

Description of Leicestershire's Road Safety Initiatives

Providing a Safer Road Environment

Development Control

1. Most individual applications are for quite small sites and, in total during 2019, we made approximately 2055 minor responses to consultations on planning applications. In granting planning permission, the local planning authority considers comments made by Leicestershire County Council as the local highway authority. When making comments on planning applications, we take account of where the proposal is located and whether it is in an accessible location with appropriate provision for walking, cycling and public transport. We also aim to ensure that the highway infrastructure required to serve new development is designed to minimise the risk of road traffic accidents.
2. These principles also apply to large sites. Throughout Leicestershire, several strategic development sites are planned for delivery over the next 10-15 years to meet housing need across the County. These strategic sites can vary in size from a few hundred to several thousand dwellings. During 2019, we worked on plans for highway infrastructure at a number of these strategic development sites across the County, and in total made approximately 851 major responses to these consultations.

Safety Audit

3. Whilst road improvement schemes are designed in accordance with established guidance and standards, unintended safety problems can arise. To guard against this, improvement schemes are subject to safety audit by accident investigation staff that use their experience of looking into why accidents have happened at other locations throughout the County to identify and correct potentially dangerous features within an improvement scheme. The design of the scheme is checked at least once before construction commences and the scheme is checked again once construction is complete. 21 completed audits were undertaken on improvement schemes in 2019.
4. Safety audits are also undertaken on developer schemes by the private sector, as part of the development process.

Traffic Management Schemes

5. There is an ongoing programme of low-cost improvements aimed at managing existing traffic flows more effectively and thereby enhancing road safety. Such schemes generally deal with:
 - the provision of double yellow lines around junctions to prevent parking and improve visibility,

- the imposition of parking restrictions to prevent parking at locations where a potential hazard existed,
- the implementation of signing and lining schemes to improve driver perception of hazards and consequently their behaviour
- the imposition or amendment of weight restrictions to reduce the dangers caused by HGV's using inappropriate roads.

Managing Speed

Safety Cameras

6. The Safety Camera Scheme is administered by the Road Safety Partnership. 22 fixed safety camera sites were in operation (9 speed, 2 bi-directional speed, 6 red light and 5 combined red light and 'speed on green'). There were 161 mobile camera sites/routes (60 core sites, 4 core routes, 5 motorcycle specific routes and 93 community concern sites).

Locations and further information on the scheme itself can be found at www.speedorsafety.com.

7. Since the break-up of the National Camera Scheme in 2007, we have used the national site selection guidance when considering the potential for new permanent camera sites. This guidance has allowed camera enforcement at locations where traffic speeds and accident numbers are insufficient to justify a permanent camera site, but there are genuine local road safety concerns. In 2016 there were some local revisions to criteria however, they fundamentally adhere to national guidelines as recommended by DfT.
8. Throughout 2019, the Camera Scheme identified 79,916 drivers travelling at excessive speeds and / or running red traffic signals across the police force area (City, County & Rutland).

Driver Education Workshops

9. Driver education remains an important part of speed management and, in 2019/20, some 22,363 drivers completed a Speed Awareness course in Leicestershire as an alternative to receiving a fine and points on their driving licence. These classroom-based workshops are offered to offenders in 30 and 40 mph speed limit areas and last for four hours. The aim of the courses is to help drivers understand the adverse consequences of their driving behaviour. In total around 100,000 hours of training per year is provided through the Driver Education Workshops in Leicestershire - a significant road safety input.

Advisory 20 mph School Safety Zones

10. Since 2002, we have been implementing advisory 20mph safety zones at schools that have produced School Travel Plans. The zones include prominent signing and flashing amber lights to indicate their extent and times of operation. They are aimed at reducing vehicle speeds to improve safety

and encourage walking and cycling to school. In summer 2014 we completed the programme, with over 250 zones being created.

11. The County Council continues to be of the view that 20mph restrictions are only effective when supported by physical measures and in the current financial climate, unless there is a proven injury accident problem at a location, we cannot justify the installation of such measures.

Traffic Management

12. It is important for the safety of all road users that drivers are advised of the maximum speed that they should be traveling at along any particular length of road, this is the speed limit. In 2013, speed limits on a number of our roads were changed in order to ensure, as far as we can, that the speed of traffic was reduced to a level consistent with the environment of the road and the hazards on it.
13. Any speed limit changes implemented are in line with the Department for Transport published national guidance on setting local speed limits, January 2013.

