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Joint Committee on Transport

Report on Road Safety: The Urgent Need for Action

November 2026

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Publications

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Committee videos

Footage of Committee proceedings can be found on the Committee videos page.

Committee debates

Transcripts of Committee debates can be found on the Committee debates page.

Contact details

The contact details for the Committee can be found on the Committee page.

Orders of reference

Read the Orders of reference for the Committee.

Committee Membership

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Foreword

Behind every road death is a family grieving, a life lost and a community profoundly affected. Behind every serious injury are individuals and families whose lives may be changed forever.

In 2025, more people died on Irish roads than in any year for over a decade. Since 2019, road deaths have increased by 31%, while across the European Union they have fallen by 15%. In 2026, fatalities have again exceeded the corresponding figures for the previous year emphasising the urgent need for action.

These are deeply troubling statistics, and we must never lose sight of the human tragedy behind every number.

It was against this background that, in January, I asked the Joint Committee on Transport to make road safety a central priority of our work programme.

Over 12 public hearings, the Committee heard compelling evidence from road safety organisations, An Garda Síochána, Government agencies, experts and, importantly, those representing victims and bereaved families.

The evidence highlighted significant shortcomings in roads policing, enforcement, legislative implementation and collision data, alongside a clear need for stronger coordination and accountability.

I want to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of those working across the agencies responsible for road safety. Their commitment is not in question. However, we must ensure that the necessary structures, resources and accountability are in place to deliver better outcomes.

This report contains 52 practical recommendations aimed at improving road safety in the short to medium term. Central to these is the proposed establishment of an independent Road Safety Commissioner, alongside important recommendations on enforcement, Garda resources, legislation and safer infrastructure.

I sincerely thank everyone who contributed to our examination, particularly the bereaved families and victims' organisations whose courage and determination have been so important. I also thank my fellow Committee members and the Committee Secretariat for their dedication and commitment.

I urge Government and the relevant agencies to give these recommendations serious and timely consideration.

Ultimately, the success of this report will not be measured by the number of recommendations it contains, but by the actions that follow and the lives that can be saved.



Michael Murphy TD
Cathaoirleach to the Committee
11 November 2026

Introduction

Road safety remains a significant public policy challenge in Ireland. Successive road safety strategies contributed to a reduction in road deaths from 472 in 1997 to 132 in 2021, the lowest figure recorded since records began in 1959. While Ireland continues to record a road mortality rate below the European Union average, road deaths have increased by 31% between 2019 and 2025 and by 7% between 2024 and 2025. The rise in fatalities and serious injuries is diverging from broader European trends, where road deaths have continued to fall by 15%. 2025 recorded the highest number of road deaths in over a decade and by 23 September 2026 deaths had increased by 30 on the same point in 2025. These increases place Ireland at risk of reversing two decades of progress. As a result, the likelihood of achieving the Government's Vision Zero objectives as set out in the current Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 (the Strategy) of halving road deaths and serious injuries by 2030 and eliminating them entirely by 2050 is diminishing.

Against this background the Committee decided early in 2026 to make road safety a priority of its Work Programme. This examination was prompted by 2025 recording the highest number of road deaths in several years, a rise in deaths among both drivers and vulnerable road users, with serious injuries also remaining high. Provisional figures for 2025 showed 41 pedestrians, 30 motorcyclists and 14 cyclist deaths, with the number of cycling deaths the highest since 2017 and motorcyclist deaths the highest since 2007. The Committee set out to examine the factors behind these trends, and how enforcement, operational capacity, legislative provisions and data systems support the delivery of road safety policy. From February the Committee held twelve public hearings with organisations representing vulnerable road users, motorcyclists, hauliers, and public transport workers, victims and survivor groups, and with academic and medical experts, the Road Safety Authority (RSA), An Garda Síochána and the Minister of State at the Department of Transport with responsibility for International and Road Transport, Logistics, Rail and Ports.

The Committee's overall finding is that Ireland has a strategy, an action plan and a range of agencies working on road safety, yet outcomes have worsened. The evidence points to a gap in delivery and accountability. Lead responsibility is spread across the Department of Transport, the RSA, An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and local authorities. Each is responsible for the actions assigned to it in the Strategy's action plan, and delivery is overseen by the road safety leadership

group chaired by the Minister of State. The Committee found that while road safety is a shared responsibility, no single body currently has the authority to require delivery across all responsible organisations or to hold those organisations publicly accountable where agreed actions and targets are not achieved. Visible enforcement has thinned, with roads policing at around 660 members against more than 1,000 in 2009, and breath testing is in decline. Enforcement cameras and legislation have been slow to arrive. The data needed to target action is slow, incomplete and not linked across systems, and the Committee heard of gaps in how penalty points, disqualifications and licence surrender are recorded and enforced.

This report sets out 52 recommendations, along with supporting evidence gathered across hearings that cover governance, enforcement, driver distraction, speed, infrastructure, driver training, data, drink & drug driving, vehicles, motorway safety, and victims access to justice. Several recommendations depend on legislation that is currently been prepared, including the National Vehicle and Driver File, Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2026 and subsequent Road Traffic Bills. The recommendations contained in this report are intended to assist Government and relevant agencies in accelerating progress towards Vision Zero and also ensuring that the reduction of road deaths and serious injuries remain a priority.

The Committee recognise that its examination of Road safety has limitations. Three areas that would benefit from more focused work include the risks faced by young and novice drivers, the role of in-vehicle technology, and international best practice. The Committee heard evidence on each but did not examine any of them in sufficient depth and may look at these as further areas of examination in the future.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends:

Governance, Leadership and Accountability

1. The Government establish an independent Road Safety Commissioner on a statutory basis, with the authority and resources to co-ordinate road safety activity across Departments, agencies and local authorities, to monitor delivery against the Road Safety Strategy, and to report publicly where delivery falls short.
2. That the Consolidation of the Road Traffic Acts be carried out without delay.
3. The Department of Transport publish, where an action or target under the Road Safety Strategy is not delivered, the body responsible, the reasons for non-delivery, and the remedial action to be taken.
4. That the Minister for Transport provide a formal response to this report within six months of its publication, outlining the Government's consideration of the recommendations and identifying those proposed for implementation, including indicative timelines where appropriate. The Committee further recommends that regular progress updates be provided on the implementation of the Road Safety Strategy, including Phase 3.
5. That the Road Safety Authority and Department of Transport explore an all-island approach to road safety initiatives.

Enforcement

6. That the strength of the roads policing unit be restored to a level commensurate with the volume of traffic and the size of the population, and that a recruitment and retention plan be published with an aim to restore its numbers to where it was in 2009
7. That enforcement of road traffic law be conducted on a routine and sustained basis rather than through periodic campaigns.
8. The introduction of a graduated penalty points system to reflect the severity of the driving offence.
9. That the Department of Transport, in conjunction with the Courts Service, An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority, undertake an urgent audit of the recording of court-imposed penalty points and driving disqualifications on the National Vehicle and Driver File, identify any failures in the transmission or recording of such penalties, and introduce a robust verification process to ensure that all court-imposed penalties and disqualifications are accurately and promptly recorded.
10. That the deployment of safety cameras under the National Safety Camera Strategy be progressed without delay, and that the Camera Enforcement Oversight Group publish a time bound implementation plan by the end of Q1 2027 with measurable performance indicators and report publicly on progress at regular intervals.

