



Department
for Transport

Alison McGovern MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Robert Goodwill MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 2566
Fax: 020 7944 4309
E-Mail: robert.goodwill@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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18 NOV 2013

21 NOV 2013

Dear Alison

Thank you for your email of 18 October, enclosing correspondence from Ian Campbell, Secretary of the Wirral Pedestrians Association, about their document "Vision Zero Merseyside: A strategy to eradicate fatal and serious injuries to Merseyside pedestrians and cyclists". I read the document with interest.

I agree that pedestrian and cycle safety is an important issue. Both walking and cycling are healthy, fun and good for the environment and I am keen to encourage more people to take them up.

The UK already has some of the safest roads in the world, but it is important that we all focus on making them even safer. The Department has also been making funding available to support safer cycling. Since February last year, we have made an additional £159m available for supporting cycling and improving cycling safety. This includes £35 million to improve safety at junctions, £94 million for cities and National Parks and £30 million for infrastructure in communities and facilities at rail stations.

As the document recognises, there is also a role for other bodies in promoting safer roads. For example, many important safety initiatives such as improving road infrastructure and implementing 20mph zones can be undertaken by councils.

The Department's Strategic Framework for Road Safety, published in May 2011 sets out the Government's vision for safer roads and the steps it will take to achieve that vision. Recognising that different approaches to road safety all have merit, it took a combination of the traditional "3 Es" approach to road safety, the systems approach and the public health approach. This

does not mean that the Government believes that fatal or serious accidents are acceptable. The Road Safety Outcomes Framework uses a series of statistical measures to help everyone understand the detail behind trends in road safety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a series of loops and a final downward stroke.

ROBERT GOODWILL



Department
for Transport

Esther McVey MP
The Parade
Hoyle Community Centre
Hoyle Road
Hoyle
Wirral
CH47 3AG

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Robert Goodwill MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 2566
Fax: 020 7944 4309
E-Mail: robert.goodwill@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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29 NOV 2013

Dear Esther

Thank you for your e-mail of 5 November to Stephen Hammond, on behalf of your constituent, Ian R Campbell of 22 Bramhall Close, Newton, Wirral, CH48 8BP, about pedestrian safety on roads and footways in Wirral and Merseyside. I am replying as Minister responsible for this issue.

Deterioration in reported serious injuries to Merseyside's pedestrian and cyclists is unacceptable and it is a tragedy for those affected by deaths or injuries. As you would appreciate, it is difficult for the Department to comment on a particular local situation. The local highway authority is best placed to identify what exactly is the cause of the problem and from this the appropriate solution.

We remain committed to reducing the toll of people killed and injured on our roads still further; this is a key priority for us. I welcome the vision Zero Merseyside as it will contribute towards improving our road safety record that cannot be achieved without a significant buy-in from the public.

We set out a strategic framework for road safety in 2011 setting out its vision and approach to road safety. The overall approach of the strategy reflected the principle of localism, and focussed on a more targeted approach to enforcement to tackle the irresponsible few.

Mr Campbell could see the strategic framework action plans and progress update in the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-framework-for-road-safety>

The Department's THINK! campaigns target a wide range of road safety issues including drink and drug driving, seat belt wearing, the use of mobile phones and driver fatigue. It also promotes awareness of the more vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, children, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. Mr Campbell may view the Department's THINK! Activities here: <http://think.direct.gov.uk/>

On 12 August the Prime Minister announced the successful cities and National Parks that applied for the Cycling Ambition Grants. They will receive £94 million of funding and together with local contributions will be £148 million. The Cycling Ambition Grants means that investment in the eight successful cities will now be in excess of £10 per head per year, as recommended by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group's recent report.

In 2013/14, through the Integrated Transport Block, we are providing £320m to local authorities in England (outside of London) for small transport improvement schemes. This includes: road safety schemes, bus priority schemes, and walking and cycling schemes. This funding is not ring fenced and offers local authorities the freedom to develop and implement solutions which best suit their localities as the Coalition Government believes that local authorities – and not Whitehall - are best placed to determine the right transport solutions for local communities.

With reference to the introduction of presumed liability in pedestrian and cyclist road safety, in English civil law it is necessary to prove that the defendant's actions caused the accident and were either negligent or intentional.

Applying presumed liability for motor insurance alone would mean an anomaly in the law of negligence, whereby claims involving personal injury or damage to property would be treated differently in law solely on the basis of how the injury or damage was sustained.

This Government is not convinced that the introduction of presumed liability for road traffic incident would be to the benefit of road safety and it could be unfair to responsible road users. Even if there were some benefits these would need to be weighed against the disadvantages which might result from overturning the well-established and effective law that applies in civil liability.

Yours sincerely



ROBERT GOODWILL