Community Speed Watch

14. Community Speed Watch continues to be a popular initiative which encourages local communities to get involved in identifying speeding motorists; and thereafter encouraging them to drive at more appropriate speeds. In 2019, 13 schemes ran and the details of more than 2,100 speeding vehicles were passed through to the police, who where possible wrote to the registered keeper of the vehicles reminding them of the dangers associated with speed. The scheme also incorporates the ongoing use of mobile vehicle activated signs and 40 are now being deployed within 48 communities across Leicestershire. (Some communities share signs). The community speed watch website has further details of both schemes www.communityspeedwatch.org.uk

Education Training and Publicity

15. Human error is a significant factor in many accidents. Education training and publicity educates alerts and informs road users about hazardous behaviours and the following outlines the diverse array of initiatives which are currently employed within the County.

Driver Education Workshops

16. In addition to the Speed Awareness Workshops discussed previously, many drivers accused of other motoring offences were offered the opportunity to attend workshops. Over 1,700 drivers have completed the national What's Driving Us? course in Leicestershire in 2019. This three-hour classroom-based course can be offered to drivers committing traffic light offences and other offences such as using a mobile phone whilst driving.

17. Driving 4 Change was introduced in 2013. This is a two-hour practical course with a focus on driver skills rather than attitudes. The police decide on which course to refer the drivers to. A relatively small number of drivers are offered this course.
18. In 2019, 145 drivers accused of careless driving (often involving an accident) chose to attend a Safe & Considerate Driving Course, which combines classroom activities and practical driving instruction, as an alternative to prosecution.

Drink-Driving

19. Whilst the police continue to target drink-drivers throughout the year, the two main month-long campaigns reminding drivers of the risk they take if they choose to both drink and drive are held throughout December and June.
20. Local media, including daily and weekly newspapers, radio and TV remain very supportive of the drink-drive campaigns and there was continued newspaper coverage along with regular interviews of police spokespersons to remind people not to drink and drive and/or consider alternative means of transport such as buses, taxis or identifying designated sober drivers in order to get home safely and legally.
21. During December 2019, 109 people were caught drink driving, along with 28 for drug driving, across the Leicestershire Police force area (December 2018 saw 122 drink and 33 drug drive arrests). Thirty-five of these arrests were made following a road traffic accident, and although 69 of the arrests were made in Leicester City, there were also significant numbers in Charnwood (20), North West Leicestershire (10) along with Hinckley & Bosworth (12). Drivers aged 24 or under accounted for just under a quarter of all roadside arrests, suggesting that a persistent minority of younger drivers are not heeding our drink/drug drive messages. There is unfortunately no formula to determine how much any one person can drink in an evening and be okay to drive the next day. It depends on several factors, including weight, gender, age, metabolism and how much food has been eaten. The penalties for drinking and driving are a minimum 12-month disqualification, which rises to three years for a second offence within 10 years, a fine of up to £5,000 and up to six months in prison.
22. Leicestershire Police now use roadside drug testing kits to help enforce legislation introduced in March 2015 which makes it illegal to drive with certain levels of illegal and prescription drugs in the bloodstream. The new law can be enforced with the use of kits that detect traces of cannabis and cocaine in saliva. More traditional “field impairment tests”, including measuring the size of a driver’s pupils or asking them to walk in straight line can also be used where impairment through other drug groups is suspected.

Pre- Driver and Fleet Driver Training

23. Pre-driver days continued to be held at Mallory Park during 2019; dates are posted on our website www.tjunction.org.uk. There were 5 events and over 100 participants, concentrating on driver responsibility, peer pressure, impairment and the costs of motoring. Each participant had two driving sessions with approved driving instructors on the Mallory Park circuit where they were introduced to the basics of car control. The Official Theory Test was also explained and tried by the participants on iPads equipped with the test
24. Drivers of Council vehicles within the Environment and Transport Department have previously undertaken a one-day defensive and green driver training course, aimed at improving safety and fuel economy. Drivers of many larger vehicles have to undertake 35 hours (five days) of training every five years as part of the requirements for a 'Certificate of Professional Competence' (CPC). Driver CPC is an initiative introduced across Europe to raise driving standards and it is a legal requirement. The defensive and green driver training course gained Driver CPC accreditation and counts towards the required 35 hours of training.
25. Presentations have also been provided for local businesses for their fleet drivers.

Older Car Drivers

26. The 'Safer Driving with Age' (SAGE) scheme for drivers aged 60 and over operates throughout the County. Older drivers need to ensure that they have undertaken an eyesight check, answer a health questionnaire and undertake a driving assessment in their own vehicle with an Approved Driving Instructor. During 2019 there was continued interest in the scheme and work continues to encourage drivers to take part. It is noted that there is 'an aging population' and continuing to drive safely helps to tackle social isolation and can contribute to general wellbeing.

Winter Driving

27. Driving conditions throughout the winter months can be very different from those experienced by motorists throughout the remainder of the year, with clear road safety implications. Alerting motorists to these changing conditions is an integral part of our ongoing road safety advice.

