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NBTN ADVISORY NOTE 2

MOTORBIKES IN BUSINESS

In 2007 a total of 144,583 scooters, mopeds and motorcycles were sold in the UK, an 8.6% rise on the previous year. There are now approximately 1.22 million licensed motorcycles in Britain, including those which are exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty, such as electric bikes. Motorcycle traffic has increased by an estimated 40% between 1997 and 2007 and motorcycles travelled around 5.6 billion vehicle kilometres in 2007. There are a variety of reasons for this increase from the volatility of fuel prices to congestion and companies should consider how to support motorcycling as an alternative to car use within workplace travel plans.

While there may be benefits in terms of efficiency and reduced congestion, riding a motorcycle is more hazardous than driving a car, so careful planning is needed to minimise risk and maximise the skills of any riders.

THE BENEFITS OF MOTORCYCLING

One of the biggest benefits of motorcycles is that they rarely get stuck in traffic jams. During the morning peak up to 15% of motorists on key inner city routes are stuck in queues, according to analysis of five 'go-slow' roads by the AA in conjunction with traffic information provider ITIS Holdings. Along the entire length of three major roads into a city, the AA estimates that just one minute a day of queuing can:

- Waste 900,000 litres of fuel per year - worth nearly £1.1 million at October 2008 prices
- Add 645 tonnes of CO₂ emissions - equivalent to switching on 2,000 streetlights

However motorcycles can be 'jam-busters', working both for commuters and employees visiting other business premises during the day if they don't have much to carry:

- Journey times in London can be reduced by between 40%-60% when travelling by motorcycle, moped or scooter
- Scooters cut journey times in London by an average of 48% compared to all other forms of transport.
- Up to five motorcycles can be parked in a space occupied by one car
- Motorcycles produce on average significantly lower levels of Co₂ than any other motorised mode of transport

Source: MCIA 'Smart' Report 2002

TRAVEL PLANS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

When constructing a travel plan, a company should ensure that infrastructure is in place to support motorcyclists. Their specific needs should be considered when planning funding requirements within a corporate travel plan. Areas to consider (see case studies) include:

- **Provision of safe and secure parking** - This should be well lit and covered if possible with sturdy posts or stands for motorcycles and mopeds to be secured to
- **Provision of changing facilities/storage for equipment e.g. motorcycle helmets** - Companies may wish to provide lockers for equipment, changing rooms, showers and drying areas. These facilities can be the same as used by cyclists
- **Promotion** - To support employees, especially those considering motorcycling for the first time, it would help to provide information about suppliers and training. Companies could potentially agree preferential rates with suppliers
- **Training** - Appropriate training is vital to ensure riders are safe on their bikes. To protect its employees, a company should consider whether to offer staff additional or refresher training
- **Interest-free loans** - Companies could consider provision of interest-free loans for employees wishing to travel by motorcycle/moped for commuting or work-based trips - if so, companies should encourage purchase of small motorcycles/ mopeds. Loans can be provided tax-free up to a value of £5,000

ENVIRONMENT AND POLLUTION

There is much debate regarding the environmental credentials of motorcycles and scooters and this is a complex subject due to the variety of vehicles available. As with cars and other motorised vehicles, levels of emissions vary according to a number of factors such as the type, engine size and age of the vehicle and how it is driven. EU emissions standards for motorcycles and scooters were first set in 1999 and great progress has been made in this time (from Euro 0 to Euro 3 and further proposals from the EC are awaited).

When thinking about motorcycles and scooters as a sustainable form of travel the following points should be considered:

- Motorcycles can avoid congestion and spend less time idling in traffic which contributes to lower fuel use and reduced emissions
- The European Motorcycle Industry (ACEM) research shows that scooters and motorcycles on average have a CO₂ performance of 110g/km versus the new EU targets for cars (120 g/km) and motorcycles and scooters will tend to emit less than half of the CO₂ of other motorised petrol or diesel fuelled vehicles
- Emissions of oxides of nitrogen for scooters and motorcycles are on a par or lower than other motorised vehicles
- Emissions of particulates and particularly hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide tend to compare less favourably with other vehicles
- Increasingly stringent standards have reduced noise levels from newer motorcycles

ACEM and the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Association (FEMA) have launched a campaign to promote new, clean, synthetic oil. Using synthetic oil helps reduce emissions and wear and tear on engines to keep them running well for longer.

