



Tackling the Deficit

Where next for road safety?

Naomi Baster
March 2011

The Royal Automobile Club Foundation for Motoring Ltd is a charity which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and responsible road users. Independent and authoritative research, carried out for the public benefit, is central to the Foundation's activities.

RAC Foundation
89–91 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5HS

Tel no: 020 7747 3445
www.racfoundation.org

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About the Author

Naomi Baster joined PACTS in October 2010 as a Policy and Research Officer. Previously she worked as a Researcher for Alistair Carmichael MP in the House of Commons, after having graduated with a first in Economics and French from Strathclyde University.

About The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)



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Contents

Foreword	iii
Executive Summary	v
1 Introduction and Methodology	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Methodology	2
2 The Context	4
2.1 Financing road safety	4
2.2 Localism	7
2.3 Road safety strategy	9
2.4 Overview	10
3 The Current Situation	12
3.1 Local authorities	13
3.2 Road user groups and professional institutions	15
3.3 Partnerships	16
4 Looking to the Future	17
4.1 The framework	17
4.2 Roles and responsibilities	21
4.3 Action	25
5 Conclusion	31
6 References	33

Foreword

As we near the end of the financial year, it is becoming clear that road safety will face challenging times over the next few years. The combination of a new government with a different approach to targets and strategies, a focus on deficit reduction and an emphasis on devolving decisions to local councils will mean that road safety and casualty reduction will struggle to secure both the resources and staff to make road safety a political priority.

Improvements in road safety do not occur by chance. They involve research, implementation and the evaluation of effectiveness. They are the result of decades of effort. Their impact, however, can be reduced very quickly. We hope that this will not be the result of the recent local government settlement which sees local authority budgets reduced substantially.

In the earlier report *Tackling the Deficit: At what cost for road safety?*, PACTS and the RAC Foundation highlighted the large number of organisations, whether governmental, professional, academic, campaigning or civil, involved in road safety. We suggested that this was an example of the 'Big Society' in action. Different groups are able to contribute in their own ways to improving safety. National government can set out the vision and overall direction of travel; but it is the organisations involved that provide most of the means of achievement.

The level of risk of death on the roads remains substantially higher than that tolerated on other modes of transport or in other aspects of daily life. Road death and injury is not accidental. We know what to do: these are preventable events about which we can, and as a civilised society should, take action. We hope, therefore, that road safety will not become another victim of budget cuts at a point when it has much more to achieve.

Internationally, the United Nations has initiated a *Decade of Action for Road Safety* beginning in May this year and running until 2020. The United Kingdom needs to play a full role in this decade, alongside our colleagues throughout the world. For many years, the UK has been seen as a leader in the field of road safety. National and local politicians are well placed to ensure that we continue to lead, inform and help the other parts of the world in this important area.

This report sets out the case for a further focus on cutting road casualties in Great Britain beyond 2010. It argues for a vision for road safety supported by a measurable outcome, informed by performance indicators that will help professionals and the public know that safety is being improved. Internationally, this approach is shown to result in higher levels of reduction than in those countries without a strategy or target. It is also an approach adopted throughout the rest of Europe and endorsed by the OECD.

While PACTS and the RAC Foundation might have differing views on specific road safety interventions, we are united on one matter: road safety must lie at the heart of government transport policy - the potential human and economic benefits dictate so. As the government considers its strategic framework for road safety, we would encourage it to follow best international practice and the approach adopted by their predecessors in 1987 and in 2000. Saving lives on the roads has been supported by previous governments of all political parties. We would urge the current Ministerial team to reaffirm its commitment to improving the safety of our citizens.



S. Glaister

Stephen Glaister
Director, RAC Foundation



Robert Gifford

Robert Gifford
Executive Director, PACTS

Executive Summary

Background

This second PACTS report on *Tackling the Deficit* commissioned by the RAC Foundation presents updates from around the road safety sector at the close of 2010, a time when a new government was in place, with consequent new budget arrangements and policies. It then looks forward to 2011 and the rest of the decade, focusing on the strategic framework for road safety that is due to be published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in April 2011.

Methodology

The information in this report is a combination of desk-based analysis and qualitative research conducted by means of communications with academics, practitioners and professionals. In order to take stock of the current situation and establish a well-rounded viewpoint, PACTS spoke to representatives from local authorities, police forces, the UK Fire and Rescue Service, professional bodies, academia and consultancies.

Key findings

Research for this report found a pessimistic mood among many representatives of the road safety sector. However, it should be noted that research was conducted at a difficult time, soon after the Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12, and that, even at this time, both enthusiasm and ideas for moving forward were in evidence. This demonstrates the determination and dedication of the sector, which should give road safety professionals inspiration to take the proactive approach required to keep road safety a priority at a time of austerity.

- *The effects of localism*

Although the Localism Bill is recent, and elements such as mutuals (companies owned by their members not shareholders) and Local Enterprise Partnerships are yet to establish themselves, aspects of decentralisation have trickled down to a local level through the Spending Review. The effect has mostly been financial, with local authorities assuming more decision-making powers as budgets are no longer ring-fenced.

- *Financing road safety*

Road safety sits in a complex financial context, with increased competition for reduced funds. In the questionnaire issued by PACTS, 89% of respondents answered 'negative' or 'potentially negative' to the question 'With regard to the Budget and Spending Review, how do you view the impact on road safety in 2011?'.

Local authorities were the stakeholders who felt the most strongly about this question (with 92% answering ‘negative’ or ‘potentially negative’); they reported already having been affected by major budget cuts, job losses and a reduction in activities. These effects could be partly attributable to the perception that road safety is not a priority for central government, and that funding is consequentially being directed towards other services.

- *The Government’s road safety strategy*

As was discussed in the first *Tackling the Deficit* report, road safety deliverers have been facing difficulties due to the lack of a current road safety strategy. The sector is now awaiting the promised strategic framework due in April 2011.

- *Targets and a vision*

Research for this report found widespread support for a nationwide vision and target, to reassure local decision makers that road safety is a priority. Strong leadership on the importance of road safety will send out a clear message, and will give road safety greater backing at a local level when it comes to competing for funding. Providing this direction could also help slow the current rapid loss of skilled and experienced professionals from the sector.

Research also found support for a cross-government vision which focused on better, safer communities where the road environment invites active travel and encourages people to share responsibility for it. The DfT should continue to work with public health professionals to develop this kind of joined-up approach, whilst focusing on removing the safety-related barriers to active travel. Targets based on casualty rates should be committed to, in order to avoid the possible undesirable effect of discouraging vulnerable road users from travelling by their preferred mode of transport.

- *Roles and responsibilities*

Localism engenders altered roles and responsibilities throughout the road safety field, making it vital that the Government’s new strategic framework defines exactly what ‘local’ means, and provides an indication of the kind of contributions required from all involved. This will eliminate repetition (with its associated inefficiencies), avoid competition between stakeholders, and improve accountability.

As roles develop and evolve, all contributors will need to be flexible and open to change, whilst keeping the main goal of improving road safety in mind. Changes bring new opportunities, and a positive attitude will be an important factor in realising the potential of this change.

In this new era of localism, local authorities should be engaging with civil society through the dissemination of useful and accessible information. They will be required to develop new relationships and to draw on available resources, for example by co-ordinating and supporting the Fire and Rescue Service, who could take on a more active role in delivery of road safety.

Central government in particular has key responsibilities, which it cannot devolve to local authorities. Only central government has the ability to provide an overview, and to advise, co-ordinate, monitor and encourage consistency between local authorities.

