outside their own child's school, so this is not, I think, a question of, "You've got this view and you've got that view, so can we weigh it up?" but we are all sort of slightly mixed up about it, depending on the circumstances. It is, in my view, incontrovertible that speed cameras have an effect on speed and that having an effect on speed has an effect on safety; that is what the evidence says and you can measure it in several different ways, but it is real and it is profound. We have had a rather difficult conversation with many people who think the entire thing is just an exercise in raising fines and we deliberately, two years ago, changed the funding arrangements so that we no longer say, "You pay for speed cameras out of fines", but fines, like any other fines, now go into the Treasury, and we are providing a wholly open-to-spend road safety grant of the order of £110 million a year to local government, so there is no connection anymore between the fine revenue and what people choose to do. If they think that speed cameras are the wrong solution for their area, they can spend the money differently, but there are no incentives to artificially get speed cameras. For my money, they are actually very effective and that is what has been demonstrated.

Q52 Geraldine Smith: I have seen a very successful project at Lancaster and Morecambe College where young people were shown both the dangers of dangerous driving and the effects it could have on them and also the effects it could have obviously on pedestrians that they may kill. The project used shock techniques really and it did seem to have an effect on those young people at the end of the day. What are your views on projects like that?

Mr Devereux: Well, we have, for quite a while now, been running increasingly explicit media campaigns on road safety, and even I wince at some of the positions that you find yourself in. We have been trying though to segment some of these media campaigns to make sure they are being seen by precisely the people who need to see them. We have been doing some stuff particularly around young males, and they are not going to be sitting watching the average TV advert that you would expect to see, so some of these things are actually happening on the Internet and in places that you would not normally see, but we are trying to make sure that actually we are bringing home to people quite how bad these things are.

Q53 Geraldine Smith: Do you have any evidence to suggest that they are working and is there any way that you can monitor the effect of them? Certainly, just from my own personal view, looking at a group of young people, they appear to work in the afternoon when they watch some shocking footage.

Mr Devereux: I have not brought the figures for this particular campaign with me, but consistently the *Think!* campaign, which is the big advertising and marketing campaign, begins with fairly detailed research of attitudes before they begin, they target that attitude through the media and they measure it afterwards, so, if I were doing drink driving, which I have brought with me, or seatbelts, which I have

brought with me, you can see the shift in attitudes, so would you mind if I went away and found the particular one you have asked me about and I will come back and tell you how the media advertising that we have done, particularly around young men and teenagers, actually is changing their attitudes.³

Q54 Geraldine Smith: Finally, just going back to bicycles and cycling, why do you think there is a law saying that you have to have a bell on a bicycle when it is manufactured and when you first buy it, but then you do not have to keep that bell on and you can take it off the day after you buy that bicycle? Do you not think that is a bit illogical?

Mr Devereux: It was a major step forward to ensure that actually bikes were supplied with bells on because, by and large, once they are supplied, people keep them and, if you supply them without them, by and large, they do not go and buy them, so it is a step forward to at least have got to the position where they are supplied with a bell.

Q55 Geraldine Smith: But why not take the second step and say that we should always have a bell on a bicycle?

Mr Devereux: I guess it is always possible to have ever more compulsory laws about ever more things, and I guess bells on bicycles are in the category that we should be delivering them with bells.

Q56 Mr Curry: Whistles will do.

Mr Devereux: Or whistles. As I understand it, and correct me if I am wrong, we are now expecting new bicycles to be delivered with bells on them.

Q57 Mr Curry: Welded to them?

Mr Devereux: Well, if the legislation said "welded", we could have had them welded, but I think it just says "fitted".

Q58 Geraldine Smith: Just before I finish, can I stress again that this is an issue that registers a lot more than you would think with the public.

Mr Devereux: For cyclist safety reasons or for bad cycling reasons?

Q59 Geraldine Smith: Well, I would guess it is for pedestrian safety, but also cyclists because you see more and more examples of cyclists cycling at night without any lights on, without bells on their bicycles and also cycling in a very irresponsible fashion.

Mr Devereux: I am afraid I am going to hypothesise that the sort of person that is cycling irresponsibly without lights on a pavement is probably not going to considerately tinkle his bell just because he has got one. The problem goes further back to why are they in this position in the first place to which, I suspect, if it is indeed the case and the police have powers to stop cycling on the pavement in the first place, that is where we should take the action, but, I am afraid, I must repeat the point I made earlier, that the police do have an awful lot of things to do and this is not typically the very highest on their realistic agenda.

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Geraldine Smith: Thank you very much, you have been very helpful.

Q60 Chairman: With regards to speed cameras, I agree with you, that people normally will not object to speed cameras outside schools and in accident black spots, but I think what irritates people is when the speed limits change from 70 down to 60 down to 50 on big dual carriageways, such as the A1, and I know people should be conversant, but that is what, I think, people find objectionable. I just wonder whether there is any evidence as to how much difference those speed cameras on big motorways and dual carriageways coming in and out of cities make in terms of road safety.

Mr Devereux: The fastest way to get out of a road speeding conviction is to demonstrate that the camera has not been properly signed as to the road speed limit before you get there, so you should find, and I am sure you will have a road where this is not the case, that actually, before you get to a speed camera, there are indeed clear signals of what the actual speed limit is. I am afraid that the reason why the speed limit varies is because that is a judgment as to what is safe on that road, and part of the reason in the Road Safety Strategy for inviting local government to think about 60-mile-per-hour rural roads is because many roads do not actually survive 60-mile-per-hour limits and they should be lower. That is why they change. The answer to your question is that they should be properly signed so that you can see that and, if they were not properly signed, I am afraid we would not be able to enforce the penalty against you.

Q61 Mr Bacon: I have had two occasions, and certainly I could start on them, though I was planning of course to start on the irresponsible behaviour of cyclists, but the Chairman has got me started on speed cameras and then on the 60-mile-per-hour limits. I have twice tried to persuade my local county council that a 60-mile-per-hour limit outside a school on a rural road, a very rural road, is not sensible. Once, I succeeded in getting the limit changed, but on the other occasion I have been banging my head against their door for several years and they have acknowledged that maybe they will look at it. We have established that between 20 miles per hour and the national speed limit it is a matter for local authorities, it is for them to decide, but it does seem to me that not enough priority is given to this. The roads in each case that I have been talking about are ones where no one in their right mind would drive at 60 because you could not do so safely and yet there is still the legal limit, but it is quite odd. Now that I have got that off my chest, I will come on to cyclists, so it was not a question. I tell you this: I have spoken of this in three different ways, once as a very keen cyclist many years ago, secondly, as someone who drove in London regularly in 1989 when I had a car 20 years ago briefly, before I lived abroad, and a third time as someone driving in London regularly now. First, I know that, when I was a cyclist regularly in my teens, no one, at least hardly anyone, went through red lights. I would have

been shocked if I had seen it, but it did not really happen and I certainly did not do it. Second, when I was driving in London 20 years ago, it did not happen, you did not see it regularly and now it happens all the time, it is commonplace to see cyclists go through red lights, and I do not think this is taken seriously enough by the authorities. What is more, I was in a taxi recently and we saw, in Parliament Square actually, a cyclist coming spinning round. We were coming from Victoria Street and the cyclist was coming round the other way. He went straight through a red light, and I said, "It's amazing that so many of them are still alive", and he said, "I had one, only a few weeks ago, slam into the side of me". I think it is regarded as commonplace and I think you should do more to take it seriously, frankly. Now, that is a policy point, but it does not seem to me that it has been gripped.