Businesses and riders can now invest in a new generation of electric motorbikes, such as the Vectrix. Although their range is limited to about 40-50 miles, they are viewed as ideal for city use and commuting. Electric motorbikes offer pollution-free riding, particularly if they are charged using 'green' electricity, which is produced from renewable sources, such as wind and wave power.

SAFETY

For some employers, scooters and motorcycles are perceived as dangerous, however riders are growing in number and it is important that they are fully supported in travel plans.

Scooter and motorcycle riders are vulnerable and have the highest average casualty rate (the chance of having an accident) of any form of transport. Department for Transport figures show there were 588 motorcycle user fatalities in 2007 (2% lower than during 2006). The total number of seriously injured riders rose from 6,484 in 2006 to 6,737 in 2007 (4% increase). However, compared to the 1994-98 average, motorcycling has increased by 44%, which means that the casualty rate has dropped by 32% compared to the 1994-98 average.

Providing additional training to riders should be considered essential by companies, particularly if staff are to ride their bikes on work-related journeys in addition to home to work travel. Businesses should also consider pro-active safety campaigns for employees and make bike riders and car drivers aware of the main causes of crashes involving scooters and motorcycles.

The main causes of accidents are as follows:

- **Failure to look properly**
- **Loss of control**
- **Failure to judge another road user's path or speed**
- **Poor turn or manoeuvre**
- **Careless or reckless, riding or driving**

The most dangerous accident locations are:

- **Junctions** - urban and rural areas. In urban areas there are many obstructions and distractions such as when a car driver pulls out of a side-turn when a rider has right-of-way.
- **On rural roads** - where higher speeds are allowed there is less time to see another vehicle approach.
- **Bends** - the most common crash site when no other road user is involved, either because of a slippery surface or a rider going into a bend too quickly.
- **Overtakes** - either when filtering in heavy urban traffic or when getting past a line of slow-moving traffic on the open road.
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BikeSafe

BikeSafe is an initiative run by police forces across Britain who work with the biking world to help to lower the number of motorcycle rider casualties. By passing on their knowledge, skills and experience, police motorcyclists can help riders become safer and more competent.

For details, log onto www.bikesafe.co.uk

For details of motorcycle accident figures, go to www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesmr/rcgbmainresults2007

CLOTHING

Protective clothing can significantly reduce the risk of injury in the event of a crash. The law states that all riders of mopeds, scooters and motorcycles must wear a helmet.

The DFT's Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme (SHARP) enables riders to more easily select a helmet which matches their needs by giving an independent assessment of the safety performance of helmets sold in the UK. Employers should encourage riders to consider the SHARP rating when selecting a helmet.

It is not a legal requirement to wear any other protective clothing, but experts recommend riders should wear protective clothing at all times, to help reduce the severity of any injuries that might be caused in a crash.

For safe riding essentials include:

- Padded gloves
- Protective boots
- Motorcycle leathers (or equivalent protective clothing)

TRAINING

The current motorcycle test includes a large practical element, including handling tests and an on-road assessment. The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) will launch a new practical motorcycle test on March 30, 2009 which will be even more rigorous.

The new test will contain two elements.

- The higher speed exercises and other exercises will be tested on safe, off-road sites and take about 10 minutes to complete.
- The accompanied on-road element of the test will follow, consisting of a road ride covering a variety of road and traffic conditions and will also include normal stops, hill and angle starts.

Post-test training can help any rider further develop their skills, which will enhance their riding pleasure as well as improve safety. According to RoSPA, advanced riders are 20% less likely to have an accident.

Riders who take an advanced certificate can also benefit from other advantages such as lower insurance premiums. Via **The Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS)** – a new training package produced by the DSA. The scheme is designed to benefit all riders who have a full motorcycle licence, whether their bike size or experience level.

As well as providing information about motorcycle post-test training, companies may like to consider subsidising such post test training as part of their travel plan.

COSTS

A strong argument for buying a motorbike or scooter is the cost in comparison with a car.