- *Actions*

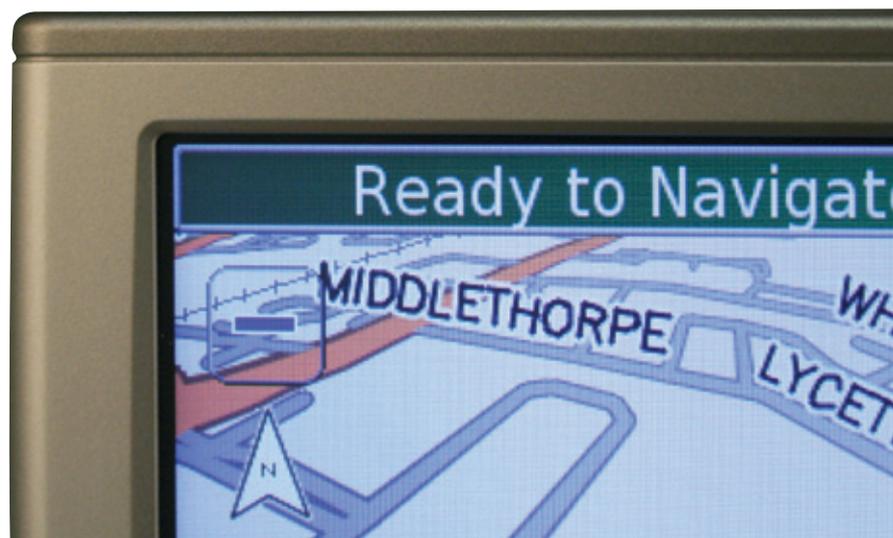
If the UK is to maintain its international reputation for high standards of road safety, both the road safety sector and central government should:

- promote best practice to encourage partnerships;
- encourage knowledge transfer partnerships between universities, businesses and the public sector;
- show commitment to an evidence-led approach by encouraging research;
- engage with the private sector to promote and encourage road safety activities; and
- target action on high-risk user groups.

The UK has a wealth of information, which would be best managed centrally by the establishment of an accessible central source of data and research; this would also facilitate the sharing of both successful and less successful practice. In times of austerity it is essential to pool resources, to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.

Research conducted for this report, including the questionnaire, led to the compilation of a shortlist of one-off and mid- to long-term actions for which the government should take responsibility. They include: committing to a timetable to act on the Transport Committee's advice to reduce the drink-drive limit to 20 mg alcohol per 100 ml blood; requiring the Health and Safety Executive to address traffic accidents in the course of work on equal terms with other accidents at work; and publishing revised guidance on how to implement 20 mph limits and zones.

Over the longer term, the DfT should ensure that they complete a number of ongoing actions such as: enhancing data collection using available technologies as well as by combining resources with those of other departments; ensuring that driver and rider training and testing is updated; monitoring prosecution and sentencing for driving offences; encouraging a programme of research into the changing contributory factors to casualty occurrence, notably in respect of vehicle technology and devices which can distract drivers.



1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Looking at the figures from the first three quarters of 2010, it is reasonable to estimate that road deaths fell below 2,000 in the year 2010, and the road safety community should be proud of the achievement represented by the lowering of this figure. However, this achievement will be of little comfort to the family and friends of those who died on the roads last year, or indeed those who suffered serious injuries. Road deaths and serious injuries are preventable, and it is important to keep up the enthusiasm, especially the political enthusiasm, for further reducing this figure.





The year 2010 saw many changes, with the election of a new government, and consequently a new Budget and new policies. This, coupled with the recession, has inevitably led to changes for road safety. This report forms the second part of a two-part series written by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) on behalf of the RAC Foundation. The first report in the series, *Tackling the Deficit: At What Cost to Road Safety?*, was published in October 2010. It analysed the impact of the emergency Budgets for 2010/11 on the road safety sector, and made recommendations encouraging best use of road safety funding within the context of budget cuts which were expected to follow the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in October 2010.

This second report will review the CSR and the current situation for the road safety sector, and focus on the Road Safety Strategic Framework, which, as stated in the DfT's Business Plan, is scheduled for publication in April 2011. As PACTS discovered when researching the first report, the lack of a new strategy to replace *Tomorrow's Roads, Safer For Everyone* – the previous government's road safety strategy which ran until the end of 2010 – was a major concern for all stakeholders. With budget cuts, no strategy, and localism giving them more freedom but also fewer guidelines, it was feared at local authority level that road safety would be pushed down to the bottom of the priority list.

With a new strategic framework being devised, it is an important time to gather information on the current situation for the road safety sector and the opinions of professionals on what the strategy should contain. The strategic framework needs to be ambitious but achievable, and to send out a clear message to local authorities that the Government takes road safety seriously.

1.2 Methodology

The information in this report is a combination of desk-based analysis and qualitative research conducted by means of communications with academics, practitioners and professionals. In order to take stock of the current situation

for section 3, and a well-rounded viewpoint for section 4, PACTS spoke to representatives from local authorities, police forces, the UK Fire and Rescue Service, professional bodies, academia and consultancies.

This communication came mainly in the form of a questionnaire which was sent out to PACTS members, subscribers to Road Safety GB, and subscribers to the IRSO (the Institute of Road Safety Officers) emailing group 'safe and sustainable road transport'. It was also given to attendees at the Road Safety GB conference in November 2010.

PACTS polled respondents on a number of multiple-choice questions. Space was also given for more substantial and detailed responses. Respondents included representatives from geographically varied locations and of varied professions, and who also made a variety of contributions to road safety. This input was extremely valuable and the author wishes to thank all those who shared their experience and expertise.

It is stressed that the opinions and conclusions outlined in this report are those of PACTS and the author. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the RAC Foundation or the organisations consulted as part of the report.



2. The Context

Since the previous *Tackling the Deficit report* (Besley, 2010), the CSR and the Localism Bill have been published. Both these documents underline the new government's programme of public service reform. This section will highlight important elements from both documents in order to provide the current policy context for road safety. The section will also recap on the current situation with regard to a government road safety strategy, an issue that was fully discussed in the previous report.

2.1 Financing road safety

There are four important points to address when it comes to the future financing of road safety.





2.1.1 Cuts to road safety grants

Local road safety was affected significantly by this financial year's emergency Budget made in June 2010 which saw the abolition of the Road Safety Capital Grant (which had been set at £17.2 million) and a 27% cut to the Road Safety Revenue Grant (cutting it from £77.3 million to £56.7 million). From April 2011, the entire Road Safety Grant will be subsumed into the formula-based grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which funds revenue spending of all local authority services.

2.1.2 Budget cuts in the Department for Transport

Table 1 shows the resources that will be available to the DfT for the next five years.

Table 1: Resources that will be available to the DfT for the next five years

	£ billion				
	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)	5.1	5.3	5.0	5.0	4.4
Capital DEL	7.7	7.7	8.1	7.5	7.5
Total DEL	12.8	13.0	13.1	12.5	12.0
Departmental Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

Note: Resource DEL excludes depreciation and AME excludes non-cash items.

Source: HM Treasury, *Spending Review 2010* (2010: 44)

The Government claims that the DfT's capital allocation has been 'relatively protected'; this includes more than £10 billion over the Spending Review period for maintenance and investment in key road schemes (HM Treasury, 2010). Cuts to the DfT resource allocation are expected by the Government to be taken care of by reduced administrative costs at the DfT and its Arms Length Bodies (HM Treasury, 2010).

At the local level, authorities will as a result of these changes see their capital funding cut by 22% (LocalGov.co.uk, 2010). The integrated transport block will be halved in 2011/12, and highways maintenance will be cut by 15% over the course of the Spending Review period.

