



# Riders Are Voters 2010

## The Motorcycling Manifesto.

### Providing a Fair Deal for Motorcycle Riders, Industry and Sport.

**Transport policy is incomplete without motorcycling. This is because motorcycling can offer a realistic alternative for many road users. The industry, users and motorcycle sport should benefit from a level playing field in Government policy**

For the last 30 years transport policy in the UK has consistently failed to support, or in many cases even recognise, motorcycling as a mainstream and positive mode of transport. This is a serious overall policy deficiency.

The Government motorcycle strategy of 2005 was welcome, but the strategy merely 'rolled together' modest policy strands and activities which were ongoing, rather than announcing policies which would actually achieve the stated aim of the time – 'mainstreaming' motorcycling.

Government 'headline' transport policies need to mention motorcycling as a transport mode and there needs to be recognition that motorcycles are the lowest Co2 polluting form of motorised transport. Motorcycling offers a congestion-busting solution, which for a significant percentage of commuter travellers is far more practical than using other modes.

Transport policy in the UK has suffered from a long term significant deficiency. Walking, cycling and public transport cannot on their own offer a complete solution to transport problems. In policy terms motorcycling should sit alongside these, so that the public is provided with a proper 'toolkit' of alternative transport options which can meet a far broader range of individual needs.

The same policy 'malaise' also affects policy towards the motorcycle industry and sport. The industry overall is worth £7billion to the UK economy, employing 62,000 people in 5,700 businesses. But government incentives to protect the automotive sector during 2009 completely ignored the motorcycle industry. Tax benefits and other incentives for green and electric transport manufacture and use also ignore the motorcycle industry - despite motorcycling being the leastCo2 polluting form of transport. Government needs to engage more positively with industry.

Motorcycle sport in the UK is a £0.75billion industry which creates world class athletes who bring significant sporting success to the nation. Off road sport attracts some of the largest public audiences for any sport, with off road motorcycling engaging young people (the sporting stars of tomorrow) and helping to reduce social exclusion and youth

crime. But there is no clear recognition or support for the sport in Government sport policy. At local levels, venues are being lost and opportunities to engage the sport are reducing. It is no coincidence that concerns about young people illegally riding off road or illegally riding 'mini bikes' has gone hand in hand with the reduction in the number of local motorcycle sport venues.

It has also been observed by the organisers of rallies and events that an 'even hand' can sometimes be absent in relation to rules and policing of events. This concern sometimes extends to road traffic enforcement in some high profile areas of the country. Courts will often ensure that motorcycling offences are properly punished, while at the same time levying more lenient penalties on offenders in cars for the same offences. The Police and Courts must treat all traffic offenders with an even hand.

### What Does Government Need to Do?

- 1 **Recognise the benefits of motorcycling** in all key transport policy documents and direct practitioners to fully consider and provided for motorcycles
- 2 Allocate at least 1% of the overall road transport budget to ensuring that **motorcycles are fully considered and provided for** (motorcycling is 1-2% of road traffic)
- 3 Revise the Government Motorcycle Strategy and **provide named leadership for motorcycling policy** within the Department for Transport
- 4 Include motorcycling **experts on key roads policy committees**
- 5 **Create a level playing field** for business and enterprise policy, including the motorcycle industry and consumers in all Government incentives for automotive industry, business and green transport
- 6 Government to **adopt and promote the industry code of practice** for motorcycle sport.
- 7 Government to support an increase in the number of off road sporting venues and **include the positive role of organised motorcycle sport** in messages about social exclusion and youth crime
- 8 Government to review policing and judicial policy and practice to **ensure all road users are treated with the same 'even' hand**



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### Making Motorcycles an integral part of the future transport mix: 'Think Bike' Motorcycling is good for society and its aims

**Society is changing and attitudes to transport are changing. Concerns about the environment, traffic congestion and inefficiency means that ordinary people are demanding greater choice, but also are much more interested in smarter and often greener choices. 'Reducing social exclusion' is not just an empty phrase, there is real public demand for the 'tools' which can offer the least-advantaged ways of improving their work and life opportunities. Motorcycling can offer this.**

For too long, motorcycling has been seen as a problem for society with risk taking, speed and performance being incorrectly identified as the main 'drivers' behind the motorcycle world.

