



Cycling Embassy of Great Britain

Response to proposal to increase speed limits for HGVs

The Cycling Embassy of Great Britain objects to this proposal on the grounds that it would have a detrimental effect on the accessibility of rural roads to those who wish to cycle and a detrimental effect on safety, particularly that of vulnerable road users. This is a blanket proposal for all single- carriageway rural roads, whether they are arterial trunk routes or quiet back roads and is a disproportionate response to the perceived problem of 'platooning'.

Q1 & Q2 – Policy option: raise the national speed limit for HGVs over 7.5t from 40 to 50 or 45 mph.

We note that already rural roads are already disproportionately dangerous for cyclists, with accidents more likely to result in a cyclists' death or serious injury. In addition, HGVs are disproportionately responsible for cyclists' deaths, so increasing HGV speeds on already dangerous roads can only make this problem worse. As cyclists are more likely to use single-carriageway roads, rural roads form an important part of the cycling network, including much of the on-road National Cycle Network infrastructure. They are particularly important for those people who are traditionally less likely to cycle, families, novices and those using non-traditional cycles as mobility aids, all of whom are more likely to be put off cycling if they have to mix with faster traffic. We therefore oppose any proposal to increase speed limits for any traffic on these roads.

Q3. Alternative policy options

In the long term, the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain believes that the UK should build a dense high-quality network of direct, coherent, safe and attractive cycle routes between all destinations, separated from traffic where speeds are higher than 30mph. If this were the case, then increasing HGV speeds would have less of an impact on cyclists, as long as junctions were designed in such a way that cycle tracks could safely interact with motorised traffic. On roads where suitable parallel routes of at least equal convenience, quality and directness were available to cyclists, then we would not oppose higher speed limits for HGVs



In all other cases, which includes practically all roads in the UK at the moment, the Cycling Embassy of Great Britain proposes that greater use be made of average speed cameras on major single- carriageway roads. Studies in Scotland have already shown these to be far more effective and cost- effective at reducing accident rates than programmes of road widening and dualling.

We also agree with the Campaign to Protect Rural England that speed limits be lowered rather than increased. On minor rural roads where neither pedestrians nor cyclists are separated from motorised traffic, then the default national speed limit should be 40mph. On larger single carriageway roads with no quality separate provision for cyclists then it should be 50mph, eliminating the problem of platooning.

Ends