

# Integrated National Transport Strategy: a call for ideas

## Respondent details

Q1. You are responding as an:

organisation?

## Organisation details

Q8. What is the name of your organisation?

The Motorcycle Action Group

Q9. You are:

**content to continue contact via email**  
central-office@mag-uk.org

Q10. What is the approximate total number of employees in your organisation?

2 to 9

Q11. What best describes your organisation?

Non-governmental organisation

## Joined up working

### Q15. In your opinion, how could the transport network be better 'joined-up'?

To make the transport network more 'joined up' three key issues need to be addressed.

Firstly, consistency of operation for each sphere within the wider network (roads, rail, air and water). Consistency of operation is currently the least well delivered on the road network. A clear example of opportunity specifically for motorcycling is bus lane access. The Government has recently rejected the opportunity to deliver consistency in this area, despite, in its consultation response, demonstrating a clear understanding of the advantage of consistent policy.

Secondly, frictionless transition between modes and spheres of the network is essential. A successful integrated national transport strategy will seek to remove all barriers to the best modal choice for the specific purpose, requirement and circumstances of each trip or stage thereof. The motorcycle specific example of opportunity here is parking facilities at bus stations, park and ride facilities, train stations, air ports and ports. Currently parking thinking is dominated by the motor car, with insufficient consideration given to motorcycles.

Thirdly, world leading levels of safety need to be achieved. A successful integrated national transport strategy should aim to return the UK to its position as the home of the safest roads in the world. It is important to note that this goal is divergent from the current Vision Zero philosophy that is placing the desire to shape the system above the desire to improve its safety or deliver the core purpose of a transport system. MAG's Welcoming Roads philosophy is more closely aligned with an integrated network - it does not seek to manipulate choices by allowing some to remain less safe than others. Motorcyclists currently face the highest level of risk on UK roads but under Vision Zero receive the least amount of consideration.

Specific policy considerations for opening the path to safer and fully integrated use of motorcycles include but are not limited to:

- Ensure roads are free of hazards like potholes, loose gravel, or uneven patches that can be more dangerous for motorcyclists.
- Create more secure motorcycle parking zones near public transport hubs and urban centres.
- Provide dedicated parking areas with PPE storage at transit hubs to encourage mixed-mode commuting.
- Allow motorcyclists to integrate their travel seamlessly by offering tickets that combine motorcycle parking with public transport access.
- Ensure that ferries and trains accommodate motorcycles efficiently, with secure tie-downs and easy boarding.
- Allow motorcycles to use bus lanes and ensure segregated cycling infrastructure does not adversely impact motorcyclists.
- Allow motorcycles to use Advanced Stop Lines and, where appropriate, and be exempt from bus gates and traffic filters.
- Promote understanding among all road users about sharing the road safely with motorcycles through adoption of the Welcoming Roads Philosophy.
- Reform motor vehicle licensing regimes to allow unbiased entry to any modal choice while delivering safer behaviours by all road users.
- Subsidize advanced driver and rider training programs to enhance safety and confidence.
- Replace a 'speed kills' mantra with one of 'better driving saves lives' and adopting the Speed, Surprise, Space and Consequence formula in pre- and post-test training.
- Gather better data on motorcycle traffic patterns, accidents, and rider needs to inform infrastructure planning.
- Develop better modelling (routinely including motorcycle as a choice) to assess the impacts of modal shift.
- Include motorcyclist representatives in transport planning boards to advocate for their needs.
- Mandate that Local Transport Plans deliver meaningful policies that facilitate motorcycling as well as other modes.
- Mandate that Local Transport Plans examine and report policy impacts for motorcyclists as well as other road users.
- Develop apps or GPS enhancements that provide motorcycle-specific navigation, promoting safer routes for motorcyclists.
- Install facilities that cater to motorcyclists, including secure storage and shelters.
- Maintaining full support for all current and future motorcycle propulsion technologies. Battery electric is only one part of the future solution for motorcycles.
- Support all technological options for lower emission motorcycles by improving EV charging infrastructure design standards to better meet the needs of motorcyclists.
- Ensure motorcycles are actively promoted in policies for low-emission zones, congestion charging zones and other demand management policies.

