



## CTC's summary response to *A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World*

### Overall approach

- We support the proposed Vision statement, but propose some additional words, namely that Britain should aim to have “the safest roads in the world *for all road users*”. Although we are presently one of Europe’s better performers on overall road safety – especially for motor vehicle occupants – we have a relatively poor safety record for pedestrians, cyclists and especially children. *A Safer Way* needs to focus on these groups in order to maximise its contribution to wider health, environmental, accessibility and quality of life objectives.
- We welcome the recognition that *A Safer Way* should aim for more as well as safer cycling, and that the past use of simple casualty reduction targets may have created perverse incentives for road safety professionals not to encourage cycling (or even to actively discourage it) on the basis that more cycle use could mean more cyclist casualties, contrary to their casualty reduction targets.
- We therefore strongly support the move to adopt “rate-based” targets based on exposure to risk (i.e. to halve the risk of serious and fatal cyclist and pedestrian casualties *per 100,000 km travelled*), rather than simply aiming to reduce casualty numbers. CTC has presented good evidence that more and safer cycling can and should go hand in hand, through the “safety in numbers” effect. The new rate-based targets should help ensure that this happens.
- However we recognise the concern that rate-based targets will be difficult to monitor at the local level, due to the difficulties of obtaining reliable local data on cycle use. Hence there is still a risk that the overall simple casualty targets could come to dominate at the local level. We therefore urge that pedestrians and cyclists should be excluded from the overall casualty targets, particularly for local target-setting.
- We also propose the adoption of targets to improve the perceived safety of walking and cycling. Such a target could be easily monitored at the local level, as data could be collected through the existing survey of public perceptions of the safety of public transport travel. It would also focus local authorities’ attention on tackling the fears which deter people from walking and cycling. By encouraging people to cycle more, this would in turn lead to real improvements in pedestrians’ and cyclists’ safety, through the “safety in numbers” effect.

- The main sources of fear which need to be addressed by the road safety strategy are speed and speeding, irresponsible driving, hostile roads and junctions, and lorries.

## Interventions

- The strategy is heavily dependent on technological solutions (especially vehicle-based) yet these technologies are mainly beyond the control of the Department. We believe that the Department's strategy should include more policy levers within its control.
- We strongly support the move to make 20 mph the speed limit in 'town of city streets... where pedestrian and cycle movements are high'. We feel that this could be achieved more easily through the commitment to make 20 mph the default speed limit in 'built-up areas', whilst allowing local authorities to adopt higher limits on appropriate roads.
- We believe that the national speed limit should be changed to 50 mph, but that for many rural roads a more appropriate speed would be far lower than this. A hierarchy of rural roads would be a sensible approach, whereby lanes or roads which provide routes for vulnerable road users or leisure have lower limits to other, more strategic roads.
- More attention needs to be given to ensuring traffic engineers and planners have the skills and training required to deliver good cycle-friendly street design, in accordance with the principles set out in Cycle Infrastructure Design and the Manual for Streets. Local authorities should be strongly encouraged to make greater use of procedures like cycle audits and cycle reviews. Lessons should be learnt from continental best practice, particularly in creating attractive urban street designs which enhance the urban environment and strengthen the urban economy, which encourage more walking and cycling, and which promote a style of driving which respects the presence of non-motorised road users.
- Much more needs to be done to improve the general standard of driving. The measures taken to update the driving test will be insufficient on their own. More priority needs to be given to the enforcement of road traffic offences by police forces, and the CPS and courts need to adopt a more consistent approach to prosecution and sentencing. The definitions and sentences for the core bad driving offences (i.e. those involving "dangerous" and "careless" driving) should be reviewed, as there are serious inconsistencies in the definitions and the sentencing powers available, as well as the way these are applied in practice. Too many drivers who cause serious danger or harm escape with prosecutions and/or convictions for relatively minor offences, and sentencing often fails to reflect the seriousness of the offence.

- More attention must be given to the threat posed by lorries. Nationally they typically account for 20-25% of cyclist fatalities in any given year, and are the major killers of cyclists in urban areas. They were involved of 9 out of the 11 cyclists killed in London in 2008 and we understand they have been involved in all but one of the 6 adult cyclist fatalities in London so far this year. Attention needs to be paid to the design and safety features fitted onto lorries, to both driver and cyclist training, to fleet management and to lorry management and routing strategies. Research and monitoring are required to assess the most effective interventions.
- Cycle training is a highly effective measure for encouraging more as well as cycling which has received considerable attention from Government in recent years. The strategy should commit to making it widely available not just for younger children, but also for teenagers (to support the retention of the cycling habit as they approach driving age) and for adults wishing to discover or rediscover cycling later in life. There is anecdotal evidence that people who have undertaken cycle training make better progress when learning to drive, and become safer drivers. This should be researched with a view to incorporating cycle training into the training of young drivers. The value of cycle training for bus and lorry drivers should also be more fully explored.
- We are pleased to note that the document for the most part employs the term 'collision' rather than 'accident'. This is a more appropriate term for events where the exact level of culpability of the parties involved in the collision is not determined. We suggest that the final text is consistent in its approach to this issue.

Please also refer to the measures suggested in *Safety in Numbers* – [www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers](http://www.ctc.org.uk/safetyinnumbers)