2.1.3 Budget cuts in the Department for Communities and Local Government

The overall picture of local government revenue funding remains complex. The ending of ring-fenced funding is intended to give local councils greater flexibility in meeting local need. For transport in general, and for road safety in particular, this will result in competition for revenue funding between these services and others such as adult social care, child protection and, in some authorities, libraries.

The picture is further complicated by the decision to put road safety, rural bus subsidy, and grants for detrunking (the change in 'ownership' of strategically important roads from central to local government) together under the heading 'Local Transport Services'. This decision may also result in the creation of unnecessary internal competition within transport itself.

DCLG funding is due to undergo cuts amounting to 28% over the next four years (DCLG, 2010), so road safety will be looking for funding from an increasingly shrinking pot. Most local authorities are yet to confirm the amount of resource funding which will be allocated to road safety from April 2011.

2.1.4 The Local Sustainable Transport Fund

A four-year £560 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) has been set up to encourage active travel, with the aims of reducing carbon emissions and increasing levels of physical activity. The application guidance states that proposals which improve safety will be favourably considered, but it is not compulsory. It is disappointing that safety was not included in the primary objectives for the fund, particularly as safety is vital for the achievement of the second objective (DfT, 2011a):

'reduce carbon emissions, for example by bringing about an increase in the volume and proportion of journeys made by low carbon, sustainable modes including walking and cycling.'

2.2 Localism

The purpose of the localism agenda is to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods, whilst giving local communities more control. According to the Prime Minister's Office, the main benefits of localism will be (Number 10, 2010):

- Empowering local people.
- Freeing local government from central and regional control.
- Giving local communities a real share in local growth.
- A more efficient and more local planning system.

Localism has three important impacts on road safety, relating to decentralisation, mutuals and Local Enterprise Partnerships respectively.

2.2.1 Decentralisation

'For far too long local people have had too little say over a planning system that has imposed bureaucratic decisions by distant officials in Whitehall and the town hall. We need to change things... so there is more direct democracy and less bureaucracy in the system. These reforms will become the building blocks of the Big Society.'

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 18 November 2010 (BBC, 2010)

The Government's public sector reform redistributes power away from central government, with the theory that this gives power to the people who are directly affected by local services and who are therefore most likely to have ideas for improving them.

The devolution of power gives a greater role to civil society, which will have the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue, and the power to veto excessive council tax increases. Local authorities will have more responsibility for decisions on spending.

Underlying the reform is the view that 'the changes needed to tackle the social and economic challenges facing the UK today are too numerous and too complex to be solved by a one size fits all approach from central government' (HM Treasury, 2010). By localising power and funding, the Government believes that it will get rid of the burdens, regulations and targets that have 'stifled innovation and freedom' (HM Treasury, 2010).

In the first *Tackling the Deficit* report, PACTS identified a significant level of confusion about the process of decentralisation. It was thought that it might lead to a strained relationship between central and local government. It would

seem that there is still a lack of clarity about what localism means. There is also concern that local priorities could become skewed towards the groups of people who shout the loudest.

2.2.2 Mutuals

'I know that across the country there are literally thousands of front line employees who can see how things can be done better, but at the moment, with the existing constraints, they just can't get it done. Now this is going to change... We must not be afraid to do things differently if we are to provide better services for less money.'

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office, 12 August 2010
(Cabinet Office, 2010)

As part of the localism agenda, public sector workers have the right to form John Lewis-style employee-owned co-operatives to take over running the services they deliver. Local people and employees will be able to demand the right to run a service where they believe they could run it better than local authority management. To aid this, the Government states that £470 million will be budgeted over the Spending Review period to support capacity building in the voluntary and community sector, including an endowment fund to assist local voluntary and community organisations. The Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude has stated that £10 million in extra funding has been set aside to help with the start-up costs of mutuals, which could be independent or part-public organisations.

Allowing mutuals to take over the provision of public services could reduce the effectiveness of local authority economies of scale, and might raise questions about accountability and ensuring the quality of the service. While they may not be an attractive option for many aspects of road safety work, it will be important to monitor any such developments.

2.2.3 Local Enterprise Partnerships

'The outcome will vary just as local economic priorities differ across the country. In some areas, there might be a focus on skills. In others, local enterprise partnerships may help set priorities for planning and infrastructure decisions. The key is that these partnerships are built from the bottom up and will have the flexibility to determine their own agenda, rather than have it handed down to them by Whitehall.'

Dr Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, 7 September 2010 (News Distribution Service for Government and the Public Sector, 2010)

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) replace Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). They represent smaller regions, and delivery partners were involved in the decision about defining regions. To date, the first 24 LEPs have been announced, and are now setting up boards and local governance structures.

It has been suggested that they will sit on regional committees responsible for monitoring programmes paid for by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). As the abolished RDAs used to be responsible for administering ERDFs, details of how the ERDF is to be managed are to be given in next year's Budget. It is unclear whether LEPs will take over responsibility for regional transport developments which were formerly the responsibility of the RDAs.

It remains to be seen whether LEPs will contribute to any aspects of road safety work. There is a possibility that they could be useful in areas such as travel to work and occupational road risk, where journeys often cross local authority boundaries.

2.3 Road safety strategy

Tomorrow's Roads, Safer for Everyone was published in March 2000 and set casualty reduction targets and a road safety strategy for the following ten years. This strategy technically ended at the end of 2010, and the previous PACTS report *Tackling the Deficit* identified a high level of concern amongst professionals about there being no replacement strategy.

The research which PACTS undertook for that report showed widespread support for the role which the *Tomorrow's Roads* strategy had played. The strategy was thought to be comprehensible, feasible and relevant. Road safety professionals found that it enabled them to gain support for road safety, making it a priority for local authorities.

In Autumn 2010 local road safety delivery teams were facing difficulties due to the lack of a current relevant strategy. Interviews held by PACTS at the time identified the following problems with the absence of a road safety strategy for the future:

- difficulty in, or impossibility of, securing funding;
- difficulty generating interest in or prioritising road safety;
- re-allocation of resources (including staff) to other policy areas;
- difficulty in maintaining partnerships; and
- perceived failure of the relationship between national and local government.



Local authorities were also facing timing difficulties developing the next round of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the period 2011–2016. The lack of clarity about a road safety strategy may mean that LTPs will have to be rewritten, or that they will contain little or no reference to road safety activity. Without a complete safety policy referred to in their LTP, it may well be difficult for local authorities to achieve the goal set out in the *Guidance on Local Transport Plans*: ‘contribute to better safety, security and health’ (DfT, 2009a).

At the beginning of November 2010, the Department for Transport announced its departmental Business Plan which set out a vision for the transport system, (DfT, 2010a), ‘...one that is... greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities.’ It also stated: ‘We... want our roads to become safer, less congested and less polluted,’ and promised: ‘...we will use insights from behavioural science to improve road safety...’.

The Business Plan also outlined actions, one of which is to ‘develop a new strategic framework for road safety’, due in April 2011. Since a new strategy was identified as being vitally important in the first *Tackling the Deficit* report, the remainder of this second report will focus on the requirements of the new strategy: the current situation in road safety; how professionals expect to move forward from this point; and the support and resources required to do so.

It should also be noted that much work and consultation across the road safety sector went into the consultation for *A Safer Way* (DfT, 2009b) in 2009, which was a new strategy to take over from *Tomorrow’s Roads* (DfT, 2000). Unfortunately, its progress and implementation were impeded by the general election. When making recommendations, this report will take into account the suggestions made during this consultation, which still remain relevant despite changes in the political landscape.

