

Cyclists Touring Club right to ride network

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18 May 2008

Dear Howard,

Transport Fundamental Service Review Workshop

Thank you for inviting us to take part in the Transport Fundamental Services Review workshop on 16 May 2008. The discussions were lively, interesting and thought provoking. I believe that everyone involved came away feeling that it had been a worthwhile exercise. How valuable it turns out to be in the long run will depend on how (or indeed whether) the findings are implemented.

My impression was that there was a very strong consensus on most issues. We are all agreed on the need to protect the individual historic character of each of our four towns, to promote a diverse and vibrant local economy, to reduce the adverse impacts of excessive car use, to reduce the impact of heavy vehicles without penalising the businesses that depend upon them, and above all to give people genuine transport choices while educating them in how to make those choices for the betterment of our society as a whole.

Perhaps the only area where there was a significant difference of opinion was on how much we should allow our town centres to be dominated by car parking, and by vehicle access to those car parks. How big a sacrifice are we prepared to make so that I can choose to drive into town and park my car where I like, when I like, at minimal personal expense, rather than walking there, cycling or taking the bus?

I had the strong impression that this remains an argument dominated by emotions and ideology rather than any hard evidence. All of the available space in our town centres has already been taken up by car parking, and as a result we are faced with a straight choice - maintain car parking levels at the expense of making improvements, or lose some of those spaces to encourage safer, healthier, less demanding modes of travel.

It is a fraught and emotive question. Do we need to maximise car parking to ensure that businesses and customers don't drive to Milton Keynes or Stevenage instead of staying in North Herts? Or do we recognise that towns like Hitchin and Letchworth will **never** be able to compete for that market, and so try to keep local customers in the town by offering them something better - a lively, vibrant, attractive, traffic free centre with lots of bustle and entertainment.

I'm sure that you realise our preference is for the latter, but with a healthy balance. We, after all, own cars too and there are occasions when we choose to drive into town.

I felt a little sorry for the officer taking notes at our workshop. Without a background in transport I think she struggled a little to summarise what were quite free ranging discussions into bullet points on a flip chart. I thought therefore that it might be useful to put some of those arguments onto paper.

Yours Sincerely

Alasdair DV Massie Ceng MStructE

CTC Right to Ride Representative, North Herts



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1. The Challenge.

To work towards a society and a transport network that:

- b** Places the minimum demands on the earth’s finite resources.
- b** Causes the minimum of damage and pollution to both the local and the global environment.
- b** Minimises our dependency on imports from potentially unstable nations.
- b** Encourages healthy lifestyles, happiness and a sense of well-being.
- b** Strengthens rather than splintering communities, encourages social interaction, and promotes consideration before self interest.
- b** Encourages use of local services and generates local jobs.
- b** Addresses “safety” by removing threats, not by restricting the freedom of potential victims.
- b** Addresses the needs of all, not just those with the loudest voices.
- b** Allows people to enjoy travel instead of enduring it.

More cycling, walking and an efficient public transport system all answer these challenges. We all know that car use does not, even if many people are reluctant to admit it.

In the long run we will have no choice. We will have to face this challenge some time whether we like it or not. Much better to face it now, to reap the benefits of a cleaner, more civilised society, rather than backing further into a dark and uninviting corner.



2. Car Parking and Congestion

2.2 Town Centers

2.2.1 Where are we now ?

Town center car parking is very emotive. Many of those who habitually drive into town centers now are extremely defensive of their “right” to park, and are unwilling to even contemplate the alternatives. This has made a constructive dialogue very hard to progress.

All of the North Herts towns have large car parks close to the town centers and these are supplemented by privately owned car parks provided by shops and businesses, as well as by on-street parking.

There is an oft repeated claim that there is not enough parking in the North Herts towns. As someone who has now lived and worked in North Herts for quarter of a century I have to challenge that claim. I do not regularly drive into town by habit, but I do so often enough to know the conditions. In 25 years I have **NEVER** at any time experienced any difficulty in finding a suitable parking spot in any of the North Herts towns.

This must raise the question: is there insufficient parking, or do some people have unrealistic expectations of being to park right outside their destination whenever they choose to do so ? We might also question whether people get so heated about car parking because they see it as an attack on their driving culture, and they will bitterly oppose anything that erodes the dominance of that culture.

2.2.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

We would like to see a reduction in the dominance of car parking on the townscape. Many of the cars parked around town are used for no more than 40 minutes in an entire 24 hour period. For the rest of that time they are just taking up space. They are not benefiting the economy, they are not nice to look at, their presence stifles development and prevents improvements to the streetscape.

Parking restraint is one of the few, proven, effective methods of constraining traffic growth.

We would like to see real reductions in the number of car parking spaces in the town center, and a quantum leap in the number and distribution of cycle parking spaces.

What we do not want to do is penalize small businesses by driving custom away. But would this happen as some people claim ? Surveys show that retailers consistently overestimate the number of their customers who arrive by car, and consistently underestimate the number who walk, cycle or come by bus. Other studies have demonstrated the fairly obvious point that people who shop by bicycle spend more of their money locally, rather than in distant destinations.

We do have a precedent to go on. The old market square in Hitchin was a 24 hour car park when I first moved to the town. It was a horrible environment that ruined a beautiful old square. Restricting parking and turning it back to a public space is the best thing that has happened in Hitchin, making it a place where people want to go and spend time.

Did it cause the local economy to collapse ?

There are people who like to claim that is the case and point to the decline of the Churchgate development as evidence. Do we believe it ? Businesses fronting the square and the surrounding streets continue to thrive. Are we surprised that a rather shabby and dated development that backs onto a car park and the equally shabby market has failed to keep up?

People who are going to get in their cars and drive to the shops are very unlikely to choose to use the North Herts town centers, unless they live close enough to walk or cycle. There are





quite simply too many other destinations nearby where you can happily go shopping in a car park just off a motorway. Our town centers will **NEVER** be able to compete for that market.

If we try to compete for the stubbornly mono modal motorist's business we will lose. He will drive to Stevenage however hard we try to attract him, but we will ruin our towns and drive away local customers in the process. If we make our townscapes more car dominated then the money will flow out of North Herts, not in.

Small businesses and local services have fared very badly in the "car age". If we want those businesses to survive and prosper, we must look to challenge our obsession with the car.

So, what assets do we have to sell ?

We have four attractive towns, each with a unique history, each has retained a distinct character. Although the streetscapes are very much car dominated, it is to a lesser extent than many towns.

This is what we need to celebrate and to sell - character and individuality. We want the people of Letchworth to work in Letchworth and to shop in Letchworth. We need to make people **want** to walk there or cycle there, and to leave their cars at home. That will make our towns a nicer, cleaner, friendlier, safer place to be. There will still be car parks for those who need them, and there will be less competition for the spaces.

Travel is a wonderful thing if enjoyed and used productively. Traveling for the sake of it, without enjoyment, and to access services that you could have accessed closer to home, is just a burden on the economy and the physical infrastructure.