The above suggestions do not meet the criteria of strategic policy but show that the motorcycle as a modal choice has been largely overlooked. From a strategic perspective the goal can be defined as: make the transport network safer, more efficient, and better integrated for motorcyclists. Despite the recent admission that "at present, the government has no policy to encourage greater use of motorcycles", a successful integrated national transport strategy will encourage their use as a sustainable and flexible mode of transport. Any strategy that has an impact failing to facilitate greater use of motorcycles is, by definition, unsuccessful as a strategy for integration. The demand for motorcycling clearly exists but is finding reward in regulatory loopholes. If the loopholes are dealt with effectively that demand will return to legitimate motorcycling thus resulting in an increase in what is recognised as legitimate motorcycling.

We often see claims that all road user groups are included in a strategy, then find zero consideration in

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subsequent policy. If the term "all" is to be used to allow a streamlined strategy statement, then the term must be clearly defined by listing the constituent modes covered by the term. Too often we will see definitions such as "Vulnerable Road Users (VRU's) such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders." The neglect of motorcyclists in the definition is as consistent as it is unforgiveable. Thus "All" must be qualified with a definition that explicitly lists motorcycles.

## Data and technology

**Q16. How could data be used to improve the transport network?**

Data can play a transformative role in improving the transport network specifically for motorcyclists by providing actionable insights into their needs, behaviours, and challenges. The granularity of data and ability to separate it by transport mode is wanting at present. For example, basic data such as the number of riders currently riding on CBT compared with fully licensed riders is not available.

From a strategic level the policy needs to be that data collection should be specific to transport mode and able to be presented and analysed for each mode as well as in aggregate. Data analysis should pay particular attention to differences between transport modes.

Potential uses and areas where data is currently poor include but are not limited to:

- Collect and analyse accident reports to identify and resolve high-risk areas for motorcyclists, such as dangerous junctions, complex bends, or roads with poor surface conditions.
- Use sensors or crowd-sourced reporting to identify and map potholes, loose gravel, or slippery areas, allowing targeted maintenance for motorcycle safety.
- Use GPS and mobile app data to track motorcyclists' routes and identify congestion hotspots where interventions like dedicated motorcycle filter lanes or alternative routes might help.
- Equip junctions with smart traffic systems that detect motorcycles and adjust signal timing to reduce waiting times and improve traffic flow.
- Use data to develop navigation apps tailored to motorcyclists, highlighting routes with good surfaces, minimal congestion, and clear sight lines, while avoiding less suitable roads.
- Combine real-time weather data with route planning tools to suggest safer or more comfortable routes during adverse conditions.
- Use data on motorcycle parking occupancy and patterns to identify areas where more parking facilities are needed.
- Link motorcycle parking data with public transport schedules, helping riders to transition smoothly to mixed-mode travel.
- Implement platforms where motorcyclists can report near-miss incidents, creating a dataset to address underlying risks proactively.
- Gather data on motorcycle usage by region, time of day, and type (commuter, business, leisure), helping to tailor infrastructure investments and regulations to the specific needs of motorcyclists.
- Use demographic and behavioural data to identify road users who may benefit most from switching cars to motorcycle trips.
- Create visual tools like heatmaps to educate riders about areas with higher accident rates or challenging road conditions.
- Build systems where riders can report hazards in real-time (e.g., debris or broken-down vehicles), providing immediate alerts to other motorcyclists.
- Equip emergency services with real-time motorcycle accident data to improve response times and outcomes.

By harnessing data effectively, transport planners and policymakers can make informed decisions, reduce risks, and enhance the riding experience for motorcyclists, making the transport network safer, more efficient, and more responsive to their unique needs.

### Q17. How could technology be used to improve the transport network?

Whilst new technologies can increase the range of choices, efficiency and flexibility of the transport system, it is important not to allow those new technologies to hinder existing proven technologies. A natural replacement of old technologies will always occur, but this should not be a forced process, especially with un-proven technologies. A successful integrated national transport strategy should allow continued use of existing technologies whilst allowing the introduction of new.

