

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy safety review call for evidence

Response by Chester Cycling Campaign

30 May 2018

Consultation question 1

Do you have any suggestions on the way in which the current approach to development and maintenance of road signs and infrastructure impacts the safety of cyclists and other vulnerable road users? How could it be improved?

We are often told by people who don't cycle that they are too scared to try. People who don't cycle tell us that we are "brave" to cycle to work. The road infrastructure is so offputting that most people won't even try cycling. Britain needs a wholesale change of focus so that, when planning transport systems, pedestrians are prioritised first, then cyclists, then vehicle users (ie a hierarchy of transport users). Transport is about how people move, not how vehicles move.

1. We should reduce the road space allocated to vehicles & allocate more to cyclists & pedestrians – eg on wide roads, narrow the road carriageway & widen footpaths & cycle paths running alongside. **Evidence:** as practiced in many Dutch towns.
2. Currently cyclists are exposed to the risk of injury and death by being forced to mix with vehicle traffic at more than 20mph. Nationally, current 30mph limits should become 20mph, ie the default speed limit in built-up areas becomes 20mph. **Evidence:** lots at <http://www.20splenty.org/>. The volume of signage needed would be reduced, as would driver confusion & exasperation as drivers would know that there is nowhere in the town to go faster, so would relax. **Evidence:** World Health Organisation "when motorized traffic is in areas with pedestrians and cyclists, the speed limit should be under 30km/h"¹ Note that 30km/hr = 18.6 mph, which is 7% slower than 20mph.
3. All non-major roads in England should have a standard speed restriction of 50 mph. This would have a significant positive impact on cycle and walking safety on minor roads and country lanes which are often the preferred routes for cyclists and walkers. Across the country there are thousands of examples of minor roads which link major roads, where the major road has a speed restriction of (say) 50mph whereas the minor road has the national limit of 60 mph.
4. Recommendations in "Manual for Streets" should be followed by transport planners in local authorities. They are currently often ignored.
5. Walking and cycling routes should be planned to be the most convenient & safe way to get around a town, with vehicle routes planned only once the walking and cycling routes are planned. **Evidence:** many Dutch towns.
6. Follow the example of places which achieve high cycling rates or walking rates eg most Dutch towns; Portland, Oregon, USA; Calgary, Canada; Bogota, Colombia; New York, USA. These places have achieved their success by political will. We could do the same in Britain. **Evidence:** all these towns/cities. Public Health England's "Everybody active, every day" was published October 2014. Since then, there has been little progress towards more active travel.

¹ WHO/NMH/NVI/17.7, 2017.

7. Follow the guidance in Vision Zero, a programme of systematic safety used in Sweden.
Evidence: <http://www.visionzeroinitiative.com>.
8. Expenditure on cycling & walking must be increased to a much higher proportion of the road/transport budget. Divert money from spending on vehicle facilities to cycle facilities. The £1.2 billion of Government funding available to local bodies over five years that may be invested in cycling and walking from 2016-17 until 2020-21, is not enough. The convenience of car use only exists due to the gargantuan expenditure over the years on infrastructure designed specifically for vehicles. If even a fraction had been spent on safe & convenient cycle infrastructure, cycle use would surely equal or outweigh car use over short distances.
9. The local authority motivation and essential funding to deliver improvements are not yet evident. **Evidence:** Even in London where investment has been more significant the improvement from 2000-2016 in cycling journeys as % of total journeys, has only moved from 2% to 3.5%. We need a much for radical and committed response.
10. Traffic light signalling should be altered so that they change quickly for pedestrians & cyclists, to reduce waiting time (& delivers the clear message that people traveling by non-motorised means should have priority over those traveling in vehicles).
11. Junctions should be altered so that pedestrians have right of way at every junction over vehicles turning in to that road, ie vehicles have to pause to let pedestrians cross.
12. Establish workplace parking levies to fund the public transport / cycling facilities in the town.
Evidence: Nottingham City Council have used a workplace parking levy to fund improvements in their tram and bus system. <https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-12/nottingham%20case%20study%20-%20Workplace%20parking%20levy.pdf>
13. Maintain pavements & cycle paths to encourage their use ie repair, sweep to keep free of debris, clear obstructing vegetation & de-ice in winter. In Chester (like many towns in Britain), currently in winter, roads are de-iced but pavements & cycle paths are not, sending a strong message that vehicle travel is prioritised over walking & cycling.
14. Clearly mark road space which is intended to be shared between pedestrians, cyclists & drivers. This could be simple painted markings on the ground.
15. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK's "**Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn't you...?**"
https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/04/1804_cyclinguk_cycle-safety-make-it-simple.pdf