2.2.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Expand the vehicle restricted area in Hitchin. Build on its use as a public entertainment venue for street fairs, music events etc.
- b Implement similar vehicle restricted areas in the centers of Letchworth, Baldock and Royston. Use space currently sterilised by car parking as public space, and to bring back to life the historic character of each of the towns.
- b Make sure that there is cycle parking within 25m of every shop and other destination in North Herts.
- b Re-allocate road space currently sterilised by on-street car parking to make cycling safer and less intimidating, and to make walking more pleasant. Note that this needs careful implementation to avoid situations where cycle facilities will only succeed with stringent enforcement, as such enforcement is unlikely to be forthcoming.
- b Tidy up the existing sprawling, open air car parks. They are an eyesore, they create a negative impression as you approach the town center, and are unpleasant to use at night. These need to be built over, placing car parking in an undercroft, using mixed development to ensure activity at all times of day.



2.2.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Intransigent attitudes from habitual motorists.
- L Ignorance and prejudice over how people currently access businesses and services, and how they would like to access those services.
- L Finance / development interest. Re-landscaping streets isn't cheap, partnership with a developer is the most viable way to deliver but any willing developer is likely to impose conditions of their own which may conflict with the needs of the plan.

2.3 Reducing Congestion

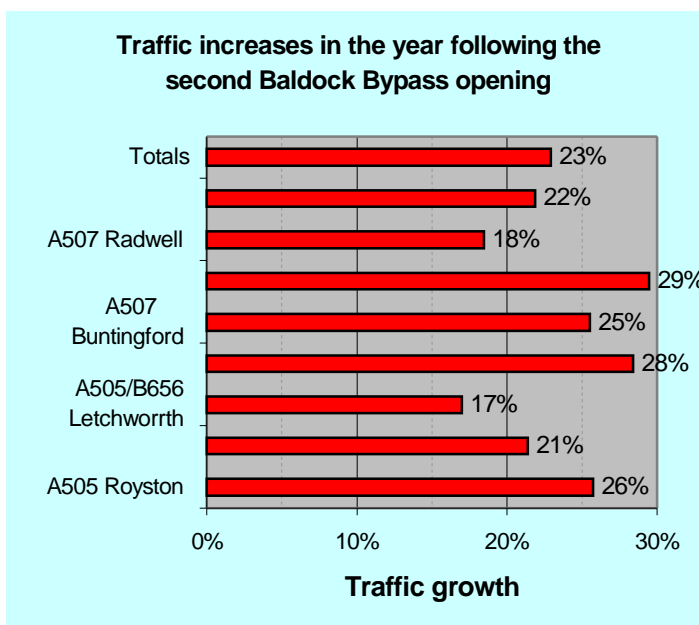
2.3.1 Where are we now ?

Like most of the country, North Herts towns suffer widespread peak time road congestion. This is probably worst in Hitchin where long queues of traffic form on most of the main roads in and out of the town, but affects all of the towns to a greater or lesser degree.

High car use in North Hertfordshire also contributes to congestion in neighbouring districts and major roads. Congestion on the A1(M) for example is aggravated by large amounts of local and long distance car commuting by people living in North Herts.

Local "Solutions" to congestion that rely on increasing road capacity have an adverse impact on neighbouring areas and the roads between them. For example in the year after the opening of the second Baldock bypass, traffic levels on the main roads leading to and from Baldock jumped by 20-30% without any corresponding drop in traffic on other routes. This clearly places pressure on roads downstream such as the A1 and M25, as well as increasing traffic on local roads that are feeding onto the new road.

Congestion creates many problems for a wide variety of victims.



- ⌞ Congestion is indiscriminate. People moving goods and services are stuck in the same traffic as people on frivolous journeys that could have been avoided or be carried out by less damaging means.
- ⌞ Congestion is unpleasant. It makes people stressed and angry, it makes neighbourhoods unpleasant and threatening, it increases pollution (noise and air).
- ⌞ Congestion soaks up road space and investment, making it even more difficult to get that roadspace re-allocated equitably to encourage more socially and environmentally friendly means of transport.
- ⌞ Congestion makes people angry and impatient. That anger is often directed at the only people on the road who are not contributing to the congestion (namely cyclists).

As an example of just how irrational and badly focused peoples' reactions can be, only a few days ago I was hit by a car. It was not an accident. The driver hit me deliberately, to "teach me a lesson". His reason - the road, a signed cycle route along a residential road with traffic calming measures, was uncharacteristically congested due to traffic rat-running around nearby major roadworks and he was unable to pass me immediately.

Waiting behind me momentarily would have made no difference to his journey since there were many obstructions for him ahead, and even in clear traffic you cannot drive down that road faster than you can cycle. Unfortunately, reason does not enter the minds of some people once the red mist has descended, anger dominates their thought processes and they look for a scapegoat to vent that anger on.

Scapegoats are of course identified, not by the likelihood that they are responsible for the "problem", but by how different they appear from the observer. Thus, regrettably, many



people will look to blame and find fault in somebody riding a bicycle for no better reason than that act identifies them as somehow "different"¹.

2.3.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

We would like to be in a position where congestion has been eliminated or significantly reduced. We would like this to be achieved by making real modal shifts away from car use for local journeys, by challenging the culture whereby long daily car commutes are seen as reasonable behaviour, and by setting in motion a shift in attitude whereby frivolous car journeys and aggressive driving become as socially unacceptable as drink driving and smoking in confined public spaces.

We recognise that such a change in attitudes is likely to take at least one generation to embed in our society, and we have really only just started. See box on the parallels with attitudes to smoking.

In the interim therefore we need to ensure that the current levels of congestion, and the likely growth in congestion in the medium term, do not make life intolerable for those people who choose **NOT** to contribute to it. People who walk or cycle need to be protected from the fall-out from traffic congestion, otherwise we will simply reinforce car dependency and steepen the downward spiral.

2.3.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Tackle demand. There are very few proven effective measures to restrain demand. Those that work are parking restraint, congestion charging, and congestion itself. Clearly, leaving the roads to reach saturation is the least appealing of the three.
- b Invest in the alternatives - walking, cycling and public transport. Make them cheaper, quicker, easier more convenient and more attractive than driving.
- b Car clubs (commercial and informal) reduce demand, make people think more directly about the cost of driving, and relieve people of the inconvenience and expense of multiple car ownership.
- b Railways provide the obvious alternative to long and medium distance travel but peak time trains are terribly overcrowded. Investment is needed to lengthen platforms, increase peak time frequency and improve the service to small stations.

Is motoring the new smoking?

Absolutely right it is.

Both are destructive, addictive, self centred personal indulgences. Both are (or were) near universal habits. Both are surrounded by a culture of denial at the problems they create, and a culture where the perpetrators complain of being victims while everybody around them has to suffer the adverse effects of their habit.

Nobody likes other peoples' smoke, and nobody likes other peoples 'traffic.

Of course it is not an exact parallel. Motoring is a means of transport and transport brings personal freedom and economic vitality, but that personal freedom is bought at a cost to anybody who isn't driving or does not wish to. Between two thirds and three quarters of all car journeys are within easy cycling distance so there is immense scope for improvement. Many people drive without any thought for the alternatives.

Smokers have long refused to have any consideration for the people around them, and in the end we have been forced to legislate to protect peoples' rights to breathe clean air. Who would turn the clock back ? Would anyone want to work in a smoke filled office or travel on a smoke filled train or plane again. If you are too young to remember what it was like then believe me, you are lucky.

In the same way, the motoring public has long refused to have consideration for the people around them. We all know the problems - congestion, pollution, death and injury, fear of traffic, road rage, community blight, environmental damage, heart disease and obesity... the list goes on. We just ignore them and carry on driving more and more, putting our own desires before the good of society.

continued over...