With the obvious discussion around e-scooters and e-bikes it is important to recognise when existing regulation can already adequately be applied and indeed when new technology is simply a re-packaging exercise of existing technology.

E-bikes and e-scooters fit the bill of technologies sold as being new when they are not really new. E-bikes and E-scooters are motorised two wheelers and are thus motorcycles. There is existing regulation that can and should be applied. The attempts to claim novel status and seek novel regulation is possibly an indicator that existing regulation and policy for motorcycles is not working, or in need of reform. This need to develop policy and regulation should not be regarded as proof of a new technological solution for applying non-human power to the vehicle. The proliferation of e-bikes and e-scooters should be viewed in the context of a decrease in popularity of well-regulated traditional 50cc mopeds which largely share the characteristics of these claimed 'new' technologies.

A successful integrated national transport strategy should aim to encourage technology that will enhance the transport network for motorcyclists by improving safety, efficiency, connectivity, and convenience.

Potential and emerging technologies can provide the following benefits for motorcyclists:

- Traffic signals equipped with sensors that detect motorcycles, ensuring they trigger timely light changes and reduce waiting times.
  - IoT (Internet of Things) devices to monitor road conditions (e.g., potholes, debris, or slippery surfaces) and alert motorcyclists in real time through apps or navigation systems.
  - Adaptive lane systems that create dedicated motorcycle filter lanes during peak hours in locations where bus lanes are not available.
  - Navigation systems tailored for motorcyclists, offering route suggestions based on smooth roads, minimal traffic, and motorcycle-friendly amenities.
  - AI and data analytics providing real-time updates about traffic, weather, or hazards, helping riders make informed decisions.
  - Augmented reality (AR) in helmets to project navigation, speed, and hazard alerts directly into the rider's field of vision.
  - Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Communication to enable motorcycles to communicate with other vehicles and infrastructure to share position, speed, and warnings about potential collisions.
  - Virtual Reality (VR) Training to simulate real-world riding conditions, providing safe, immersive environments for new riders to learn.
  - Telematics Data for Feedback that track riding behaviour to offer personalized feedback and tips for improvement.
  - Smart parking apps that show real-time availability of motorcycle parking spots and allow riders to reserve spaces in advance.
  - Integrated ticketing to link motorcycle parking payments with public transport systems for seamless multimodal journeys.
  - EV charging stations specifically designed for electric motorcycles.
  - Battery swap stations for quick and convenient motorcycle energy replenishment.
  - Hazard reporting apps to report hazards (e.g., debris, roadblocks) in real time, creating a community-driven safety network.
  - Integrated SOS buttons in apps or smart helmets to alert emergency services and provide precise location details.
  - Apps that connect riders with nearby mechanics or workshops, offering on-demand services and price transparency.
  - Use of AI to analyse accident patterns and develop targeted interventions for high-risk areas.
  - Use of anonymised travel data to understand motorcyclist behaviour, guiding infrastructure investment and policymaking.
  - Develop tools that suggest the most fuel-efficient or energy-efficient routes for riders as well as suggesting motorcycles as alternative choices for car drivers.
  - Use of location-based technology to notify riders about local events, weather changes, or road closures.
- By leveraging these technologies, the transport network can become more inclusive, safer, and user-friendly for motorcyclists, while also promoting sustainable and efficient transportation solutions. The opposite is also true.

Technological innovations can create new problems that did not exist prior to their introduction. The trade-offs must be carefully and rationally considered. This need for balance highlights the need to understand the fundamental core goal of transport policy - rapid and convenient movement of goods and people.

It is vital that these technologies are used to facilitate, not restrict. They should not enforce choices, or discourage movement in a way that contradicts the core purpose of a successful transport system.

