



## **Lancashire Road Safety Project**

### **Public Opinion Survey**

#### **Submitted to**

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## **November 2004**

# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction and Methodology

In 2001 The Lancashire Road Safety Project (the Project) commissioned ORC International to conduct a quantitative face-to-face public opinion survey with the residents of Lancashire on road safety issues. The review set a baseline of public opinion and three subsequent annual surveys have allowed the Project to assess changes in public perception over time.

Within each survey the participant profile broadly reflected the demographic profile of the County in terms of age, gender and vehicle ownership. Residents were interviewed in the fourteen areas of Lancashire listed below:

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| ◆ Blackburn     | ◆ Lancaster                |
| ◆ Blackpool     | ◆ Leyland                  |
| ◆ Chorley       | ◆ Nelson                   |
| ◆ Clitheroe     | ◆ Ormskirk                 |
| ◆ Garstang      | ◆ Padiham                  |
| ◆ Great Harwood | ◆ Preston                  |
| ◆ Kirkham       | ◆ Rawtenstall / Haslingden |

In the most recent survey, interviews with 1189 residents were completed and available for analysis. Lancashire has a population of over 1 million and data based on a sample of 1189 respondents is subject to +/- 3 percentage points' margin of error at a 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% sure that if 50% of respondents to the survey say 'yes' in response to a given question, then the true response if a census of the entire population had been carried out, would lie between 47% and 53%.

## 1.2 Safety Cameras

- 80% of participants agreed that 'Safety cameras are meant to encourage drivers to keep to the speed limits'.
- Levels of agreement with the statements 'Fewer road accidents are likely to happen where safety cameras are installed' and 'Safety cameras mean that dangerous drivers are more likely to get caught' were lower (58% and 56% respectively).
- 67% agreed that 'Safety cameras are an easy way to make money out of motorists'. This belief has increased during each annual survey.
- 76% agreed with the statement 'Safety cameras should be supported as a method of reducing casualties'

- 68% of residents believed that the primary aim of safety cameras was to save lives.
- 44% believed that there were too many safety cameras in their area.

### **1.3 Seat Belts**

- 93% of respondents either strongly agreed or tended to agree that they had a good understanding of the laws relating to wearing seat belts.
- 79% would be happier if seat belt regulations were more strictly enforced.
- 73% disagreed that people fined for not wearing seat belts were 'just unlucky'.
- Attitudes towards seat belts have not changed noticeably across the surveys.

### **1.4 Speed Limits**

- 69% believed that stricter enforcement of speed limits on 30mph roads would lead to fewer road accidents.
- 55% agreed that driving slightly faster than the speed limit makes individuals less safe as drivers.
- 51% felt that drivers often ignored speed limits that were set too low.
- 78% acknowledged that 'Speeding is one of the main causes of road accidents'.
- 62% felt that 20mph limits in residential areas were a good way to calm traffic.
- 49% said that they would break the speed limit to keep up with the flow of traffic.

### **1.5 Speed Cautioning Policy**

- 11% of participants were aware of the speed cautioning policy introduced in Lancashire.
- 33% of these respondents believed that penalties had relaxed as a result of the review. 39% said that they had not noticed any difference and 28% said that they did not know.
- 61% agreed that such a review was required, 35% said that they did not know and only 3% felt that the review was unnecessary.

## 1.6 Drink Driving

- 34% agreed 'It's hard to have a good time if everyone else is drinking but you have to limit yourself because you're driving'.
- 84% thought that the police should increase the number of breathalyser tests conducted at public houses around closing times.
- 15% agreed that 'It's acceptable to drive after one or two drinks'.
- 7% felt that 'It is acceptable to drive first thing in the morning even if you have had a lot to drink the night before'.
- Attitudes towards drink driving have remained consistent across the surveys.

