



PACTS WRITTEN COMMENTS
DFT CONSULTATION ON WHETHER THE LAW SHOULD BE CHANGED
TO PERMIT SMALL ONE-PERSON ELECTRIC PERSONAL VEHICLES
(EPVS) TO USE PUBLIC ROADS AND CYCLE TRACKS.

Friday 26th March 2010

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is a registered charity and an associate Parliamentary Group. Its charitable objective is "**To protect human life through the promotion of transport safety for the public benefit**". Its aim is to advise and inform members of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords on air, rail and road safety issues.

The PACTS view on legislation regarding Electric Personal Vehicles (EPVs) is that the Department for Transport (DfT) should maintain the present position as outlined in Annex IV, rather than opting to make alterations. In Table (a) in section 12 of Annex II, PACTS would support the maintaining of the 'current position'. Reasoning for the PACTS position is briefly outlined below.

Policy Context

The consultation outlines a number of suggested policy objectives which could be facilitated by the wider introduction of EPVs into the road and cycle network

The EPVs discussed in the consultation are said, in other countries, to be used on average for between 5 and 10 miles a day – roughly equivalent to the average daily commute distance in Great Britain (GB). Nearly two thirds of all trips in GB are under 8kms in length (42% under 3kms), and as 25% of car trips are under 1.6 kms, where their efficiency is at its lowest. In that sense, it is correct to suggest that EPVs could contribute towards the reduction of CO2 and other vehicle emissions and the reduction of congestion, both major transport objectives outlined in Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS).

However, at this stage there is no evidence to substantiate these outcomes. Furthermore, the journey profile which is being addressed by EPVs is currently the 'target area' for encouraging more active travel. Modal shift towards more active travel choices such as walking and cycling has the additional benefit of an evidence base showing wider health benefits such as reductions in obesity and associated diseases. The widespread introduction of EPVs onto the road and cycle network could therefore have negative public health outcomes in areas such as preventative health and road safety.

Additionally, the introduction of EPVs onto the cycle network could further prevent desire to cycle by imposing on and reducing the enjoyment and/or safety of cycling to those people who already cycle or those people thinking about making the modal shift.

Legislation

We can see little or no benefit in altering current legislation to allow for the use of EPVs on the road or cycle networks and therefore suggest that existing legislation should remain in place. If the DfT insists on creating a new regulation, it is advised that EPVs should not be permitted to use footways or cycle lanes, and should be subject to the same regulations as P2Ws under 50cc.

For more information on any of the issues raised in this response, please contact

Eleanor Besley
eleanor.besley@pacts.org.uk