

## Motorcycles

Motorcycles/motorbikes are a fully motorised individual transport mode. They are used for less than 1% of journeys nationally, whilst ownership sits at around 1.2million motorbikes in the UK. They are part of the transport fabric around Oxfordshire. They suffer from a reputation for being dangerous, some of which is born out in the data, which shows motorbikes as having the highest number of fatalities per million miles travelled compared to any other mode.

Motorbikes are regulated by the Department for Transport (DfT) and require a test to be passed in order to hold a licence.

There are four types, by size, of motorbikes recognised by the DfT, which are:

- 50cc & under
- between 50cc and 125cc
- between 125cc and 500cc
- 500cc & over

As part of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan there are arguments for and against promoting motorbikes as part of a transport solution for the county.

### For

- Outside the electric vehicle revolution, motorbikes use less fuel than most, although not all, cars.
- Motorbikes take up less space on the highway than cars; so swapping cars for motorbikes would reduce congestion and take up less parking space
- Motorbikes are faster than bicycles; they are perhaps more suited to longer journeys, or longer commutes, than an active mode of travel

### Against

- Motorbikes are mostly still using fossil fuels to run, meaning they are environmentally unsound, not sustainable, and contribute to air pollution
- Motorbikes make a substantial contribution to noise pollution
- Statistical evidence suggests motorcyclists are a danger to themselves, and there are recorded activities in other places showing drops in collisions once motorised two wheelers have been banned from specific lanes other than roads.
- Motorbikes are substantially larger than bicycles, so they take more land space to park in busy urban environments

### What evidence can we draw upon?

There are very few electric motorbikes on the market, although this number is increasing, which means most motorbikes rely on fossil fuel for their propulsion. The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) say motorbikes are 'the most sustainable form of private motorised transport'. This is not the same as being sustainable. In 2012 legislation, the EU required motorcycles to improve pollutant emissions, although only to match 2012 car emission controls by the end of the decade. Motorcycles substantially lag behind the car industry in creating less polluting, smaller engines, and electric bikes have been slow to the market.

It is relevant to review other local authority policies for Powered Two Wheel riders. Where Transport for London has permitted permanent access to bus lanes for motorbike riders, the number of road incidents involving powered two wheelers has increased. Injury data from the NHS relating to those attending A&E/Hospital show that twice as many powered two-wheeler riders attend hospital, compared to reporting to the police. One reason could be that of those who attend hospital – but not report to Police – are most likely to have been the only ones involved.

The causation factors (i.e. factors that may have played a part in the accident occurring) differ between the different motorbike types. A summary of the 'top 5' (i.e. those appearing most often) causation factors shows:

### RANK PTW Type/Size

	50cc & under	50cc to 125cc	125cc to 500cc	500cc & over
1	(605) Inexperienced or learner driver/rider	(605) Inexperienced or learner driver/rider	(410) Loss of control	(410) Loss of control
2	(103) Slippery road (due to weather)	(103) Slippery road (due to weather)	(103) Slippery road (due to weather)	(403) Poor turn or manoeuvre
3	(410) Loss of control	(410) Loss of control	(602) Careless/Reckless/In a hurry	(307) Travelling too fast for conditions
4	(102) Deposit on road (eg oil, mud, chippings)	(408) Sudden braking	(403) Poor turn or manoeuvre	(102) Deposit on road (eg oil, mud, chippings)
5	(403) Poor turn or manoeuvre	(102) Deposit on road (eg oil, mud, chippings)	(605) Inexperienced or learner driver/rider	(602) Careless/Reckless/In a hurry

The following pattern can be seen:

- lower powered PTW'ers lack of experience/road conditions seems to be an issue
- higher powered PTW'ers a loss of control and speed/being in a hurry are issues

Standard police practice when compiling accident reports is to assign the primarily 'at fault' vehicle as vehicle 1 (with any other vehicles assigned vehicle 2, vehicle 3 etc.). In Oxfordshire, in 2014-2018 the following proportion of motorcycle accidents had the motorcyclist as vehicle 1: Fatal: 71%, Serious: 59%, Slight 51%. This suggests that the higher severity incidents were more frequently the result of errors on the part of the motorcyclist than the other parties involved.

## Question 28

### **Motorcycles - What do you think?**

Should the approach to motorbikes and motorbike riders in the new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan be reviewed? How could any approach affect active and healthy travel opportunities?

Could there be better and clearer parking, as distinct from cycle parking and car parking?

Could road safety campaigns on motorcycles be extended? What angle/s should this cover?

To respond please use the online consultation form.