11. That camera-based enforcement of existing heavy goods vehicle restrictions be piloted in one local authority area, evaluated, and extended if effective.
12. That legislative protections are brought forward without delay to support members of An Garda Síochána while driving on operational duty.
13. That the Department of Justice and the Department of Transport examine the introduction of a new aggregated offence of dangerous driving where a person deliberately travels the wrong way on a motorway, with much stronger custodial sentences.
14. That legislative provision to enable local authorities or other agencies to process offences detected by camera be explored to reduce the administrative burden on An Garda Siochána.

Speed

15. That the Government reverses its decision not to adopt the Speed Limit Review Group's recommendation for a 30 km/h default speed limit in built up areas, with clearly justified exceptions where higher speeds can be made safe.
16. That the Department of Transport and local authorities set out how road safety risk is addressed on urban distributor and arterial roads which fall outside 30 km/h limits.

Infrastructure, planning and Safe System Design

17. The annual allocation for walking and cycling infrastructure be adjusted to reflect at minimum construction cost inflation.
18. That enforcement against parking on footpaths and cycle tracks be strengthened, and that the Department reviews whether existing powers and penalties are adequate.
19. That the use of walkability audits be extended, and that pedestrian crossing locations and signal timings be reviewed with the participation of older people and people with disabilities.
20. That professional bus drivers be consulted in the design of road and street layouts affecting bus operation, and that design standards for bus stops and bus lanes be reviewed to ensure they accommodate large public service vehicles.
21. That the interaction between cycle paths and bus stops be reviewed, having regard to the safety of boarding and alighting passengers.
22. That the Department of Transport, in conjunction with local authorities, establish and publish clear responsibilities and maintenance standards for walking and cycling infrastructure, including routine inspections and timely removal of debris and vegetation and repair of damaged surfaces and faded road markings
23. That funding be provided for hedge cutting to a height sufficient to accommodate heavy goods vehicles and buses. Where sightlines cannot be improved advance warning signage is deployed at constrained locations.
24. It is recommended that the allocation for low-cost safety improvement schemes be increased, and that funding be directed to locations identified as collision clusters.

25. That TII accelerate the provision of divided road infrastructure on high-speed single-carriageway national roads, prioritising locations with a history of fatal and serious injury collisions.

Driver Training, Education and Behaviour Change

26. That the Garda BikeSafe programme [1]be resourced to meet demand, including through the resourcing of Garda motorcycle units.
27. That the Department of Transport and the RSA, in cooperation with the Department of Education and Cycle Right delivery partners, ensure that all three levels of Cycle Right are progressively made available to children nationwide, including practical on-road training where it can be delivered safely, with the funding and delivery support needed for a consistent national rollout, and that awareness of the vulnerability of all road users, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians be included.
28. That motorway, and rural road driving experience be incorporated as part of the essential driver training.
29. That reform of the learner driver curriculum is considered including the option of supervised driving experience after gaining a full license be examined, having regard to international evidence on the relationship between supervised practice and collision risk.
30. That the Department of Transport and the Road Safety Authority report on the implementation and effectiveness of the learner permit renewal regulations which commenced on 1 November 2026, including confirmation that the new arrangements prevent learner drivers from indefinitely renewing permits without undertaking a driving test, and identify any further legislative or administrative measures required.
31. That the RSA/Department should conduct a review of the current process of licence renewal and whether it is sufficiently robust to ensure an ongoing awareness of the rules of the road.
32. That the content and delivery of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence[2] be reformed to reflect current vehicle technology and identified operational risks.

Data, Research and Evidence

33. That the RSA publishes annual road casualty statistics within defined timelines, including provisional figures for deaths and serious injuries separately and as a combined KSI measure; publish updated, validated figures by a specified date following the linking of Garda and hospital data; and provides timely collision causation data to support evidence-based interventions.
34. That the National Vehicle and Driver File, Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2026 be progressed without delay, which includes local authorities having direct access to

[1] Garda BikeSafe programme
[2] Driver Certificate of Professional Competence

collision data and the provision that a jury may consider a charge of careless driving where a defendant is acquitted of dangerous driving.

35. That the proposed legislation providing for the recognition of the loss of a pregnancy resulting from careless or dangerous driving be progressed and enacted.
36. That the Department of Transport resolve the outstanding data protection issue preventing An Garda Síochána from accessing the photograph on the driving licence record through the National Vehicle and Driver File (NVDF).
37. That the Department of Transport, with the Department of Justice and An Garda Síochána examine the possibility of establishing a multidisciplinary, no-fault investigation of fatal collisions, based on the Finnish approach, aimed at identifying how future deaths can be prevented.

Drink, Drug, and Dangerous Driving

38. That the charging practice applying to collisions causing death or serious injury be reviewed, including the acceptance of pleas to lesser charges.
39. That penalties for driving under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs together are reviewed to reflect the increased risk.
40. Consider increasing the maximum sentence for dangerous driving causing death or serious bodily injury from 10 years to 14 years.
41. Provide for driving disqualification periods to commence on release from custody rather than run concurrently with custodial sentences.
42. The publication of roadside breath-testing targets as recommended by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC).
43. That the arrangements for evidential blood sampling following road traffic collisions be examined, including whether a sample may be taken by the treating emergency clinician and the adequacy of the three-hour period.
44. That legislation be brought forward to require driving licence's and learner permits to be surrendered to the court upon disqualification, as operates in Northern Ireland, with appropriate enforcement provisions and arrangements to ensure that all disqualifications are promptly recorded and accessible to An Garda Síochána.
45. That the Department of Transport, in consultation with the Department of Justice and relevant UK authorities, review the operation of arrangements for the mutual recognition of driving disqualifications between Ireland and the United Kingdom, identify any outstanding gaps, and bring forward the necessary measures to ensure effective cross-border enforcement.
46. Progress the alcohol ignition interlock programme provided for under the Road Safety Strategy, initially on a voluntary basis, and provide legislation for the mandatory use in cases involving repeat or high-risk drink driving offences.

Vehicles

47. That the Department of Transport undertake a comprehensive review of the safety and regulation of e-scooters, e-mopeds, and other powered personal transporters, including the effectiveness of existing legislation and enforcement, the potential introduction of registration and compulsory insurance requirement. Such a review should have particular regard to the safety of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users, while maintaining the existing legal distinction between conventional pedal-assist bicycles and higher-powered electrically propelled vehicles.
48. That learnings from the Limerick e-scooter pilot operation be examined and recommendations made to all Garda divisions vis-a-vis policing of e-scooters.
49. That the Department of Transport consider the introduction of a Continuous Vehicle Coverage System to upcoming road traffic legislation reforms to help reduce the number of uninsured vehicles on Irish roads.

Victims, Survivors and Access to Justice

50. That the reforms required in the Coroner Service, be progressed.
51. That An Garda Síochána, in consultation with road traffic victim support organisations, establish a consistent national protocol to ensure that families bereaved by fatal road traffic collisions receive timely information on investigation procedures, their rights, available supports and the coronial process.
52. Expand restorative justice and driver awareness programmes for road traffic offences where appropriate.