2.4 Overview

Taking action to tackle the UK’s budget deficit was inevitable and unavoidable, regardless of the results of the general election. However, as the above discussion has demonstrated, the coalition government has been making particularly deep and fast cuts. The benefits of road safety interventions can be difficult to quantify and are often widespread over many areas. Therefore with the present emphasis on value for money, it may be that road safety finds it more difficult to justify its spending, and so will face problems fighting for funding in this time of austerity.

The localism agenda aims to provide the right environment and opportunities for flexibility, for innovative ways of working, and for potential creativity to blossom. Road safety professionals have the opportunity to take advantage of this freedom to empower partnerships by turning them into mutuals, or by co-ordinating with other geographical areas in LEPs. Some will see this as a

chance to try new ideas and avoid any complacency. Others will see it as a dismissal of excellent work and an attempt to fix something that isn't broken.

In the previous *Tackling the Deficit* report, PACTS argued that road safety has always been a good example of the 'Big Society', bringing together national and local government, statutory agencies, the private sector and civil society to work together to cut casualties. Therefore road safety should be at an advantage in the new political push towards a Big Society. However, with greater power at a local level, local authorities now have to balance new responsibilities for departments which previously had more centralised agendas. Road safety could suffer as a consequence, as local authorities try to simultaneously strike a balance between their services, deal with a significantly reduced budget, and create an environment within which the Big Society can operate. The following section will examine the real effects of this new context for road safety.



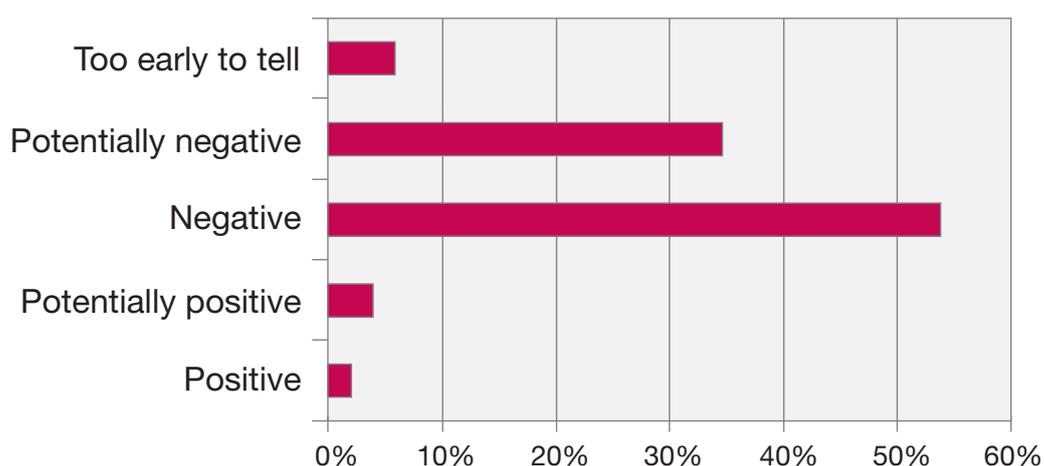
3. The Current Situation

The following discussion is based on experience shared through the questionnaire outlined in the methodology. It is worth noting that most of the research was conducted at a difficult time, during December 2010 and January 2011, soon after the Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12. Therefore readers should be aware that this section in particular provides simply a snapshot view of the current picture, which is likely to change in the coming months.





Figure 1: With regard to the Budget and Spending Review, how do you view the impact on road safety in 2011?

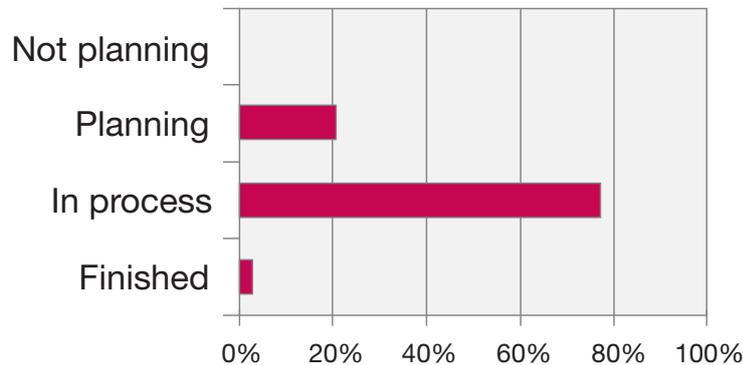


Source: PACTS questionnaire

3.1 Local authorities

Local authorities are experiencing significant changes, being directly impacted by the Localism Bill as well as by deficit reduction measures. The majority are in the process of reorganisation – seeing job losses and introducing new structures.



Figure 2: What stages are local authorities at in terms of reorganisation?

Source: PACTS questionnaire

Although the overall local government finance settlement was announced on the 13 December 2010, the lack of ring fencing means that local authority budgets are for the most part still unclear. There have been indications that money allocated to road safety will be significantly reduced. With less funding for engineering, enforcement and education, there was a very real concern expressed by those surveyed that casualty reduction will stall or even reverse.

The failure to publish a road safety strategy by the end of 2010 has led some local authorities to conclude that the Government is no longer committed to road safety. It would appear that this negative perception is influencing the decisions of local authorities and possibly represents an exaggeration of the real situation. There was also concern from participants that the speed of the cuts has not allowed for careful planning to be undertaken, and decisions have had to be made quickly and under pressure.

It is worth noting that previous to the emergency Budget in 2010, local authorities did not have an unlimited budget. The recession was already pushing all practitioners to find efficiencies and reduce spending; finding smarter ways of working is therefore not always possible, with the only remaining option then being strict budget cutting and resulting job losses. Various local authorities have given the following examples:

- Road safety engineering budget cut by 60–80%
- School crossing patrols completely or significantly cut
- Safety camera operations significantly reduced or threatened with switch off
- Cancelled investment in digital cameras due to reduced capital funding
- Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) examples:
 - around 25% cut in ETP funding;
 - Road Safety team merging with Traffic Management team functions, with reduced staffing and budget;

- reducing ETP activities to a minimum (including cutting free pedestrian, Bikeability and Bikesafe training);
- campaigns cancelled;
- reduced Road Safety ETP team from three full-time posts to one part-time post (three days);
- loss of road safety publicity officer post.

Many road safety officers have been told that their jobs are at risk. Ongoing reorganisation, which some reported as having been going on since September 2009, is expected to continue as the full impact of the Spending Review is felt, and this has been very damaging to morale in a number of instances. Those who succeed in keeping their jobs will be expected to spend more time trying to secure funding with less staff and reduced grants available, whilst keeping up the standards of road safety.

PACTS concluded from responses to the questionnaire that road safety officers need government to recognise and highlight the importance of road safety, to assure them that their work is valued and vital. Local authorities will find it hard to justify spending on road safety if central government does not take a lead on its importance. Cost-benefit analyses will not always help the justification, as while the local authority bears the cost of road safety interventions, the benefit is spread out between police, fire and rescue, the health service, and the communities which avoid the cost of physical and emotional pain.

3.2 Road user groups and professional institutions

The questionnaire revealed that over two thirds of this group felt that government actions have had a negative or potentially negative impact on their organisations. Whilst these figures paint quite a negative picture, they show more discrepancy than amongst the local authority representatives (92% of local authority representatives questioned believed there was a negative or potentially negative impact).

It may be that the impact will be felt later, when funding is finalised at a local level and the effect of reduced budgets are felt. While some consultancies may benefit from policy development in certain areas, many have expressed that they are experiencing difficulties due to a reduction in available funds.