¹ TRL 549 Drivers' Perceptions of Cyclists. Transport Research Laboratory



- b Stations also generate a lot of local congestion. Institute personal travel planning for rail commuters to change how people get to the station.
- b Protect vulnerable road users from the impacts of congestion. Resist the calls to provide ever more capacity for motor vehicles and instead use that space to improve walking and cycling, and to make them more attractive.
- b Change the mind set. Personal travel planning for all residents of North Herts. Educate and influence people. Make them want to change and empower them to do so.

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It would be nice if we could deal with this in a reasoned, civilized manner, by consensus instead of confrontation, but it is hard to see that happen. Change will have to come, because we simply cannot satisfy drivers' insatiable demands for resources and road space, and because there is genuine injustice in the way non-motorists are treated.

In the end it will probably have to be imposed onto a reluctant public. But it will be for the best, and we will look back in 50 years time in the same way that we look back on smoking in the 1950s, wondering why anybody thought that was a good way to live.

from Newsnight blog 19/02/08

2.3.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Intransigent attitudes from habitual motorists.
- L Pressure to re-allocate all of the available space to increasing motor vehicle capacity.

2.4 Car Park Charging

2.4.1 Where are we now ?

Car park charging has become a political football, used by local politicians for short sighted "points scoring". This has made it all but impossible to deal with the underlying issues.

It is clear from current levels of car park use that the charges applied do not act as a deterrent to driving. Some people may want free parking, but that is unrealistic and it would not be in their own interests since the only restraint would then be availability - and if you don't get there first...

2.4.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

Car park charging needs to be de-politicised. The actual level of fees isn't really all that important once market forces take over. The operators will set fees at a rate that gets the best return while ensuring car parks are full. That way it is never unreasonably high, and never unrealistically low.

One of the constraints that is mentioned time and time again is finance. There is always money for big projects, but never any for a cycle lane or a new crossing. Car parking generates revenue. That revenue needs to be used, and used transparently on positive local transport initiatives. People don't mind being taxed when they can see the money being spent on improving their local environment.

2.4.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Privatise car parking, contract it out to a commercial operator.
- b Set up a mechanism whereby car park revenue is channelled directly into local sustainable transport initiatives. Publicise it so that people know where their money is going and feel good about it.

2.4.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Some politicians enjoy playing "political football".
- L Some people view free car parking as a fundamental right.



2.5 Commuter Parking

2.5.1 Where are we now ?

2.5.1.1 Rail Commuter Parking

Railway stations make bad neighbours. The streets surrounding stations suffer from traffic congestion, and residential streets are used as free parking by commuters.

Driving to rail stations is one of the most unnecessary sources of peak time traffic. In North Hertfordshire nobody lives more than 20 minutes cycle ride from a rail station and the vast majority are within 5 minutes.

People do not **NEED** to drive to the station. We must challenge the expectation that this is what normal people do, educate them in the alternatives, and make people want to use them.

2.5.1.2 Workplace Parking

In Cambridge (only 20 miles away) one in four people cycle to work. There is no reason why they could not do the same in North Herts. Unfortunately few people will even consider the alternatives until we make car parking a little more difficult and expensive, whilst giving them positive incentives to walk or cycle.

At present people place little importance on their journey to work. I have neighbours who commute daily by car to Guildford and Reading. Clearly this is completely unsustainable. It is much too easy for people to drive and distance isn't really a strong disincentive. Cost and availability of parking on the other hand can be a very strong disincentive.

My "day job" is as a Consulting Engineer. We recently designed a new headquarters building for a neighbouring local authority. The area devoted to car parking for those offices was four times the footprint of the building. Not surprisingly, almost the entire council staff now drives to work. This is a dreadful waste of valuable land, and provides incentives for all the wrong sort of behaviour.

2.5.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

We would like to see British rail stations look like Dutch ones, with only a few car parking spaces and great racks of well used cycle parking. We would like every rail commuter to reach the station on foot or by bike.

Workplace car parking, like town centre car parking, presents opportunities as well as problems. It can generate revenue for investing in sustainable travel, and to reward people who choose to forego their right to park.

Again, it must be transparent and the "stick" must be balanced by juicy "carrots".

Research in Darlington (Sustainable Travel Town) revealed that money is a strong motivator, even small amounts. Saying that you will pay people NOT to drive to work enthruses them. Charging people to park without promoting alternatives antagonises them.

We would like to see workplace car park charging to be the norm, resulting in empty car parks, heaving bike sheds, and a sustained decline in those unnecessary, long distance car commutes.



Groningen station cycle parking

2.5.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Implement resident only parking zones around all rail stations.
- b Ensure that all rail stations have safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to get to them.
- b Good quality, attractive, well positioned cycle parking at all stations, and lots of it with a continuing programme of expansion.



- b Personal travel plans for all rail commuters to reach the station. Make them want to leave the car at home and empower them to do so.
- b Hitchin Station has particularly acute access issues. It needs access from the east side of the rails, cycle access from Benslow Bridge, and the A505 bridge needs to be replaced with one that creates space for pedestrians and cyclist.
- b Universal workplace car park charging, coupled with incentives to those who choose not to drive.
- b Workplace travel plans that are more than a paper exercise. These need to address commuting as well as business travel.

2.5.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Some people view free car parking as a fundamental right.
- L Workplace car parking charges may be politically explosive, unless there is great transparency and the benefits are clear.
- L Ill informed employee health and safety plans sometimes ban or discourage cycling.
- L Rail commuter parking issues need cooperation and investment from rail operators.

3. Environmental Impact - Transport Planning

3.2 Environmental Impact and Emissions

3.2.1 Where are we now ?

3.2.1.1 Local Impact

The North Herts towns and surrounding countryside are comparatively pleasant places to live, but like much of Britain there is the inescapable oppressive impact of road traffic.

I live in a small village but my sleep is disturbed by speeding traffic, the distant rumble of traffic on the A1 and A505 destroys rural tranquility and the opaque orange glow of streetlights is a spreading stain around the horizon, blotting out stars. It is not safe for my children to visit their friends directly across the street from us without an adult to escort them over the road, and the behaviour of drivers on some of the minor rural roads leaves me speechless.

In the towns, some roads have become virtual no-go areas because of the oppressive atmosphere created by traffic. Hitchin is the worst affected. I would single out Walsworth Road, Nightingale Road and the Paynes Park gyratory, forming a garrote around the town center.

The major inter-urban roads sever towns from their rural hinterland. Roads like the A505 (Baldock to Royston and Hitchin to Luton), and the Barton Road are extremely hostile for walking and cycling. Unlike the motorway network there are no alternatives to these roads. Motorways ironically present less of a challenge, but the intersections with the local road network are extremely intimidating and dangerous to negotiate on foot or by bike.

The impact of motor traffic on the local environment is wholly negative. There is nothing positive that can be said about it.



3.2.1.2 Global Impact

This is probably not the place to debate global warming and its impact. The evidence that global warming is already happening has become so compelling that, as far as I am aware, no credible scientific authority now questions it.



The question is not now “*will it happen ?*” but “*how can we stop ourselves making it worse?*” and “*how do we deal with the irreversible consequences ?*”

While the scientific community is convinced, and many sectors of industry are gearing up to the challenge, the public have their heads buried firmly in the sand. For Joe public, it is for *somebody else* to deal with. Unfortunately Joe public is responsible for producing a significant proportion of our CO₂ emissions, and a significant proportions of those come out of his car exhaust.

