

Enforcement

A major reason that compliance with speed limits is relatively poor is actually due to the low level of speed enforcement. The proportion of the road network having speed enforcement is considerably less than 3% of the whole network! This means that motorists are generally free to speed on 97% of the road network. A major reason for this state of affairs is the draconian guidelines placed on Safety Camera Partnerships to only perform overt enforcement on roads having a high death/accident rate.

These guidelines seemingly contradict the stated expectation of the Department for Transport:

The government expects all drivers to observe all speed limits on all roads at all times (except for emergency vehicles)

The guidelines are likely to be illegal with regards to the Human Rights Act. Article 2 places an absolute responsibility on public bodies to take all reasonable action to prevent unnecessary loss of life - especially where the loss of life is by illegal acts such as speeding. It is highly unlikely that very limited overt speed enforcement would be considered "all reasonable action" by the courts.

The requirement that enforcement only take place on roads with a high death/accident rate denies most vulnerable road users protection from the constant intimidation that is a consequence of speeding traffic. This is likely to be in contravention of Article 3 of the Human Rights Act (also article 1, protocol 1 would likely be infringed).

Average Speed Cameras

There is already very clear evidence that average speed cameras are highly effective at reducing deaths and casualties on roads where they are deployed. No further studies/research are required to prove their efficacy. There should be no delay in rolling out their usage on roads that have significant problems with speed. There should be no need for the roads in question to have significant death or accident rates - only a speeding problem. These systems result in a high compliance with the speed limit - normally there are very few speeding tickets issued where such systems are deployed.

The systems that perform automatic number recognition (ANPR) could quite easily be used as cheap average speed enforcement systems. If two or more cameras are placed along a stretch of road that is known to have speeding problems the data collected by the cameras could be analysed to determine average speeds. The average speeds could be used to determine offenders. Such a system could be used to differentiate between HGVs and normal cars - therefore making the system even more effective at enforcement.

Speed Awareness Courses

It should be ensured that such courses are consistent. One element that should be a requirement for such courses is requiring the participants to be vulnerable road users. A 15-20 minute cycle ride along a busy road should provide participants with a good idea why speeding or driving closely to vulnerable road users is so intimidating.

Speed Limits

Serious consideration should be given to reducing the national speed limit on most single

carriageway roads to 50mph. It is likely that 50mph is already the mean speed on such roads. This reduction could be offset by raising the speed limit on motorways to 80mph. 80mph appears to be the current speed limit on motorways. Both of these limits are similar to those currently in force on the continent.

The following are the suggested 6point thresholds. Using these values would underline the seriousness of speeding to motorists. The suggested limits are memorable values.

<i>Limit</i>	<i>6 point threshold</i>
20	30
30	45
40	60
50	70
60	80
70	90
80	100

Speeding Related Driving Bans

One option for speeding related driving bans that deserves further research is to allow such drivers the use of low powered scooters/motorbikes (e.g. up to 125cc). There are many reasons why this idea is worthy of further investigation:

- such punishment turns the offender into a vulnerable road user - leading to greater appreciation of the dangers faced
- allows the driver mobility without the possible loss of employment
- magistrates might be more likely to enforce bans when such an option is available

Of course if such a banned driver is caught speeding on a scooter/motorbike then there can be no second chances.

Road Safety Ideas

There should be a system whereby all untraceable drivers that accumulate speeding tickets are recorded. It seems likely that the DVLA is the ideal organisation to provide this service. Constabularies and Safety Camera Partnerships should be able to record all such violations against a vehicle - especially those that are untraceable. The logging of such information could help build up a driving pattern of such offenders. In this way the most serious and persistent offenders could be specifically targeted. Such offenders are highly likely to be uninsured banned drivers. This scheme would be popular with most motorists.

Relatively minor offences could be enforceable by Traffic Wardens or Council Enforcement officers. Such offences could include:

- broken or defective head/tail lights
- broken or defective brake lights
- dirty/unreadable license plates
- inappropriate use of fog lights

A warning letter could be sent to bring the offence to the driver's attention. Or a low level fine could be applied - reduced if a defective item is repaired within a short period of time. Constabularies are frequently hard pressed to effectively deal with such issues. This seems to suggest that such offences could be dealt with by less experienced officers. The only requirement should be that such offences are photographed and recorded - so there

can be no dispute as to whether the offence actually occurred.

Safety Camera Partnerships should be expected to provide Community Speed Watch programmes. These allow communities who have little or no speed enforcement to have a limited form of speed enforcement. They also free up police/partnership resources for other enforcement activities.

Derbyshire

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) have performed the speed limit review that the Government required them to perform in autumn 2006 [copy forwarded]. Note that there was no public consultation during this review. The decisions arising from the review were less than stellar. DCC themselves state regarding Home Zones and Quiet Lanes:

These are only viewed as appropriate under very low traffic flows, and it is anticipated that their applicability within Derbyshire will remain limited.

This statement is astonishing for a number of reasons. Derbyshire is home to the Peak District National Park - tourism making up a significant proportion of the local economy. The county is predominantly rural and is criss crossed by numerous lanes sign posted "Not suitable for HGVs". The DCC motto is, somewhat ironically, "**Improving** life for local people" (emphasis theirs).

As a result of the review most major A/B roads in Derbyshire now have a 50mph limit. This is certainly a welcome outcome. As there is only 1 Quiet Lane and no Home Zones in Derbyshire most of the minor roads/lanes are now sign posted with national speed limit signs (60mph). This no doubt devalues the 50mph speed limits on the major roads in the eyes of most drivers.

DCC interpreted the Government prompted review to only require them to review the speed limits on the A/B roads. As a consequence DCC will only apply the 30mph speed limit "norm" to villages on A/B roads!

Hulland Ward village was one of those to newly benefit from the 30mph speed limit "norm". For years the village had had a 40mph speed limit on the A517 that runs through it. The village has ended up with three speed limits: 30mph on the A517, 40mph on 300m of Kedleston Road to Derby and 60mph on Moss Lane. The village would benefit from a Home Zone in the body of the estate - which has a school at its heart making it an ideal candidate. But it seems that DCC policy is against Home Zones and Quiet Lanes as stated earlier.

The 30mph speed limit on the A517 through the village is obviously ignored by the bulk of the traffic travelling through the village. There certainly is no or very little enforcement. I would guess that a significant proportion of traffic is travelling at 40-50mph in what is notionally a 30mph speed limit. This is almost certainly true in the first 100-200m stretches of the speed limit. I frequently see some cars actually having difficulty negotiating bends on entry to the village because they are travelling so fast!