A newly registered good commuter motorcycle should cost under £5,000, or they can be leased for under £200 a month through suppliers such as Motorcycle Management. A moped can cost less than £1,000 to buy.

Fuel economy can vary, but can range from 30 mpg to 60 mpg during everyday driving depending on the conditions. Smaller scooters and mopeds can achieve over 100 mpg.

Insurance costs also vary depending on who is covered, with young riders paying substantially more than older, often more experienced, riders for comprehensive cover (as is often the case for car use)but for most experienced riders it will be similar or less than car insurance cover.

Several hundred pounds must also need to be set aside for a helmet, gloves, protective clothing and boots.

For information on motorcycle leasing see www.motorcyclemanagement.co.uk

TAXATION AND MILEAGE RATES

Benefit-in-kind tax for motorcycles is much simpler than for private use of cars.

For benefit-in-kind tax, the rule is that 20% of the cost of the vehicle to the employer is added to the employee's taxable income for each tax year. This amount can be reduced if there is any business use, by a fraction represented by the ratio of business use to total use. Meanwhile, fuel is simply taxed at cost.

If employees use their own motorbikes for business, then the employer can reimburse them with tax and National Insurance-free Approved Mileage Allowance Payments, currently 24p a mile for motorcycles.

Vehicle Excise Duty for motorcycles ranges from £15 for bikes of 150cc and under to £66 for bikes over 600cc.

CASE STUDY 1: VODAFONE

Vodafone, the leading international mobile telecommunications group and NBTN member, encourages staff to leave their cars at home by paying everyone who travels by alternative means - including motorcyclists - an £85 a month allowance.

Undercover parking is provided for motorcycles at the company's various UK sites, along with changing facilities for employees that include lockers, wardrobes for hanging wet clothes and showers. Additionally, interest free loans are available of up to £1,500 to help staff buy motorcycles up to 250cc. A motorcycle user group has also been launched and employees who use their motorcycles for business trips are paid the HM Revenue and Customs' tax-free mileage rate of 24p a mile.

Company travel manager Chris Hopkins said: "Vodafone wants to encourage employees to use alternative to the car, which include motorbikes and scooters. By making it as easy and as practical as possible for staff to use motorcycles we have seen an increase in their use. Scooters have become particularly popular among employees who do not have a long commute."

CASE STUDY 2: PFIZER

Initiatives to encourage UK employees to use motorcycles to commute to work are included within an all-encompassing transport plan launched by Pfizer, the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical company and the major supplier of medicines to the NHS.

The long-established transport plan is designed to encourage employees to use a range of alternatives to cars.

Incentive schemes to encourage staff to use motorcycles include a full training scheme with interest-free loans for young people who want to learn to ride a bike and refresher training for 'born again' riders.

Additionally reserved motorcycle parking areas have been established along with changing rooms and showers.

Transport consultant John Elliott, who helped design and launch the plan, while a full-time employee of Pfizer, said: "The whole transport plan is about educating employees about the environment and making it easier for them to use travel alternatives to cars. Motorcycling is just one option, and Pfizer wants to make that choice as safe as possible which is why it is encouraging staff to complete a training course."

CASE STUDY 3: BAA AT GATWICK AIRPORT

At Gatwick Airport the focus has been on ensuring that motorcyclists are as safe as they possibly can be on their way to and from work.

BAA Plc, which owns Gatwick Airport and is an NBTN member, launched a major travel plan in 2000 and re-launched it in 2006 under the name of 'Gatwick Commute'.

With the aim of giving everyone who works at Gatwick Airport - BAA staff and people who work for other organisations located at the complex - information and advice on travel options, the Metropolitan Police were approached to provide safety training.

Tom Hall, Corporate Responsibility and Surface Access Analyst at BAA Gatwick, who helped develop the far-reaching travel initiative, said: "The travel plan is about giving people options and reducing the environmental impact of travel. With regards to motorcycling we wanted to ensure people who work at the Airport are as safe as possible."

Five or six times a year depending on demand, the Metropolitan Police run their 'BikeSafe' rider skill days at Gatwick, which are also open to family and friends of Airport workers. The course, which typically costs £30 if held at the force's own training centre, is available at the subsidised price of £20.