We ignore these challenges at our peril. Technology has only ever lead to greater consumption and greater environmental damage in the past. Only a fool would believe that technology will come to our rescue now. We must change our behaviour, we have no choice.

3.2.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

Clean air, a stable climate, a return to rural and urban tranquillity, quiet roads and an end to traffic domination in our towns.

That, of course, is probably not achievable.

It is very unlikely that we can halt the process of global warming but if we stop prevaricating we might slow our headlong rush towards the precipice. Everything that we need to do to protect the global environment is a good policy in its own right. There is no good reason for carrying on complacently. Even if global warming turns out to be a great mistake then we will still have made the world a better place.

Save the
cyclist, save
the world...

with apologies to
“Heroes”

3.2.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Education (of adults, children already know about global warming). We cannot allow such an important issue to be driven by vested interests and misinformation.
- b Leadership. Government at all levels needs to be seen to be leading the way. If the council only pays lip service to environmental concerns then what chance that others will ? There was only one other bike in NHDC’s bike shed when I last visited the council offices, and I don’t believe that everybody else walked.
- b Empowerment. People need to know that they, as an individual, can make a choice, they can make a difference, and they need some help and encouragement in making that choice.
- b A significant modal shift. Darlington achieved a 9% reduction in car use and a whopping 67% increase in cycle use just by talking to people. But let’s aim higher, let us match Cambridge where one in four cycle to work.

3.2.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Public complacency, ignorance, and in some cases sheer bloody mindedness.
- L Vested interests who are opposed to some of the measures (eg reduced car use) needed to safeguard the local and global environment.
- L Hysterical attitudes in some sections of the popular press towards anything that can be portrayed as “*anti car*”.

3.3 Transport Usage and modal shift

3.3.1 Where are we now ?

Modal share is currently dominated by private car use with artificially low levels of walking and cycling. The rail system is fast, efficient and well used, with the main constraint being overcrowding.



As with much of the UK, levels of cycling are unnaturally low. North Hertfordshire is geographically ideal for cycling. We have a mild, dry climate, gentle terrain and compact towns, each within 10-20 minutes cycle trip of its neighbour.

There is no physical reason why North Hertfordshire could not enjoy levels of cycling enjoyed in nearby Cambridge or across the North Sea in Holland and Belgium (up to 40% modal share in some cities).

Cycle trips can easily be linked with the rail network for longer journeys with no point in the district more than 5 miles (20 min) from a station. There are very onerous restrictions on cycle carriage for trains into London, but outside of peak hours there is ample capacity for cycle carriage, no advanced booking is required for local services and it is simple and accessible.

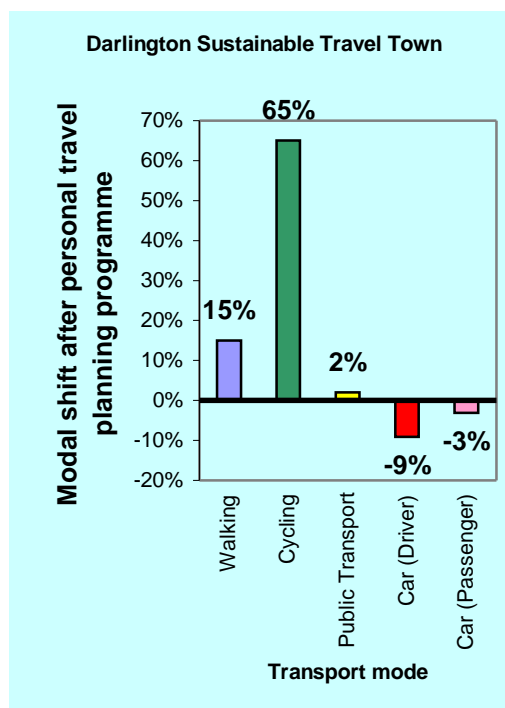
3.3.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

The Transport White Paper 1998 called for doubling of cycling levels by 2006 and a further doubling by 2012. We have spectacularly failed to achieve this. It may have sounded like an ambitious programme, but quadrupling cycling levels in North Herts would still only bring the modal share up to around half that currently enjoyed by our neighbours in Cambridge.

Experience from the Darlington studies showed that for most people cycling was the most practical alternative to car use. It is accessible to all, most people already own a bike, it gives the same door-to-door convenience as a car, it is relatively immune to congestion, it costs nothing, urban journey times are as good or better than a car, and its health and environmental credentials are impeccable.

Not surprisingly, modal shifts to cycling were an order of magnitude higher than to other modes in the Darlington study, albeit starting from a low base (similar to North Herts).

This was achieved almost entirely by talking to people and by raising the image of sustainable travel. Darlington is also a Cycling Demonstration Town and has seen higher than average investment in cycling facilities. Reports from the users are that these facilities are unfortunately of the same, low quality, barrier focussed style that afflicts most of Britain so it would be fair to say that these increases have been gained in spite of the investment in hard infrastructure, rather than because of it.



3.3.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

b We need to sell people the dream. We are bombarded with positive images of motoring. When people buy a car they know it will spend most of its time stuck in traffic with fractious children squabbling in the back, but they still want to buy into that dream of open roads and beautiful people.

Cycling is used by advertisers (even in car ads) to convey an image of carefree living, but it is rarely used to promote the idea of cycling itself. So when people think of cycling to work the only image that comes into their heads is of big lorries spraying them with oily water and buffeting them into a guard rail.

We need to change that image. We need actively market walking, cycling and sustainable travel. We need to sell people the dream,





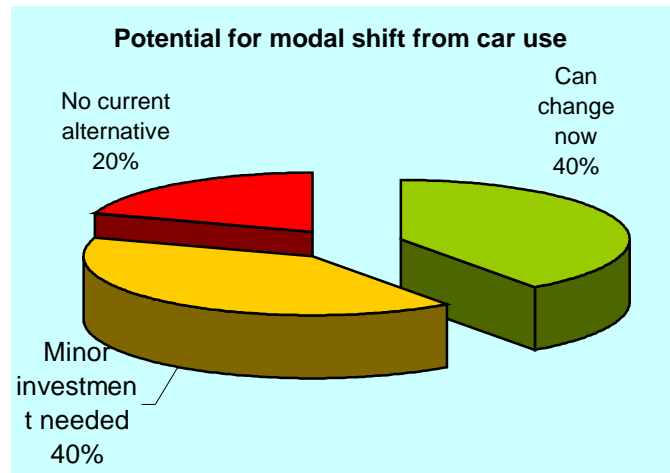
make it desirable, make it cool. Developing a strong brand image was central to the sustainable travel campaign at Darlington.

There are of course a lot of people who will stubbornly ignore that message, but over the course of time they will find themselves left in the margins of society.

- b Personal Travel Planning.** Combined with a strong marketing programme. Many people would like to be a bit greener in their travel habits, but feel powerless to change. They may not feel confident enough to go against the social norm, or they might not understand, or have thought how to take advantage of the alternatives.

Surveys show that people have a very skewed idea of journey times. People will usually underestimate car journey times, while overestimating journey times on foot or by bike. This may all be part of the process of justifying driving, but by giving people the facts and by encouraging people to look critically at them, we empower them to make an informed choice.

How many people genuinely think about the cost of motoring? I use a rail / bike combination to get to work and for most of my everyday transport needs. People look at the cost of individual train journeys and see them as expensive when compared to say the cost of fuel to make the same journey by car. But, of course the cost of fuel is only one part of the cost of motoring. If, like me, your travel choices mean that you can own one car as a family rather than two, or if you can make use of a "car club" rather than own a car yourself, then you make a step change saving that far exceeds the cost of train fares.



