



IHIE POLICY POSITION 11 - May 2005

LIVING WITH TRAFFIC

Reducing speed can save lives and provide a better environment but 'Traffic Calming' can be a blunt instrument. Traffic calming is not a panacea and lazily designed schemes do not promote support. The reluctance to innovate is often prompted by fear of litigation, and too often the overly cautious engineers are demonised by other professionals and communities.

Engineers are being asked to reconcile providing for movement and enhanced safety with a quality public realm. There is concern in the profession that political imperatives are overriding engineers' professional judgements; imposing blanket measures not related to local environments or communities. Traditional techniques are being criticised as despoiling the streetscene - see for example, '*Save our Streets*', launched by English Heritage in October 2004 and CPRE's signs clutter campaign.

IHIE has a history of promoting innovative approaches to calming traffic in order to cut accidents and to provide a better local environment. For instance, conferences in 1985 and 2004 brought over the leading shared space innovators from Holland and the 2002 *IHIE Design Guidelines for Home Zones* gave designers the tools to deliver UK home zones which are central to the Government's Sustainable Communities initiative.

NEW THINKING

Research into 'natural traffic calming' by Terence Lee, St Andrews University, and TRL and the 'shared space' initiatives on the continent championed by Hans Monderman are challenging assumptions and offering new ways of thinking. Both demonstrate that pedestrians are the most effective form of traffic calming and examples are coming in the UK - in home zones, in main streets in Kensington and Chelsea and Bath - and through the shared space pilots.

Strong structural features indicating that the road space is about to change (e.g. arches, bridges) and changes in the road surface (e.g. cobbles, grass deliberately left to grow in the middle of Quiet Lanes) have the most powerful speed reducing effect and are more acceptable to communities.

More radical is Hans Monderman's anti-regulatory approach: remove signs and signals, mix in people and provide quality spaces, create uncertainty placing responsibility firmly on drivers. The Wiltshire experiments in limited removal of white centre lines have attracted widespread attention.

IHIE would like to encourage members to look afresh at why and how traffic should be calmed. Engineers can design new estates and developments with a design speed of less than 20mph even if they are not home zones. The car would be seen as an intruder with roads less environmentally dominant.

IHIE WILL

- campaign for research into the effectiveness of traffic calming measures and better evaluation of calming schemes
- seek to build alliances and encourage cooperative working across the professions
- provide the skills training engineers need to meet the new design agenda
- support trials of 'natural calming' techniques based on research into driver behaviour and attitude to risk

'Education, enforcement, engineering' are the 3Es of road safety.

IHIE proposes "5Es" - Education, engineering, environment, evaluation and enforcement.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

This means

- moving away from the toolkit approach
- working *with* communities to analyse their concerns and identify options
- honestly engaging with the community and stakeholders, not 'consulting' them
- team working with colleagues right from the start to deliver tailored solutions
- making 20mph feel natural to drivers in towns without lots of signs and lines
- work with the context - using houses, trees, public buildings, road surfaces to create uncertainty and natural traffic calming
- all estate roads in new development to have a design speed of no more than 20 mph
- proper evaluation.

to meet the '5Es'.

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