Governance, Leadership and Accountability

Road Safety Commissioner

1. Witnesses across the hearings described road safety governance as fragmented, with responsibility divided between the Department, the Road Safety Authority (RSA), An Garda Síochána and local authorities, and no single body answerable for the outcome. As an example, Cycling Ireland pointed to the speed limit review, which recommended a default 30 km/h limit in built-up areas and was set aside some months later without public comment from any of the bodies that had participated in it. Alcohol Action Ireland argued that whoever holds responsibility must have the authority to direct resources, pointing out that the Minister for Justice is responsible for An Garda Síochána while the Minister for Transport is responsible for reducing road deaths.
2. Witnesses proposed two approaches to strengthening oversight and accountability. Cycling Ireland proposed a statutory Road Safety Commissioner, drawing a comparison with independent statutory offices similar to those established for mental health, policing, healthcare quality and the Irish language, arguing that the cost would be small relative to the estimated €1.4 billion annual cost of road collisions. The Irish Road Victims Association (IRVA) supported that and proposed a Minister with sole responsibility for road safety, explaining that the current ministerial role has expanded such that road safety forms only a small part of it. PARC also sought a senior Minister but withheld support for a commissioner pending detail on its powers.
3. The Medical Bureau of Road Safety (MBRS) confirmed that responsibility for road safety rests with the road transport section of the Department of Transport and agreed that a body is needed with the authority to pull the various Departments and agencies together, by whatever name.
4. While the proposed forms differed, the majority of witnesses were consistent that no body currently holds the authority to require delivery or to hold others to account for it. Promoting awareness, Responsibility and Care on our roads the PARC group contrasted the RSA's current public profile with earlier periods when its leadership was widely recognised and publicly challenged Government on measures it considered would save lives.

5. Members questioned whether a further office would duplicate existing agencies and were referred to the National Transport Authority (NTA) as an example of a body established to resolve a comparable co-ordination problem across local authorities.
6. Members' further questioning throughout the hearings reflected a concern that, where responsibility for road safety is shared across a number of bodies, there should be independent oversight of delivery and public accountability for the full and timely implementation of agreed road safety actions and objectives. The proposed Road Safety Commissioner was presented as a means of providing that oversight and accountability.
7. Responsibility for road safety is divided between the Department, the RSA, An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the NTA and local authorities. The Minister of State, Sean Canney T.D. advised the Committee that he chairs the Road Safety Leadership Group, which brings these bodies together. He confirmed that chairing that group does not allow the Department of Transport to direct An Garda Síochána or local authorities, and that the Authority does not have the remit to do everything about road safety. The Minister further added that the function of a commissioner already exists through the leadership group. Witnesses across the hearings sought an office with the authority to require delivery against agreed actions and timelines and to report publicly where those objectives are not met. The Minister of State clarified that he has overall responsibility for Road Safety.

Vision Zero delivery

8. The Government's Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 commits to halving road deaths and serious injuries by 2030, with a target of 72 deaths annually. The Dublin Commuter Coalition advised the Committee that the first milestone under the strategy, of no more than 122 road deaths in 2024, was not met, and that road deaths have increased in every year but one since the strategy was adopted. The Committee was told that deaths among vulnerable road users increased significantly over the preceding 12 months, against a marginal increase in overall road deaths and that a reduction of 118 deaths annually is now required within three and half years if the 2030 target is to be met.

Consolidation of Road Traffic Acts

9. PARC informed the Committee that consolidation of the Road Traffic Acts has been promised for 17 years, and that prosecutions can be brought under the wrong amending provision, resulting in cases being dismissed. The Minister of State confirmed that the Department is working with the Law Reform Commission on consolidating road traffic legislation for first time since 1961.

Engagement with representative bodies

10. The Irish Motorcyclists' Association (IMA) advised the Committee that it has sought engagement with the RSA over a period of five to seven years and has had limited contact, notwithstanding its position as a representative body. Similarly, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Irish Advance Rider Training (RoSPA IART) advised that it has received no response to its approaches. The Committee notes that a recent motorcycle safety campaign directed at driver observation at junctions has since been launched with consultation from motorcyclists' groups.

The Road Safety Authority

11. The RSA is responsible for driver licensing, vehicle testing and road safety promotion, education and research.
12. The Committee heard that the majority of the Authority's staff are engaged in driver licensing and vehicle testing, with only a small number assigned to road safety promotion, education and research. The Dublin Commuter Coalition noted that the Authority employs no engineering or road design staff and is not treated as a stakeholder by local authorities in road design projects, and that its income derives from vehicle testing and driver licensing volumes, which sits uneasily with its road safety remit.
13. The Indecon RSA review examined the Authority's structure and functions. A restructuring separating the road safety function from service delivery was approved by Government following that review, but that decision was subsequently reversed. IRVA did not support the split, describing it as cosmetic, and said the Authority has responsibility but little control, being reliant on other parties to a whole-of-government strategy. PARC and the Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA)

welcomed the separation, with service delivery functions moving to the Department and the Authority focusing on road safety.

14. The Minister of State told the Committee that the Authority was not functioning properly and that reform from within was the quickest route further explaining that reforms and a timeline would be published. The Committee noted that package of reforms was approved by Government on 29 July 2026, providing for a road safety Ambassadors programme, expanded educational programmes alongside the transfer of responsibility of the driver file element of the national vehicle and driver file.
15. Witnesses acknowledged that there are good people working in the Authority in a difficult environment, and that it is under-resourced. Alcohol Action Ireland said the Authority has no control over how Garda resources are deployed yet is seen as carrying responsibility for road safety outcomes, and that whatever structure is in place must be able to direct resources. The Climate and Health Alliance supported the need for a road safety commissioner, and that it does not make sense for one arm of the Authority to issue licences while another is charged with protecting vulnerable road users.

Enforcement

16. Witnesses across the organisations emphasised to the Committee that enforcement is the principal determinant of driver behaviour, and that road traffic law is not enforced at a level sufficient to change it. The Committee was advised that the strength of the road's policing unit has fallen by close to 40% from approximately over 1000 members in 2009 to its current level of 660, while the number of vehicles on the road has increased by around one million over the same period. The RSA told the Committee that deterrence theory is the lens for enforcement, and that certainty of detection is its first principle, adding that if people see An Garda Síochána enforcing the law they change their behaviour.
17. The Committee noted that the former Garda Commissioner gave a commitment to the former Joint Committee on Transport and Communications in May 2024 that the unit would be strengthened by 150 members by the end of 2025, and that the Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for Roads Policing confirmed in October 2025 that only half of those posts had been filled. An Garda Síochána however

confirmed in their hearing with the Committee that these were conditional on overall Garda recruitment growth which did not happen during the timeframe of the previous Commissioner but clarified during their hearing on 15 July 2026 that numbers across the board are starting to lift upwards. The Garda Assistant Commissioner confirmed in their second hearing on 30 September 2026 that roads policing is the largest specialist unit in the organisation and that most roads policing activity is carried out by front-line gardaí, accounting for 75% of arrests.

