

RoadPeace dedicated to supporting road crash victims

support ● advocacy ● education ● research ● working for *real* road safety



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Tom Healey
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House of Commons
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Dear Mr Healey

The Government's motorcycling strategy

RoadPeace and the other people and organisations listed below are writing to support Stephen Plowden's plea, in his letter to the Committee on 16 July 2007, that the Committee should insist that the government looks again at reducing the permitted weight, power and speed of motorcycles.

The case for 'downsizing' motorcycles, as described above, is very strong. Hundreds of deaths and thousands of serious casualties could be saved in quite a short time, and the wholly disproportionate impact that motorcycles have on the environment could be very much reduced. These benefits could be obtained without compromising the usefulness of motorcycles to law-abiding riders.

In its memorandum to the Committee, RoadPeace said that it was inexcusable that the Government's strategy made no mention of the risk that motorcycling posed to other road users in addition to considerable risks to themselves. Indeed the memorandum from CTC (the national cyclists' organisation) provided calculations from Government statistics showing that, mile for mile, powered two wheelers (PTWs) are about 1.5 times as likely as cars to be involved in collisions which cause injury to cyclists, twice as likely to be involved in causing them serious injuries and about three times as likely to be involved in killing them. For pedestrian injuries, PTWs compare even more unfavourably; per mile travelled they are about 3.8 times as likely as cars to be involved in slightly or serious injuring pedestrians, and over 4 times as likely to be involved in killing them. Motorcyclists also present significant risks to themselves. Despite considerable reductions for other road users, the number of motorcyclist riders and passengers killed rose from 467 in 1994-98 to 599 in 2006. None of these facts are mentioned either in the Government's Motorcycling Strategy or in the response to the Transport Committee."

The Committee said it was "unacceptable that the heavier of these vehicles [motorcycles] are more polluting than cars, this may be another argument in favour of reducing the maximum power and speed that is available on these vehicles". The Transport Committee's report did not ask the Government to commit itself to making policy changes straight away, but only to research the possibility of fitting motorcycles with speed limiters, and to recognise that combating pollution could be another reason for reducing the power and speed available on these vehicles.

The arguments used by the DfT for turning down these very moderate suggestions are spurious and disingenuous. We believe that if the matter is allowed to rest there, not only will the horrific toll of casualties and the serious environmental impact continue, quite unnecessarily, but Parliament's prestige will suffer and public disillusion with the political system will grow.

We therefore urge the Committee to say to the Government that its response is not acceptable, that it should acknowledge that a very strong *prima facie* case for "downsizing" motorcycles has been made, and that it will give very high priority to a thorough investigation of this case and to introducing whatever measures this investigation may suggest.

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