

## AA Trust cautiously welcomes new focus with speed cameras

Today's government announcement means that, from 2007, speed cameras will no longer be the easier option for reducing road casualties but will have to be weighed against other measures to improve road safety, says the AA Motoring Trust.

Motorists will welcome the breaking of the link between catching speeding drivers and income for camera partnerships. This means that cameras will be sited where they have the greatest impact on road casualties and not where they will help to meet financial targets.

However, the AA Trust will be watching closely to make sure that the 110 million extra safety funding available to local authorities will be additional to their road safety budgets and will not allow them to divert existing road safety cash into other council spending.

"Speed cameras have created a nation of people torn between wanting the roads outside their houses and schools protected from speeders while wanting the freedom to interpret conditions on other peoples roads and choose the speed they see fit", says Andrew Howard, head of road safety for The AA Motoring Trust.

"The constant tirade from the "anti" lobby, which declares speed cameras to be nothing more than cash-raising machines for the Treasury, and the "pro" lobby, which sees blanket enforcement and criminalizing a quarter of UK households as the only way to reduce road casualties, constantly misses the point.

"The reality is that speed cameras work alongside other measures, such as better engineering of roads to reduce and provide better margin for mistakes, but are not the universal remedy some advocates claim. Unfortunately, with speed cameras currently being effectively self-financing, they offer a far cheaper alternative to other safety measures that have to be paid for by cash-strapped councils.

"Where government has failed is to allow a headlong dash into speed camera use without carrying the public with it. At the turn of the millennium, 83 per cent found cameras acceptable - now its 69 per cent. Cameras can have a major role to play but the public must understand their use, and the motives behind them."

Other changes will affect the criteria for where cameras can be installed. These will add flexibility for sites where there are many accidents but few serious enough to meet the criteria - a key concern of many communities, and will allow routes with problems, rather than just sites, to be tackled. While accepting this the AA Trust believes that camera siting must still be linked to accidents.

Changes to signing guidelines, and the nationwide review of speed limits on "A" and "B" roads are welcome. Speed limits need to be realistic and appropriate to ensure compliance