18. Cycling Ireland advised the Committee that periodic enforcement campaigns are of limited value because they signal to drivers that enforcement is temporary, and that enforcement must be routine and sustained. A member raised the issue of increasing aggressive driver behaviour, which PARC attributed to the absence of enforcement, saying drivers are not deterred by the prospect of being caught.
19. Headway Ireland emphasised that investment in dedicated roads policing units is essential, particularly in urban areas, where interactions between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians are becoming more complex and injuries are now occurring on pavements. Further stating that alcohol, drugs and mobile phone use remain strongly associated with traumatic brain injury.
20. The Minister of State acknowledged that there were not enough Gardaí in the Roads Policing Unit and confirmed that the target for increasing its strength had not been met. The Minister explained that competing demands on Garda resources and the need to backfill members moving into roads policing were factors affecting the increase in numbers.
21. The Committee heard from the Garda Commissioner that following the Crowe report, work was carried out looking at how all roads policing units are set up and managed across the country. Following this, An Garda Commissioner confirmed that an implementation plan is underway to strengthen roads policing, with Community Engagement Superintendents now having roads policing assigned as part of their portfolios, with each roads policing unit having a dedicated inspector. At present only some units have dedicated roads policing inspectors with other unit inspector sharing regular policing duties alongside roads policing.
22. When asked whether growing the number of gardaí in dedicated roads policing units was a priority, the Commissioner told the Committee that it was not his number one priority, informing the Committee that maximising the output from the existing 660

members with strengthening the supervisory capacity as his number two. The Commissioner further outlined however that some units did require strengthening and confirmed an additional 13 gardaí placed in the Dublin Metropolitan Region. In their second hearing The Assistant Commissioner advised that the priority is to get the maximum work from the 660 members, and the that the Commissioner is committed to maintaining that number, and that roads policing may benefit as overall Garda numbers grow. The Assistant Commissioner also reminded members of the 30 minutes of dedicated roads policing for every front-line garda.

23. This however is in contrast to evidence given to the Committee throughout the hearings on Road Safety calling for a significant increase in roads policing numbers.
24. The Committee also heard concerns from PARC regarding failures to record court-imposed penalty points and driving disqualifications on the National Vehicle and Driver File. Such failures have potentially serious implications for the effectiveness of road traffic enforcement, particularly where repeat offenders or disqualified drivers are concerned. The Committee considers that an urgent examination of the completeness and accuracy of these records is necessary.

Automated Enforcement

25. On automated enforcement, the Committee welcomed the publication of the National Safety Camera Strategy on 29 April 2026. During hearings with witnesses the Committee was informed that there are nine static speed cameras and five average speed camera systems in operation nationally, and that Lithuania, with half the population, operates 400 static cameras. The Irish Cycling Campaign advised that automated systems operate continuously, do not divert members from other duties, and remove the risk to members staffing roadside checkpoints. However, the Committee noted the lack of a roll-out time frame or implementation plan. The Minister of State confirmed that preparation of an implementation plan formed part of the Camera Enforcement Oversight Group’s terms of reference but did not indicate when this would be completed.

Legal Protections for Gardaí on Operational Duty

26. The Garda Commissioner informed the Committee of the legal and operational challenges faced by members policing the road network, particularly involving

pursuits. The Commissioner added that members acting in the course of their duties may face investigation and criminal proceedings for road traffic offences arising from incidents that occurred while performing those duties, with ten members being prosecuted. The Assistant Commissioner advised that the Commissioner has made a submission to the Department of Justice on strengthening protections for members involved in pursuits.

Driver Distraction and Mobile Phone Use

27. The Committee heard concerns about driver distraction from several organisations. Members also raised the growing use of touchscreens in vehicles and the distraction they cause. An Garda Síochána informed the Committee that its analysis of fatal and serious injury collisions identifies driver distraction through mobile phone use as one of the main behavioral risks, alongside speeding, drink and drug driving and not wearing a seat belt. It also informed the Committee that detections for mobile phone use had increased by 23% in 2026 to the end of May.
28. The Minister of State advised the Committee that the National Safety Camera Strategy is focused initially on speed, red light and bus lane offences, and will be scaled up over time to include camera enforcement of seatbelt and mobile phone offences as committed to in the Programme for Government.
29. During their hearing with the Committee An Garda Síochána informed them that there are 58 GoSafe mobile speed camera vans in operation across 1,901 identified enforcement locations. The Deputy Commissioner confirmed that Garda strategy favours expanding fixed and average speed camera technology over increasing the mobile van fleet, noting that detections from fixed cameras have increased by 90% year on year. The RSA stated they wish to see full implementation of the camera strategy prioritised to help reverse the current trend in fatalities and serious injury. They also noted the 40% drop in personnel in the roads policing unit calling on political support to help restore roads policing and enforcement to the levels required. The Committee welcomed the use of automated cameras to assist in enforcement however stressed that a camera does not capture drink or drug driving.

Technology

30. Members raised the possibility of emerging vehicle technologies that can provide additional tools for collision investigation with the Minister of State. Event data recorders, which can record information such as speed and braking immediately before a collision were raised as an example of one such technology. The Minister of state agreed that technologies already coming on stream should be examined for their potential use in aiding enforcement and improving road safety, advising the Committee that he will establish what legislative procedures are required to use technology already available.

Speed

31. Rural roads account for approximately 70% of road fatalities. Between 2019 and 2023 89% of serious injuries to pedestrians occurred on urban roads, with children disproportionately represented[3].
32. The Committee heard that the speed of a vehicle at the point of impact largely determines whether a pedestrian or cyclist survives in a collision. A pedestrian struck at 30 km/h has approximately a one in ten chance of being killed, rising to one in two at 50 km/h. A review of city-wide 30 km/h speed limits in European cities found average reductions of 23 per cent in collisions, 37 per cent in fatalities and 38 per cent in injuries, with impacts on travel time and congestion generally in the range of 3 to 5 per cent, and in some cases improvements in both. Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) informed the Committee that even where the limit is introduced by signage alone, the reduction is approximately 11 per cent[4].
33. Witnesses across hearings called for the default 30 km/h limit in built-up areas, legislated for in 2024 and recommended by the 2023 expert speed limit review, to be introduced without further delay. Responsibility for its introduction now rests with local authorities, which must complete the process by March 2027. Witnesses' preference was that a default should have been introduced first, with local authorities then reviewing individual roads and raising limits where warranted.

[3] Phase 1 Review and Serious injuries among pedestrians 2019-2023 Summary report
[4] https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/11/4382

34. At their hearing with the Committee the RSA advised they had produced a report on speed awareness courses for low-level speeding, noting high levels of speeding in urban areas where the most vulnerable road users are found.

Infrastructure, Planning and Safe System Design

Suburban Distributor Roads

35. TU Dublin informed the Committee that suburban distributor roads are poorly designed from a road safety perspective, identifying wide streets and wide roundabouts as the principal problem, and that the psychology of street design determines how road users behave. Under the safe systems approach adopted in the Road Safety Strategy, the road environment should be designed so that where a collision occurs it does not result in death or serious injury, which requires either that speeds are low enough to be survivable or that vulnerable road users are physically separated from traffic.
36. Dublin Commuter Coalition advised the Committee that the cycle design manual sets out the circumstances in which particular forms of provision are appropriate, and that difficulties arise where cyclists are directed into shared space in circumstances the manual does not support.

Cycling Safety

37. In a follow-up submission to the Committee, Cycling Ireland provided results of a survey carried out in February 2026 of almost 2,200 of its members. The survey found that 53% of respondents experienced dangerously close passing on most rides and 52% had been involved in a collision or serious near miss within the previous 12 months. Over half (56%) believed conditions for cycling had become more dangerous, while 65% rated existing cycling infrastructure as poor, very poor or non-existent. Female cyclists reported feeling less safe than male cyclists, experiencing higher rates of close passing and greater concern regarding deteriorating road safety. The survey also found that respondents were predominantly experienced cyclists, with almost all holding a driving licence and describing themselves as experienced or very experienced road users. Overall, the survey highlighted widespread concerns among cyclists regarding close passing, near misses, deteriorating road safety conditions and inadequate infrastructure. The

report recommended a range of measures, including safer cycling infrastructure, stronger enforcement, improved reporting and data collection, enhanced road user education, and sustained collaboration between Government agencies and Cycling organisations[5].

