

Scottish Road Safety Strategy: Consultation Document

Response from TRANSform Scotland
Friday 25th April 2008

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance. We campaign for a more sensible transport system, one less dependent on unsustainable modes such as the car, the plane and road freight, and more reliant on sustainable modes like walking, cycling, public transport, and freight by rail or sea. We are a membership organisation bringing together rail, bus and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation organisations; local environment and transport campaign groups; and individual supporters.
- 1.2 Transform Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government's proposals for a revised Scottish Road Safety Strategy. However, we think that the strategy could be improved by a more clear focus on measures to improve speed management.

2. "What should our priorities be?"

- 2.1 Priority should be given to reducing danger for the most vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists, children, older people, and those with mobility problems. The danger experienced by vulnerable road users is not limited only to built-up areas, but also extends to rural roads (where the risk of death is heightened as a result of increased traffic speeds).
- 2.2 The finalised Scottish Road Safety Strategy should set out an ambitious strategy akin to the Vision Zero strategy in Sweden (as highlighted in the document).
- 2.3 The strategy should also set out how road safety fit in with other transport, health and environmental priorities as there is disappointingly little on this matter in the current document. For example, there should be an explicit recognition in the document that the wider requirements to deliver modal shift to walking and cycling will require special attention in road safety implementation. (It would be deeply unsatisfactory for the road safety strategy to lead to the discouragement of walking and cycling when other governmental departments are actively promoting these modes of transport.)

3. "How should we address these priorities?"

- 3.1 The key focus should be on speed management, as it is often the case that it is excessive speed - or excessive speed for the prevailing conditions - that turns driver error into collisions, and worsens the severity of those collisions. While we recognise that resources for enforcement are "limited" and that these must be directed to "areas where the greatest benefit can be gained" (p.13), the strategy should make a clear statement that a key objective is to get all road users to obey speed limits at all times.
- 3.2 We recommend the greater use of average speed cameras, and consider that this could play a useful role in targeting excessive speeds on rural roads.
- 3.3 We recommend that those caught speeding be sent on speed awareness courses, the fees for which should be paid by the offenders themselves.

- 3.4 Finally, we recommend that the standard speed limit in all residential areas be reduced to 20mph or lower. This will require a new approach to street design and layout, which puts the needs of residents, especially children, above those of drivers. We want to see 20mph or lower speed limits the norm for residential streets and those used by shoppers, tourists and others, close to schools or public buildings, or important for walking and cycling or children's play. In urban areas only the busiest strategic traffic routes should qualify for higher speed limits.

4. "How should road safety be organised to deliver?"

- 4.1 We are not aware of any significant requirements to the existing organisational set-up.

5. "How could road safety be funded more effectively?"

- 5.1 We recommend that local authorities specify speed management targets as part of their Single Outcome Agreements. This would appear to be the mechanism that would lead local authorities to devote adequate amount of funding to road safety.
- 5.2 Secondly, and as at §3.3, above, we recommend that those caught speeding be sent on speed awareness courses, the fees for which should be paid by the offenders themselves.

6. "What can we learn from others?"

- 6.1 We have no further examples of good practice to recommend.

7. Summary of response

- 7.1 We welcome this review of the Scottish Road Safety Strategy.
- 7.2 We believe that the priority should be on reducing danger for vulnerable road users.
- 7.3 We recommend that the focus of efforts be on speed management.
- 7.4 Amongst other things, we recommend that the standard speed limit in all residential areas be reduced to 20mph or lower. This road safety measure also has the benefit of helping to deliver on a range of other governmental policies (e.g. sustainable transport, urban regeneration and public health).

TRANSform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns.

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