



**Aberdeen Cycle Forum**  
[www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk](http://www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk)

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft **Road Casualty Reduction Strategy for the North east of Scotland**.

1. Road safety is the dominant concern for existing cyclists and the main barrier preventing more people cycling. In the city, latest figures suggest that 2008 will see a sharp rise in serious injuries amongst cyclists. In the rest of the region, cyclist KSI figures are a continuing concern; the death of a child cyclist in a collision with a car in Stonehaven is being widely reported as we prepare this response. We also know that there is significant under-reporting of minor collisions and injuries involving cyclists.
2. We are surprised and disappointed, therefore, that improving cyclists' safety (child and adult) receives such scant attention in the draft strategy. As a consequence, there is an absence of Actions to address the road safety issues that cyclists face. We believe that the strategy should outline supporting targets for each road user group and should explicitly acknowledge cyclists as a priority vulnerable group in para 3.2. Accident statistics for each road user group should be promptly and publicly available online.
3. Whilst the Cycle Forum supports attempts to improve driving standards, we believe it is crucial that improving driver attitudes to and awareness of cyclists is a key part of the car driver projects outlined in Appendix A. Dangerous and incompetent driving especially when overtaking (overtaking too closely and/or at speed) or negotiating junctions (cutting in or pulling out in front of cyclists) are the most common complaints that the Cycle Forum receives. Projects should seek to foster a greater awareness of other road users and improved standards in relation to sharing road space. We are concerned that an over-emphasis on improving driver 'skills' is likely to encourage some drivers to use their skills to impose greater risks on others whilst still feeling they are driving 'safely'.
4. We appreciate the time and effort that Grampian Police put into delivering cycle training to primary age schoolchildren. In the city, at least, we are aware that this is not available across all schools. We believe it should be a priority to ensure that cycle training is delivered consistently to all primary schools in the NE.
5. There is also a case to pilot further cycle training for secondary schools, as this is the age when pupils will wish to cycle independently to school. We support the conclusion of the recent Commons Select Committee report on road safety that recommends cycle training in stages throughout schooling; this could produce a more disciplined and risk aware future driver (as well as potentially a continuing adult cyclist which would meet other health and environmental objectives).

6. The Aberdeen Cycle Forum believes that the lax enforcement of 20 and 30 mph limits within the city and rural towns has wider repercussions for road safety across the region. We are not aware, for example, of any enforcement action in the Aberdeen city centre 20mph zone since its inception. If drivers can break speed limits in a busy city centre with impunity, how much more likely are they to speed on an 'empty' rural road? This is especially crucial for younger drivers where it is important to establish responsible driving early on in their driving 'career'. We believe a stronger approach to enforcement in city and town centres will send a strong message against ill disciplined and aggressive driving that will pay dividends across the wider area.