Publicity Campaigns

28. Much of the campaign work is now channelled and supported by the Road Safety Partnership. In 2019, social media road safety campaigns specifically focussed on young people and mobile phone distraction. The Road Safety Partnership also worked with Arriva on a joint initiative promoting mobile phone distraction to all pedestrians.

The Fatal4 Clinics

29. Over the past seven years, Leicestershire Police, with the support of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Road Safety Partnership, have held a series of FATAL4 clinics at locations across the Police force area. These are designed to reinforce concerns about speeding, using mobile phones (while driving), not wearing seatbelts along with drink/drug driving.
30. Since 2013 FATAL4 operations targeting HGV drivers and other drivers using the local motorway and trunk road network have taken place. Police officers travelling in an unmarked HGV tractor unit covertly filmed those drivers seen to be committing FATAL4 offences who were then escorted by a following patrol car to a nearby safe place off the motorway to be dealt with accordingly.

Improving Road Safety for Vulnerable Road Users

31. In looking to improve safety for vulnerable road users, we primarily target motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists. Details of the initiatives employed for these three groups are given below.

Motorcyclists

32. The Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS) is a national rider training scheme for post-test riders. The cost is typically £130 but, with a £70 subsidy from the Road Safety Partnership the rider only pays £60. In the Financial Year 2019/20, 79 riders took advantage of this scheme. A variety of different methods were used to publicise the scheme, including social media, and promotion through events and with training providers.
33. Bike Safe workshops are run by Police Class 1 Advanced riders from the police motorcycle section, accredited for the delivery of training. The purpose of Bike Safe is to reduce casualties among bikers by giving them an insight into safer/ smoother riding and a heightened awareness of possible hazards.
34. The Road Safety Partnership in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council purchased a Triumph motorcycle to be used for Road Safety purposes including the promotion of training for motorcycle riders. To help promote this further the bike has been transferred to staff at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service who have capacity to use this resource. The bike has been re-branded as "FireBike". The bike has attended many events and biker meets.
35. We remain supporters of The Shiny Side Up Partnership (SSUP) an East Midlands motorcycle safety partnership. The group is presently made up of Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Derbyshire County Council. Originally set up to try and drive down casualties relating to Sports Bike riders this has now broadened to include lower capacity scooters and motorcycles. The website has been redesigned and carries a wealth of useful information. www.shinysideup.co.uk

36. The County Council uses a variety of SSUP roadside posters at sites that have a poor motorcycle casualty history these messages include Bike Crash Site Ahead and Think Bike. The roadside posters are bright yellow and have become a regular seasonal way of reminding riders and other road users to take extra care and look out for each other.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

37. The Junior Road Safety Officer scheme has been operating for more than 30 years with a good number of Leicestershire primary schools involved. JRSO is now primarily a website based scheme. There were three main themes for academic year 2019/20: pedestrian safety; cycle/scooter safety and active travel to school <http://www.junior-rso.org.uk/>
38. Road Safety Tutors continued to provide cyclist training to primary school children, training to National Standards – Bikeability. In 2019/20 over 2100 were trained on roads at Level 2. This training usually takes place in the last year of primary school and can encourage children to cycle when they move to high school. Funding has been secured to March 2021 to support the delivery of Bikeability. Training using balance bikes has also been undertaken for more than 260 children aged 4 to 6. This ‘Bikeability Balance’ training gives children the confidence to begin riding. Funding for this also continues to March 2021.
39. Cyclist training has been offered to those over 16s who either cannot cycle, have not cycled for a while or who wish to develop their skills and confidence through on and/or off-road training. The Fire Service has developed a cycle safety virtual reality film as part of their VR education programme (existing young driver film). Such films are very engaging and use 360-degree camera footage and are played using a mobile phone connected to a VR headset.
40. The School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service continues to help children and parents across busy roads at school journey times. A number of the patrollers have involved themselves in wider aspects of road safety work, such as road safety talks in schools.
41. Walking to school is a genuine safety concern for many parents as children living less than 3 miles from the catchment area school for their home address (2 miles for primary school age children) are only provided with free transport by the Council if their walking route is assessed as ‘not available’. The availability of such a route is assessed against local criteria (based on national statutory guidance) which look at highway-related safety issues. Walking route assessments look at the issues which might affect a child walking to school, accompanied (as necessary) by a responsible adult. When walking along the road, the main issue is the presence or otherwise of a footway but, where there is no footway, the assessment asks:
- Is there a verge to step onto to avoid oncoming traffic?
 - What is the traffic flow?
 - Are there suitable sightlines?

42. Crossing of the road is also assessed and here the main issues are the visibility of approaching traffic and how long pedestrians must wait for a suitable gap in that traffic.
43. School keep clear – Camera Project which aims to change the behaviour of parents when taking their children to school by ensuring the entrances to schools are clear of traffic, reducing the risk to children.