This is the information that people need to know. If they know that they are throwing away £500 every month just for the luxury of sitting in stationary traffic, it might well be the nudge that encourages them to explore better alternatives.

- b** We need universal cycle training in schools, after school clubs and "parent and child" cycle lessons / events.
- b** We need popular cycling and running events. We need a mini triathlon from Norton pool. We need to sell people the fun side cycling and physical activity.
- , Make bus travel cheaper, more attractive, more reliable and more accessible. Subsidise it if necessary. Improvements would be smaller, quicker, more frequent buses, integration with train times, real time indicators at stops.
- b** Buses do not have a particularly good road safety record and are frequently cited by cyclists as one of the worst sources of intimidation. TRL 549^[1] noted that bus drivers often have a very negative, stereotyped attitude towards cyclists. All drivers should be trained specifically on how to interact safely and considerately with cyclists, and they should receive cycle training themselves so that they can experience the reverse side of the coin.

3.3.4 What are the constraints ?

- L** Stubborn refusal by some to consider alternatives.
- L** Negative attitudes towards sustainable travel by some sectors of the press.
- L** Social pressure to conform to the current, car dependent, norm.



- L Investment. Personal travel planning is cheap and effective, but it is not free. Good quality, experienced consultants are needed with a flair for marketing as well as knowledge of transport needs.
- L Threatening road environments and poor quality infrastructure will continue to deter people from walking and cycling.
- L Cooperation needed from bus operators.

3.4 Rural Access

3.4.1 Where are we now ?

How rural is North Herts ? There is a perception that many parts of North Herts are “rural” and therefore people are forced to drive. But how rural are we really ? I live in one of those “rural” villages and I am no further from the shops and local services in town than many people who live in urban estates.

Nobody in North Herts lives more than 20 minutes cycle ride from a town and most live much closer.

The “rural” aspect of the district is a bit of a mirage. It creates a pleasant backdrop and gives excellent countryside access (nobody lives more than 5 minutes by bike from countryside), but it does not significantly affect peoples’ travel choices.

Many villages have of course lost shops and post offices over recent years. Small businesses have struggled to compete against the retail giants so easily reached by car. Their loss has created a vicious circle of apparent car dependency. But it is not real dependency. There may not be services within walking distance anymore but they are certainly within cycling distance.

Recreational cycling is very popular in “rural” North Herts. The lanes that pass my home are ideal for cycling and on the weekend they are full of groups of all shapes and sizes. The business from those cyclists helps keep rural shops, cafes and pubs in business. If more people were to walk and cycle rather than reaching for the car keys then we would re-create conditions in which village businesses could thrive.



The character of those lanes and their suitability for cycling must be protected against increased traffic growth. We need to graft that enthusiasm for recreational cycling onto more utilitarian, weekday journeys.

Rural bus services are socially important, particularly to the elderly or infirm, and to school children - people who cannot (or are not permitted to) cycle or drive. Local bus services remove a burden from parents and give children independence. So they are socially beneficial, but we must question the economic and environmental arguments for rural bus services. Half empty buses are neither cheap, clean or green, and cannot compete for price, speed or convenience with the humble bicycle except on specific, targeted routes, such as the Ashwell station bus.

3.4.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

- b Utility cycling should become the norm, not the exception, for rural local journeys.
- b A more human scale transport culture will encourage a renaissance in village businesses.
- b A civilised and considerate driving culture must put vulnerable road users first.
- b We need to remove the urbanised sign clutter that blights rural lanes.
- b Rural bus services need to be more focused to



encourage commuters to leave their cars at home.

3.4.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Default speed limits on minor rural roads must change to 40 mph, as recommended in TRL's report PPR025². This would need to be applied nationally to avoid driver confusion.

Proposed speed limit regime following TRL PPR 025

	Urban / village	Rural Single Carriageway
No white centre lines	20 mph	40 mph
With white centre lines	30 mph	50 mph

- b Remove unnecessary signage except to mark concealed hazards. Drivers should expect to have to read the road.
- b Personal travel planning. Encourage people to want to leave their cars at home and educate them in how to do it.
- b Explicitly give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders on unclassified roads.
- b Presumption of driver liability in the event of a collision, unless the victim can be shown to have been responsible, ie the **VICTIM** is innocent and entitled to compensation unless proven responsible. This is the presumption used in many European states. It is the opposite of current practice in the UK where victims have to battle to receive compensation.
- b Driver education. One test at 17 just is not good enough for the only activity in most peoples' lives which carries a significant risk of killing someone. Drivers need regular training updates and assessments.
- b Speed awareness courses to be mandatory for learner drivers and all traffic offences. These have been very effective in countering the tide of misinformation regarding driving speed, but are currently far too limited in extent. Pay for it through speeding and other fines.

3.4.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Inertia. People don't like change. The current speed limits were set at a time when there were few motor vehicles and no research. They are deeply flawed and need to change.
- L Hostile attitudes. Motoring is a very emotive subject and many people react very aggressively to any suggestion of regulation or greater enforcement.
- L Perceived cost. All costs should be raised through fines from miscreants.
- L Enforcement. It would not be possible to actively enforce these rules (not that there is any enforcement on minor rural roads at present). The rules will only succeed if people see them as fair and reasonable - but that is not a bad thing.

4. Travel Plans

4.2 Safety

A "safe" road means different things to different people. Motorways have a low casualty rate but you wouldn't let your children play on one. Reducing the number of casualties on a road is important, but possibly less important than making people "feel" safe. After all, while road collisions still make up



² TRL PPR 025 Setting Local Speed Limits

an unacceptably high number of premature deaths, for most people it is a very unlikely event.

Compare that with the everyday fear and intimidation associated with using busy roads on foot or by bike. If that fear discourages active travel then it is more dangerous than a drunk driver. 70,000 people die every year from heart disease, only 3,500 die in road crashes.

We must take care not to exaggerate the dangers of walking and cycling, or to "solve" safety issues by excluding, discriminating against, or inconveniencing pedestrians and cyclists. To do so will push people towards the much more dangerous alternative of an inactive, unsustainable lifestyle.

4.2.1 Where are we now ?

4.2.1.1 Collisions and casualties

We often read in the press about Britain's impressive road safety record. What is not usually reported is that the good headline rate conceals a very poor record for vulnerable road users. Cycling in the UK is an order of magnitude more dangerous than in countries like the Netherlands and Denmark, and across the EU, only Portugal has a worse record for child casualties.

Our "good" headline rate has been achieved, not by making the roads safer, but by excluding and discouraging "victim" groups.

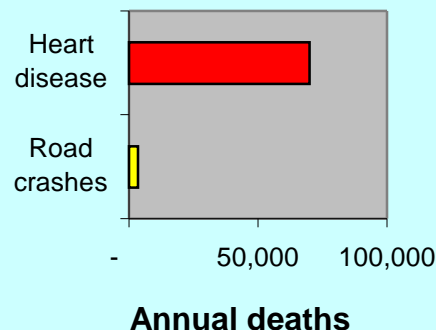
It is vital that we do not over-exaggerate the dangers of walking and cycling. Studies show that regular cyclists are no more likely to die on the road than if they drove. There are obvious reasons for this, cycling might be more dangerous mile for mile, but who is going to cycle 50 miles each way to work every day? A very considerable proportion of car mileage happens on major roads with low accident rates and that distorts the statistics.