Mr Devereux: Well, I have got a clear message from three of you on where cyclists are and their behaviour with the law. I have already explained, courtesy of the person now working for us who is a connection with the police, let me see if I can do something to make the police aware of what the law is. I am afraid I have to repeat my earlier caveat that, if you say to the hard-pressed constabulary, "Actually, I've got one more thing for you to do", they do not—

Q62 Mr Bacon: But it is the hard-pressed constabulary that can be assisted by an act of citizenry. We have in Morley St Botolph a community speed watch.

Mr Devereux: A community speed watch?

Q63 Mr Bacon: Yes, and it is working very well. I think it was inspired by a local farmer, a constituent of mine, who, when he was not busy putting his peas in, was suggesting that people vote for me, so I am a great fan of his! He got very hacked off with cars coming round the corner near to where he lives and speeding, so he donned a yellow high-visibility jacket, got out a hairdryer and crouched in a ditch, and of course these locals slowed down. I thought he was being very public-spirited, but unfortunately the beak at Norwich Magistrates' Court took a slightly different view! One of the consequences of that was that the local constabulary realised that there is actual citizenry there which will help, and I have witnessed that in Morley St Botolph which is actually one of the sites with a 60-mile-per-hour speed limit outside the school. The police will train and assist local citizens who are volunteers, and it is only their zeal that needs to be restrained, to be honest, to use proper professional radar guns and, with enough witnesses, you can get evidence which will stack up in court, so you can present it and the police can then prosecute, so the constabulary who, as you say, are hard-pressed are then free to go on and do other things. I am sure you could do the same with cyclists. There is plainly a big difference. Judging by the figures on page 9, it looks to me like you are 41 times more likely to be killed by driving a motorcycle than you are driving a car, and pedal cycling, although it is not as dangerous as

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motorcycling, is still very dangerous in comparison with the car with 3.4 fatalities per 100 million passenger kilometres versus 0.269, so it is still much, much more dangerous. It is quite obvious that a significant proportion of this is due to the behaviour of other road users like cars and lorries and the fact that motorcycles and pedal cycles are vulnerable, there is no question about that, and you mentioned that you have yourself suffered from the trauma that comes with this, as many people have, and many of us have local citizens who have. I had an adjournment debate and I was shocked, it was about the issue of death by careless driving, that there was no legislation. I was shocked in September 2004 to find 20 Members of Parliament who were all party to that debate, that everybody had a case in their own constituency. It is clearly an issue with those road users where, because of the vehicle speed, motorcyclists and cyclists are vulnerable. It is also plainly the case that a significant contributor to these statistics is the behaviour of motorcyclists and cyclists. I know, from just driving around in London, that the behaviour of motorcyclists is deeply shocking and it is normal. You look in your mirror and you will find five or six motorcyclists are weaving in and out like a swarm of locusts, and this is normal behaviour for them. I refuse to believe that there is not a deep connection between that behaviour and the fact that you are so much more likely to suffer a fatality driving a motorcycle than by other methods of transport. You mentioned the *Think!* campaign and we often see on the roads "Think bike!" Do you have a *Think car!* campaign which is targeted at motorcyclists to encourage their responsible behaviour because that would do a lot to reduce these statistics, would it not, and the same for cyclists?

Mr Devereux: You have made the point I was going to make. I can see an assertion creeping in that says that, because they are badly behaved, they are a big part of this number. I am afraid I do not know that that is the case. I can believe that, and some of the people who jump red lights are clearly—

Mr Bacon: Well, it is an assertion, but perhaps it is not borne out in fact and perhaps you can tell me what the facts are. In fact, I should say something in parenthesis. I think there is a very good story to tell here, and we have been quite critical of you. If you had asked me how many fatalities there are on the roads, I would have said 3,500 because that is the number that has been in my head for several years and I was very pleased to see that it was 2,900. I remember, five years ago, looking at this and looking at the comparisons with Japan and France. The French basically had canned their road safety methodology and I think it was the previous President of France, Chirac, who said, "We're just going to copy the British; they've got it so much better than we have"—

Chairman: You are getting awfully discursive.

Q64 Mr Bacon: Sorry. There is a good story to tell, which is why I am saying it in parenthesis, but, of the 2,946 people who were killed, referred to in paragraph 1.2, 646 of them were pedestrians and 136 were cyclists, but what were the others?

Mr Devereux: Well, 1,432 were car occupants, 588 were motorcyclists and the difference between those four and 2,946 were van drivers and lorry drivers in relatively small numbers.

Q65 Mr Bacon: Perhaps you can send us the chart with all of them on.⁴

Mr Devereux: I can.

Q66 Mr Bacon: I am surprised you do not report it. So 588 were motorcyclists?

Mr Devereux: In 2007, the deaths, yes.

Q67 Mr Bacon: So 588 were motorcyclists out of a total of 2,946, in other words, exactly 20% to a round number. Now, obviously what you need to do to find out how important and relevant that is to compare the number of miles covered by cars with the number of miles covered by motorcyclists and then you will be able to tell whether my assertion is right or not, will you not, the fact that the behaviour of motorcyclists contributes to the higher proportion of motorcyclist deaths?

Mr Devereux: I can tell you that there are 10.5 motorcycle deaths per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled by motorcyclists.

Q68 Mr Bacon: It says 4.42 here, 4.42 fatalities per 100 million passenger kilometres.

Mr Devereux: That is the average over 1997 to 2006 and I was quoting the numbers that went with what I have just quoted.

Q69 Mr Bacon: Sorry, 11.14.

Mr Devereux: That table is headed as the average over 1997 to 2006 and I was quoting you the 2007 figure of 10.5.

Q70 Mr Bacon: But it is still top and it is still much, much higher than the others.

Mr Devereux: Yes, and cars are 0.4.

Q71 Mr Bacon: Can I ask you why it is per 100 million passenger kilometres because, when I was first elected, it used to be per million passenger miles? The top one there, air, is useless, it is literally useless. There is no useful comparison you can do between travel by air when it is 0.000, and it is not the case that nobody dies from travelling by air, there are fatalities. We have a lot of light aircraft in East Anglia and we do have fatalities. If I wanted to divide motorcyclists by air travel to find out how much more dangerous it is to travel by motorcycle than by air, I cannot do it on these numbers.

Mr Devereux: The "3" tells you that the air figures are for UK-registered airline aircraft in UK and foreign airspace. Those are passenger deaths and they do not include—

Q72 Mr Bacon: But my point is that it is 0.000, and it is Department for Transport data which is the source of that, but it is utterly useless in telling me anything I can use as a basis for calculation.