However, more than 60% of all motorcycle mileage is for practical reasons, meaning that the majority of motorcyclists see their bikes as a valued work and life tool, which provides lower cost and efficient personal transport, that can radically reduce personal carbon footprints compared to using a car.

The 'Powered Two Wheeler' offers not just a greener and more efficient mode of transport for society but also offers a low cost and flexible mode of transport for young job seekers.

Motorcycles are not constrained by traffic congestion and offer journey time efficiencies to users and business which are unparalleled by any other mode. They do not stand in traffic jams with their engines idling which means that total Co2 emitted will always be lower for any given journey.

Figures show that bikes of all kinds have, on average, a Co2 performance (110g/km) which is already better than the new EU targets for cars. For smaller bikes, average Co2 figures are under 100g/km

Quite clearly, motorcycles have a distinct advantage and benefit, over and above any other motorised transport mode, for any transport policy which has the objective of Co2 reduction at its heart. Government sustainable transport policies (Currently 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' [DASTS]), must therefore recognise the positive role of motorcycle use.

Wheels to work (WTW) is the highly respected local area programme which provides small motorcycles to job-seekers who often live in remote areas where public transport may be unreliable and private powered transport beyond the individual's financial means.

Unfortunately central funding for WTW has dried up, leaving existing programmes forced to fend for themselves, either through local authority funding or through creative third party funding or sponsorship arrangements. WTW schemes are providing transport to enable those young people being targeted by various Government schemes such as Connexions, Working Links or New Deal to access work.

However, in most cases, the funding to enable these schemes to continue is not provided.

WTW's role in job accessibility and social inclusion is key and through 'enabling' employment represents a good Government investment, compared to the cost of the loss of tax revenue and the open ended payment of benefits to individuals, who without WTW would be unlikely to access jobs and get a foot on the social and economic ladder.

The Prime Minister and the Leaders of both main opposition parties have been very supportive of WTW in recent years, the motorcycle community calls for positive action to back these warm words from whoever wins the election

In addition to reducing social exclusion, motorcycles can also engage young people in structured social activities and divert them away from crime, through local motorcycle sport projects.

#### What Does Government Need to Do?

- 1 **Recognise the sustainable transport advantages offered by motorcycles;** investment in knowledge and infrastructure to increase cycling should be matched by similar support for motorcycling
- 2 Provide positive guidance and targets to ensure local and national roads authorities provide motorcycle users with appropriate support, eg: **access to bus lanes, free motorcycle parking and access to Advanced Stop Lines**, implementing advice in the Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE) motorcycle guidelines
- 3 **Reduce Vehicle Excise Duty** ('road tax') to zero for all sub 100g/km motorcycles
- 4 Extend tax breaks and other incentives for **'green vehicles' to include motorcycles**
- 5 Extend automotive industry **incentives for R&D and manufacture of green and electric vehicles to the motorcycle industry;** support motorcycle sport zero emission incentives and events
- 7 **Establish multi departmental support for Wheels to Work** and ensure that referred clients come with their own portion of funding and work with known WTW supporters such as the Motor Cycle Industry and Community
- 8 Transport Association to establish **formalised national coordination and business support** for individual WTW projects
- 9 **Recognise the role of motorcycle sport in social inclusion and youth crime**, encouraging the development of new sporting venues





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### Refocusing road safety action on tackling the real causes of accidents

**Many 'safety' policies seem to be more about reducing motorcycle use than about actually improving safety for new and existing users. This does little more than maintain the vulnerability of motorcycle users. The catastrophic implementation of European Driving License Directives and lack of support for best practice in rider training clearly demonstrates that a radical rethink of the Government's whole approach to motorcycle safety is required**

Although the chance of a rider having an accident has fallen by nearly 30% since the year 2000, motorcycle users still account for 20% of all road fatalities. The majority of these deaths involve the actions of other road users or of roads authorities. Yet almost all local and national work to reduce rider vulnerability is focussed on the rider and not the external causes of motorcycle collisions.