Consultation question 2

Please set out any areas where you consider the laws or rules relating to road safety and their enforcement, with particular reference to cyclists and pedestrians, could be used to support the Government's aim of improving cycling and walking safety whilst promoting more active travel.

In the UK, we accept 5 deaths on our roads each day – which is a whole family wiped out each day - (1,792 in 2016²) to be the price of the freedom to be on our roads. This level of death would be totally unacceptable in other areas of transport.

1. Presumed liability should be introduced, so that drivers of vehicles are presumed liable when in collision with pedestrians or cyclists, until proven otherwise. **Evidence:** Other European countries have this already.
2. Road users should be expected to take care (ie liable for harm caused) in proportion to their ability to cause harm.
3. Sentences for dangerous and bad driving are unduly lenient. All too often, it appears that magistrates & judges consider the driver's needs over the needs of the victim. Drivers remain on the road with over 12 points on their licence after pleading "exceptional hardship". Drivers are given leniency because judges, jurors & magistrates allow "a momentary lapse of attention" - which killed someone - to be acceptable & go unpunished or lightly punished. Magistrates, judges & jurors should be considered accessories to crime if a person who they have allowed to drive goes on to break the law in future.
Evidence: driver Christopher Gard, who killed cyclist and 48-year old father-of-two Lee Martin in August 2015, while driving and texting at 60 mph. Gard had been convicted six times within the previous three years for driving whilst using his mobile phone, and stopped for the same offence on another two occasions, avoiding penalty points by attending a re-training course. He had dodged a driving ban by pleading 'exceptional hardship' if he lost his licence. Similarly, a motorist who admitted killing a cyclist was spared jail by a judge "Anybody in this court room who is a driver can be guilty of inattention, a moment of carelessness, anyone could end up in the same position of Mr Lappin following a few seconds inattention," said the judge.
Evidence: <http://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/motorist-avoids-jail-killing-cyclist-judge-sees-no-point-prison-sentence-366654>
4. Fines for speeding need to be increased so that they are a deterrent. In Finland, fines are based on the driver's salary. For example, when one of the county's wealthiest entrepreneurs was clocked at 14 mph above the limit, he received a fine of 54,000 Euros (£39,000). The sliding scale of fines clearly has a deterrent effect. **Evidence:** <https://www.eta.co.uk/2017/12/22/roads-finns-and-fines/>
5. Enforcement works: Serious cycle smashes down by a fifth in 'Close Pass' first year West Midlands Police. **Evidence:** <https://west-midlands.police.uk/news/3951/serious-cycle-smashes-down-fifth-close-pass-first-year#>
6. The Highway Code should be revised to make it clearer. In many cases, road users are unclear what is mandatory & what is advisory. Include safe distances for vehicles passing cyclists.
7. Enforce no cycling on pavements.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2016>

8. Enforce no parking on pavements.
9. Increase automated detection of road offences by ANPR technology, with fines sent out automatically.
10. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK's "**Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn't you...?**"
https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/04/1804_cyclinguk_cycle-safety-make-it-simple.pdf

Consultation question 3

Do you have any suggestions for improving the way road users are trained, with specific consideration to protecting cyclists and pedestrians?