⁴ Ev 19

Mr Devereux: I did not put the table in.

Q73 Mr Bacon: No, but it says it is Department for Transport data and you are the Permanent Secretary.

Mr Devereux: It is our data, but it is not my table.

Q74 Mr Bacon: But why did it used to be put in passenger miles, is my question?

Mr Devereux: Why did it used to be?

Q75 Mr Bacon: There used to be a figure that you could understand, and there have been a number of these, which you could then use to manipulate and calculate other numbers.

Mr Devereux: If I may make a small, flippant point, if it were a million passenger miles, it would be even smaller than nought.

Q76 Mr Bacon: Well, I do not know. All I remember is that the Parliamentary Advisory Council sent me some figures on this when I was first elected eight years ago and there was a meaningful number for air travel and now there is not.

Mr Devereux: Well, I am sorry, I am going to defend the number. To two or three decimal places, you will not be killed in an aircraft, is what this says, for 100 million—

Q77 Mr Bacon: What I am saying though is: why do you not produce figures which are useful rather than figures that are useless? This is a useless figure. I cannot do anything with it and I cannot do any useful sums with it. There are air fatalities in the UK and they might not occur every year, but they occur, so why not produce some figures we can use? Do you hear what I am saying?

Mr Devereux: It is not my table.

Q78 Mr Bacon: It is your table. It says “Source: Department for Transport data”.

Mr Devereux: The figures are sourced from the Department for Transport.

Q79 Mr Bacon: But you are the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport.

Mr Devereux: We can argue this one all afternoon. I agree with you, that, if you want to have a different table that showed, for example, how many hours you have to be in any of these things or the absolute number of deaths, we could have put that in, but that is not what the National Audit Office chose to put in, sir.

Q80 Mr Bacon: I know that your record on statistics is not a brilliant one, and it was your Department which gave this Committee figures on evasion of excise duty for motorcyclists which turned out to be wrong and had to be corrected and we—

Mr Devereux: No, my Department wrote you quite a lengthy letter to explain that what they gave you was correct when they were here. They told you that there was work in progress and, when that work in progress was produced, they produced the further information, so I think that is unfair.

Q81 Mr Bacon: Well, I was there at the time.

Mr Devereux: You were and I remember reading the letters. Let us agree that we are in a good place on the evasion of vehicle excise duty now.

Q82 Mr Bacon: I am glad it is getting better.

Mr Devereux: It is much better.

Q83 Mr Bacon: Finally, I would just like to ask about local authorities and the contrast between paragraph 3.6, which talks about the key ways in which the Department can influence practitioners, through research papers, best practice guides and so on. It says in bullet point two that the “research is often written with policymakers or other researchers in mind, rather than practitioners”, and yet, if you look at paragraph 1.27 on page 18 where it splits up your budget for the Road User Safety Division and how it is spent, it is quite obvious that, although you do spend some on the staff costs for policy and strategy, a lot of it goes on other things, with £3.9 million on research, distributing grants and demonstration projects at £14 million and national publicity and so on at £17 million. Could you not do more to make sure not only that the standard you have is better and of more use to local authorities, but also, and this is the third bullet point of paragraph 3.6, that “stakeholders and practitioners have a valuable perspective and the Department could involve them more in shaping research programmes”? What that means to me is that there is a lot of good expertise out there at the rock-face where they are seeing things going on and there are people over here in their, I hesitate to use the term, but I will, ivory tower who are not doing as much as they could to talk to practitioners, which is basically what that is saying. Is that not a fair comment?

Mr Devereux: I do not think I have ever met a stakeholder group which has entirely said everything the Department does is perfect, so I am certainly going to accept that, that we could do more on this. If you look beyond to paragraph 3.7, you begin to see some of the things which the NAO has recorded that we are actually doing. For example, we have begun to produce a dissemination programme with seminars, and these seminars have been basically sell-outs around the country and we have had lots of people come to them. We have now produced four-page summaries of each of these research projects. We understood the point and we were doing something about it even before the NAO came along.

Q84 Keith Hill: This has been a rather cathartic session so far and I am almost embarrassed in reverting to the somewhat low-key topic of data on road casualties. The only thing I would caution my colleagues is that they can now expect, if any of these observations are broadcast, an avalanche of hate-mail. I remember once referring to cyclists as “hooligans on wheels” and I have never had such a large mailbag as a result of that. However, it was of course in the columns of *London Cyclist*, so I suppose it was a rather obvious provocation. Nevertheless, let me get on to the issue of data on

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road casualties, and can I just revert also to the somewhat contentious issue of the international comparisons and say that I take your point, Mr Devereux, that you were drawing attention to the fact that the rate of casualty had declined in this 12-month period apparently from 0.62 to 0.40 and the issue was, therefore, the rate rather than the ranking of where the UK came in these tables. However, I have to say, if you look at the countries reported in your table, it appears to me that half of the figures go up and half of the figures go down so, as you said, these are very volatile figures and I doubt you can draw very many conclusions from them, but let me turn—

Mr Devereux: Can I just say that that is very true of the children one, but it is far less true of the ones on the far left-hand side. On overall deaths, it is very stable and, if you look at the people in the top five, they are the same year after year after year, so you can have some confidence about our aggregate performance.

Q85 Keith Hill: Let me talk about the way in which you report road casualties. If you look at Appendix 2 of the NAO Report, paragraph 8, it is observed that there is some research at least which indicates the total number of serious casualties may be twice in fact the number reported, so let me ask you: how can you claim that you are meeting your targets when in fact you do not know if the levels of reporting have changed over time?

Mr Devereux: This is a subject on which the Department has been active for the last two to three years. This is not a new story that has suddenly turned up with the NAO Report. I read back to the 2006 statistical publication and actually started to go through what we know about hospital episode statistics, for example, and where the trend data on all that is coming from. Let us be clear, that it will not be the case that everything is always going to be recorded. All the analysis that we have done suggests that we are almost certainly picking up all the fatalities and we are almost certainly picking up all the serious injuries of the kind that, you might imagine, would keep you in hospital for more than two days. There is some noise in the system as to whether or not some people who find themselves in hospital for nought to one day have or have not been collected in the police statistics. Something which has given rise to the interest in all of this is because there has been a sharp rise in the hospital data about the number of people who have been admitted for nought to one day since 2003, and the deduction has been made from that that, somehow or other, we have not got our act together on road traffic accidents because the health data is showing something else. The analysis which we published made perfectly clear that there are rather more profound reasons why the health numbers are going up and they are not simply going up for road traffic accidents, but right across the board.

Q86 Keith Hill: I think you are probably right, that there does appear to be an issue about the definition of recording where the police seem to record and

define in perhaps a different way from the hospitals, but we do of course use the police data and, if you look at Figure 14 on page 33 of the Report, hospital admissions paint a much worse picture than the police reporting. The hospital admissions indicate two-fifths more pedestrian severe cases, a fifth more cyclist serious cases and indeed three-fifths more road casualties of all sorts. If you are looking at these different sources of recording, let me ask you when you think you will be able to adjust for the under-recording in the police data and tell us how many road casualties there really are?