Walking and Cycling infrastructure cost inflation

38. The allocation for walking and cycling infrastructure stands at €360 million annually under the National Development Plan to 2030 and does not increase over that period. Witnesses were concerned that construction cost inflation is reducing what the allocation delivers each year, and that schemes local authorities have designed and are ready to construct are being delayed as a result.

Road Maintenance

39. Road maintenance was raised across the hearings by Age Friendly Ireland, the Irish Cycling Campaign, the Dublin Commuter Coalition and the Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA), including debris in cycle tracks, encroaching vegetation, uneven footpaths, potholes, uncut verges and faded road markings. Members noted that vegetation obstructing a road is typically cleared within a week, while equivalent obstruction of a cycle track is not, as it may fall to a different budget. IRHA said overhanging trees and branches at rural bends force heavy vehicles onto the opposite side of the road, and that where hedge cutting is carried out it is generally to a height of around two metres, which suits cars and vans but the height at which the mirrors of heavy goods vehicles and buses strike remains uncut. IRHA also said that where sightlines cannot be improved, digital signage of the kind used outside schools can warn drivers of an oncoming vehicle at blind bends and narrow sections, and that the technology is readily available and inexpensive.
40. Age Friendly Ireland advised that the absence of footpaths and safe walking routes in rural towns and villages is a legacy issue requiring capital investment.
41. Members acknowledged the poor condition of many rural roads, attributed to lack of local authority budgets where drivers are forced onto the wrong side of the road to

[5] https://www.cyclingireland.ie/downloads/CyclingIreland_MemberSurvey_WEB.pdf

avoid damage, and reported road markings and signage issues going unaddressed for extended periods.

High-risk locations

42. Witnesses sought a clear duty on road authorities to act where a location is known to be dangerous. The IRHA proposed a threshold of recorded collisions above which the road authority would be required to intervene. IRVA sought a statutory obligation to act within a defined timeframe, with consequences where a known risk is not addressed. The RSA confirmed that collision data is shared with the Department of Transport to look at remedial measures while TII informed the Committee that every two years it uses three years of collision data to identify high collision locations on the national network, around 160 to 200 a year. it passes these to the local authorities and funds their reports on how to address each one. TII said that with many locations there is no predominant collision type, which makes it difficult to identify an engineering measure, and these are monitored. Where measures are applied, often to reduce speeds, TII advised that it has seen a big reduction in fatalities at the locations treated.

Low-cost safety improvement schemes

43. Members noted that local authorities identify collision black spots and that low-cost safety improvement schemes fund remedial works with approximately €9 million allocated nationally this year. Members noted that this is not sufficient, local authorities consistently identify more locations than can be funded, and that the scale of intervention required at individual locations is modest relative to the overall roads budget.

Pedestrian Crossings

44. Age Friendly Ireland informed the Committee that traffic light timings at pedestrian crossings do not always allow sufficient time for older people to cross safely, and that walkability audits provide a means of consulting older people and people with disabilities on crossing locations, signal timings and speed limits.

Bus lanes

45. RoSPA IART raised the possibility of motorcyclists been allowed to use bus lanes arguing that in bus lanes motorcyclists would be safer than in general traffic, be more visible, have a better view of surrounding traffic, and be able to move aside for buses. The Committee were told that this is permitted in parts of the United Kingdom.

Road design

46. The National Bus and Rail Union (NBRU) raised issue with road layouts that do not accommodate large public service vehicles, citing bus stops located between car parking spaces, street furniture at the footpath edge, and insufficient space for a bus to enter a bus bay. It also identified cycle paths intersecting with bus stops as a risk to passengers, particularly those with visual impairments. SIPTU made similar points, citing bus stops in towns that are difficult to enter, the absence of lay-bys in rural areas, and lorries unloading at bus stops in cities.

Motorways

47. The RSA and TII highlighted that motorways are the safest roads in Ireland, with the lowest proportion of casualties compared to local, regional and national roads noting there were 36 deaths and 218 seriously injured between 2021 and 2025 on motorways in Ireland. On a vehicle to kilometre-travelled basis, motorways are more than eight times safer in respect to fatalities than single carriageway national roads.
48. In response to the recent motorway incidents the RSA updated the Committee on their current social media campaign that provides advice to the public on what to do in the event of encountering a vehicle travelling the wrong direction on a motorway.
49. TII noted there was an average of 77 recorded incidents a year between 2021 and 2025, also acknowledging that the real number is higher. It said that engineering measures can help prevent, detect and warn of wrong-way driving but will not deter a driver intent on doing it.
50. TII informed the Committee that new signage has been installed on all interchange off-slips to inform drivers they are travelling the wrong way. TII also trialled radar detection and warning signs at 12 slip road locations on the N18 and M7, which gave

some positive results but advised the technology is not mature enough to scale across the network. Further advising that in-vehicle warnings through connected vehicle technology could be transformative, but only 4% or 5% of the fleet currently has the technology, and wider deployment could be ten to 15 years away. TII advised the Committee that European Surveys concluded that there is no single measure capable of fully dealing with the challenges of wrong-way driving. Instead, a combination of measures through the greater use of new technologies, together with enhanced public awareness and more effective enforcement, is needed to mitigate the problem.

51. Although there has been emphasis on recent wrong way driving events, TII emphasised that the principal road safety challenge on the national road network remains the single carriageway. TII informed the Committee that approximately 92% of fatalities and serious injuries on the national road network occur on single-carriageway roads and identified the provision of additional divided roads, providing physical separation between opposing traffic flows, as a key road safety priority.
52. An Garda Síochána advised the Committee that when the Garda become aware of a vehicle engaged in dangerous or reckless driving on the road network, their response is co-ordinated between gardaí on the ground and the trained personnel in a regional control room of which there are four operating on a 24-hour basis. The Committee learned that the Garda Síochána introduced an updated policy on spontaneous pursuits in December 2024 which provides a clear governance framework for the management of pursuits and places continuous risk assessment at the centre of the Garda response. The Garda Assistant Commissioner also advised that 2000 members were trained in vehicle stopping devices (Stingers) and have access to air support as another tactical option. With regard to the training of in-pursuit training, a pilot course for around six members is planned before the end of 2026, with a larger roll out in 2027 dependent on availability from UK police forces.

Vehicles

Heavy goods vehicles

53. Members advised the Committee that heavy goods vehicles operating on residential roads in urban and suburban areas present a significant risk to vulnerable road

users, and that existing restrictions are routinely breached. The Committee heard of a school in receipt of Safe Routes to School funding, located on a road subject to a heavy goods vehicle ban which is not observed.

54. Members referred to the London lorry control scheme, which uses sensors and camera enforcement, and advised that enforcement by camera would achieve compliance without drawing on Garda resources. The Irish Cycling Campaign supported this, advising that the restrictions introduced in London were transformative, that the technology to make heavy goods vehicles safer in urban settings already exists, and that deferring its introduction until fleets are replaced is not acceptable.