Studies consistently show that cyclists live longer and enjoy better health, so we must not dwell too long on the dangers.

Accident clusters can be misleading. A cluster of cycle accidents may mean that there is a specific hazard for cyclists, or it might mean that it is a popular and well used route where there are inevitably occasional collisions.

Conversely, the absence of cycle casualties does not signify a safe road. Dangerous roads usually frighten people off before they get injured.

Many road features are inherently threatening and dangerous for cyclists. Roundabouts, large junctions, dedicated slip lanes, one way gyratories etc.



Studies have shown that people who cycle regularly have the health of a sedentary person 10 years younger than themselves.

*The Copenhagen Study (Anderson 2000) concluded that those who did **not** cycle to work experienced a 39 percent higher mortality rate than those who did.*

"Obesity is costing the [UK] economy £2 billion. Cases of type 2 diabetes are increasing among our young people, and the projection is that if something is not done about obesity, the economy will have to bear £3.5 billion in related costs by 2010." (Richard Caborn, Minister of sport November 2003)

Heart disease, liver disease, diabetes, asthma and depression are all associated with an inactive lifestyle. Heart disease kills 70,000 people every year, compared with only 3,500 deaths on the road. The benefits to be gained from cycling far outweigh the risks imposed by road traffic.

Cycling regularly is reported to halve the danger of heart disease. (Source: British Heart Foundation, Morris). Whitehall civil servants who cycled for at least an hour a week (or 25 miles in a single week) had less than half the death rate of those who didn't, during a 9 year study period



Not only have we seen no progress in making any of these features safer and more permeable for cyclists, they are becoming more common, not less so.

4.2.1.2 **Perceived road safety – would you let your child cycle on that street ?**

There are two key questions to ask in order to determine if a road is genuinely safe:

Would you cycle down it ?

and...

Would you let your children play in it or travel independently without supervision ?

If the answer to either of those questions is NO then the road is not safe, whatever the crash statistics might say. They need to be made safe for **ALL** users.

Not many people would class “their” street as safe on those criteria. Hence the widespread demand for traffic calming.



4.2.1.3 **Personal security**

Very few people are attacked by strangers in dark alleys but it remains a real concern for many people. Vehicle dominated roads, with little human scaled activity, lots of guardrails and vehicle orientated street furniture are uncomfortable places to be at any time of day or night.

Good street lighting can help, but if a street, path or park doesn't have “natural surveillance” from other users and neighbouring properties then people will stay away.

4.2.2 **Where would we like to be in ten years ?**

b We would like to see genuine improvements in the safety of vulnerable road users, and an end to the culture of excluding pedestrians and cyclists in order to keep casualty rates down.

b We would like to see a reversal of the culture that puts the comfort of cyclists at the bottom of the list of priorities. Walking and cycling should come first, just as official policy states.

b All residential streets to be safe for unsupervised children to play in.

b All urban roads to be safe for an unaccompanied child cyclist (suitably trained), **WITHOUT** pushing that cyclist onto an inappropriate pavement conversion.

b One way systems to be returned to two way flow or have contraflow cycling.

b All major junctions and intersections to be negotiable by a competent but nervous cyclist, without them feeling endangered.

b Traffic free or low traffic routes between the North Herts towns and within those towns.



4.2.3 **What do we need to do to get there ?**

b 20 mph limits to become the default in town. 30 mph is neither “safe” nor appropriate and should only be used where there is little human / vehicle interaction (generally places that currently have 40 mph limits).

b Speed limits to be self enforcing through good design, rather than



physical restraints.

- b Remove all give way markings in residential streets. Drivers to negotiate not rely on artificial rules of priority.
- b Carriageway to be deliberately narrow but with space for cyclists - as Dutch homzones.
- b Filtered permeability. Make cycle and pedestrian access simple and direct. Minimise vehicle access points and make routes indirect.
- b All cycle measures to be designed using the appropriate solution from TA 91/05's Hierarchy of Measures. No pavement conversions in urban areas unless they provide a clear and obvious benefit.
- b Planning of new developments to be designed around cycling and walking, not driving. Personal security to be a priority - all spaces to be well overlooked, with properties facing onto the streets.



4.2.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Resistance from people who do not wish to consider changing their travel habits.
- L Resistance to allocating carriageway space for anything other than motor vehicle use.
- L Press hostility to any measures that may be interpreted as "anti-car".
- L Finance. Many of these improvements require nothing more than well placed bollards, but good landscaping costs money.
- L Culture of reducing casualties by excluding cyclists and pedestrians.
- L Culture of taking cyclists off the carriageway rather than making the carriageway safe to cycle on.
- L Prejudice towards "allowing cyclists to do things that motorists can not" eg contraflow cycling in one way streets, cycle access through road closures and banned turns.
- L Prejudice towards allowing cycle priority at side roads and light controlled crossings.

4.3 Streetscene – Urban Architecture and de-cluttering

4.3.1 Where are we now ?

Very cluttered!

We have an obsession with signs, poles, tactile paving and barriers. Some designers appear to treat the Traffic Signs manual as shopping list and select one of everything for luck.

An overload of signs and information is distracting to drivers, making it more difficult to focus their attention on the important things - like making sure that they do not endanger other road users.

Over reliance on signs can also put drivers at risk by making them lazy. A few years ago some bend warning chevrons were put up at an obvious bend near Ashwell. The next weekend a young motorcyclist was killed when he lost control at a bend slightly further down the road. By signing some hazards, we encourage faster, less attentive driving and that puts everybody at risk.

Too much street furniture heightens the impression of traffic dominance, and deters people from walking or cycling.





Signs, poles, barriers and other street furniture present hazards to cyclists and to pedestrians. People with visual impairments are particularly at risk. Excessive guard railing is a particular concern to cyclists, who could be trapped against it by a vehicle.

Ironically very little effort is made to sign cycle routes. Quiet cycle routes are often difficult to follow as they wind through residential streets and need to be clearly signed if people are to use them. Signs are also a good marketing tool, especially if they give times to key destinations by bike.

4.3.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

Minimise unnecessary street clutter. There should be sufficient signage for people to find their way, and to mark unexpected hazards, but no more.

Cycle and walking routes should be clearly signed.

Cycle parking is not clutter. Secure parking at all destinations is vital if people are to be enticed into cycling rather than driving. Stands must be positioned so that they do not create a hazard for partially sighted pedestrians and end racks should have a tapping rail.

4.3.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Remove all guardrail. Don't fence people out, make the road safe.
- b Remove all poles and other hazardous features closer than 500 mm to a cycle lane or path.
- b Provide clear signing for walking and cycling routes, with TIMES to destinations.
- b Audit all streetscapes. Is there too much clutter ? Is the street clear and legible to a partially sighted person ? Does any of the street furniture create a hazard ? Can it be better arranged ?



4.3.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Liability shyness. Many unnecessary signs are put up, not because they are useful, but to avoid attracting liability for everyday hazards.
- L Unwillingness to invest in walking and cycling - even the relatively small amounts needed to pay for signing.
- L Vandalism. Signs for cyclists get vandalised. It must not be possible to rotate signs and they should be positioned in clear view to deter vandals.