Mr Devereux: Perhaps I can just push back on some of this data, because that is what I was trying to explain. Let me take the cyclist figures in here, for example. The figures that we published two years ago showed that the health statistics were indeed recording 7,065 hospital admissions for cyclists. Of those, 4,268 had had no collision at all; they had fallen off their bike and gone to hospital. That is not, by my definition, a road traffic accident. It is that sort of definitional issue which is causing some of this headline stuff. It is not sophisticated in this analysis about what is going on. We have done reports, both in 2007 and in 2008 which make it perfectly clear that we have a much better grip of whether there is a big distinction or not and, actually, the police data comes out extremely favourably when it comes to thinking about serious injuries and fatalities. We are not saying, as I said when I began, that somehow or other we have captured absolutely everything, but we did some very detailed matching last year of all the data from the police over five years, with all the data from the hospitals over the same period and you actually find that the police have got very good coverage of anything that you would recognise as a death or a serious injury from a road traffic accident as opposed to something connected with a bike.

Q87 Keith Hill: That is genuinely very interesting and, with respect to the NAO, I do not find that in this Report. I believe that if that is the case and if you have done that kind of detailed analysis it would really be extremely helpful to this Committee if you were to let us see it.

Mr Devereux: I have brought it with me and I will be happy to send it to you.⁵

Q88 Keith Hill: We would welcome that. Nevertheless, let me express a little scepticism around the reliance on police data because the fact of the matter is that if you compare the police records with the hospital records with other sources of information, for example benefit claims in the Report, the fact of the matter is that without exception the police statistics are the lowest.

⁵ See *Road Casualties Great Britain: 2006 Annual Report*, Department for Transport, Article 6 at www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/roadcasualtiesgreatbritain2006 and *Road Casualties Great Britain: 2007 Annual Report*, Department for Transport, Article 6 at www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/roadcasualtiesgreatbritain2007.

Therefore it is a reasonable question as to why you do continue largely to rely on a reportage which gives you the lowest possible measure of casualties.

Mr Devereux: I hope I have not asserted that I am guaranteeing that the police data is correct; I am saying that consistently the analysis we have done against different sources suggests that it provides the most robust position as to what is going on and, in particular, as to trends over time. That is the thing which I am trying to keep a track on. If I am an uninsured driver who has driven with a drink in me and I have come off the road, I am unlikely personally—if I have had an accident entirely on my own—to ring up the police and report it. I am probably likely to go to A&E because I have cracked my head open. There are bound to be classes of people whom the police will not get to know of, whom the hospitals will get to see, so there will be under-recording, and that problem is exactly the same in other countries. Internationally we know that police data will not actually come to the top, but what is going on in some of these annexes is the general argument that somehow or other because there are other statistics, the police data on which we have relied are wholly unreliable. That is not the evidence which our own statisticians have actually generated. They have done consistently, though, large amounts of work on this and there is more work being published this summer on the data matching between hospitals and the police data.⁶ I am afraid I cannot quite recall when we are proposing to do some work on the insurance stuff.

Q89 Keith Hill: Chairman, I wonder if it would be possible for me to ask the Comptroller to come in at this point and perhaps comment on the differential reporting according to the sources that are used here.

Mr Morse: That is fine, Mr Hill. If I may I will ask Ms Barker to comment on this.

Ms Barker: Basically there are lots of different databases. What we are actually saying, as Mr Devereux has pointed out, is that there are problems with all of them. What we are urging the Department to do is to look at them in a more holistic way so that they get a better understanding of what is happening with the statistics.

Q90 Keith Hill: Are you satisfied that that process is going forward?

Ms Barker: Certainly the Department is able to provide us with evidence of work that they are doing at the moment and we would encourage them to carry on.

Q91 Keith Hill: Have they indicated to you by what date they expect to have more reliable holistic figures?

Ms Barker: No, and we actually have the recommendation in here that it needs to be completed as a matter of urgency.

Q92 Keith Hill: As a matter of urgency. Will the Department respond to that recommendation?

Mr Devereux: Yes. I wish I could tell you that this is a very simple question and that so long as I got to Day X this would all be brought to an end, but this is a constantly moving problem. The way in which the NHS incentivises or otherwise, for example, whether you stay in A&E for four hours or get admitted makes a difference to their statistics, so actually it is not as if all these statistics are stable and so just for the want of some effort we can put the thing to bed forever. However, it is my memory—but I will check this and get back to you—that we are hoping to produce yet further information on this, this summer. The point I am making is that actually we were publishing information on this in 2007, we published it in 2008; this is not news, we are aware of it as you would imagine for a subject which is actually very, very rich in evidence. Of all the subjects that are likely to come in front of you, this is the one that has actually got some facts behind it.

Keith Hill: Thank you very much, Chairman.

Q93 Nigel Griffiths: Mr Fawcett, you are the head of road safety. Are you aware of the achievements in Edinburgh and the Lothian Borders in respect of child deaths?

Mr Fawcett: I am not directly aware of exactly what has been achieved there, no.

Q94 Nigel Griffiths: A decision was taken in 2000 to eliminate child deaths and for the next five years or so not one single child was killed in the Lothian Borders area. That was through the use of speed cameras, speed humps and 20 mph zones, and I am very depressed if you do not know that, if you are the person responsible for showcasing best practice around the country.

Mr Fawcett: We are certainly aware that those are all measures that can be extremely effective and the Department's guidance to local authorities in England certainly commends all those approaches, and in the new strategy draft which we published on 21 April we are further encouraging the use of 20 mph zones, we are saying that that should become the norm over time.

Q95 Nigel Griffiths: Thank you, I have got that. Is there a single mention in this Report of speed cameras?

Ms Barker: No.

Q96 Nigel Griffiths: It is one of the three most important things you tell me; why is there not a single mention of speed cameras in this Report, *Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists?*

Mr Devereux: It is not my Report.

Q97 Nigel Griffiths: Who is going to take responsibility, who is going to answer that question?

Ms Barker: We have covered the initiatives in broad detail in the demonstration projects that we covered. We were looking specifically at projects that examined pedestrian and cyclist safety rather than general measures such as speed cameras.

⁶ See *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2008 Annual Report*, Department for Transport at www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/162469/221412/221549/227755/rrcgb2008.pdf, Article 5

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Q98 Nigel Griffiths: This is a poor Report, time-warped some 20 or 30 years ago with a general belief that the public is hostile to anything that curbs car users and does not like cyclists and motorcyclists either. I believe that is fundamentally wrong, as it happens, and what concerns me is if you do not know about what the Lothian and Borders Police working with the local council have achieved, which showcase councils are there? I am astonished that that is not in this report since it is a GB report. I am astonished that after five years, no child deaths, and it was only broken by two people who have now gone to jail for a terrible accident on the edge of my constituency, but what we need from these reports if we are going to learn the lessons is perhaps less research and more action on the basis of councils and authorities with a proven track record, would you not agree?

