Road Safety Strategy Call for Evidence

Summary

- Logistics UK supports the Road Safety Strategy ambitions, but delivery and success of the plans rely on long term funding, robust governance and consistent enforcement across regions.
- Road safety reforms must be led by evidence, avoiding fragmented local approaches and ensuring any enforced vehicle standards align with EU vehicle standards to protect vehicle availability.
- Drivers with vocational entitlements already meet higher medical and compliance standards compared to private motorists.
- Improving safety on rural and strategic roads requires better maintenance of road surfaces, clearer and future proofed signage and infrastructure that is maintained and reflects the needs for freight and heavier zero-emission vehicles.

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About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, and the only trade association which represents all of logistics. Our mission is to support, shape and stand up for a safe, sustainable and efficient logistics sector. Our membership of more than 22,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning road, rail, inland waterways, sea and air as well as the customers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers. We deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policymakers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole, right across the country.

The logistics sector

Nothing moves without logistics. The sector employs 8% of the UK workforce in good jobs with strong career progression, contributes £170 billion in GVA each year, and underpins the resilience of the everyday economy.

Logistics plans and coordinates the movement and storage of the goods that businesses, public services and households rely on – using ports, airports, roads, railways, waterways, warehouses and smart digital systems to tie it all together.

With the right policies, logistics can drive up UK growth by £8 billion a year.[1] However, rising costs, red tape and poor infrastructure are holding the sector back – putting firms out of business, fuelling inflation, and undermining productivity and supply chain resilience. As a result, the UK has fallen from 4th to 19th in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index over the decade to 2023.

Logistics UK Response

a. The strategy sets targets of a 65 per cent reduction in people killed or seriously injured (KSI), and a 70 per cent reduction in child KSIs, by 2035. Do these targets reflect the right level of ambition?

Logistics UK and our members support all efforts to increase safety on our roads and reduce road deaths.

b. Are governance, delivery and resourcing arrangements across Government departments and key partners strong enough to achieve these targets?

[1] Logistics Delivering a solution to the UK's productivity puzzle, Oxford Economics, 2023

The creation of a new Road Safety Board and a Road Safety Investigation Branch are welcome developments. These structures have the potential to improve national consistency and ensure that road safety is treated as a strategic priority. However, their success will depend on long term, ringfenced resourcing and shared priorities across government. Political changes should not be allowed to jeopardise funding or derail the continuity required for meaningful safety improvements.

Logistics UK would also like to see a commitment to long-term, multi-year funding for infrastructure. Aging or unsuitable road infrastructure continues to contribute to avoidable incidents, and without sustained investment, the underlying risks will persist.

Local authorities are often asked to deliver road safety outcomes, and it is critical that enforcement remains consistent across regions. A patchwork of approaches or varying regulatory standards would undermine the clarity operators and road users rely on.

While commercial vehicle policing units across the UK are being disbanded and absorbed into wider police forces, Logistics UK is increasingly concerned about the impact these changes may have on effective enforcement.

e. The Government has said its Strategy is informed by Sweden's Safe System approach. What other international or UK examples offer the most relevant lessons for reducing deaths and serious injuries?

London's Direct Vision Standard (DVS) demonstrates how vehicle regulation can materially reduce collisions involving HGVs, avoidance of changes to scheme. If DVS was to be implemented elsewhere in the UK Logistics UK call for this to be the same system as the London scheme and there should be no divergence.

g. What is the right approach to safe driving later in life? What safeguards are required to protect both safety and independence of older drivers?

Vocational drivers are already held to a much higher regulatory standard. Vocational driver licences require a D4 medical form for licence acquisition and renewal. From the age of 45, licences are required to be renewed every 5 years up to the age of 65, and then annually from then.

Logistics UK members are calling for a better streamlining of resources for driver medicals to avoid delays in the administration of driver medicals.

h. What should the proposed work-related road safety charter require of organisations that employ people to drive or ride for work?

Commercial HGV drivers already operate under a significantly more stringent regulatory framework than other road users, with robust requirements on medical fitness, licensing, working hours, vehicle standards and continuous monitoring.

For the system to function effectively, every organisation and professional involved in keeping drivers compliant must fulfil their responsibilities reliably and in a timely manner. This includes, for example, GPs and medical professionals completing required forms promptly, regulators processing documentation without unnecessary delay, and employers ensuring that their internal processes are efficient and supportive.

The Charter should also recognise the national skills shortage in HGV technicians, MOT testers and enforcement specialists. As vehicles become more complex, particularly with the introduction of advanced ADAS, electrification and Euro 7 technologies, the need for a well-trained maintenance and inspection workforce becomes more critical. A safety system is only as strong as the professionals who support it and addressing this skills gap is essential for ongoing road safety.

k. How can Government maximise the safety benefits of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) and ensure they are used safely and appropriately?