Safety issues have come to define the Government's general approach to motorcycling. Ministers have previously stated that the Government wishes to encourage safe and sustainable motorcycle use by fully considering and providing for motorcycle users in all relevant government policy. However, policy actions have yet to 'mainstream' motorcycling as promised. This inertia sustains the vulnerability of motorcyclists; almost the only significant change in official policy on motorcycling in recent years has been to make it almost impossible to gain a licence to ride a motorcycle in many parts of the country. This situation has led many riders to conclude that there has been no genuine intention to properly integrate motorcycle use in mainstream transport thinking.

Successive Governments have instead pursued a policy which seems more about reducing the number of riders, rather than being about actually improving safety. Licensing regulations have been relied upon as a tool to improve safety through more stages of testing on mere machine control skills, when in fact more effort needs to be put into improving attitudes and road skills among new and existing riders.

The road environment also has a significant impact on safety. But common-sense measures, such as ensuring road maintenance budgets are spent on providing everyone with reliable road surfaces, designing road junctions and road-side equipment to reduce the risks they present to riders, granting nation-wide access to bus lanes and integrating motorcycling into Local Transport Plans, have been ignored - often on the irrational grounds that ensuring a safer and more motorcycle-friendly road network would promote motorcycling as a hazardous activity. This failure to encourage positive road and infrastructure policies for motorcycling actually prevents greater improvement in motorcycle safety.

The DSA's catastrophic implementation of new motorcycle rider testing since 2009 has resulted in vastly fewer test centres, an inadequate supply of test opportunities and a new machine control test that has not been fully thought through. This could lead to a permanent reduction in the

number of riders who are properly trained and qualified. European regulations that would allow riders to progress from smaller to larger bikes through further training tailored to their needs are set to be ignored, instead the Driving Standards Agency seem determined to insist that riders continually repeating the same test at every stage.

Government grants which could be used to expand and develop recognised and popular best practice, such as the police-led 'BikeSafe' rider assessment, are instead being awarded to local projects which seem more about 're-inventing the wheel' than innovating or improving.

#### What Does Government Need to Do?

- 1 Future road safety budgets must **proportionately invest in motorcycle safety** and refocus on addressing the sources of external risks (such as other road user behaviour, road design and maintenance, etc.)
- 2 National and local roads authorities must be **required to provide motorcycle-friendly infrastructure** (such as junction improvements, road surface improvements and non-lethal restraint systems) as well as policies that will reduce rider vulnerability and improve safety (such as access to bus lanes and Advanced Stop Lines)
- 3 Protect road maintenance budgets to **ensure local roads authorities do not divert essential funding**
- 4 Require **prompt replacement of worn-out surfaces** and infrastructure by roads authorities and undertakings
- 5 Revise criteria for road safety grant awards, to **ensure development and promulgation of best practice** as well as encouraging true innovation
- 6 Ensure roads authorities monitor the safety performance of roads affected by recent speed limit reviews, and to **rescind restrictions where no significant net social benefit can be demonstrated**
- 7 **Immediately review motorcycle training and testing**, with the aim of creating a new strategy by 2011 based on developmental training, rather than repeated testing, (which should be brought back under the direct management of the DfT in London, with the motorcycle community integral to all decision making processes).
- 8 **Reform the DSA** so that its current commercial operations are separated from policy and standards functions
- 9 **Equalise the cost of car and motorcycle tests**
- 10 Ensure **full funding** for the national administration of BikeSafe





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