Mr Devereux: Can I just help the NAO? I did not write the Report; if you ask the Department what is high on the list of things that clearly work we have already touched on speed and I perfectly understand that it works, it is central to the strategy that we have just launched. It is central to that for the reasons I have explained.

Q99 Nigel Griffiths: That may be the case, Mr Devereux, and you have had an unfairly tough time but you have handled yourself well. However, you and your road safety expert should have made sure it was in the Report because you jointly signed it off, I will leave it at that.

Mr Devereux: I signed off as to its accuracy rather than as to its completeness. That is quite important.

Q100 Nigel Griffiths: Let us look at local authority funding. You mentioned a figure of £600 million.

Mr Devereux: Yes.

Q101 Nigel Griffiths: What is that for?

Mr Devereux: The Government pays quite a lot of different portions of money to local government and the £600 million refers to a thing we call the “integrated transport block” so this is money which is provided to local government specifically for things to improve transport, of which one is safety. It is different from the money we give them for road maintenance.

Q102 Nigel Griffiths: And the £120 million?

Mr Devereux: I said it was £110 million actually. That is the road safety grant which is the money which used to be used locally by keeping fines from speed cameras. The fines now go to the Treasury and the Department pays money to individual authorities, so we are spending £600 million on the integrated transport block, some of which goes on road safety, and £110 million which does go on safety.

Q103 Nigel Griffiths: That £110 million now funds speed cameras, speed humps and 20 mph zones.

Mr Devereux: It funds whatever the local safety partnership thinks is the best use of the money.

Q104 Nigel Griffiths: We know from your road safety expert that speed cameras, speed humps and 20 mph zones are very effective. Why are you allowing councils to spend money on other things? What is more effective than those three that they should be spending money on?

Mr Devereux: Possibly reducing the speed limit on rural roads if you are a rural county.

Q105 Nigel Griffiths: I accept that. In an urban area?

Mr Devereux: In an urban area you might like to produce safe routes to cycle to school, you might like to train people to do cycling training.

Q106 Nigel Griffiths: How effective is the cycling training as against those three measures: speed cameras, speed humps and 20 mph zones?

Mr Devereux: There is a double benefit from training people to use cycles—

Q107 Nigel Griffiths: I want to check on the objective. What do the statistics tell us—£1 spent on a speed camera, £1 spent on training a child?

Mr Devereux: I do not have that calculation because the £1 spent on the speed camera immediately gets some results in that particular area; £1 spent on a child who might then through the rest of their life cycle as opposed to not cycle would mean you have a child which is probably less obese and probably producing better things for transport, so they are different calculations.

Q108 Nigel Griffiths: “Might” is your qualifying word and that is really what we need to do some research to draw out. Are all the councils required to spend that proportion of £110 million on road safety measures?

Mr Devereux: It has become one of the so-called “area grants”. What that basically means is that we put it in with an expectation on our part as to what they will do, but the general relationship which government has now arrived at with local government is not to tie them up with endless packets of different money, but to give them some choice, so at the margins they could take this money and spend it on something else. The evidence is that because quite a lot of them take it seriously they do spend it on road safety things.

Q109 Nigel Griffiths: But it is their choice as to whether they spend money that might save the lives of our children.

Mr Devereux: It is their choice because that is the way we configure local government in this country.

Q110 Nigel Griffiths: I take a different view I have to say.

Mr Devereux: I might share that view but it is not the way it is.

Q111 Nigel Griffiths: I hope you will be advising your ministers accordingly.

Mr Devereux: It is a different department I am afraid.

Q112 Nigel Griffiths: Is there a shred of evidence in this report that carelessness or reckless riding by bikers or cyclists is responsible for the majority of their accidents?

Mr Devereux: No.

Q113 Nigel Griffiths: Does that mean that the evidence really points to careless car drivers and commercial vehicle drivers—

Mr Devereux: No, it does not, because you asked me the question “Is there a shred of evidence in the Report that points to it?” and there is no evidence in the Report. I have already acknowledged that I do not know the answer to the question, in absolute terms, “Is it correct?”

Q114 Nigel Griffiths: Is there evidence in the Report that it is carelessness or recklessness by other road users that causes the majority of the accidents to bikers and cyclists?

Mr Devereux: I am fairly sure that that will be the truth, I am not going to say whether it is in the Report.

Nigel Griffiths: So any notion from further questioning by other members of the Committee that these people are all somehow responsible for their own accidents is really a myth and damaging.

Mr Curry: We were not suggesting that.

Mr Bacon: Who was saying that, because I certainly was not?

Chairman: Let us not have a spat between us.

Nigel Griffiths: We will have the transcript.

Chairman: Everybody is responsible for their own questions.

Q115 Nigel Griffiths: And then we will have the conclusion of the Report because I happen to think cycling is good and the vast majority of cyclists and bikers are perfectly responsible. To tarnish them with some of the examples given and imply that that is the majority is a very bad mistake. Responding to the conclusions of the Report, where I thought the Report seemed technically weak was in arguing almost for more research and less action and until we get interventionist action of the type that we have seen in Edinburgh then I do not think that we will get to the sort of zero figures that are attainable. I say that having read the Report because the statistics are creditable. The trends have been rather good; it is just having seen in my own area covering almost a million people no child death on the roads for five years, you can imagine my frustration and I am sure the frustration of my colleagues that there are still child deaths around the country, and we want to research them instead of it backing—as I hope that this Committee will do—the need for the use of speed cameras, speed humps and 20 mph zones. Do you think these are the most effective ways of curbing child deaths on the road?

Mr Devereux: The most effective thing is certainly to limit the speed of vehicles in areas where people are on the roads as pedestrians or cyclists. Whether you do that through speed cameras or speed humps or the geometry of the road I am afraid is a local decision, so I would rather not be signed up to the

conclusion, but the speed of vehicles which weigh a lot crashing into human bodies which do not—that is a fairly self-evident thing to target.

Q116 Nigel Griffiths: If I might finally recommend to the Comptroller and Auditor General, when the Report is next reviewed and published perhaps the pictures might show a 20 mph zone rather than a 30 mph speed limit being encouraged, it might show speed humps in a favourable light and it might show speed cameras as well. In fact I hope it mentions them next time.

Chairman: Thank you. There are one or two supplementaries. Mr Bacon.

Q117 Mr Bacon: Very quickly could I ask Geraldine Barker about page 28 where in the third bullet it refers to several challenges including “the lack of priority afforded to road safety by some organisations”. Which organisations were you referring to there?

Ms Barker: It is a general comment about organisations, both in Whitehall and more generally, where their remit is not specifically road safety but they have other agendas and so the Department has to raise the road safety agenda within them.

Q118 Mr Bacon: Which organisations?

Ms Barker: I would have to look back. We consulted a wide number of organisations.

Q119 Mr Bacon: It is quite an important sentence. It looks to me as though it has been edited downwards to make it a bit softer.

Ms Barker: No, I do not think so.