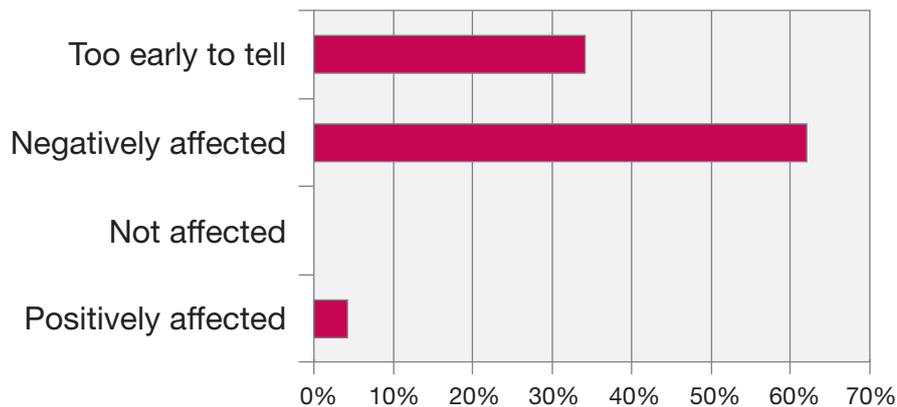
Commercial companies are likely to feel the effect of reduced capital budgets, with new technology investment falling lower down the priority list for central government and local authorities. This could in turn discourage research and development as well as technology innovations, allowing other countries to take the lead globally.

The DfT's research funding has also been reduced, with, for example, funding for the UK Transport Research Centre being cancelled, which risks significantly

affecting the UK's contribution to safety research. Because of cuts to research, the academics questioned were concerned that the Government does not value sufficiently highly the importance of an evidence-led approach.

3.3 Partnerships

Figure 3: What is the current situation for partnerships?



Source: PACTS questionnaire

The situation for partnerships is reported to be quite negative and hanging in the balance. The questionnaire responses indicate that most partnerships have experienced reduced funding, which significantly affects outputs, and that others were unable to identify what funds will be available beyond March 2011 which also impacts on current activity.

Reductions in both staff and budgets at the local authority level leave partners in a difficult position. Likewise local authorities are seeing cuts in their partners' budgets, which had previously funded projects and campaigns. An uncertain future makes partners nervous, and organisations reconsider their priorities.

Partnerships have to deal with reduced resources, with many casualty reduction partnerships under threat or already dismantled. There is a real fear among those questioned that a reduction in partnership working will cause a rise in the number of casualties seen on local and national roads.

Many participants mentioned the Government's announcement on speed cameras and expressed the concern that partnerships with reduced resources are beginning to rely on a limited income stream from speed awareness courses. It was suggested that activities will now naturally focus on revenue-earning enforcement and speed awareness, rather than proactive education and campaigns.

4. Looking to the Future

4.1 The framework

PACTS has concluded from speaking to representatives in road safety that in this time of economic uncertainty and a changing philosophy, the sector is looking for a *clear strategy*, with central government giving *a strong lead and a consistent direction*.

There needs to be a balance between local priorities and national consistency, and a strong emphasis on methodology and tools. It is hoped that these needs will be met in the forthcoming strategic framework from the DfT. This section will discuss the sector's requirements in greater detail and give recommendations. These recommendations

include the commitment to a vision, targets to ensure that the vision is delivered, and performance indicators to check progress towards the targets.





4.1.1 Vision

The questionnaire revealed much support for a long-term vision, to provide an indication of how much progress the government and society want road safety to make. This would also acknowledge that although we currently have some of the safest roads in the world, we have not become complacent, and are still dedicated to reducing road casualties. This should be an integrated, wide-reaching vision, one of better, safer communities where the road environment invites active travel, and responsibility for that environment is shared.

An integrated vision would show leadership on the linking of road safety to other departments, including the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health, the Department for Education, and the Department of Environment and Climate Change. An example of this approach is the recently published *Transport and Health Resource*, which was commissioned jointly by the Department for Transport and the Department of Health (DfT & DoH, 2011). This cross-departmental approach will help make road safety ‘mainstream’. For example, it should be standard procedure to consider road safety issues when proposing and planning new developments.

It would also increase the opportunity for establishing partnerships with private enterprise across a range of sectors. This approach could provide additional new funding possibilities, as well as the opportunity to benefit from the expertise and skills available in different areas. A goal of safe, active travel could lead to fruitful relationships with representatives in public health, and the DfT should encourage the DoH to include a road safety representative on the new health and well-being boards.

4.1.2 Targets

As discussed in the first *Tackling the Deficit* report (Besley, 2010: 6–7), international evidence shows that targets are beneficial. Research undertaken at the time also showed extensive endorsement of the impact made by the targets set out in *Tomorrow’s Roads* until the document ran its course at the

end of 2010. It was found that the absence of a strategy for the future caused many problems, including difficulty in securing funding and gaining interest in prioritising road safety.

During its research for this report, PACTS has found widespread support throughout the sector for future quantitative targets. They give local authorities a clear framework within which to implement local plans and by which to measure success, and provide a 'policy hook' which helps to engage local politicians. Additionally, and of particular importance at this time, it provides leverage for directing funding towards road safety. A new target would assure decision makers that road safety is a priority for the Government, whilst at the same time encouraging and motivating road safety professionals.

Casualty reduction targets are reliable and appropriate, and are widely regarded as being the most effective way of encouraging change, and measuring success and progress. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2008) found that countries with targets had 17% lower fatalities than the countries without targets.

To decide on an appropriate target, it is useful to look at casualty forecasts. A Transport Research Laboratory report (Broughton, 2010) estimated the casualty reductions that might be expected if current road safety programmes were developed, but assuming that there were no new road safety measures introduced. The conclusion is that the casualty statistics for road accidents in 2020 'could well be a little more than one half of the 2004–2008 average' for seriously injured, and 'more than one third below the 2004–2008 average' for killed. Therefore on this basis, and knowing that in the last two years reductions in the number of people killed have fallen so as to now be in line with reductions in serious injuries, this report recommends the following targets:

- to reduce the number of people killed in road collisions by at least 50% by 2020; and
- to reduce the number of people seriously injured in road collisions by at least 50% by 2020.

These targets are more ambitious than those laid out in either *Tomorrow's Roads* (40%) and *A Safer Way* (33%); they reflect the steady decline in the number of people killed or seriously injured over the past decade, and in particular the rapid decline in people killed over the past few years (a 30% reduction from 2006 to 2009). They are in line with European targets and demonstrate that the UK, a world leader in road safety, has not become complacent. It is recognised that there are uncertainties over the reliability of the data for seriously injured casualties and these should be addressed throughout the decade. It is also recognised that these are challenging targets in a time of financial difficulty, but we believe that the UK would rise to the challenge, particularly as the previous decade's targets were exceeded (DfT, 2011b).

The following target is economically meaningful given the high number of young people killed or seriously injured on the roads and the economic loss they represent:

- to reduce the number of children and young people (under the age of 25) killed or seriously injured in road collisions by 50% by 2020.

Highlighting the highest-risk age group in a target will focus efforts to ensure that they are not left lagging behind.

The final target that we suggest here will strengthen the integrated vision, by measuring risk imposed on the individual. This would counteract the potential unintended consequence of a casualty reduction target that discouraged walking and cycling, whilst making the measure right for these particular modes of transport:

- to reduce the combined rate of death or serious injury for pedestrians and cyclists, per 100 million km walked or cycled, by 50% by 2020.

