

Think bike – save lives

One company is doing its best to make travelling safer for cyclists as **Pat Musgrave** reports.

A proliferation of horrific media reports of cyclist deaths in UK cities is ensuring that cyclist safety is one of the highest profile issues currently facing the country's transport bosses.

While it's going to take a long time before the UK's road network is as safe as those of some of its European counterparts, temporary variable message signs (VMS) can be used to help improve safety in the short term.

As transport bosses across the country consider ways to develop a safer road network, we are promoting the immediate, flexible and cost-effective potential of the best temporary VMS.

Not only can they be quickly deployed, but their high impact visuals are spotted by cyclists and motorists and responded to immediately.

Temporary VMS can be rapidly deployed to highlight the location of accident hot-spots, warning cyclists and motorists of the need to navigate these areas with extra vigilance.

Safety messages can be intermittently featured on temporary VMS, whatever their position and prime function, ensuring that road users everywhere are reminded to cycle and drive with caution.

As the country's network of cycling lanes expands, the temporary signs can also be used to help safely manage traffic around the subsequent roadworks.

The VMS signs of greatest safety potential are five colour matrix signs, featuring red, green, blue and white, as their displays are of particularly high impact and facilitate rapid road user response.

Our experience suggests that Chapter 8/MS4 style pictograms



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are interpreted with great speed, including by foreign road users who are not always able to understand text.

We recently installed 10 VMS-Cs during A-One+'s northbound refurbishment of the A1 western bypass between Newcastle and

Gateshead.

Featuring a display that was remotely switched from speed roundels to three colour pictograms in the event of standing traffic, A-one+ credited the VMS with ensuring zero standing-traffic related incidents during their

six week installation.

When A-One+ undertook an identical project on the southbound carriageway in 2009, using fixed frame signs, there were several such incidents.

Several city councils are already considering trials of our VMS in order to help promote the safety of cyclists on their roads.

They are demonstrating a readiness to look beyond the traffic management capacity of VMS purely within the context of roadworks, to appreciate the immediate, cost-effective potential of the product to improve cyclist safety.

MVIS' product portfolio includes a wide range of intelligent transport system (ITS) solutions in addition to VMS, which can be rapidly deployed from a nationwide network of 14 depots.

ITS solutions featuring ANPR, CCTV, radar and lighting as well as VMS have been created for clients including Transport for London, Balfour Beatty and the Metropolitan Police.

• **Pat Musgrave**, Mobile Visual Information Systems Ltd (MVIS)