Mr Hall added: "Many police forces run similar schemes so it is worth other employers approaching their local constabulary for help."

In addition to the courses, Gatwick Airport provides special secure parking areas for motorbikes and there are also lockers and showers available at a number of locations.

CASE STUDY 4: GREENPEACE

Greenpeace is using an electric motorcycle as an environmentally-friendly solution to tackling traffic in London. It has purchased a zero-emission Vectrix electric maxi scooter, which is charged from mains electricity, has a range of 68 miles and a top speed of 62 mph.

The Vectrix is based at Greenpeace's central London offices and is used to transport personnel and equipment to and from the River Thames where Greenpeace's fleet of RHIBs (Rigid Hull inflatable Boats) is based. The bike also makes trips to the charity's Harlow-based storage location, and takes transport film and photography from Greenpeace events to the media in London.

Frank Hewetson, actions coordinator, Greenpeace, said. "The Vectrix enables us to cut our car usage and as a result reduce our carbon emissions. The bike is perfect for quick trips around Central London and for taking people to Whitehall for meetings or for picking up tools and equipment which are too large for a pushbike but not big enough to justify using a car."

To ensure minimal environmental impact, Greenpeace mainly powers the Vectrix from 50 PhotoVoltaic solar panels on the roof of its building. The panels require just daylight to produce electricity.

Staff undergo rigorous training before they are allowed to use the motorbike, particularly focused on the hazards of London driving.

Mr Hewetson said: "We are very aware of the dangers of riding through London traffic. People can ride the Vectrix after taking their Compulsory Basic Training, but we insist on riders getting their full licence and then we also assess them to ensure we are happy with them being on the road on a motorbike."

An additional challenge is the fact the Vectrix is almost silent, so additional care has to be taken, particularly around pedestrians and cyclists.

But, despite the challenges, the bike has proved a hit. Mr Hewetson said: "I drove to Harlow, which is just over 30 miles, including the M11. I drove at 55 mph and when I got there, the battery still had half a charge left. I am delighted with it."

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCIA) - the Motorcycle Industry Association represents the interests of the supply side of the UK Motor Cycle Industry. Members include manufacturers and importers, clothing and accessory manufacturers, importers and wholesalers, motorcycle marketing services including the major finance houses and insurance brokers. Web: www.mcia.co.uk; Tel: 02476 408000

British Motorcycle Federation - with over 92,000 members, the British Motorcyclists Federation is Britain's largest most influential Riders Rights Group. Its aim is to promote and protect the interests of the road rider by representing the riders' interests where and when it matters. Web: www.bmf.co.uk; Tel: 0116 2845380

Motorcycle Action Group - The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is Britain's leading riders group, drawing membership from across the whole spectrum of motorcycling and with active local groups across the UK. A political lobbying and campaigns group which is central to all aspects of policy and legislation affecting motorcycling. Web : www.mag-uk.org/; Tel : 01788 570065

Bikesafe - is an initiative run by police forces around Britain who work with the whole of the biking world to help to lower the number of motorcycle rider casualties. By passing on their knowledge, skills and experience, police motorcyclists can help employees become a safer more competent rider. Web: www.bikesafe.co.uk; Tel: 08452 307407

THINK! Motorcycle Academy - offers practical advice on riding, equipment and safety from industry experts, training organisations and racers. Part of the THINK! road safety campaign run by the Department for Transport. Web: www.dft.gov.uk/thinkmotorcycleacademy/

The Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS) - A new training scheme for riders which has been designed by the DSA and the motorcycle industry. Completion of which may reduce insurance premium. Web: www.enhancedriderscheme.co.uk/

SHARP The Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme - Produced by the DfT, SHARP enables riders to more easily select a helmet which matches their needs. It provides consumers with an independent assessment of the safety performance of helmets sold in the UK. The SHARP RATING reflects the performance of each helmet model following a series of advanced laboratory tests and rates helmets from 1-5 stars. Web: www.sharp.direct.gov.uk/

IHIE Guidelines for Motorcycling - award winning practical guidance for transportation professionals on providing a safer environment for motorcycles, mopeds and scooters. Web: www.motorcycleguidelines.org.uk/