Local authorities will need guidance on how to measure total distances of walking and cycling. Central government collects such data on walking and cycling through the National Travel Survey.

4.1.3 National Key Performance Indicators

This report endorses the following indicators, the data for which is already available, although not in one single published source. It is information that is collected nationally rather than at local authority level. It is recognised that these indicators are purely statistical, and do not attempt to quantify public satisfaction or perception about safety. It is advised therefore that the government should build on the conclusions of *Road Safety Research Report No. 122* (DfT 2011b) and develop an annual report on public attitude, similar to the annual survey undertaken in New Zealand (Ministry of Transport, 2010).

The following list of recommended indicators builds on indicators proposed in *A Safer Way*, with additions and modifications reflecting issues raised during the consultation for this report.

1. Rate of road deaths per 100 million vehicle kilometres.
2. Rate of road deaths per 100 million vehicle kilometres in the ten most deprived local authority areas.
3. Rate of killed or seriously injured pedestrians per 100 million kilometres walked.
4. Rate of killed or seriously injured cyclists per 100 million kilometres cycled.
5. Rate of killed or seriously injured motorcyclists per 100 million vehicle kilometres.



6. Rate of killed or seriously injured car users per 100 million vehicle kilometres.
7. Rate of people over 70 killed or seriously injured per 100 million kilometres travelled by all modes.
8. Number of killed or seriously injured casualties resulting from collisions involving drivers under the age of 19.
9. Number of killed or seriously injured casualties resulting from collisions involving drivers aged 20–25.
10. Number of people killed in road collisions on rural roads.
11. Number of people killed where at least one of the drivers or riders involved was over the legal blood alcohol limit or under the influence of drugs.
12. Proportion of vehicles exceeding speed limits.
13. Cost of road traffic casualties, and this cost as a percentage of GDP.
14. Percentage increases in the numbers of people walking and cycling and in distance travelled by pedestrians and cyclists.
15. Number of people prosecuted for driving offences.
16. Number of people convicted of repeat traffic offences.
17. Number of cars driven by unlicensed/uninsured drivers.
18. Number of car occupants killed who were not wearing a seat belt.
19. Number of people offered speed awareness courses.
20. Number of people killed or injured in road collisions whilst driving for work.

A number of these indicators will require data not currently collected by the DfT, for example data on motoring offences collected by the Home Office or the Ministry of Justice. In addition, numbers 18, 19, and 20 would require information to be provided by the police service.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities

The recent Localism Bill has altered the responsibilities of those who are involved in road safety: government departments (the DfT, the Home Office, the DoH – and others), highway authorities, the police, the research community, fleets and, indeed, individual road users. Therefore to combat confusion:

- the strategic framework should define localism and redefine the expected contributions of all parties.

This will avoid repetition (with its associated inefficiencies) and competition between agencies, and will improve accountability.

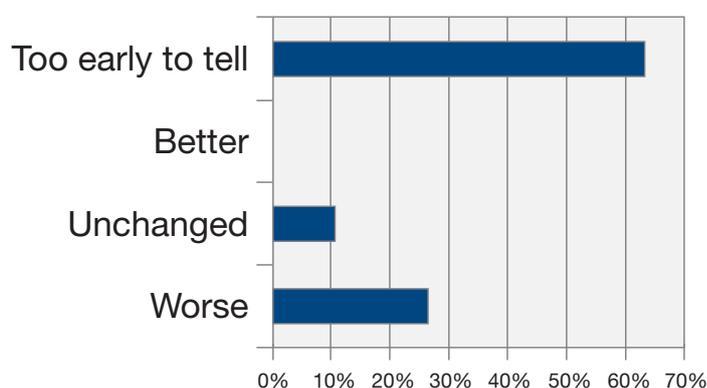
There was a strong feeling expressed by many participants in the PACTS research that central government's role should be to lead. Central government has a privileged panorama view, and it needs to use this position to co-ordinate and advise. Power can be decentralised, but overall responsibility cannot be abdicated.

Central government has responsibility for laying out a framework for improving road safety, with strategic goals or targets for at least the next decade. It should also outline methods of performance tracking to ensure that progress is reliably and consistently monitored. The government needs to provide evidence-based support, and communicate and consult closely with stakeholders. This is the approach set out in the public health white paper, *Healthy Lives, Healthy People*.

Local government has responsibility for delivering – or procuring – road safety services in order to contribute to central government’s goals or targets for improving road safety. It also has an important role to play in evaluation – ensuring that road safety interventions are making an impact and are cost-effective. This will ensure the continued improvement of road safety, and contribute to an evidence base for policy. Local authorities need additional support for this important role. Currently, local government also has a responsibility to protect road safety from damaging cuts in funding.

Participant feedback on the current relationship between national and local government showed that the relationship with the DfT remains strong and productive. Respondents suggested that there is a weaker ministerial relationship, which started in an inauspicious manner after the general election with the claim that ministers wanted to ‘end the war on the motorist’.

Figure 4: How is the current relationship between national and local government?



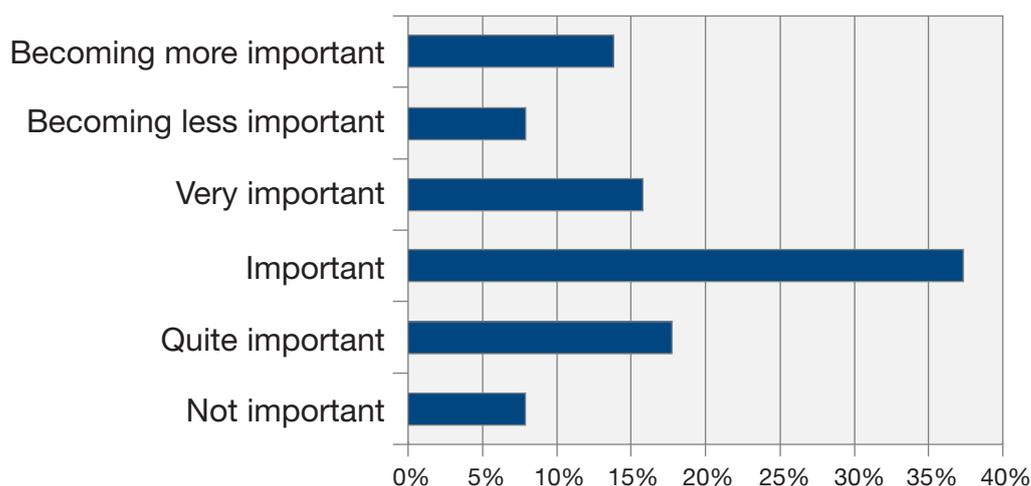
Source: PACTS questionnaire

As illustrated by the survey results, there has been a long, protracted period during which road safety professionals have been unsure of what is happening.

During this new era of localism, local authorities will need to be prepared to take a lead on policy and agenda setting. Central government needs to ensure that there is continued working towards this common goal. There is a risk that localism could isolate local authorities, leaving an inconsistent approach to road safety, with local authorities unable to develop partnerships.

Fire and rescue will have an increasingly important role, as fewer resources lead to a reduction in road safety education and in campaigns from other sources. This should be carried out with local authorities in a co-ordinating role, to ensure consistent, accurate and well-researched programmes.

Figure 5: What is the role of the Fire and Rescue Service in road safety?



Source: PACTS questionnaire

The private sector has an increasingly important role due to a smaller government and more outsourcing. The main responsibilities of the private sector include supporting delivery of road safety improvements, supplying the public sector, and contributing to research and evaluation.

