



Cycle Safety Briefing on behalf of CTC Scotland

CTC is the national cyclists' organisation – the 'AA' for cyclists. We have over 4100 members in Scotland. We embrace all types of cycling but are particularly committed to everyday cycling for utility reasons – work, school, shopping.

This briefing is for the RS Operational Partnership Group's meeting on cycle safety. It is arranged as a series of 'issues', followed in each case by 'what the Scottish Government could do' ('SG').

1 Risks of not cycling outweigh risks of cycling by 77:1. Despite recent deaths, cycling is essentially a safe and benign mode of travel. Numbers killed are so small that the stats are unreliable. Until recently, stats have been based on 'absolute' figures. Casualty figures should be related to number of trips. If cycling increases faster than the casualties, cycling is getting safer. Over past decade, casualties dropped 17%, while use grew by 20%, so risk per mile has dropped by 31%. This is still not as fast as for other road users. Clearly, more can be done.

SG: ensure stats are related to amount of cycling being done – 'rate-based' measure of safety.

2 'Safety in Numbers': Research shows cycling is safest in countries or regions where numbers are highest – because drivers become more aware, learn to expect cyclists. Cycling is also an economical necessity. Every bike is potentially one less car. A 10% reduction in cars produces a much bigger reduction in congestion – the latter costs Scottish economy at least £2bn/year. Health benefits also estimated at £2bn/year.

SG: get more people cycling. Take the CAPS target seriously, by devising a worked-out and costed strategy for achieving the target of 10% of journeys by 2020.

3 Slower speeds: greatest source of danger is disparity in speeds of bikes vs. vehicles. Where 20mph zones have been introduced, casualties have fallen and cycling has increased.

SG: 1) encourage Local Authorities to introduce a rolling program of 20mph zones.

2) driver education – convince drivers that 20mph will not make their journey longer – average in-town vehicle speeds are well less than 20; and big fuel savings possible.

4 Roads infrastructure: current infrastructure of main roads is unsuitable and unsafe for cycling.

SG: initiate a rolling program to re-design major junctions to incorporate cycle safety.

5 Road maintenance: current state of roads in towns and cities, especially the parts of the road used by cyclists, not just appalling but dangerous. Cyclists constantly swerving to avoid bumps.

SG: 1) introduce program to ensure urban streets brought up to the standards of trunk roads.

2) ensure LAs are required to cater specifically for cyclists in all roadworks.

6 Strict liability: in many countries of Europe, drivers are presumed liable in any collisions with pedestrians or cyclists, unless there's evidence to the contrary. Makes drivers much more cautious. Two cycling solicitors have confirmed they believe strict liability is a devolved matter.

SG: opportunity for a 'first' here! Put Scotland ahead of the rest of Britain, and on par with Europe.

7 "Cyclists feel excluded from justice": trivial sentences given to drivers who kill or main vulnerable road users. Speed cameras not being used effectively or treated seriously. When charging, 'careless driving' always preferred over 'dangerous driving' because easier to secure conviction.

SG: tighten up the application of the law, and ensure some well-publicised cases of drivers being properly dealt with.

8 What to avoid: Times campaign and Parliamentary debate commended for avoiding 'blame the victim' – eg wear helmets. **SG:** adopt similar attitude of encouraging cycling.