1. The learning to drive process should require a certain number of hours training with a qualified instructor. (Currently there is no such requirement).
2. The learning to drive process should require that theory training & possibly simulator training should be done before a provisional driving licence is issued (ie before going on the road.)
3. The learning to drive process should include the Dutch reach to open a vehicle door.
4. The learning to drive process should include successful completion of a Bikeability cycle training course (with appropriate simulation for anyone unable to do the practical) so that they understand what cyclists should do on the road. This would also have the benefit of giving most of the population good cycle training.
5. The learning to drive process should include awareness of what it is like to be a vulnerable road user, eg with limited vision, or poor balance, or using a wheelchair. Use goggles to give the experience of limited vision, use a special surface to experience poor balance & experience using pavements & crossing roads in a wheelchair. Experience is remembered by humans much more than theory.
6. Bikeability training should include awareness of what it is like to be a vulnerable road user, eg with limited vision, or poor balance, or using a wheelchair, as in 5. above.
7. The learning to drive process should place a lot of emphasis on drivers having responsibility for the safety of other road users, ie learning to drive is not just about you learning how to pilot the vehicle, it is about you learning to keep others safe by your actions.
8. The learning to drive process should cover the deficiencies of vehicle design. eg many modern cars have wide pillars between the windscreen & side windows, which can obscure an approaching cyclist from the driver's view. <https://www.londoncyclist.co.uk/raf-pilot-teach-cyclists/> & <https://singletrackworld.com/2018/01/collision-course-why-this-type-of-road-junction-will-keep-killing-cyclists/>
9. The learning to drive process should teach slowing and stopping at junctions unless absolutely sure it is safe to proceed, rather than continuing to roll at junctions and not stop if possible. Younger drivers taught by this method seem unwilling to stop when they do not have right of way, or should stop so as not to scare a cyclist who has right of way at that junction.
Evidence: several young adults who recently received driving lessons & took their driving tests, <http://road.cc/content/news/237184-near-miss-day-96-driver-fails-see-cyclist-roundabout> - comment by CXR94Di2 "Having taught my kids in the last few years to drive. I taught them to stop at junctions,. look and move off when clear. The first child only just passed due to hesitation. The second child had some lessons and it became obvious that the instructions from the instructor, were all about keeping momentum at junctions, don't stop unless absolutely necessary. I then spoke with several parents of kids taking their test. They all commented the same surprise. I was never taught this keep rolling method, just too dangerous and easy to miss small objects like cyclists pedestrians etc."
10. Bikeability training should emphasise that cyclists have responsibilities for the safety of other road users.

11. The learning to drive process should include awareness of the potential for human error & misjudgement, as in Vision Zero.
12. Revalidation for drivers: all drivers should re-take (and pass) a driving test every 5 years. Revalidation (rather than just continuing education) had become normal for doctors & other health professionals. Driving involves operating potentially lethal machinery, so regular revalidation should be mandatory.
13. Drivers of larger, heavier vehicles (eg 4x4s) should have to have passed an extended driving test, covering the damage which such vehicles can do to other, smaller vehicles, cyclists & pedestrians.
14. Bikeability training should be available to general members of the public and not limited (as it seems to have been up to now) to schools and other institutions.
15. Make questions specific to driving around cyclists mandatory on driving tests, both in the theory and practical sections. If people know it's going to come up on their test, they will dedicate time to practicing it. **Evidence:** several young adults who recently received driving lessons & took their driving tests.
16. Eye testing should be carried out by an independent authority. A GP's responsibility is the healthcare of their patient, not vehicle licensing.
17. It is particularly important that women are encouraged to adopt cycling, as they will have a big influence on teaching children to cycle.
18. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK's "**Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn't you...?**"
https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/04/1804_cyclinguk_cycle-safety-make-it-simple.pdf

Consultation question 4

Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve road user education to help support more and safer walking and cycling?

1. When drivers have contravened traffic rules, it would be very effective to guide them through a “root cause analysis” or reflective process about their contravention, to help the driver understand how their actions/inactions contributed to the situation & what other choices they could have made.
2. We have heard anecdotal evidence of the people instructing on Driver Awareness courses treating the subject matter lightly eg laughing with people who have attended more than once. To be effective, such courses have to be delivered in a meaningful way. Instructors should be subject to oversight.
3. “Exchanging places” exercises could be run by the Police, where one type of road user tries out being another type of road user eg lorry driver & cyclist.
4. “Black box” devices (which record driving patterns & determine how well someone is driving) should be made mandatory. They help make drivers aware of how their driving really is, rather than how the driver thinks it is.
5. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK’s **“Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn’t you...?”**
https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/04/1804_cyclinguk_cycle-safety-make-it-simple.pdf

Consultation question 5

Do you have any suggestions on how Government policy on vehicles and equipment could improve safety of cyclists and pedestrians, whilst continuing to promote more walking and cycling?