4.4 Infrastructure and Engineering

4.4.1 Where are we now ?

Britain's highway infrastructure is unashamedly motor vehicle orientated. In urban areas there is near universal segregated provision for walking, but virtually no account is taken of the safety and comfort of people cycling.

This is a huge deterrent to cycling, which cannot be overstated.

Pedestrian space is usually adequate, but seldom genuinely attractive. Cycle facilities on the other hand rarely meet even the most basic requirements. At best they are an irritation to cyclists, provoking unnecessary antagonism from other road users, and in the worst cases they are downright dangerous.



Basic geometric requirements for width, visibility, bend radii and clearance to hazards are routinely flouted by designers. The fundamental requirements of **coherence, directness, attractiveness, safety and comfort**³ are rarely even considered.

Most busy roads and intersections are designed without any thought for cyclists. As a result they completely sever communities from each other. Only the hardest cyclists will venture onto roads like the A505 and the Barton Road.

Local gyratories are particularly intimidating for cyclists. They encourage higher speed and more aggressive driving. The cyclist has to travel further, with more traffic exposure and in more hostile conditions. Examples include Paynes Park and Hollow Road in Hitchin, Letchworth Gate and Kennedy Gardens in Letchworth, and the A10 gyratory in Royston.

Gyratories bring no benefits at all. They are a relic left over from the post-war years when people thought that the motor vehicle would usher in a bright new age of liberty. Unfortunately the reality is that gyratories create unpleasant wastelands, devoid of human activity. We would like to see them all revert to two way flow.

One way streets are a problem for cyclists in the same way as gyratories. There is never any logic in preventing two way cycling in one way streets. The safety implications are no different from two way streets, and are usually considerably less onerous than would be experienced going the long way round with the traffic. Contraflow cycling is the norm in one way streets in the Netherlands and Germany. We would like to see them all revert to two way flow. Failing that we would like to see contraflow cycling permitted by default unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so.



4.4.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

- b All urban roads should be safe and comfortable for cycling. A suitably trained child should be able to ride in confidence on all of our urban roads.
- b All gyratories should be returned to two way working.
- b All one way streets should be returned to two way working. If this cannot be achieved then contraflow cycling must be permitted. Preferably this would be unsegregated, with speed restraint and clear signs to indicate that it is legal and legitimate. Failing that contraflow lanes should be used.
- b There should be no cycling bans on any non-motorway roads. If cycling cannot be accommodated safely then the design is wrong.
- b All inter urban roads should either be safe and comfortable to cycle on or separate facilities **OF EQUAL QUALITY** should be provided.
- b All intersections must be made safe and comfortable for cyclists to negotiate, without any time penalty relative to motorised traffic. You will not encourage people to cycle by making them wait until everybody else has gone. Again the test should be that a suitably trained child should be able to negotiate the junction with confidence.
- b All "cycling infrastructure" must be designed on the basis

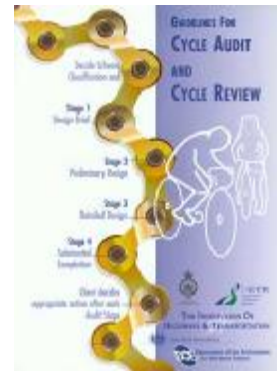


³ Cycle Friendly Infrastructure 1996 DfT, IHT, CTC



of the "Hierarchy of Provision" in TA 91/05, and to the recommended (not minimum) geometric requirements in TA 90/05. Narrow cycle lanes and pavement conversions deter people from cycling, they are not an asset.

- b All cycling infrastructure should be subject to a **cycle audit** by a knowledgeable auditor. The "Safety Audit" process ignores practicality and invariably results in unusable, barrier filled facilities



Hierarchy of solutions DfT TA 91/05

- b** Traffic Reduction
- b** Speed reduction
- b** Junctions and Traffic Management
- b** Carriageway Redistribution
- b** Off road provision away from highways
- b** Roadside pavement conversions

Consider last

4.4.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Educate designers.
- b Build the North Herts Towns Cycle Route Network.
- b Address one way streets and gyratories.
- b Progress 20 mph limits, homezones and quiet roads.
- b Identify and address hazardous or intimidating junctions and intersections.
- b Identify and address hazardous or intimidating inter-urban routes.
- b Build high quality traffic free cycle routes between towns.
- b Think outside the box !



4.4.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Lack of specific training in design for cyclists amongst designers and auditors.
- L Lack of personal experience of cycling amongst designers, auditors and developers, resulting in a poor understanding and a lack of empathy with users.
- L Prejudice and antipathy towards cycling. Hostility towards any schemes that re-allocate space and resources away from private car use.
- L Reluctance to commit meaningful sums of money to cycling and walking. It is essential that all potential sources of funding are explored to "pump" prime the system. eg S106, health, environmental, education, sport, sustainable transport, road safety and active travel initiatives.
- L Inertia. People don't like change, even when it is clearly for the better.
- L Liability shyness. People see change, particularly unfamiliar change such as contraflow cycling, as increasing their liability.

4.5 Speeding

4.5.1 Where are we now ?

Speeding is another regrettably emotive subject. The facts are simple and well proven but they are often ignored in favour of extremely partisan opinions on the part of people who wish to drive free from restraint.

As can be seen from the chart on the right, the very simple facts are that very few pedestrians and cyclists die from impacts below 20 mph, while very few survive impacts over 40 mph. In between the two whether you live or die will depend on small variations in impact speed.

With this knowledge it is absolutely extraordinary that anybody feels that driving at speeds over 20 mph in the presence of pedestrians and cyclist is a responsible way to behave. Regrettably that is the precisely how most people drive, and many people become quite aggressive if you imply that we should reconsider that rule.

The whole question of “speeding” has become distracted by speed limits and enforcement. Speed limits in themselves have little intrinsic benefit. It would be much better to live in a society that took driving more responsibly so that people drove at speeds appropriate to the circumstances, and with consideration for the comfort of people around them. If we all did that there would be no need for speed limits or enforcement cameras.

We need to foster a society whereby drivers automatically drive at a speed that allows them to stop within the distance that they can see, and at speeds that do not threaten other people on the road.

4.5.1.1 Speed limits

The current national speed limits of 30 and 60 mph were set at a time when there were few vehicles and no scientific data on the relationship between speed and the likelihood and severity of car crashes. At the time, 60 mph was beyond the capabilities of most vehicles on the road.

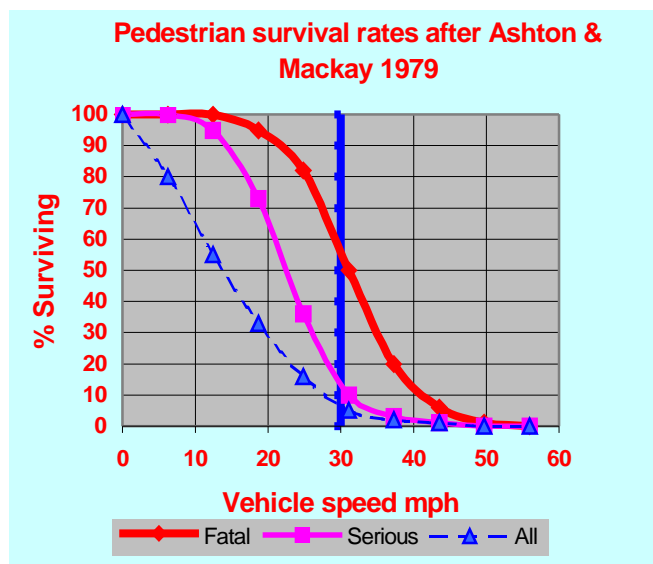
The speed limits are very widely flouted, with virtually all drivers admitting to breaking them on a regular basis. Despite the powerful influence of speed on both the likelihood and the severity of a crash, there is virtually no social stigma attached to speeding. On the contrary, to many people (particularly young men), driving within the limit is portrayed as a mark of weakness.