Alcohol Ignition Interlocks

55. Alcohol Action Ireland supported alcohol ignition interlocks, either on a voluntary basis linked to reduced insurance costs, or fitted for those convicted of drink driving, with some jurisdictions offering a shorter disqualification where the device is used. European legislation requires new vehicles to be capable of accommodating them. Age Friendly Ireland also recommended examining their use adding that technology commitments in the Road Safety Strategy be pursued. The Minister of State also expressed support for the use of alcohol ignition interlocks and highlighted their potential use for those convicted of drink driving as part of the consequences of offending and rehabilitation. The RSA informed the Committee that they strongly support their utilisation having chaired a working group examining interlocks, informing the Committee that the report is now before the Department of Transport.

Agricultural vehicles on high-speed roads

56. The IRHA said cars running into the back of tractors is a recurring collision type on high-speed roads, as drivers cannot judge how slowly a loaded agricultural vehicle is travelling where the permitted speed is 100 km/h. It said tractors are tested as agricultural vehicles and are not suited to motorway use, and that most are operated by agricultural or construction contractors rather than by farmers. Members noted that modern tractors travel at speeds at which control deteriorates, and that the cab position and axle layout make them less responsive under braking.

E-scooters and scramblers

57. The Irish Motorcyclists' Association advised the Committee that scramblers and off-road motorcycles are mechanically propelled vehicles under the Road Traffic Act and each carries a vehicle identification number recorded on sale, but that they are not registered. It further advised that registration would identify the owner, allow vehicles to be traced, permit a minimum purchase age, and address the theft of off-road machines, which are not currently registered. Headway Ireland informed the Committee that it is seeing increasing e-scooter related injuries, supported by research published in the Irish Medical Journal, and that helmet use and the regulation of scramblers and other e-vehicles require priority attention.

Delivery riders and high-powered e-mopeds

58. The Committee heard concern from members about delivery riders using high-powered electric bikes in urban cycle-lanes at speeds faster than the cyclists around them. The RSA told the Committee that a legal e-bike is limited to 250 W and 25 km/h, and that higher-powered bikes are effectively e-mopeds, for which the rider should hold an AM licence with the bike registered and insured. The Assistant Commissioner advised the Committee the An Garda intend to meet the companies, and also advised that targeted operations, including speed testing of e-bikes have been carried out.

Vehicle Size

59. The Committee were informed by the Climate and Health Alliance that a pedestrian or cyclist struck by a sport utility vehicle is 44 per cent more likely to be killed, and a child 82 per cent more likely, and that such vehicles are involved in 20 per cent of collisions in Europe[6].

Uninsured Drivers

60. The Committee heard from the Motor Insurers' Bureau of Ireland (MIBI) who explained that 211,000 vehicles or 6.5% of the total fleet, are uninsured or unregistered making this the fourth highest rate in the EU-EEA where the average for the whole region is 2.4%.

[6] https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2025/being-hit-suv-increases-likelihood-death-or-serious-injury

61. MIBI proposed Continuous Vehicle Coverage (CVC), where insurance is tied to vehicle ownership rather than relying on Gardaí catching uninsured drivers in the act. The MIBI also informed the Committee that it is used in 26 other EU/EEA countries and its use in the UK where uninsured rates fell from 6% to 2.5%. It is estimated that CVC could reduce Ireland's uninsured rate to 3.9% within 5 years saving an estimated €25-€30 million annually and reducing the motor insurance policy by €10-15 euro. The Committee also heard that most uninsured drivers involved in collisions are young males under 30.

Driver training, Education and Behaviour Change

Driver Training

62. The Committee heard that learner drivers are not brought onto motorways during training and encounter motorway conditions for the first time after passing the test. RoSPA IART advised that lane changing without indication is common on motorways and presents a particular risk to motorcyclists and attributed this in part to the absence of motorway training. The Irish Motorcyclists' Association advised that driving standards have declined and that this is reflected in how drivers are trained.

HI-VIZ Clothing

63. The NBRU and the IRHA sought that high-visibility clothing be made mandatory for cyclists, saying it makes hazards easier to identify from the driving position of a large vehicle, particularly in poor weather or at night. Age Friendly Ireland proposed a cultural shift towards its use by pedestrians of all ages, arguing that the emphasis places responsibility for collision outcomes on the person at risk rather than on the driver.
64. The Dublin Commuter Coalition, the Irish Cycling Campaign and Technological University Dublin took the opposite view explained to the Committee that compulsory Hi-Viz shifts responsibility to vulnerable road users without addressing the underlying issue of speed. TU Dublin added that such requirements can produce risk compensation, with drivers passing closer to those wearing them, and can deter people from walking and cycling. Climate and Health Alliance expressed the view that the evidence does not support high-visibility clothing or helmets.

Refresher Training at Licence Renewal

65. RoSPA IART advised the Committee that enforcement presumes road users know the rules, and that in its experience most drivers have not consulted the rules of the road since obtaining their licence and are unaware that it is periodically revised. It proposed that licence renewal provide an opportunity to require evidence of a refresher course. Climate and Health Alliance made a similar observation, that a person may pass a driving test at 17 and never be re-evaluated.

Supervised Driving & Experience

66. The Irish Road Haulage Association described the accompanied driving system operated in Germany, under which a driver may pass the driving test a year before the licensing age and then drive only when accompanied by a person over 25 with at least five years' driving experience. Evaluation of that programme found a 17 per cent reduction in collision involvement in the first year of independent driving, after adjustment for other factors. Evaluation of a comparable reform in Sweden found the reduction in collision risk was concentrated among those who accumulated substantially more supervised practice before driving unaccompanied[7].
67. The RSA informed the Committee that research carried out by the Queensland University of Technology found that that the first two years after passing the test are the highest-risk period for new drivers, due to inexperience and risk-taking behaviour. The report has been shared with the Department of Transport and aligns with recommendations from the European Transport Safety Council. The research recommends a graduated licensing model built on earned credits, along with hazard perception testing and a review of essential driver training.
68. The RSA also confirmed through international evidence and international road safety agencies (e.g. the European Transport Safety Council and European Road Safety Observatory) evidence that drivers are most at risk immediately after licensure and on commencement of unsupervised driving (ERSO, 2021: Guzman et al, 2026: UNICEF, 2025) and particularly in the case of younger drivers (Chapman et al., 2014: Gershon et al., 2018) confirming that when novice drivers begin driving on

[7] https://www.bast.de/DE/Publikationen/BerichteBASt/Berichte/unterreihe-m/2011-2010/m218.html

their own without supervision, their crash rates increase dramatically and remain elevated for at least a year, decreasing over time as drivers gain more experience.

69. PARC highlighted the longstanding issue of learner drivers being permitted to renew learner permits repeatedly without undertaking a driving test. The Committee notes the introduction of new regulations introduced on 1 November 2026 and considers it essential that their implementation and effectiveness be independently assessed to ensure that the loophole is fully addressed.

BikeSafe

70. RoSPA IART advised the Committee that the BikeSafe programme operated by An Garda Síochána is an excellent service but that available places do not meet demand, which it attributed to the resourcing of Garda motorcycle units.

Cycle Right

71. The Committee heard from Cycling Ireland about the Cycle Right programme which has been delivered to approximately 200,000 children aged eight to eleven over the past four years, funded in part by the RSA. The Committee was told that the programme comprises three levels but that only level 1 is being delivered, as participating children are not brought onto the road or onto paths outside schools in rural areas, and that requests to progress to level 2 have yet to be agreed. The Irish Cycling Campaign informed the Committee that the programme is effective where delivered and that its benefit is evident in how children approach junctions at secondary school age, but that the rollout is not comprehensive enough. Both witnesses proposed that cycle training be embedded in the school curriculum in the manner of the school swimming programme.