1. Note that current government policy results in most people being actively prevented from choosing active travel, because it's too dangerous! All we need is political will, at national & local levels, to introduce policy to make cycling & walking safer. It could be introduced quickly. It is vital that it is implemented immediately. Lives are lost because of lack of political action. Evidence: cities/towns around the world which achieve high cycling rates or walking rates eg most Dutch towns; Portland, Oregon, USA; Calgary, Canada; Bogota, Colombia; New York, USA.
2. Vehicle design must be improved so that visibility is improved. Many modern cars have wide pillars between the windscreen & side windows, which can obscure an approaching cyclist from the driver's view. <https://www.londoncyclist.co.uk/raf-pilot-teach-cyclists/> & <https://singletrackworld.com/2018/01/collision-course-why-this-type-of-road-junction-will-keep-killing-cyclists/>
3. Incentivise electric vehicles – the lack of fumes is noticeable & very welcome when cycling & walking.
4. Improve safety of HGVs: eg FORS approved (Fleet Operators Recognition Scheme). It is compulsory to be FORS approved in London for all HGV's, but not elsewhere. It should be adopted nationally.
5. Ban HGVs from town centres at times of high numbers of pedestrian & cyclist movements.
6. Autonomous vehicles must reliably give priority to cyclists & pedestrians & leave plenty of room when passing or in close proximity.
7. Make “black boxes” (as already used by some insurance companies) in vehicles mandatory. There should be fines for “risky driving” which has been revealed by black box records. Increased insurance premiums should also be incurred.
8. The legislation on what equipment (lights, reflectors, bell) is required on a bicycle is outdated & confusing. It needs consolidating. There also needs to be better standards for such equipment.
9. Do not make cycle helmets mandatory. Do not make wearing high visibility clothing mandatory for cyclists. We need to remove the source of danger rather than provide the victim with (ineffective) protective clothing. **Evidence:** <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/article/20171126-Chris-Boardman-0> See also a review of the evidence: https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2017/11/helmets-evidence_brf.pdf
10. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK's “**Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn't you...?**” https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2018/04/1804_cyclinguk_cycle-safety-make-it-simple.pdf

Consultation question 6

What can Government do to support better understanding and awareness of different types of road user in relation to cycle use in particular?

1. Increasing the number of people cycling & walking (by providing safe spaces & convenient routes) is the single most effective measure, because more people become a pedestrian, a cyclist & a driver. Such a person knows what it's like to be another type of road user, because they are one. It also "normalises" cycling & walking. Cycling & walking become expected behaviours.
2. Run awareness campaigns: eg TV, radio, social media, featuring one person who is a pedestrian, cyclist & driver at different times during the same day. Themes of "we're all in this together" or "cyclists are people too!" Messages are understood well if they are positive &, if possible, humorous – **Evidence:** Antanas Mockus , Mayor of Bogota, Columbia, 1995, brought about a 50% reduction in traffic fatalities and increased compliance with traffic laws, using a positive, humorous approach. More carrots than sticks: Antanas Mockus's civic culture policy in Bogotá. *New Dir Youth Dev.* 2010 Spring;2010(125):19-32.
3. Highlight the joys of cycling. Many adults experienced it when a child & are enthused when they re-discover that riding a bike is so enjoyable.
4. Communicate that cycling is an easy & cheap way to keep fit & lose weight. Active commuting is an alternative to leisure-time exercise in the management of overweight and obesity. Evidence: **Effects of active commuting and leisure-time exercise on fat loss in women and men with overweight and obesity: a randomized controlled trial**
J S Quist, M Rosenkilde, M B Petersen, A S Gram, A Sjödin & B Stallknecht
International Journal of Obesity volume 42, pages 469–478 (2018)
<https://www.nature.com/articles/ijo2017253>
5. Most people don't realise that things could be different: that town centres & streets could be re-engineered so that it is clear that people are more important than vehicles. The more examples people see, the more people will want/demand that their town or city becomes a pleasant place to walk or cycle.
6. In addition to the above, we fully support the proposals in Cycling UK's "**Cycle safety: make it simple Why wouldn't you...?**"
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