

# Enterprise and Learning Committee

EL(3) 13-09 (p1) : 4 June 2009

## Inquiry Into Trunk Roads And Casualty Reduction

1. The Welsh Assembly Government is directly responsible for planning and delivery of improvements and maintenance of over 1000 miles of trunk road and 75 miles of motorway network in Wales. We do this through our agents and contractual partners. Our three regional public sector Trunk Road Agencies that deliver the day-to-day management of the trunk road are the South Wales Trunk Road Agency, the Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency and the North Wales Trunk Road Agency.

2. Road Safety is an intrinsic element of our trunk road management procedures and reducing the number of road casualties in all parts of Wales is a One Wales commitment. In 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government set targets for the reduction in road casualties in the period up to 2010. The table below demonstrates that we are making good progress towards achieving these targets.

Classification	1.	2010 Target*		Progress (2007 data)
			1. 2.	
Total number of Killed or Seriously Injured	1.	40% reduction	1.	30% reduction
Total number of children Killed or Seriously Injured	1.	50% reduction	1.	62% reduction
Slight casualties per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled	1.	10% reduction	1.	28% reduction

\*from the average for 1994-98.

### Road Safety Management

3. Making roads safe for all users is a key priority for the Welsh Assembly Government and we fund and encourage a range of initiatives and measures aimed at achieving this. Our initiatives work across all areas of improving road safety, such as making appropriate infrastructure improvements, introducing traffic calming measures, encouraging the use of alternatives to the car, and educating children and road users such as young drivers and motorcyclists. Our key initiatives include:

20 mph zones

Safe Routes in Communities

Child Pedestrian Training Co-ordinators

Road Safety Campaigns

4. Our principle way of funding these initiatives is through grants to Local Authorities, such as the Local Road Safety Grant which is £8.129m for 2009/10 and Transport Grant for Safe Routes in Communities, which is £8.134m.

### All Wales Casualty Reduction Partnership

5. Another key initiative in improving safety on our roads is the All Wales Casualty Reduction Partnership, which is an amalgamation of the previous two partnerships set up in North and South Wales. We are providing £8.4m in 2009/10 to support this initiative, which will primarily be used for reducing road casualties through enforcement of speed limits, but can also, if appropriate, be used for the development and implementation of broader road safety activities including engineering, publicity and marketing.

### Road Policing in Wales - Y Maniffesto

6. Another more recent initiative is the development of 'Y Maniffesto', the new plan to improve safety and reduce congestion on some of Wales' busiest roads. The plan has been developed in partnership with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and proposes the integration of existing police and trunk road services, and the transfer of powers from police to highway authorities to improve the efficiency of road policing and free up the police for law enforcement duties.

7. The key initiative set out in this document is the development of a new joint Police/ Welsh Assembly Government model for managing heavily trafficked roads, using Traffic Officers. The model will be trialled on the A55 in the north and M4 in the south.

8. The A55 trial was launched on 21 May, with the role of Traffic Officers being covered by the North Wales Trunk Road Agency's Routes

Stewards. The Route Stewards will be fully trained over the summer, with the trial being implemented in September. These officers will attend minor incidents, remove debris and assist broken down vehicles. As well as improving safety, reducing congestion and providing improved journey time, this will relieve pressures on the North Wales Police to enable them to carry out core police functions.

9. The M4 trial is currently being developed and will start in September. In South Wales, Incident Support Units will be used. These vehicles would be large vans (3.5 tonnes), rather than the 4 wheel drive vehicles being used in the trials in north Wales.

10. The South Wales Police are no longer able to provide the same service for non-criminal activities as previously provided on the trunk road network in South Wales, and in particular on the M4. We are currently considering options on how best to address this issue, but believe the trial of traffic officers on the M4 will go a long way to helping overcome this issue.

11. The results of both trials will be evaluated to determine the future model for co-ordinated trunk road policing in Wales.

### **General Management of the Trunk Road Network**

12. As well as supporting and encouraging a wide range of initiatives to improve road safety, it is vital that we maintain the trunk road asset to reduce the likelihood of incidents. Our Trunk Road Agents maintain the day-to-day safety of the motorway and trunk road network, through a range of minor and major works.

13. The agents have an annual programme of major maintenance works across the network, including key elements such as the road pavements, lighting infrastructure and structures. They also carry out safety inspections and routine maintenance activities, such as grass cutting to maintain visibility splays and the repairing and upgrading of safety fences.

14. As well as the works undertaken by our agents, the major improvements schemes in our Trunk Road Forward Programme and our own programme of improvements and upgrades play an important role in improving road safety by ensuring that the network in Wales is fit for purpose.

### **Partnership Working Together**

15. At the heart of improving safety on the roads in Wales is the need for partnership working, both for when incidents occur and in delivering all the proactive initiatives and programmes we have established to improve road safety and prevention.

16. One example of how we work in partnership is 'Road Safety Wales', which was established to develop and sustain co-operation and interaction between all 22 Local Authorities in Wales and agencies with the responsibility for local authority road safety promotion, the Welsh Assembly Government, the four Welsh Police Forces, the three Fire and Rescue services, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Road Safety Wales focuses on prevention of incidents through education and raising public awareness.

17. Our delivery partners play an essential role when reacting to incidents on the roads. When accidents do occur on the road network, Traffic Wales, the police and Trunk Road Agents work closely together to ensure that any casualties are dealt with quickly and safely, and that any disruption on the network is kept to an absolute minimum.

### **Closing Remarks**

18. The Welsh Assembly Government is fully committed to working closely with all partners involved in delivering road safety in Wales. As well as working with our Trunk Road Agents and the Welsh Police Forces, we are working with local authorities through the Regional Transport Consortia, using the Regional Transport Plans as the mechanisms for future priorities for maintaining safety on the local road network.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AM**

**Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport**

**May 2009**