The Government should actively encourage private companies to take responsibility for their employees' safety, by continuing to support the scheme Driving for Better Business (even if it cannot continue funding), or following Scotland's lead: the Scottish Government's *Road Safety Framework to 2020* includes the commitment to 'ensure that all contractors working with Scottish Government have a MORR [Management of Occupational Road Risk] policy in place' (Scottish Government, 2009). Crossrail is an example of a public company that is encouraging best safety practice throughout their supply chain to private businesses.

Professional bodies have a responsibility to push the road safety agenda, ensuring that its quality is not compromised by a difficult financial environment. They need to continue their contribution to research and sharing good practice, to ensure that action taken to improve road safety is effective and provides value for money. They also have the opportunity to move road safety forward, by contributing to road safety policy development and evidence-led innovative approaches.

The role of civil society is evolving, and all citizens have the opportunity to take more responsibility for both personal actions and their contributions to decision making. In order to do this, they need to have easy access to information, expertise and evidence, and to be encouraged to become more involved in their local community, for example by joining civil society groups. Central and local government should provide guidance on how to action their new responsibility, as well as advice on funding mechanisms for local community groups.

Relying on civil society to influence may well lead to distortion of local policy and agendas in favour of those with the loudest voice. The road safety agenda will be dependent on strong support from communities, who may decide that their priorities lie elsewhere. Therefore a balance will need to be established between a centralised one-policy-fits-all approach and a localised 'patchwork policy'.

These new roles will have to be developed, and new relationships formed. All contributors should be flexible and open to change, and keep the main goal of improving road safety in mind. The opportunity has arisen to form new innovative models of funding and delivery, and a positive attitude will be an important factor in realising this potential, and enabling better co-ordination among the major players. Generous sharing of resources and knowledge will be particularly important, following the example set by AIRSO (the Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers), which is allowing IRSO members to attend regional training seminars at a member's rate.

- It is recommended that the Government take the following actions to support developing and evolving roles:
 - use its panoramic view to lead and co-ordinate;
 - monitor and ensure consistency throughout local authorities;
 - promote best practice to encourage partnerships;
 - encourage knowledge transfer partnerships between universities and businesses;
 - show commitment to an evidence-led approach by encouraging research; and
 - engage with the private sector to promote and encourage road safety.
- It is also recommended that local authorities:
 - take a proactive approach in promoting the importance of road safety and the effectiveness of their work in this area;
 - co-ordinate and support fire and rescue as they take on a more important role in road safety;
 - look for opportunities for engaging with and involving the private sector; and
 - engage with civil society through the dissemination of useful and accessible information.



4.3 Action

4.3.1 Inputs and interventions

The ‘three Es’ (education, enforcement and engineering) are often cited as being the main inputs to road safety.

This report recommends adding ‘engagement’, ‘encouragement’, ‘evaluation’ and ‘evidence-led’ to the existing three Es.

Following the Localism Bill, the civil society has a bigger role to play. In order to be involved in decision making and hold their local authority to account, local citizens need information. Therefore, local authorities need both guidance on how to disseminate information and tools for *engagement*.

As well as improving engagement with the local community and users of local roads, local authorities should increase engagement with the private sector. This could be through schemes such as Driving for Better Business, or by means of mutuals and partnerships.

It has been evident, on reading responses to the questionnaire, that many local authority representatives feel demoralised by continuous threats to their jobs and the perception of a seemingly uncaring government. Central government needs to give local authorities *encouragement* by reassuring them that road safety is a priority.

The research community also needs encouragement in the form of national co-ordination and promotion of ongoing research and development. This national co-ordination should also include guidance on *evaluation*, bringing together resources such as E-valu-it. Practitioners need to evaluate which interventions work and which give the most value for money. Given this information, they can then prioritise their activities and provide evidence to support requests for funding.

The road safety profession is aware that improvements are possible in some areas, and to some extent cuts may provide the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and to withdraw those that are less successful. That said, it is also worth recognising that road safety does not operate with perfect information, and that although evaluation is improving, there is still progress to be made with evidence-based programmes.

Evaluations can then be fed into a central source to aid *evidence-led* research. This central source of data, research, and best practice will be invaluable in the continued investigation into behavioural changes, particularly those due to education interventions that are difficult to evaluate.

Over the last decade, Great Britain has achieved the lowest per capita road

deaths in the world through significant improvements in road infrastructure and vehicle design (DfT, 2010b). Even more effort must now be focused on educating road users to achieve significant behavioural change improvement. Three groups for *education* emerged from the questionnaire responses:

- **Young people and children.** Children should be taught road safety as a life skill; the importance of educating young road users before they become drivers is well established. There were calls for road safety to become part of the National Curriculum and for driver training and testing to be looked at. This education should be in the form of interactive, positive learning that does not just focus on the negative consequences of road crashes.
- **Offenders.** There was widespread support for remedial training and education for offenders. This should be continually assessed to ensure that the correct structure is in place.
- **Adults.** It was thought that education should be aimed at an expanded range of people, as adults need re-education, reminders and updates throughout their lives. This would help establish social norms, and encourage civil society to take more responsibility for the road safety culture.

Even with high-quality education, there will still be a need for *enforcement*, particularly for the minority with whom it is difficult to engage – this includes repeat offenders and some drink and/or drug offenders. There is equally a continuing important role for *engineering*, particularly at sites identified by accident trends.

4.3.2 Resources

When asked whether there were sufficient research and knowledge resources available to achieve further improvements in road safety, 23% of questionnaire respondents said no, 54% said it was too early to tell, and 23% said yes.

Although Great Britain is rightly proud of its research resources in road safety, it cannot afford to become complacent or risk losing its global reputation. As well as general continuous improvement, there remain specific issues that need focus (such as young drivers) and developing issues (such as the mobility of an ageing population). There is still room for improvement with the gathering of quantitative data, and development of qualitative data and research would be particularly appropriate given the need for an overarching approach, as well as the introduction of a 'well-being index' to complement GDP. Nevertheless, best use should be made of the abundant existing resources and knowledge by making them accessible to all.



Research for this report found little evidence of significant reductions in the levels of research and knowledge within the UK, but the effect of reduced government spending may well be felt in the coming months. The effect on professional bodies remains to be seen, though with cuts to research establishments, as well as to research within universities and government, it could be that the role of professional bodies and non-governmental bodies will be changing.

At a local level, questionnaire participants expressed concerns about a loss of local knowledge occurring as a result of staff reductions. Knowledge and expertise at this level are vital for applying national research findings to local circumstances. Additionally, the dispersion of new research and best practice information may become difficult: participants talked about attendance at conferences being cut to make savings. An illustration of this is the duration of the RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Conference in January 2011 being reduced from three days to one. Road safety practitioners will increasingly rely on the Internet for sharing information. Although online tools such as the Road Safety Knowledge Centre and MAST (Market Analysis Segmentation Tools) are popular and highly thought of, one of the questionnaire respondents commented that the Internet lacks the interactive personal touch.

The concept of a central source for data and research, as mentioned in the section 'Inputs and Interventions' above, would allow the gathering, summarisation and dissemination of the UK's valuable knowledge. This would avoid duplication and inefficiencies caused by a lack of awareness of existing research, and allow effective, efficient interventions. The European Road Safety Observatory (www.erso.eu) would be a good model to use.

Questionnaire participants who saw some positive aspects to the current situation stated that the opportunity exists to revisit previous studies and strengthen the existing knowledge base. Focus could be shifted onto identifying good knowledge, interpreting it, and making it both accessible to practitioners and easy to apply. Optimism was also expressed about the Government's openness to change, which would help facilitate innovation and the fostering of new approaches to road safety.

