



**LAPC response to - DfT Road Safety Consultation
"A Safer Way: making Britain's roads the safest
in the world"**

Background

The London Accident Prevention Council (LAPC) was first established in 1916. It is the only forum in London where elected members and road safety professional's work together to develop plans and proposals to raise awareness of road safety issues.

LAPC has used many successful and innovative approaches to enhance the effectiveness of their road safety campaigns.

The London Accident Prevention Council would like to thank the Department for Transport for the opportunity to contribute to this draft Road Safety strategy.

For ease, each paragraph is aligned with the section number it relates to in the consultation document.

DfT Road Safety Consultation

DfT Question

We are proposing a number of measures to support the effectiveness of the road safety profession. Do you think they will be effective? What else might need to be done?

The LAPC's overall observation is that the strategy outlines many proposed advances to road infrastructure and technology. Regrettably there is much less emphasis on the fundamental element of educating all classes of road user. It should be noted that no level of improvement is effective if you are not educating on correct usage.

4.13 We would like to know how the DfT will ensure that local authorities are allocating sufficient funds to Education Training & Publicity. Unfortunately some local authorities require direction on their statutory obligations. The DfT needs to set guidelines to ensure that this is achieved.

4.15 This section sets out findings derived by pre-consultations with stakeholders. The Department for Education, including Head Teachers and teaching staff should have been alerted to this consultation as they are the gatekeepers to the school curriculum. There is not enough representation of professionals representing the 'Health & Wellbeing of Children'. There are many links into Every Child Matters (ECM) and Safeguarding children boards who can determine priorities for children at local levels and do have responsibility for children's safety, health and wellbeing.

Methods of road safety delivery vary from borough to borough. It is widely recognised that there is much to be gained from a combined and strategic approach. DfT needs to develop plans that will demonstrate the importance of cross curricular working.

4.24 Education and promotion is detailed in this paragraph as the final element in achieving a safe, holistic road system. Safer vehicles and new technology are less effective if you are not educating and training users in their correct use.

4.42 Political support for road safety professionals is crucial in paving the way forward for real improvements. DfT's Political advocacy and leadership plan needs to be robust enough to withstand differing priorities and demands.

7.7 Driving whilst uninsured is also a key issue for young drivers for whom the cost of insurance is exorbitant. Evidence shows that many young drivers will choose to drive uninsured because premiums are considered unaffordable or out of kilter with the rest of driving costs. This may lead to failure to comply with other driving laws. Government must recognise this problem and should offer the insurance industry some incentives to insure young drivers at an affordable rate.

7.13 The development of DfT's new road safety educational resources is very encouraging. It has been demonstrated in London that Education, Training & Publicity has a positive effect and has shown real benefits.

The major challenges facing road safety professionals are: lack of dedicated funding from local authorities and public acceptance and support for something that many don't perceive will happen to them. As Road safety education is not measurable in the same way as engineering it is sometimes underestimated in its impact and ability to sustain real change.

Owing to the pressures on schools of implementing the national curriculum and maintaining high levels of achievement, time constraints often do not allow

teaching staff to educate or focus activities on developing pupil's road user knowledge and skills. Guidance and direction by road safety professionals is essential in ensuring that the most effective methods and approaches are used. Structured road safety education should be progressive through each key stage of development, and good levels of knowledge are gained to positively influence real changes in road user attitudes and behaviour.

A study conducted by a number of Road Safety stakeholders concluded the following:-

'Young people's level of awareness to sustainable development is low. Primary school pupils are keen, but it dies off into secondary schools, i.e. there is an attitudinal change. We are not getting messages through via daily activities. Most young people have a level of awareness that affects some of what they do. Young people can be receptive when younger but want to rebel in the early secondary school years and sustainability is a casualty at this stage.'

Source: Derek Halden Consultancy

This strategy must reflect the importance of Road Safety Education in schools and the need for pupils to develop safe attitudes to travel. The development of safe transport and travel skills needs to be seen as an essential life skill. Road Safety Education must complement the promotion of sustainable travel to school. It needs to be provided in a structured way, through each key stage of a child's and young person's development.

The present economic climate has led to decreasing budgets within the public sector for many road safety education teams. DfT needs to put measures in place and allocate resources that will guarantee borough commitment and sufficient road safety professionals, in line with national guidelines of one RSO per 50,000 head of population, working towards delivering the core elements of this 20 year strategy.

7.14 Partnerships should be developed and channeled through road safety professionals to ensure appropriate use of interventions, good standards of delivery, and enable agencies to combine and maximise their resources towards achieving shared goals.

7.15 Bikeability has enabled road safety officers to deliver agreed standards of cycle training for children, young people and adults. However, external cycle training

providers may not always have the same commitment to reaching children from poorer backgrounds who may not have bikes -This can result from teachers having to identify small groups of children who have bikes and are available for training. There are clear implications for social inclusion and also for proposed casualty reduction targets which recognise the disproportionate road injury risk experienced by deprived communities.

7.22 Real and practical support for HGV drivers need to be addressed by DfT and Government agencies. Drivers hours are set by employers therefore employers need to realise the importance of legislation such as the corporate manslaughter act, set to provide tougher penalties for employers that fail to minimise the risk of death and injury.

7.23 -7.29 Dangerous driving behaviours including drink driving, drug driving, speed, failure to wear a seat belt and careless driving need to be improved and enforced robustly. It is felt that mobile phone use should be included in this group of driving offences.

8.6 Travel Plans have helped promote more sustainable modes of travel in schools and local communities. The government must now put measures in place to ensure that these plans are complemented with structured road safety education in schools.

DfT Question

We think that the key challenge for road safety from 2010 is better and more systematic delivery, rather than major policy changes. Do you agree?

In principal more systematic delivery is the key to achieving positive change, however, stakeholders need to work towards a key policy that will help shape that.

To achieve a real reduction in child road casualties' road safety professionals must work in partnership with the Department of Education in developing a policy which guarantees that pupils across the UK receive sound road safety education in developing their road user skills. This needs to be reflected in the new strategy.

Road safety education has a wide remit. The subject has a broad base and requires regular updating to meet social needs. Certain road safety themes may need adjusting to take into account regional audiences as well as modifying communication methods to homogenous groups.

Should policy require changing, and it is the route to be adopted, then it will be necessary to educate the public to the changes. Left alone these changes will be meaningless. Subtle changes may not need the same thrust of education publicity or communication. But certainly those that critically affect the public whether by 'safety' or through their pockets, will require additional Education and Publicity.

To conclude, this strategy must recognise the importance of road safety education for all classes of road user. Society must accept that we all have a responsibility for road danger and that education has a key role to play in changing attitudes and behaviours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Herrington', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Peter Herrington

Executive Committee Chairman – London Accident Prevention Council