Q120 Mr Bacon: I would expect the white fish authority (if there is one) not to consider road safety as one of its greatest priorities because it is thinking of other things. Is that what you mean, or do you mean organisations that should be considering road safety like children’s services in county councils, say, that are not doing so?

Ms Barker: Certainly those working within local authorities are having to persuade their colleagues in children’s services and other areas to raise the road safety agenda, so that would be a good example.

Mr Morse: If I may supplement that answer, as you can see in the Report only a third of local authorities have in fact adopted road safety targets out of the choice of targets available and that is quite significant, so fighting for priority is an issue that is reasonably raised. What we are primarily looking at here is the function of the Department in relation to road safety, not what should be done on the ground, so it is not really for us to address that. What we need to talk about is the functionality of the Department.

Q121 Chairman: The Auditor General makes that point but there is a question I wanted to ask you: how can we encourage a wider uptake? Why do only a third of local authorities have a road safety target; how can we encourage a wider uptake?

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Mr Devereux: Let me just go back to the way in which we do the interaction with local government. We have managed to reduce very substantially, to of the order of 180,⁷ the number of indicators which every local government will report on. We have invited them to choose up to 35 of those which are local priorities because locally they are most important. I can hypothesise that there are some well-performing councils who have good road safety for whom that is not the best use of 35 targets, they should be targeting drugs, they should be worrying about education and something else. The fact that you have not chosen it as a target should not be read as you are very bad at road safety, that is a mistake, because by and large a good government is quite good at working out what is important. We have positively encouraged those people who we regard as having poor performance to put it on the list.

Q122 Mr Bacon: Mr Griffiths' point is that there is stellar performance in one place. I understand your point about reducing the 180 targets but in paragraph 1.29 at page 18 I was quite shocked about the menu that they can choose from, up to 35 indicators of which two are road safety targets. If it is the case that there is stellar performance in one place that could be copied and if it is the case that road safety matters everywhere—and presumably it is the case that there are not huge variations in the degree of road safety between different regions in the country that are receiving the grant—then surely it ought to be a priority everywhere.

Mr Devereux: In this hearing I cannot but agree with you. On the ground, in local government, local councillors are making judgments as to what is the most important thing in their area and I can conceive that, for example, if you are tackling deprivation, road safety is highly correlated with deprivation. It might be that tackling the deprivation is a good way of doing that and therefore they are using indicators to do with social housing, children being looked after in after school clubs. I can see people making rational choices, however much we all think the right answer is surely this is the only thing which everybody must do, and that is not the way local government up and down the country had chosen to do it. Given that some of them may well be good at it and it is not a priority for that reason, what we should all be interested in is those people who are not good at it and have not made it a priority, and actually they have made a poor choice. We put quite a bit of effort with our colleagues across government in trying to get to the right choice of 35 which both central government and local government can sign up to. It is quite a complicated process.

Chairman: There are one or two more questions. Geraldine Smith.

Q123 Geraldine Smith: I just think this is a really important point that Mr Griffiths raised about a scheme that has been shown to be successful, that has saved lives quite definitely. If you were not aware of it how do you expect local councillors to be aware

of it when they are making decisions about what projects they should go for? If you are so clear and it is a fact that it does save lives if we can reduce speed, then these 20 mph zones and the other measures should be somehow incentivised. I appreciate what you say, that you cannot force local councils to do things, but if you did not even know that information—and I did not know it until Mr Griffiths raised it—then how are those councils to know all about it?

Mr Devereux: I have identified that we know that this works. I personally was not aware of that particular example but I do hope that, it being a smallish area, those five years last forever but you have just said that because of one particular accident you now have some child deaths. It is a bumpy series, small children deaths, I am afraid, and you will find periods when people get through five years and it is good. I am really pleased that that is the position there; the reality is, as I said before, speed is a really important thing if you are talking about child deaths on roads and measures to control it are appropriate. What I am doing to incentivise it, I am making that perfectly plain to people, I am spending quite a lot of money and disseminating the information and I have provided part of a local government target metric which actually has child deaths and serious injuries as one of the things which everybody is reporting on. The Audit Commission is seeing everyone and so are we; the question is making sure people are targeting it if it is a problem for them.

Mr Curry: Just a point for Mr Griffiths, as I interpret the front cover of this it shows traffic stopped at a traffic light, pedestrians trying to cross the road and a cyclist scything through.

Nigel Griffiths: I rest my case about the portrayal of cyclists.

Q124 Mr Curry: I am always interested in what other countries do which is effective. Can I draw your attention like Mr Griffiths did to an experiment, but this time it is in France, Cap-Ferret, the peninsula of France which encloses the Bassin d'Arcachon near Bordeaux. That is a community, Lège-Cap-Ferret, where only 8000 people live in the winter and 20 times that amount in the summer, a lot of kids, a lot of campers. There is a road which goes through the forest and every year there used to be a large number of young people injured and killed in those summer periods. They went to night clubs or restaurants or bars, there was a lot of drunken driving and a lot on these little scooters which are death traps. The local mayor introduced something called the *bus de nuit*. It is a free bus service which goes around the peninsula every hour, stopping where young people congregate, it is absolutely free and it delivers them back to the various settlements along that peninsula. It has got radio contact with the police so that if anybody is disorderly or misbehaving or whatever, the police are waiting at the next bus stop, and that has eliminated entirely the problem of young people being killed. I just pass that example on and I could put you in contact with the mayor of Lège-Cap-Ferret who is a friend of mine who could give you chapter and verse if it were

⁷ Note by Witness: The current figure is 188 indicators

useful. The second point, you have illuminated something for me. About two months ago I was driving up the A1 which, as you know, is a dual carriageway pretty well all the way, and now the roundabouts have been eliminated it is rather easier to drive on, and on these overhead panels they had the words "Think! Bike". I thought what in God's name is this about? I am used to having entirely useless information like "Road closed after A367"—I have not got the faintest idea which is the A367. Were they encouraging cyclists to cycle up the dual carriageway of the A1, is that the purpose of those overhead signs, and could we discourage them from saying meaningless things in entirely inappropriate places in future?

Mr Devereux: It literally means what it says on the tin, "Think! Bike". "Think! Bike" means do not be blind to the fact that a motorcyclist is one of the things that by and large car drivers do not see when you pull out and you are looking for other cars.

Mr Curry: Why did it not say "Beware of motorcyclists"? Why not use English and say "Beware of motorcyclists" or "Beware of cyclists"?

Nigel Griffiths: We are coming up to date here, not going back 50 years.

Q125 Mr Curry: Why did it not say it in language which those of us brought up to have subjects, verbs and objects in our language understand?

Mr Devereux: I am not going to hypothesise about what the average educational achievement is as opposed to those with—

Mr Curry: The average education can manage a three word sentence which says "Beware of motorcyclists."

Q126 Nigel Griffiths: We have got the message. I just want to say, and I should have said it in my contribution, some of the road safety adverts, especially those with a child and what has happened to them are absolutely stunning.

Mr Devereux: Thank you.