Certificate of professional competence

72. The IRHA explained to the Committee that the certificate of professional competence is not fit for purpose as currently structured, and that its content and delivery are outdated and largely irrelevant to the modern heavy goods vehicle driver. It advised that operators invest significant time and expense in training that is repetitive and disconnected from operational risk, and sought training that is targeted, evidence based, and covers the driver assist and safety technologies fitted

to heavy goods vehicles and buses. The NBRU told the Committee the material has not changed and that the same difficulties arise for bus drivers.

Road safety education in schools

73. The NBRU advised the Committee that they would like to see road safety, public transport and the rules of the road form a mandatory part of the school curriculum. The IRHA proposed that the RSA maintain oversight of the road safety content taught in schools.
74. However, the Climate and Health Alliance expressed the view that education interventions require constant repetition to be effective and are no replacement for proper infrastructure.

Data, Research and Evidence

Collision data

75. The Irish Motorcyclists' Association told the Committee that published road safety statistics are based on closed collision files and can be several years old, whereas comparable European data appears within six to eight weeks of year end, and that only collisions attended by An Garda Síochána are recorded. RoSPA IART asked whether collision reports could be published in anonymised form, as occurs in aviation, noting that data protection has been cited as an obstacle. IRHA said published figures record the involvement of heavy goods vehicles without indicating responsibility, and that involvement in a collision is not the same as having caused it.
76. Headway Ireland informed the Committee that the RSA collects serious injury statistics from the scene of a collision, while hospital data is recorded separately in the Hospital In-Patient Enquiry system. It said the two systems do not align, so the health consequences of a collision cannot be linked to road safety data and proposed that work be undertaken to connect them.
77. The RSA confirmed with the Committee that it receives only preliminary data from An Garda Síochána early in an investigation, and that definitive information on contributory factors arrives only after the coroner’s inquest. It further advised it has raised this with An Garda and that noted that other jurisdictions provide early indicators of contributory factors.

National Vehicle and Driver File, Roads Traffic and Roads Bill 2026

78. The Committee heard that data protection has restricted the sharing collision data with local authorities since 2016. The Minister of State confirmed that the National Vehicle and Driver File, Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2026 will restore a legislative basis for local authorities to receive collision data directly, and will facilitate greater real-time access to the database by An Garda Síochána. He further stated that providing collision data directly to local authorities would enable them to identify locations where engineering interventions are required and to seek funding for remedial works.
79. The Minister of State advised that the NVDF bill will include a provision to allow a jury to consider a charge of careless driving where a defendant is acquitted of dangerous driving, addressing a gap identified in Mr. Justice Haughton's report into the tragic death of Shane O'Farrell. The Committee heard that there will be 11 separate provisions designed to modernise road safety enforcement, improve the use of data and address identified gaps in road safety legislation.
80. The Committee also heard from the Minister of State that the Department are working on the next road traffic Bill, which will include measures on graduated speeding penalties along with camera enforcement of mobile phone and seatbelt offences. Also adding that they are working with the Law Reform Commission on consolidating road traffic law for the first time since 1961 making the law clearer and more consistent.
81. An Garda Síochána informed the Committee that it has driving licence details on its mobility devices but not the photograph or signature due to complex GDPR issues. This would make driver identification a lot easier.
82. The issue recognising unborn babies who die as a result of road traffic collisions was raised by PARC, highlighting the campaign led by Saoirse Aylward, in memory of her unborn son Jax who died following a road traffic collision in 2024, calling for a formal recognition of such deaths in road collision statistics through the introduction of “Jax’s law”. The Committee are supportive of the amendment to the Road Traffic Act 1961, to provide for recognition of the loss of a pregnancy resulting from careless or dangerous driving.

Investigation of fatal Collisions

83. An Garda Síochána confirmed with members that fatal collision investigations are conducted primarily to establish criminal liability, and that a forensic collision investigator is assigned to each one. Also adding that they report to the local authorities on anything that has happened. The Committee considered whether a separate no-fault investigation, looking at the road environment, the vehicle and system design as well as driver behaviour, could help identify how future deaths might be prevented. This was put to An Garda and the RSA on the basis of the Finnish approach, in which an independent multidisciplinary team including police, vehicle engineer, traffic engineer, physician and sometimes a psychologist as well examine each collision. An Garda responded that it had looked previously at the Nordic system and saw a lot of merit in it, the RSA indicated that it would support anything that improves road safety. IRVA called for a structured, Government-let, post-incident investigation and family support network. It noted that families may not learn the causes of a collision until several years afterwards.

Victims, Survivors and Access to Justice

Restorative Justice

84. The Committee heard from Headway Ireland who advised that restorative justice programmes and mandatory driver awareness programmes should be expanded in road traffic cases, drawing on their use in assault cases, further saying these can help drivers understand the lifelong consequences of their actions.

Inquests and support for bereaved families

85. IRVA advise the Committee that the Coroners Act is from a different era and that the coroner system needs modernising. Adding that time gap after a death is quite dramatic and impactful which can be between six to 18 months under the Act. Further adding that there seems to be no urgency to move in sync with the Statute of Limitations, which is two years., in having somebody's cause of death reflected. Sometimes it can be 48 months before an inquest can actually be called, for whatever reason.

86. The Medical Bureau of Road Safety (MBRS), whose director is also a serving coroner, described that there is a growing shortage of post-mortem services across several counties, with locum pathologists brought from the United Kingdom at significant cost. It said inquest hearings are affected and death certificates delayed, and that the service should not vary according to where a death occurs. The MBRS further described the position as a crisis requiring structural reform, noting that heads of a Bill were due before Government last year.
87. The Committee recognise the importance of ensuring that families bereaved by road traffic collisions receive clear, accessible and timely information on the investigative and legal processes that follow a fatal collision and wishes to acknowledge the contribution of victim support organisations.

Drink, Drug and Dangerous Driving

88. PARC told the Committee that disqualified drivers are asked to surrender their licence by post to the RSA, and that only six per cent do so. It sought the arrangement operating in Northern Ireland, where the licence is surrendered to the court on disqualification.
89. PARC sought that the maximum sentence for dangerous driving causing death be increased from ten to 14 years, aligning with Northern Ireland, and that disqualification periods take effect on release from prison rather than running concurrently with the sentence.
90. The RSA informed the Committee that up to 23 September 2026, over four in ten fatalities occurred at weekends, and that 48% of weekend fatalities occurred between 8pm and 6am. The RSA told the Committee that these high-risk periods cannot be considered without drink driving, citing coroner data to 2020 showing that more than a third of drivers killed had a positive alcohol result, and that of surviving drivers tested after serious collisions from 2021 to 2025, 7% tested positive. RSA further adding that An Garda Síochána should be supported to deploy resources at high-risk times and locations.
91. The Committee heard from Alcohol Action Ireland that alcohol is a factor in at least a third of driver fatalities. Alcohol Action Ireland further stated that 12% of drivers

admitted to drink driving in the previous year, with 75% considering it unlikely they will be breathalysed[8].