## 1.7 Road Accidents in Lancashire

- When asked to select from a list of suggestions to reduce the number of road accidents in Lancashire, participants favoured the use of legislation and training. 50% felt that tougher penalties would be effective. 43% felt that re-training would be effective, 39% suggested the introduction of tougher drink driving laws, and 37% selected larger fines.
- Tougher penalties, re-training for bad drivers and tougher drink driving laws have remained popular responses across all surveys.
- 26% believed that the number of accidents on Lancashire's roads had increased over the previous two years. When asked why they said this, the most popular response was that they had read about more accidents, or seen an increase in the number of reports on television.
- 8% felt that the incidence had diminished and this belief has fallen significantly since 2003.

## 1.8 Publicity

- 75% of participants were able to recognise the **Think!** Road Safety logo.
- Recognition of the Project swirl logo shown below was significantly lower, 13% of residents recognised the symbol.
- 20% of participants had heard of the Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety before they were interviewed.
- Newspapers were the most frequently noted source of information on the Partnership (29%). The next most frequently noted sources were television and leaflets, both of which attracted 14% of nominations.

- Respondents who were aware of the Partnership were asked what they believed to be the main aims of the organisation. There has been an increase in the number of residents who identify the Partnership with reducing casualties (this was the most frequently noted response in both 2003 and 2004), and to reduce the occurrence of drink driving.
- Most residents aware of the Partnership correctly identified Lancashire Constabulary (70%) and Lancashire County Council (62%) as part of the organisation. However fewer participants recognised other partner and stakeholder organisations.
- Thirteen percent of participants said that they were aware of the Project.

## **1.9 Recommendations**

- The Project proactively informs the public about camera locations, and explains that road safety cameras are located at accident blackspots and areas of community concern. Further statistics on the number of accidents at each location could be included on the static camera location page of the website. However, only a small number of residents are likely to visit the website, greater emphasis should be placed on the other routes currently used to disseminate information.
- It is not widely known that safety camera partnerships are self-funding, and that any money claimed back from central government cannot be spent on any other form of police, council or partnership activity. The Project must provide information on the 'netting off' process not only when sending out speeding fines, but to the general public. Possible mechanisms for consideration are press releases; information advertised in the local media, at the cinema, on bus shelters and on bus backs.
- In order to improve public perception, the Project currently uses a range of ways to inform the public of the number of accidents that have been avoided by the introduction of safety cameras. Careful monitoring of the effectiveness of each type of publicity campaign is required. The Project must be satisfied that publicity campaigns are targeting the correct audience in a cost-effective way.
- Motorists should be made aware that around two-thirds of all accidents happen on roads where the speed limit is 30mph or less, and it is recommended that the Project provide information to members of the public on how speed limits are calculated.
- Evidence from previous surveys undertaken in Lancashire indicates that young people in particular listen to the radio. The Project should consider

increasing radio advertising and could use the Department for Transport's radio advertising campaign, targeted at young males, as an example to change public opinion.

- Expanding initiatives such as the Excuses Consequences campaign may help to re-educate adults who do not identify themselves as law breakers.
- Further publicity should be given to the popular Speed Awareness Course. This has been developed by the Lancashire Road Safety Group and is designed to help people to identify why they speed, and to appreciate the consequences of speeding. The programme aims to change the habits of drivers detected just over the threshold limit.
- The wide appeal of the Hedgehog campaign launched by the Road Safety Minister, the Department for Transport's Teen Road Safety film, along with the Project's own Bee Safe Bee Seen campaign will help to teach children and teenagers to keep safe on Lancashire's roads.
- Further information on the success of the Project should be provided, and residents informed that road crash casualties in Lancashire have fallen.
- It is recommended that the Project share the research findings highlighted in this report with other safety camera partnerships. Partnerships should also consult on the most cost effective way to increase public awareness of the organisations.
- It is recommended that the Project consider ways in which it may benchmark against and learn from the experiences of other partnerships.

The Project should consider the benefits of using national advertising campaigns such as the **Think!** campaigns to promote the message of road safety. Images used in these campaigns could be used and made personal to the borough by using statistics relating to accidents in Lancashire.