



Photos: iStockphoto.com and CTC

## Safety factored

CTC has called on the Government to deliver more and safer cycling, while warning that plans for longer lorries risk making cyclists' safety worse

**GIVING EVIDENCE TO** a Commons Transport Committee inquiry on road safety, CTC's Campaigns & Policy Director Roger Geffen presented research from CTC and international sources showing that more and safer cycling can – and should – go hand in hand.

He commended the Government's 'Strategic framework on road safety' for the decision to measure cyclists' safety using a pro rata indicator: cyclist casualties per billion kilometres cycled. Previous strategies, which set targets to reduce cyclist casualty numbers in isolation, created a perverse incentive for road safety professionals to quash cycle use.

The new indicator will show when casualties are falling relative to rising cycling levels, even if they're increasing in absolute terms. The evidence suggests that cyclists can be expected to gain from 'safety in numbers', a phenomenon highlighted by a CTC campaign of that name in 2009 (see [ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers](http://ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers)).

Geffen also urged national and local Government to measure public perceptions of cyclists' safety. Past road safety awareness campaigns have presented cycling as dangerous. Yet you are less likely to be killed in a mile of cycling than a mile of walking. Campaigns emphasising danger act as a deterrent to cycling rather than encouraging safer behaviour.

Reducing the fear of cycling as well as any dangers involved in cycling would be a better way to achieve more as well as safer cycling. This means focusing on traffic speeds, safer roads and junctions, driver behaviour and lorries – and Geffen criticised the strategy for being weak on all these issues. He did, however, commend the decision to retain dedicated funding for Bikeability child cycle training, whilst urging that adult cycle training also needed to be well-funded.

### DRIVERS AND THE LAW

CTC's evidence flagged up concerns that the introduction in 2006 of a new

offence of 'Causing Death by Careless Driving' has had both good and bad results. On the one hand, it has put an end to some of the derisory fines for fatal driving incidents where the driver was deemed merely careless.

On the other hand, there has been a sharp reduction in the number of prosecutions and convictions for the more serious 'Causing Death by Dangerous Driving' offence, as prosecutors utilise the less serious charge. As a result, the proportion of drivers facing immediate custody following a conviction for a motoring offence causing death or bodily harm has dropped from 92% in 2006 to just 51% in 2010.

CTC called for a full overhaul of the framework of driving offences, and for increased priority to be devoted to road traffic policing.

### SPEED, JUNCTIONS AND LORRIES

The Government's road safety strategy says nothing about the spate of cyclist fatalities in London involving lorries and/or major junctions (see page 6). CTC remains concerned that the Government's trial of longer lorries will increase the risks faced by cyclists and others.

CTC's evidence presented new figures showing that cyclists are far more at risk on major roads than on minor roads – a discrepancy that is far larger for cyclists than for other road users – and that there is also a huge difference between cyclists' safety on rural roads compared with urban ones. CTC called for more action to tackle cycle safety, by the Highways Agency in particular.

CTC also highlighted recent evidence from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), showing that the most effective measures for improving cyclists' safety are those that involve reducing vehicle speeds, via 20mph urban speed limits, traffic lights and new road features.

Finally, CTC drew the Commons Transport Committee's attention to the very poor standards of design and maintenance of many of the 'facilities' designed for cyclists, and urged the Government to take a tougher line on requiring local authorities to adhere to its own design guidelines.

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(Top) Cyclists gain from a 'safety in numbers' effect (Below) CTC's Roger Geffen addressed the Commons Transport Committee



**If you want to get involved in campaigning locally to improve conditions for cyclists, visit [ctc.org.uk/righttoride](http://ctc.org.uk/righttoride) for details**