In order to make best use of the UK's knowledge and research, it is recommended that there should be an accessible central source for data, research, and the sharing of both successful and less successful practice.

When asked whether there were sufficient financial resources available to achieve further improvements in road safety, 61% of questionnaire respondents said no, 35% said it was too early to tell, and just 4% said yes.

As established in the previous section, the effects of funding cuts are already beginning to be felt at a local level. Local authorities and partnerships are

taking action to reduce their costs, and the private sector and professional bodies are also feeling the pinch. These impacts may worsen when the full effects of reduced local government funding become evident.

Responses to the questionnaire revealed concerns that these financial worries may have an impact on long-term priorities, with local government dedicating more time and effort to finding external funding, and partnerships concentrating their efforts on activities which generate revenue. With no ring fencing, the future of road safety depends on local authorities' choices as to where to prioritise and allocate sufficient funding. It is possible to envisage a situation where local authorities would prefer to put their reduced funding into health, education and social services, where effects from cuts would be felt immediately by the public and therefore render local politicians and councils unpopular. Unfortunately, as road safety did not get strong government backing from the inception of the Coalition, and with the continued insistence on 'ending the war on the motorist', the perception that road safety is not important is still rife, despite central government attempts to reassure local authorities about the continued importance of road safety. This will further influence decisions about allocating funds within local authorities.

As the results of the questionnaire show, the view that there is insufficient funding is widespread, and unless steps are taken to address this, participants thought that this would result in a long-term loss of expertise. It was also feared that there is a real risk of an increase in casualty numbers, particularly as the unexpected beneficial side-effects of the recession pertaining to safety (resulting from less travel and lower speeds) wear off. Although the latest casualty figures from the DfT show continued reductions in the third quarter of 2010, this is as a result of long-term improvements to road safety. Negative impacts are unlikely to show up in the data straight away.

With the increased focus on localism, it may well be that civil society and the private sector are expected to make up some of the shortfall. However, it is uncertain whether the untested Big Society will be up to the task. It will be important to monitor local activity and the impact on casualty numbers.

There was also some positive feedback in the responses to the questionnaire from individuals who felt that improvements could be made without expensive solutions, and that volunteers could make a valuable contribution. Additionally, the current circumstances provide the opportunity to reassess where money is spent in road safety, and how effectively and efficiently it is spent.

When asked whether there were sufficient human resources and skills resources available to achieve further improvements in road safety, 57% of questionnaire respondents said no, 27% said it was too early to tell, and 16% said yes.

As with research and knowledge, the current human resources and skills base in the UK is thought to be good. However there is substantial concern that this skills base will be lost as a result of the financial situation. The main reasons for this concern expressed by participants were:

- Job losses lead to a loss of expertise, particularly when experienced staff take early retirement.
- Those who keep their jobs are expected to cover a wider range of topics and undertake a greater quantity of work, whilst trying to maintain the standards set over the past few years.
- Those who stay in the work force will also find that there are fewer opportunities for receiving training, obtaining qualifications and pursuing professional development.
- A lack of consistency will discourage potential experts from choosing road safety as a career.

These effects will be felt across central and local government, the private and non-governmental bodies, and research communities. Furthermore a reduction in the skilled work force will cause problems when the economy recovers and the work force is ready to grow again.

A nationwide vision and target-setting is recommended, to reassure local decision makers that road safety is indeed a priority. Strong leadership on the importance of road safety will send a message to local authorities, the private sector and civil society. Setting targets and having a vision will give road safety greater backing when fighting for funding, and consequently slow the loss of jobs and expertise from the sector. This is all the more important, given the commitment to a target at a European level.

4.3.3 Government action

There are certain actions that only government can take. There are also areas of activity that they should oversee. Suggestions given in the PACTS questionnaire are detailed below:

One-off actions

- The government should target action on high-risk user groups:
 - drink and drug drivers;
 - young drivers; and
 - illegal drivers and drivers of illegal vehicles.
- The police should be equipped with type-approved enforcement technology.
- The Health and Safety Executive should be required to address traffic casualties in the course of work on equal terms with other accidents at work.
- The DfT should publish revised guidance on how to implement 20 mph speed limits.



- The government should improve data collection by:
 - implementing universal use of hand-held electronic devices for data collection by police; and
 - combining resources, for example from the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health.
- The DfT should implement the Transport Committee recommendation to reduce the drink-drive limit to 20 mg alcohol per 100 ml blood, and commit to a timetable for doing so by 2015, with the possibility of using 50 mg as a stepping stone.

Ongoing actions

- The national statistics concerning use of the roads, and concerning casualties in the course of their use, should be enhanced.
- The DfT should continuously monitor and support local authorities and partnerships, and help to develop a manageable set of performance indicators that would assist local authorities in assessing their relative performance.
- The Government should support continued UK input to bodies that supply information for consumers on European vehicle safety regulation, notably Euro NCAP.
- In addition to maintaining the present focus on reducing the numbers of those killed or seriously injured, which should continue to be the priority, the Government and road safety professionals should aim to reduce slight injuries. Much can be learned from examining accidents which result in slight injuries – such injuries could have been serious injuries or even fatalities, had there been a slightly different set of factors; it is therefore useful to monitor these accidents carefully.
- Within the DfT, the road safety and sustainable transport divisions should work together and focus on removing the safety-related barriers to active travel (both perceived and real).
- The DfT should also work with the Department of Health to raise awareness of road safety as a means of reducing preventable deaths.
- The DfT should work with the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice to improve enforcement of licensing, insurance and roadworthiness offences, in recognition of the link between road crime and other criminal offences.
- The DfT should maintain progress on updating driver and rider training and testing.
- The Government should monitor prosecution and sentencing for driving offences.
- The DfT should encourage a programme of research into changing contributory factors in casualty occurrence, notably in respect of vehicle technology and nomadic devices (portable electronic devices such as satellite navigation systems brought into the car and used by a driver for information, assistance, communication or entertainment).



5. Conclusion

In order to have clarity, central government needs to help define roles and responsibilities without abdicating overall responsibility. By and large, local authorities are eager to embrace their power and freedom, and to become more innovative. Road safety is already a good demonstration of the Big Society in action. Stakeholders simply need to know what they are expected to do, and to be given the guidance and tools needed to carry it out. Therefore, the Strategic Framework for Road Safety should contain structural guidance and methodologies to follow.

Stakeholders want to see a challenging strategy with strong leadership and rate-based targets, to give a clear direction for improvements in road safety. The balance will need to be found between localism and a national plan for improvement. The alternative to 'one size fits all' should not be its opposite, 'every man for himself'.

A strong governmental strategy will send out the message that road safety is a priority, encouraging local authorities to dedicate more funding to it, and thereby reducing the loss of skilled staff. Government should also take steps to consolidate research, information and data, and should commit to continue encouraging research and innovation.



If the Government can act quickly on these recommendations, and define *who* needs to take *what* actions and *how*, stakeholders will react accordingly; the possibility – that many fear will become a reality – of losing our admirable rate of casualty reductions can thus be avoided. The rest of the world has recognised the importance of road safety by declaring 2011–2020 the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. It is time for the UK, a world leader in road safety, to take an equally determined stand.



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The Royal Automobile Club Foundation for Motoring Limited is a charity which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and responsible road users. Independent and authoritative research, carried out for the public benefit, is central to the Foundation's activities.

RAC Foundation
89-91 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5HS

Tel no: 020 7747 3445
www.racfoundation.org

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