



Response to 'A Safer Way: consultation on making Britain's roads the safest in the world'

This briefing provides details of APSE's response to the Department for Transport consultation on making Britain's roads the safest in the world.

Key Issues:

- Follows on from APSE briefing paper outlining the main issues raised in the consultation:
<http://www.apse.org.uk/briefings/09/09-27%20Briefing%20A%20Safer%20Way.pdf>
- Includes APSE's response to the consultation, including the need for close involvement with the senior managers and councillors responsible for highways and related services in local councils.

Introduction

The Department for Transport released a consultation paper in April 2009 on making Britain's roads safer. It highlighted that death and serious injury figures on roads remain too high and set targets including a reduction in road deaths and serious injuries by 33% by 2020 and a reduction by 50% for children and young people. APSE consulted with its membership and has responded to the consultation, the content of which is included below.

APSE response to 'A Safer Way'

1. Introduction

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) represents officers and members involved in the management and provision of quality public services. APSE's mission statement positions the organisation as "networking organisation which consults, develops,

promotes and advises on best practise in the delivery of public services". APSE is currently working with almost 300 authorities within the United Kingdom.

In order to respond to the issues contained in this paper, the Association has consulted its members on the points raised. This response is partly based on the comments that members have made. Individual APSE member authorities will have forwarded their own detailed responses direct to you.

2. Key recommendations

APSE feels that the key to delivering the practical improvements which will be needed to realise the outcomes noted in the consultation paper is through close involvement with the senior managers and councillors responsible for highways and related services in local councils.

These are the people who have day-to-day interaction with users of our roads and know the operations problems and priorities and problems of service delivery. As such it is essential to harness their expertise and ensure they are engaged in any improvement process.

3. Comment

APSE welcomes the opportunity to respond to specific consultation papers as part of the process of policy making. We will reflect members interests and opinions in all our responses and so would encourage members with responsibility for highways, street lights, winter maintenance and other relevant services to respond to this briefing and send comments to APSE.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that APSE receives a copy of all future consultation documents as a matter of course. Please e-mail to pbrennan@apse.org.uk

4. Responses to questions

QUESTION 1: Do you agree that our vision for road safety should be to have the safest roads in the world? (Ch. 3)

We feel that this is a realistic aim and that our members with responsibility for roads, highways and related services fully support this approach.

QUESTION 2: Do you agree that we should define a strategy running over twenty years to 2030, but with review points after five and ten years? (Ch. 3)

Yes, we support regular review of strategy as long as the resources and powers available to service providers are also altered as the strategy changes.

QUESTION 3: Do you agree that our targets should be to reduce:

- road deaths by at least 33 per cent by 2020 compared to the baseline of the 2004–08 average number of road deaths;
- the annual total of serious injuries on our roads by 2020 by at least 33 per cent;
- the annual total of road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people (aged 0–17) by at least 50 per cent against a baseline of the 2004–08 average by 2020;
- by at least 50 per cent by 2020 the rate²⁴ of KSI per km travelled by pedestrians and cyclists, compared with the 2004–08 average? (Ch. 8)

We agree that the changes specified are significant and provide challenging targets. APSE runs the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking model in the UK and we appreciate the need to track service performance as a vital element of performance management. However this is the first stage in a process of service improvement or in this case of reducing accidents and deaths on our roads. We would wish for the focus of the strategy to be on sharing knowledge needed to ensure practical changes to the service can be put in place.

QUESTION 4: We are proposing a set of indicators in order to help us to monitor performance (Appendix A). Do you believe these cover the right areas? (Ch. 8)

We believe that the measures do cover the right areas in terms of tracking accidents. The cost of traffic casualties will be a difficult measure to define and in order for it to be a meaningful measure there must be a significant level of agreement across stakeholder groups otherwise it will be of limited use.

It would be informative to track the actions which are being taken to address the issues and although this information may not be in the format of straight statistical information it would certainly provide contextual data which has an impact on the performance indicators mentioned in the consultation document.

QUESTION 6: 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? (Ch. 4)

We agree that there are many examples of good practice and that highlighting these examples and ensuring the spread of existing knowledge is an appropriate way forward rather than major policy changes. Of course those delivering services are commonly working within limiting financial resources and this needs to be borne in mind when better and more systematic delivery is expected.

QUESTION 8: 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? (Ch. 4)

The measures mentioned will be effective as long as the relevant stakeholders are engaged. APSE has a structure for regional and service based events where practitioners come together on a regular basis. We would be happy to support the department in this work through this structure or in any other way which may be beneficial.

QUESTION 9: Do you agree that an independent annual report on road safety performance, created on an annual basis, would be a worthwhile innovation? (Ch. 4)

Yes as long as it is a fundamental element of the strategy review process and is specific enough to be of use to service providers at the local authority level.

QUESTION 10: Do you agree that the Road Safety Delivery Board should be tasked with holding Government and other stakeholders to account on the implementation of a new national road safety plan? (Ch. 8)

A form of independent accountability is welcome but the Board should provide regular reports on their activity.

QUESTION 13: How can we provide better support to highway authorities in progressing economically worthwhile road safety engineering schemes? (Ch. 5)

As the consultation paper makes clear, there is a balance to be found between safety and cost. Pilot projects which result in reductions in accident and death rates are welcome but the cost of subsequent installation across a wider area is expensive. Highways authorities need access to funding to encourage them to put in place road safety engineering schemes as well as access to information so that they remain aware of research and effective projects.

QUESTION 16: How can we best encourage consumers to include safety performance in their purchasing decisions?

Those making purchasing decisions should be encouraged to investigate whether the suppliers are employing measures which will contribute to the aims of the strategy such as specific training programmes for drivers. However APSE would not encourage a series of formal procedures to accompany such a change.

5. APSE contact details

If you wish to discuss this response further please contact Phil Brennan at pbrennan@apse.org.uk or on 0161 772 1810.

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