Q127 Chairman: We have not asked you much if at all about the Think! campaign which you spend £17.6 million from your £36 million publicity budget on. The Think! campaign is obviously quite important but is it value for money? It seems from this Report at paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18 that you cannot actually demonstrate any link with reducing casualties.

Mr Devereux: I signed this Report off on the basis that that is factually correct. I cannot tell you that educating people will at the margins change a particular casualty but I referred to it earlier so

perhaps you will let me tell you now. When drink driving was introduced as an offence in 1968 it was accompanied by a huge amount of publicity and deaths fell from 1,640 in 1967 to 1,152 in 1968, so overnight a huge improvement. In the subsequent seven years there was no publicity campaign, no publicity at all, and the percentage of crashes in which alcohol was a factor rose from 15% to 35%. Since we started doing the Think! campaign we actually managed to produce a downward trend of over 72% in deaths and the number of people admitting to driving with a drink inside them has fallen from 51% in 1979 to 17% today. The implication of all of that, and it is not a hard fact, is that one of the reasons people crash is because they are doing crazy behaviours and I have got to get it in their head, not just design their vehicle and design their road and put in speed limits.

Q128 Chairman: That is a perfectly fair answer. Do you think you have a lack of direct levers? We have given you quite a hard time this afternoon but really you have a limited budget and the responsibility as we have heard lies with local authorities. Are you basically a good research unit providing support to the front line?

Mr Devereux: We are more than that. The fact that there is such disparate performance across local government does not make me feel warm that if I just left it to local government it would happen anyway. What are we bringing to the party? We are bringing to the party an oversight of the whole thing, the setting of a strategy, the setting of targets. We are basically the principal funder, it is taxpayers' money that is being spent even if it is being spent by a local government. We are the ones running the national publicity campaigns and we are the ones who are best able to do national research. We are likewise, I am afraid, the people in Europe negotiating vehicle standards and improvements; we are the people who regulate by law whether you can drive on the pavement or not on a cycle. There is quite a large amount to be done by the central government department, but it is true that on the ground locally local government is a very big partner. So it is in so many other things and I am very happy with that, but we have enough levers to do it.

Chairman: Thank you very much; that concludes our hearing. We have got to underline that Britain is one of the safest countries in the world in terms of road deaths so we give you that; it is just that we have a particular problem with road safety for pedestrians and cyclists and of course children, so we hope that our hearing will have made a difference in a positive way. We are very grateful to you, thank you.

ROAD DEATHS INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS, 2007

Note: These rankings are based on latest available data.

<i>Road deaths per 100,000 population</i>		<i>Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 population</i>		<i>Pedal cyclist deaths per 100,000 population</i>		<i>Children (aged 0–14) deaths per 100,000 population</i>		<i>Child pedestrian (aged 0–14) deaths per 100,000 population</i>		<i>Child pedal cyclist (aged 0–14) deaths per 100,000 population</i>	
1 Malta	3.4	1 Iceland	0.32	1 Norway	0.15	1 Japan	0.81	1 Austria	0.23	1 Australia	0.05
2 Netherlands	4.8	2 Norway	0.49	2 Australia	0.20	2 Great Britain	0.88	2 Sweden	0.26	2 Switzerland	0.08
3 Iceland	4.9	3 Netherlands	0.53	3 Spain	0.20	3 United Kingdom	0.90	3 Netherlands	0.27	3 France	0.10
4 Great Britain	5.0	4 Sweden	0.64	4 United Kingdom	0.23	4 Sweden	0.90	4 Japan	0.34	4 United Kingdom	0.10
5 Norway	5.0	5 Germany	0.84	5 Great Britain	0.23	5 Germany	0.96	5 Germany	0.34	5 Great Britain	0.11
6 United Kingdom	5.0	6 Finland	0.91	6 France	0.23	6 Austria	1.00	6 Australia	0.34	6 Finland	0.11
7 Switzerland	5.1	7 France	0.91	7 New Zealand	0.28	7 Slovenia	1.07	7 Belgium	0.39	7 Sweden	0.13
8 Sweden	5.2	8 Australia	0.96	8 Ireland	0.35	8 Norway	1.10	8 France	0.39	8 South Korea	0.15
9 Japan	5.2	9 Belgium	0.97	9 Sweden	0.36	9 Italy	1.14	9 Great Britain	0.40	9 Austria	0.15
10 Israel	5.5	10 Switzerland	1.05	10 Switzerland	0.40	10 Switzerland	1.18	10 United Kingdom	0.41	10 Germany	0.20
11 Germany	6.0	11 New Zealand	1.06	11 Finland	0.42	11 Netherlands	1.25	11 Ireland	0.46	11 New Zealand	0.23
12 Finland	7.2	12 United Kingdom	1.09	12 Austria	0.45	12 Israel	1.38	12 Switzerland	0.51	12 Japan	0.23
13 Denmark	7.4	13 Great Britain	1.09	13 Germany	0.52	13 France	1.45	13 Czech Republic	0.54	13 Czech Republic	0.27
14 France	7.5	14 Denmark	1.24	14 South Korea	0.62	14 Iceland	1.52	14 Finland	0.55	14 Belgium	0.28
15 Australia	7.7	15 Austria	1.30	15 Japan	0.77	15 Finland	1.55	15 Denmark	0.69	15 Poland	0.34
16 Ireland	7.8	16 Spain	1.33	16 Belgium	0.83	16 Belgium	1.67	16 New Zealand	0.79	16 Ireland	0.34
17 Austria	8.3	17 Japan	1.73	17 Netherlands	0.90	17 Spain	1.67	17 Poland	0.95	17 Denmark	0.40
18 Canada	8.4	18 Ireland	1.87	18 Denmark	0.99	18 Czech Republic	1.69	18 South Korea	1.47	18 Netherlands	0.54
19 Spain	8.6	19 Czech Republic	2.28	19 Czech Republic	1.13	19 Australia	1.72	19 Iceland	1.52	19	
20 Italy	8.7	20 Hungary	2.86	20 Poland	1.31	20 Portugal	1.77	20		20	
21 Luxembourg	9.0	21 South Korea	4.75	21 Hungary	1.57	21 Ireland	1.82	21		21	
22 Slovenia	14.6	22 Poland	5.12	22		22 Denmark	1.98	22		22	
23 Portugal	9.6	23		23		23 Luxembourg	2.27	23		23	
24 New Zealand	10.0	24		24		24 South Korea	2.31	24		24	
25 Belgium	10.1	25		25		25 Hungary	2.42	25		25	
27 Slovakia	11.6	27		27		27 Poland	2.64	27		27	
28 Czech Republic	11.9	28		28		28 Cyprus	2.86	28		28	
29 Hungary	12.2	29		29		29 Slovakia	2.87	29		29	
30 South Korea	12.7	30		30		30 Bulgaria	2.91	30		30	
31 Romania	13.0	31		31		31 Estonia	3.00	31		31	
32 Bulgaria	13.1	32		32		32 New Zealand	3.04	32		32	
33 USA	13.7	33		33		33 Greece	3.38	33		33	
34 Greece	14.4	34		34		34 Latvia	3.45	34		34	
35 Estonia	14.6	35		35		35 Lithuania	5.76	35		35	
36 Poland	14.6	36		36		36		36		36	
37 Latvia	18.4	37		37		37		37		37	
38 Lithuania	21.8	38		38		38		38		38	