92. Alcohol Action Ireland informed the Committee that Ireland has the lowest level of roadside breath testing in the European Union, at 18 tests per 1,000 inhabitants in 2021 against 109 in France and 576 in Estonia, and that arrests for drink driving fell from 19,548 in 2007 to around 5,000 annually. It said Ireland does not publish breath testing targets, as recommended by the European Transport Safety Council, and that without a target enforcement, figures cannot be judged. Further giving the example of Australia, where every licensed driver is expected to be tested annually, 14% of driver fatalities test positive for alcohol, compared with 35% in Ireland.
93. Alcohol Action Ireland stated that 37% of drink driving cases are dismissed, according to Courts Service data, and that the reasons require careful examination. The Committee heard that in Australia the sample is taken by the treating emergency doctor and stored in the department, without a police member present. In Ireland a separate doctor must attend within three hours, a period witnesses said is routinely challenged in court over when the offence occurred, with cases dismissed as a result.
94. The Committee was informed by Alcohol Action Ireland that the requirement for a Garda-appointed doctor arises under section 14 of the Road Traffic Act 2010, and the three-hour period under section 5, so that any change would require amending legislation. Asked whether there is a medical basis for the three-hour period, Alcohol Action Ireland said there is not, and that in the United Kingdom no fixed limit applies, a sample being required within a reasonable time. It noted that a sample is best taken early, as the concentration in the body falls over time.
95. Alcohol Action Ireland also informed the Committee that the sampling timeframe issue had been presented at the conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, and that members voted in favour of extending the period. The Medical Bureau of Road Safety supported examining the three-hour limit but noted the ethical difficulty of the treating doctor also gathering evidence, along with the short half-live of drugs in cases where both alcohol and drugs are found together.

[8] Safety Performance Indicators 2025

96. Alcohol Action Ireland asked that vehicles be impounded at the time of a failed breath test, as applies to uninsured vehicles. The Committee heard that a vehicle is not detained following an arrest for drink driving, and that a driver remains entitled to drive until disqualified by a court, which may be some months after the arrest.
97. An Garda Síochána confirmed to the Committee that Mandatory Intoxicant Testing (MIT) checkpoint positivity is approximately 0.4% and that breath testing numbers have declined year on year, and agreed that this trend was concerning however, An Garda also informed the Committee that drink-driving arrests are up 2% with the majority of roads policing detections and arrests carried out by front-line gardaí rather than dedicated units.

Alcohol Ignition Interlock

98. The Committee heard from the Medical Bureau of Road Safety, that approximately 30% of road traffic crashes have alcohol as a contributory factor. Further stating that the average blood alcohol level detected last year was more than three times the legal limit, a figure according to the Bureau that has not shifted downwards in 30 years. The Bureau argued that the alcohol ignition interlock could be among the most significant measures available. The interlock is provided for as priority action 10 of phase two of the Road Safety Strategy, on a voluntary basis initially for commercial fleets and school transport providers however the Bureau highlighted progress has been slow and legislation providing for mandatory use has not advanced.

Drug Driving

99. The MBRS stated that drug driving is a factor in approximately 20% of road fatalities, and that of 4.500 samples tested last year, 2,800 were positive for at least one drug. The Committee were informed that while penalties for alcohol offences are tiered, that where alcohol is combined with another drug no additional penalty applies.

E-Scooters

100. The MBRS raised the intoxicated use of e-scooters, reporting that research by emergency department colleagues found intoxication to be a major factor among those presenting after e-scooter crashes.

Appendix 1 – Opening Statements and Written Submissions

Opening Statements

Date	Witnesses	Link to Submission
04/02/2026	**Age Friendly Ireland** • Dr Emer Coveney, National Program Manager • Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer **Cycling Ireland** • Ciaran Cannon, President • James Quilligan, Chief Executive Officer **Dublin Commuter Coalition** • Jason Cullen, Chair • John Quigley, Committee Member **Irish Cycling Campaign** • Neasa Bheilbigh, Chair • Damien O Tuama, National Cycling Coordinator	Transcript
11/02/2026	**Dublin Motorcycle Touring Club** • Frank Cronin, Senior Committee Member • Jim McGrath, Senior Committee Member **Irish Motorcycle Association** • Michael Noonan, PRO. • RoSPA IART: • Declan Ward, Treasurer	Transcript

18/02/2026	**Irish Road Haulage Association** • Eugene Drennan, Deputy Vice-President • Paul Jackson, Board Member **NBRU** • Colm Meagher, Vice President • Thomas O'Connor, Assistant General Secretary **SIPTU** • Larry McKenna, National Negotiating Committee Secretary, Bus Eireann Driver • Liam Weston, Committee President, Dublin Bus Driver	Transcript
22/04/2026	**Irish Road Victims Association** • Donna Price, Founder, President and PRO • David Mullins, Solicitor and Board Member • Tony Johnstone, Board Member **Headway Ireland** • Richard Stables, Information and Support Manager • Sonya Walsh, Head of Rehab Services and Principal Counselling and Clinical Neuropsychologist	Transcript
29/04/2026	**PARC Road Safety Group** • Susan Gray, Chairperson • Fiona Clancy, PARC Member • Noel Clancy, PARC Member • Loraine Fehilly, PARC Member	Transcript

	Spinal Injuries Ireland • Fiona Bolger, CEO **School of Architecture, Building & Environment at Technological University Dublin** • Jordana Corrigan, Lecturer • Dr. Sarah Rock, Lecturer	
13/05/2026	**Alcohol Action Ireland** • Dr. Sheila Gilheany, Chief Executive Officer • Dr. Eoin Fogarty, Consultant in Emergency and Retrieval Medicine, University Hospital Cork and Alcohol Action Ireland Board Member • Eóin Ryan, Head of Policy Development and Public Affairs **The Climate and Health Alliance** • Dr. Sean Owens, Chair • Dr. Caoimhe Clarke, Consultant Psychiatrist, Psychiatry of Old Age, St Vincent's University Hospital • Dr. John Legge, Consultant in Emergency Medicine, St Vincent's University Hospital •	Transcript
20/05/2026	**Medical Bureau of Road Safety** • Professor Denis A. Cusack, Director	Transcript

	Motor Insurers Bureau of Ireland • David Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer	
17/06/2026	• Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Minister Sean Canney, TD and his officials.	Transcript
08/07/2026	**Road Safety Authority (RSA)** • Alison Coleman, Interim Chief Executive Officer • Michael Rowland, Director of Research, Standards and Assurance • Nuala Carey, Director of Partnerships and External Affairs • Annette Ferguson, Assistant Principal with responsibility for Communications • Brendan Walsh, Chief Operations Officer • Miriam Scott, Assistant Principal in the driver licence division	Transcript
15/07/2026	**An Garda Síochána** • Justin Kelly, Commissioner • Dr. Shawna Coxon, Deputy Commissioner with responsibility for Policing Operations • Catharina Gunne, Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for Governance and Accountability	Transcript

23/09/2026	**Road Safety Authority (RSA)** • Sam Waide, Chief Executive Officer • Brendan Walsh, Chief Operations Officer • Nuala Carey, Director of Partnerships & External Affairs • Velma Burns, Research Manager • Annette Ferguson, Assistant Principal, Communications • John Brinn, Chief ADI Examiner. **Transport Infrastructure Ireland (Tii)** • Pat Maher, Director of Network Management • Andrew O'Sullivan, Senior Network Operations Manager • Alastair de Beer, Head of Road Safety	Transcript
30/09/2026	**An Garda Síochána** • Assistant Commissioner Denis Ferry, Roads Policing and Community Engagement (RPCE), An Garda Síochána • Chief Superintendent Brian Sugrue, Director of Training and Development, Garda College, An Garda Síochána	Transcript