## Call for ideas

**Q48. How, if at all, would you improve the way decisions are made about the transport network?**

It is evident from research conducted by the University of Nottingham in partnership with MAG that Local Transport Plans are inconsistent and often (almost 1 in 4) fail to recognise the motorcycle as a transport choice. We are happy to present the research findings to the Department. The research paper has gone through peer review and is shortly to be published in the academic journal Case Studies on Transport Policy.

Consistency of operation is a top priority for a successful integrated transport strategy. The lack of a national strategy allows for much time to be wasted in re-inventing the wheel. This process also leads to an incoherent and confused approach for motorcycling. Whilst the mode is a minority choice it is a legitimate choice and one that is beneficial to a sustainable, efficient transport system. We must therefore have a national strategy that removes to some extent a devolved approach to transport policy.

Devolution is undeniably beneficial for determining local demand and circumstances but is counterproductive for delivering a consistent national user experience that is safe, efficient and sustainable.

A top priority for an integrated national transport strategy should be to appropriately separate the local from the national level decision making process. Much play was made of the default policy for motorcycle access in bus lanes as an erosion of devolved power. This was a misrepresentation of a default policy as a mandate and showed a lack of understanding of what part of the process is best performed locally and what part is best performed at a national level.

All local transport authorities are required to produce a Local Transport Plan, but the remit should be to make local decisions. These decisions are for the local investment in maintenance and construction and, where required, the balance of demand. Local decisions may need to be made for exemptions or deviations in operation, but these should be exceptional and justified by clear evidence. The local remit is not the method of operation of the national system. Local Authorities should not be required to make policy that belongs at a national level. The national policy remit is to ensure the desired consistent user experience across all parts of all four nations.

Local Authorities should be mandated to consider motorcycles in their own local decisions. Levels of demand and viability of the various transport choices will vary, but LTP's should seek to facilitate as far as is reasonable all legitimate modal choices. Each LTP should therefore be required to integrate the role and needs of motorcyclists into their decision-making process.

**Final comments**

**Q49. Any other comments?**

We thank the Government for the opportunity to respond to and discuss this vital area of policy. The Motorcycle Action Group is a representative organisation for motorcyclists. We have over 8,000 full members, and additionally, in excess of 60,000 affiliated members through affiliated motorcycle clubs. The Motorcycle Action Group was formed in 1973. Many of the views expressed in this response have been repeated in previous discussions with local and national government and have been formed over many years of discussion and engagement with our members and the wider motorcycling community. We are a democratic organisation with elected representatives gathering and reporting the opinions of our members to formulate policy positions that are ratified by a national committee of elected regional representatives.

A successful integrated national transport strategy must facilitate all transport modal choices. Transport policy and strategy has failed to adequately cover the legal and legitimate choice of motorcycling for far too long and we see this consultation as a significant opportunity for change.

The theme of the consultation seems to be narrowly focused on public transport. MAG supports the rapid expansion of public transport, but we hope the forthcoming strategy takes a holistic approach covering all parts of the transport solution in the UK.

We would warn against the erosion of the fundamental purpose of any transport system (rapid and convenient movement of goods and people) by other policy aims. We believe that Net Zero and Vision Zero policies have been allowed to do just that.

In particular, the question of zero emissions at the tailpipe is a particular risk to the continued and beneficial integration of motorcycling within the transport system. Enforcement of a battery electric only mandate will stifle a range of use cases in motorcycling and thus be detrimental to the fundamental purpose of the transport system. All technological advances for motorcycling should be welcomed and encouraged, but electrification is only one of a broad range of potential advances.

We ask that the Government take this opportunity to redress the balance.

We respond to this consultation within the context of the recent admission that "At present, the government has no policy to encourage greater use of motorcycles". This statement was made in the outcome response to the motorcycles in bus lanes consultation published on 21st November 2024. Any meaningful integrated national transport strategy must encourage their use as a sustainable and flexible mode of transport.

Our response focuses on the role that motorcycles can and should play within the transport system and how that role can be enhanced and promoted. Whilst our focus is on motorcycles, we are not suggesting that motorcycles should be placed on a pedestal as the only, or necessarily the best solution in all circumstances. The strategy should create equal realisation of the potential offered by all modal choices including motorcycles.