5 June 2009

Supplementary memorandum from Department for Transport

Questions 1–11 (Chairman): *Why does our child pedestrian fatality rate compare less well with other countries?*

In 2005 TRL published a research project on the development of road safety in Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, known as SUNflower. When comparing pedestrian fatality rates in the three countries, it found the following reasons for the higher rate in the UK:

- A higher proportion of large cities in Britain, which have higher pedestrian fatality rates than the smaller towns that are more prevalent in the other countries.
- More and busier roads are crossed by British pedestrians on their walking trips.
- More older style (pre-1914) road layouts, with consequent higher accident rates, still exist in Britain.
- Slightly more fatalities occur away from marked crossing sites in Britain, though accident rates are not obviously worse than at marked crossing sites.

In addition to the above factors research has demonstrated the strong correlation between child pedestrian accidents and levels of deprivation.

Earlier research, published by MVA in 1999, comparing child pedestrian casualties in Britain, France and the Netherlands, found that:

- There is little difference in the total amount of time children spend near roads, but children in Britain cross roads less frequently.
- In Britain fewer crossings are made using designated crossings.
- Children in Britain spend more time on busy main roads which are less safe than local distributor and residential roads.
- British children are less likely to be accompanied by an adult.

Our relatively poor performance internationally on child deaths was one of the main reasons that our 2000 road safety strategy set a more stringent casualty reduction target for 2010 for children aged 0–15 than for the population as a whole. The 2010 target for children is a 50% reduction in the number killed or seriously injured (KSI), compared with a 40% reduction in total KSIs. By 2007 we had achieved a 55% reduction in child KSIs, exceeding the 2010 target. Other countries have also made significant improvements and so, although our child pedestrian fatality rates have fallen and we have moved up the international comparisons table over the years, our fatality rates are still relatively higher than some other countries.

Questions 52–53: *The effectiveness of THINK! campaigns in changing the attitudes of drivers, specifically young drivers*

THINK! campaigns are loosely designed around the Theory of Planned Behaviour which is based on the idea that attitudes and beliefs have an effect on intentions which in turn affect behaviours. We can track changes in beliefs and attitudes over time and demonstrate that they have changed as a result of our campaigns, and we can identify correlations between changing attitudes and changing behaviour. However, we cannot extrapolate that the publicity campaigns have causal relationship with behaviour change as other factors are at play, principally enforcement and engineering.

SPEED

Attitudes to speeding in built up areas have been shifting over time:

Male drivers under 35 disagreeing with the statement “30 mph is too slow nowadays in a residential area”

March 1998	36%
April 2000	44%
March 2001	50%
December 2008	57%

Over this period, observational research has identified that the number of cars exceeding 30 mph has declined from 70% in 1998 to 48% in 2007.

Publicity campaigns addressing speeding in built up areas have been run throughout the period being monitored which address stopping distances, the effect of hitting a child at 40 mph vs 30 mph, and this year, the effect on the driver of being responsible for the death of a child because they were speeding.

MOBILE PHONES

We have monitored the social acceptability of using a mobile phone when driving as this relates to normative beliefs: ie if an individual believes that a behaviour is normal, particularly within their peer group, they do not feel any pressure to change.

On this measure, the number of under 35 year old men who believe it is extremely unacceptable to drive whilst using a mobile phone increased by 46% between January 2001 November 2008 (from 22% to 68%).

We also monitor if people believe it is dangerous to drive whilst using a mobile phone. In April 1998 (before legislation was introduced) 30% of men under 30 completely agreed that this was dangerous. By November 2008 (following legislation introduced in 2003 and 2007), 68% completely agreed that it was dangerous to drive whilst using a phone without hands free (14% completely agreed that it is dangerous to drive whilst using a phone with hands free, which is not against the law).

In September 2003, 3.2% of drivers used a mobile phone when driving, reducing to 1.5% in September 2008 according to observational surveys.

A number of publicity campaigns have run over the period addressing the dangers of driving whilst on the phone, including demonstrating the difficulty of doing two things at once, targeting the person on the other end of the conversation and addressing the dangers of texting whilst driving.

SEAT BELTS

Seat belt wearing is a more mature road safety issue than mobile phones as legislation mandating the wearing of seat belts in the front of the car was introduced in 1983. It is also more complex as wearing rates are influenced by the individual's position in the car.

In 1998 only 45% of males under 30 considered it extremely unacceptable not to be belted up in the back. A campaign showing an unbelted child being thrown forward and hitting his mother on the head was launched in that year and by October 2005 there was an increase to 71% on the same measure.

Wearing rates also improved over the period: in April 1998 88% of men under 30 belted up in the back, increasing to 94% by 2008 according to observational studies.

Questions 64–65 (Mr Bacon): *Total Casualties by Road User Type and Severity*

Table 1
TOTAL CASUALTIES BY ROAD USER TYPE AND SEVERITY

		<i>1994–98 average</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Pedestrian	Killed	1,008	774	671	671	675	646
	Serious	10,662	7,159	6,807	6,458	6,376	6,278
	KSI	11,669	7,933	7,478	7,129	7,051	6,924
	All severities	46,543	36,405	34,881	33,281	30,982	30,191
Pedal cyclist	Killed	186	114	134	148	146	136
	Serious	3,546	2,297	2,174	2,212	2,296	2,428
	KSI	3,732	2,411	2,308	2,360	2,442	2,564
	All severities	24,385	17,033	16,648	16,561	16,196	16,195
Car occupant	Killed	1,762	1,769	1,671	1,675	1,612	1,432
	Serious	21,492	15,522	14,473	12,942	12,642	11,535
	KSI	23,254	17,291	16,144	14,617	14,254	12,967
	All severities	203,288	188,342	183,858	178,302	171,000	161,433
Motorcycle user	Killed	467	693	585	569	599	588
	Serious	6,008	6,959	6,063	5,939	5,885	6,149
	KSI	6,475	7,652	6,648	6,508	6,484	6,737
	All severities	24,023	28,411	25,641	24,824	23,326	23,459
Other road users (goods vehicles, buses, coaches, other vehicles)	Killed	155	158	160	138	140	144
	Serious	2,370	1,770	1,613	1,403	1,474	1,384
	KSI	2,526	1,928	1,773	1,541	1,614	1,528
	All severities	21,689	20,416	19,812	18,049	16,900	16,502
All road users	Killed	3,578	3,508	3,221	3,201	3,172	2,946
	Serious	44,078	33,707	31,130	28,954	28,673	27,774
	KSI	47,656	37,215	34,351	32,155	31,845	30,720
	All severities	319,928	290,607	280,840	271,017	258,404	247,780

24 June 2009