To maximise the safety benefits of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), Government should focus on ensuring that these technologies are both well understood and consistently applied across the industry. Collaboration between Government, manufacturers and operators is essential to improve driver education around ADAS, including clearer communication of what these systems can and cannot do. It is equally important to recognise that drivers can become fatigued or desensitised by repetitive ADAS warnings, so further analysis is needed to understand how notification design affects driver behaviour and safety outcomes.

A consistent approach from OEMs on the design, operation and interface of ADAS systems would reduce confusion for drivers moving between different vehicle types and brands. More comprehensive data on the real world impact of ADAS is also required, enabling evidence based decisions on which technologies provide the most significant safety benefits.

l. What is the right approach to strengthening vehicle safety standards? What measures should the Government prioritise in response to issues such as headlamp glare, increasing vehicle size and any broader issues not currently being considered by the Government's consultation?

For heavy vehicles in particular, future standards should reflect the realities of the UK market. Since almost all HGVs used in Great Britain are manufactured in the EU, it is essential that any GB-specific requirements are fully aligned with EU standards. Creating unique GB rules that manufacturers cannot or will not build to, could risk reducing vehicle availability.

If DVS is implemented beyond London where the evidence shows clear safety gains, consistency is crucial, and any scheme should mirror the London model to avoid a fragmented regulatory landscape.

m. How should evidence on the relationship between speed limits and safety influence new guidance? Does the Strategy strike the correct balance between a nationally set direction and local decision-making regarding speed?

The relationship between speed limits and safety must be guided by robust evidence. Any new guidance should reinforce that speed reviews must be rooted in data, including collision history, risk profiles, and wider network safety considerations. Local authorities should retain the flexibility to tailor speed limits to their specific contexts, including raising speed limits where needed, not just a focus on lowering them.

It is essential that speed limits are appropriate for each road environment to maintain driver understanding and compliance and to avoid unnecessary frustration that could undermine safety objectives. Clear, consistent signage and effective communication of any changes are also critical to support compliance and reduce the likelihood of unintentional speeding.

A more detailed, nationally consistent dataset on commercial vehicle collisions would assist local authorities in making evidence-based decisions on speed management.

n. What measures would be most effective in improving safety on rural roads, and is the Strategy's proposed approach sufficient?

The most effective measures for improving safety on rural roads will focus on improving the underlying condition and design of rural roads. Ensuring that road surfaces are properly maintained, markings are visible, and verges are managed appropriately is fundamental to reducing collisions, particularly on routes with poor sightlines or limited overtaking opportunities.

Clear and consistent signage is also essential. Rural roads can change character quickly, and drivers need reliable, well positioned warnings to anticipate hazards, adjust speed and understand the environment around them. Alongside physical improvements, there is a continued need for targeted driver education. Many serious incidents stem from inappropriate overtaking or misjudging speed on narrow or winding rural

roads. Public awareness campaigns that focus on these risks, supported by local enforcement where necessary, would help reinforce safer behaviour.

o. What scope is there for road design and maintenance to further improve safety?

Road design and maintenance have significant potential to further improve safety and a more forward looking and freight aware approach is required. Improving road surface quality remains one of the simplest and most effective interventions. Logistics UK members repeatedly state that road surfaces are a significant risk to safety.

Futureproofing road design is essential as vehicle technologies and fleet compositions continue to evolve. Embedding freight considerations, such as appropriate turning space, adequate loading and waiting zones, lane widths suited to modern HGVs, and design features reflecting potential future changes in axle weights and vehicle lengths, must become standard across all local highway authority guidance, including the height of new bridge infrastructure. With the introduction of heavier battery electric vehicles, local roads and bridges will need to be designed and maintained with these increased loads in mind.

Clear signage is also critical, particularly as the UK prepares for automated vehicles. Consistent, legible signage and well maintained road markings will support human drivers while also future proofing for automated vehicles. Similarly, lighting plays a crucial role in rural and high risk environments and streetlighting should form part of a long term safety plan.

Removing level crossings would also deliver substantial safety benefits. These locations are known collision hotspots and a barrier to productivity for both road users and freight movements.

Logistics UK has previously backed the roll-out of Smart Motorways as a means of reducing congestion and increasing capacity on the Strategic Road Network in the absence of significant road-widening projects. This has been predicated on rigourous data demonstrating that Smart Motorways are at least as safe as their conventional counterparts. The addition of further refuge areas in response to initial reporting has been welcome, but a comprehensive study of the safety of these routes, as well as activity to improve the public perception of safety, is needed – with further investment in safety improvements needed where evidence highlights an issue.

Overall, a more ambitious programme of futureproofed road design, backed by sustained investment in maintenance and freight aware planning, has the potential to significantly enhance safety across the road network while supporting both current and future vehicle technologies.

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