4.5.1.2 Speed enforcement

Random speed traps are now virtually unheard of. Almost all “enforcement” comes in the form of fixed cameras. Drivers have to be really quite careless and stupid to be caught by one of these cameras, which raises worrying questions about their driving skills. All camera locations are published, there are advanced warning signs, road markings, and the cameras themselves are conspicuously painted. People have to really work hard to get caught.

Networked average speed cameras can help deal with cynical offenders who slow down at the camera and then roar away.

Enforcement action is not triggered when a vehicle breaks the limit. Drivers are given a substantial “cushion”. The de-facto urban speed limit is 35 mph as a result. Speeds up to 40





mph are classified as “marginal” and punished with only a slap on the wrist. A 40 mph impact is almost certainly going to be fatal.

The £60 fine for speeding is derisory. It is less than the cost of a tank of fuel for most people and offers no deterrent.

The result of this policy is that the current speed limits and enforcement regime provide NO protection to vulnerable road users. Whether you live or die is in the lap of the gods, the speed cameras aren’t going to help you.

Other deterrent measures include speed activated signs. These have a similar effect to cameras.

4.5.1.3 Changing Attitudes

Public debate has been dominated by very noisy objectors to speed restraint. They have never attempted to present an evidence base for their objections, presumably because they know that such an attempt would be futile. Instead they have used emotive language to whip up a mob response. Speed restraint is demonised as “anti car” rather than “pro safety”.

Unfortunately large sections of the public have been all too willing to go along with this. People do not like to be criticized or to feel that their peers think badly of them. Demonising speed restraint protects people from censure if they are themselves caught speeding.

That is not to say that people like OTHER people speeding through THEIR neighbourhood. In the 1999 Antisocial Behaviour surveys, speeding traffic was identified as the number one antisocial behaviour problem across the nation.

People want to be free to break the rules outside other peoples’ homes, but they don’t like other people doing the same past their front doors.

Clearly there is scope to change attitudes.

Speed awareness courses have been very effective at changing individuals’ attitudes. Currently these are only offered by some authorities, and then only for technically “minor” (but still lethal) speeding offences. They are usually offered in exchange for waiving or reducing the fine.

4.5.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

- b Lower default speed limits. 20/30 mph in towns and 40 /50mph in rural areas (see 3.4.3).
- b A driving culture that frowns on speeding as irresponsible and antisocial. That includes inappropriate speed for the circumstances, not just driving above the speed limit.
- b A driving culture that puts consideration for others first and speed last.
- b 30 mph means 30mph, not 35mph.

Why do motorways have good casualty records if speed is so important ?

This is a simplistic argument that is regularly put forward by anti-enforcement lobbyists.

Most roads were not designed for motor vehicles. They were created by bullock carts and herdsmen. Over the last half century we have done a lot to make the busier roads more suited to modern traffic, but most remain old drove roads with a skim of tarmac.

Motorways do not carry vulnerable road users so, apart from motorcyclists, there are none of the principal “victim” groups.

Motorways are segregated so that there is no possibility of conflict with oncoming traffic.

Speeds are very homogenous so there is little need to interact with other motorists.

Most collisions occur at junctions. Motorways do not have junctions in the way that other roads do. Slip lanes allow joining traffic to merge with motorway traffic with no crossing and without emerging abruptly into the flow.

*It should be very obvious to all. Motorways have a low casualty rate **in spite of** the high speed,s because they are designed solely for motor vehicle use. But you couldn’t send your daughter off to school on her scooter down the M1, so it has little relevance for all purpose roads.*



- b Punishments for driving offences that will act as a deterrent.
- b Speed limiters for all cars. A really radical proposal would be to limit all private cars to 20 mph and require motor manufacturers to redesign the engines to suit. This would solve the whole spectrum of problems posed by motor vehicles from road safety, through spiralling journey lengths, to air pollution, while retaining the essential benefits - a big box to transport your family in. Sadly of course any politician who attempted to implement such a radical proposal would immediately be dumped unceremoniously out of office, so it will never happen in my lifetime. For the moment we will confine our aspirations to speed limiters that confine drivers to the posted speed limits.

4.5.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Education, education, education. People need to know and understand why speed is such an issue. They must want to drive responsibly.
- b Speed awareness courses for all learner drivers and all driving offences. To be paid for as part of the driving course, or out of the fines imposed as appropriate.
- b One test in a lifetime is not enough. Driving is the only activity that most people take part in where there is a significant chance of killing somebody. We should all undergo periodic re-training and re-testing to develop our attitude and skills.
- b The fine for speeding needs to be an order of magnitude higher in order to have a deterrent effect. £600 instead of £60.
- b Follow the example of cities like Portsmouth and implement area wide 20 mph limits for residential streets.
- b In-car technology to cap speeds to the required limits.

4.5.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Central government needs to grasp the nettle and lower speed limits nationwide. In the interim, current guidance allows setting of local limits and many authorities have done so.
- L Political will to tackle such a hot potato.
- L Hostility and widespread misinformation from certain parts of the press and public.
- L Finance. But not if we make the offender pay for his own re-education. More instructors = more jobs.
- L Technology for speed limiters would take time to develop and install.
- L Using speed limiters might reduce the attention that drivers pay to the road ahead, putting other road users at risk.

4.6 *Personal Travel Plans*

4.6.1 Where are we now ?

Personal travel plans are a relatively new concept being trialled in the Sustainable travel towns. Darlington and Brighton have both used PTPs as a key measure in their strategy to get people out of cars and have achieved significant success. In Darlington car use has dropped by 9% (against rising levels nationally), and cycle use has grown by 67% against a background of static or falling cycle use elsewhere.

PTPs grew from workplace travel plans. It was found that workplace travel was generally the least flexible when considered in isolation, and that greater benefits could be gained by visiting people in their homes and considering all of their family's travel needs.

Darlington has a population of 100,000. The whole population will have been approached by the end of the initial scheme this year. Interest in the town has been high and enthusiasm amongst the staff involved is clearly evident.



Personal travel Planning is a mix of marketing and information. A strong brand image, plenty of publicity are vital to its success.

We need to fire peoples' interest in sustainable travel, make them want to do it and give them the information to help them make it the change.

4.6.2 Where would we like to be in ten years ?

- b Universal awareness of the reasons behind the need to reduce car travel, and how to go about doing it.
- b People interested in sustainable transport and wanting to get involved.
- b Active participation by schools, businesses, councils, and leisure centres.
- b Genuine joined up thinking to link all the beneficiaries of a more healthy, more active, less car dependent society, to all contribute.

4.6.3 What do we need to do to get there ?

- b Universal Personal Travel Planning throughout North Herts. This can easily and logically be phased using the four towns to compare "before and after" results.
- b Managed by a skilled marketing consultant.

4.6.4 What are the constraints ?

- L Complacency
- L Departmental infighting scuppering cooperation and cross fertilisation of ideas.
- L Finance. Somebody has to pay the consultants, the people on the ground, and pay for the materials.

For more information visit www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk