

RAC response to DfT consultation on the draft cycling and walking strategy

About the RAC:

This submission is made on behalf of RAC Motoring Services (The RAC) which is the UK's oldest motoring organisation. The RAC offers a range of motoring services including roadside assistance, motor insurance, motoring advice and information and is separate from the RAC Foundation which is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users.

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. As such, it is committed to making driving easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for all road users.

The RAC, which employs more than 1,500 patrols, providing roadside assistance across the entire UK road network and as a result has significant insight into how the country's road networks are managed and maintained.

More information on the RAC is available at rac.co.uk

Summary of response:

Reducing the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured

The RAC supports the Government's ambition to reduce the number cycling fatalities and serious injuries. If we are to see an increase in cycling across our towns and cities, this is likely to see increased interaction between motorists and cyclists, therefore it is important that motorists's views are taken into account in decisions on how future roads look and operate.

Many motorists are also cyclists. Research conducted by the RAC in 2014 showed that 32% of motorists will also use a bicycle at least one to three times a week¹. Therefore it is important to stress that many motorists may understand the risks that cyclists face on account that they too are also facing them as members of the cycling community. The RAC believes that the best way to reduce cyclist KSIs is to, where possible, completely separate them from motorists. Where this is not possible, local authorities should implement proven traffic management measures such as advanced stop lines at traffic lights where cyclists are using the road.

However, it's important that local authorities understand that there needs to be a balance and that the needs of all road users be considered. In London, increasing roadworks to construct various cycle superhighways as well as extra provision for pedestrians has resulted in worsening

¹ <http://www.rac.co.uk/pdfs/report-on-motoring/rac-rom-2014-v16-compressed>

average traffic speeds.² Local authorities must weigh up increasing cycling infrastructure with demand, with impact assessments to understand the likely consequences it will have on traffic flow.

Full Response:

1. The Government would be interested to hear views on the approach and actions set out in section 8 of this strategy

The RAC is generally supportive of the approach and actions laid out in the strategy.

On **design**, the RAC welcomes the DfT's approach to considering all road users. As mentioned previously in our response, average speeds in London are getting slower, with central inter-peak time journeys averaging 7.3 mph in the first 6 months of 2015. This will be down to, in part, the construction of cycle superhighways, and the declining road space for motorists which is likely to make journey times even longer. Whilst separation will increase safety, the RAC strongly urges authorities to conduct impact assessments on the journey times for motorists and other road users where such schemes include construction and operation on existing busy routes.

On **education**, we warmly welcome the Government's plans to provide cycle training to children in schools to give them the confidence to use their bicycles on local roads. This can only help to provide greater understanding between future cyclists and motorists, which will have a positive benefit on road safety in years to come.

We also welcome the DfT's commissioning of a report which will look into the effectiveness of 20mph zones as outlined in section 2.37. The RAC supports the use of **20mph zones** in densely populated residential areas or where there are schools and hospitals, however overzealous use of such zones on through-routes is widely regarded to lead to poor compliance and longer journey times. It is important therefore that the report looks at the effectiveness of 20mph zones on through-routes to better understand to what extent they cause unnecessary delays and congestion and whether compliance with 20 mph limits is less good on through-routes than on roads of a purely residential nature.

Section 8.38 highlights the DfT's plans to investigate alternative **pavement parking** regimes. The strategy mentions a roundtable and a programme of engagement with stakeholders, however the RAC is disappointed that so far, this has not included motoring organisations. The RAC is keen to remind the Department of Transport that motorist groups should be part of this discussion, as any change to the laws will impact upon motorists as well as pavement users. The RAC conducted a recent survey which found mixed views on the idea of a pavement parking ban. 36% of respondents say they sometimes park their vehicle partially on the pavement whilst 61% say they never do this. Almost half of those surveyed believe that vehicles should be allowed to park with only 1-2 wheels on the pavement provided that by doing so, they don't obstruct pavement access (48%). **Only 37% believed that vehicles should never be allowed to park on the pavement.** Our research suggests that only 23% of motorists support an outright ban, whilst 50% say that it should be banned but only if a vehicle is obstructing pavement access. In this sense, motorists understand that there may be cases where one or two wheels on the curb is

² <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-02-25/HL6472/>

beneficial (to assist with traffic flow on narrow roads for example) but they won't do it if pavement access is obstructed. The RAC would welcome sharing all our findings with officials and stakeholders before any further decisions are made.

2. The Government would be interested to hear views on the potential roles of national government departments, local government, other public bodies, businesses and the voluntary sector in delivering the strategy and what arrangements could best support partnership working between them

The RAC believes that major changes to roads across the country should include consultation with all stakeholders with an interest, which would include motoring organisations. Ultimately, motorists can provide useful information to authorities about the safety and effectiveness of cycle routes and pedestrianisation schemes.

3. The Government would be interested to hear suggestions and evidence of innovative projects and programmes which could be developed to deliver the objectives outlined in Section 4

In order to reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, (measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled, each year) the RAC supports separation between cyclists and motorists wherever possible. The construction of dedicated cycle lanes need not be restricted to the existing road network. Initiatives involving footpaths (similar to Dutch style cycle ways as mentioned in the strategy) should be considered alongside other alternatives in order to reduce the impact of such schemes on motorists.

4. The Government would be interested to hear your views on how to increase cycling and walking in typically under-represented groups (for example women, older people, or those from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds

As we do not represent cyclists, nor are we a cycling organisation, the RAC does not feel best placed to respond to this.

5. The Government would be interested to hear views on what type of assistance Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships would find beneficial to support development of ambitious and high standard Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

The RAC believes local authorities and LEPs are best placed to answer this question, though we would always welcome working more closely with both to represent motorist views.

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