

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 2021, the Council made approximately 2380 minor responses to consultations on planning applications. In granting planning permission, the local planning authority considers comments made by the Leicestershire County Council as the local highway authority. When making comments on planning applications, the Council takes account of where the proposal is located and whether it is in an accessible location with appropriate provision for walking, cycling and public transport. The Council also aims 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 2021, the Council worked on plans for highway infrastructure at a number of these strategic development sites across the County, and in total made approximately 1134 major responses to these consultations.

Road 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 road 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. In 2021 30 audits were undertaken on improvement schemes and 15 were completed in 2022.
4. Road 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; and
- 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 with 22 fixed safety camera sites in operation (nine speed, two bi-directional speed, six red light and five combined red light and 'speed on green'). There were 161 mobile camera sites/routes (60 core sites, four core routes, seven motorcycle specific routes and 82 community concern sites).
7. Locations and further information on the scheme itself can be found at www.speedorsafety.com.
8. Since the break-up of the National Camera Scheme in 2007, the Council has 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 Department for Transport.
9. Throughout 2021, the Camera Scheme identified 49,902 drivers travelling at excessive speeds and / or running red traffic signals across the police force area (City, County and Rutland).

Driver Education Workshops (DEW)

10. Driver education remains an important part of speed management and, in 2021/22, 20,589 drivers completed a Speed Awareness course in Leicestershire as an alternative to receiving a fine and points on their driving licence. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the DEW operation now offers a blended approach with both on-line and classroom provision made available to clients.
11. In addition to the Speed Awareness Workshops, many drivers accused of other motoring offences were offered the opportunity to attend workshops. A total of 2,123 drivers have completed the national What's Driving Us course in Leicestershire in 2021. This three-hour classroom-based course has also been adapted to be delivered virtually and can be offered to drivers committing traffic light offences and other offences such as using a mobile phone whilst driving.

12. In 2021, 97 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.
13. In 2021, 2707 drivers completed the National Motorway Awareness Course. The current on-line theory course aims at increasing knowledge of the meaning of smart motorway signs, improve understanding of variable speed limits and lane closures and complying with the rules on smart motorways.
14. Workshops are offered to offenders in 30 and 40mph speed limit areas. The aim of the courses is to help drivers understand the adverse consequences of their driving behaviour. In total around 102,000 hours of training per year is provided through the Driver Education Workshops in Leicestershire - a significant road safety input.

Advisory 20mph School Safety Zones

15. Since 2002, the Council has 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 the programme was completed, with over 250 zones being created.
16. 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, the Council cannot justify the installation of such measures.

Traffic Management

17. 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 Leicestershire roads were changed in order to ensure, as far as the Council can, that the speed of traffic was reduced to a level consistent with the environment of the road and the hazards on it.
18. 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

19. 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. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council was unable to offer the usual level of support

to communities and volunteers. The Council had to adapt delivery and ran a successful volunteer free scheme where educational boards were placed at various key sites of community concern to remind drivers to check their speed. It is planned that full schemes will return in 2023. The scheme also incorporates the ongoing use of mobile vehicle activated signs and 40 are now being deployed within 48 communities (some communities share signs) across Leicestershire. The community speed watch website has further details of both schemes - www.communityspeedwatch.org.uk.

Education Training and Publicity

20. 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.

Drink-Driving

21. Whilst the police continue to target drink drug drivers throughout the year, the two main month-long campaigns reminding drivers of the risk they take if they choose to both drink and drug drive are held throughout December and June.
22. Local media, including daily and weekly newspapers, radio and TV remain very supportive of the drink drug drive campaigns and there is continued newspaper coverage along with regular interviews of police spokespersons to remind people not to drink and/or drug 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. The December 2021 campaign was supported by a paid for social media campaign which targeted drivers aged between 17 and 65 via Facebook, Instagram and Google Display Network. As a result, 84% of the drink drive audience along with 70% of the drug drive audience were reached, that is actually viewed the advert in their social media feeds.
23. During December 2021, 111 people were caught drink driving, along with 38 for drug driving, across the Leicestershire Police force area (December 2020 saw 104 drink and 28 drug drive arrests). Of these arrests, 33 were made following a road traffic collision, and although just under half of all these arrests were made in the Leicester conurbation, there were also significant numbers in North West Leicestershire (20), Hinckley and Bosworth (14) and Harborough (11). 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.
24. 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 Training

25. In 2021 Pre-Driver training was paused due to face-to-face restrictions (Covid-19 pandemic). In 2022 there were four events and over 85 participants, concentrating on driver responsibility, peer pressure, impairment and the costs of motoring. Each participant undertook 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. The events were also supported by the Partnership with presentations from the Fire Service, Hazard Express and the Safety Camera Team attended with a safety Camera van.

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 (ADI). During 2021 there was sustained interest in the scheme and work continues to encourage ADIs to deliver this scheme and 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 2021, social media road safety campaigns specifically focussed on encouraging older drivers to consider taking Council’s SAGE course, encouraging motorcyclists to ride safely and courteously and reminding drivers of the importance of stopping at red traffic light signals.

The FATAL4 Clinics

29. Over the past ten years, Leicestershire Police, with the support of the Leicester, Leicestershire and 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, the Council primarily targets motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists. Details of the initiatives employed for these three groups are given below.

Motorcyclists

32. The Enhanced Rider Scheme is a national rider training scheme for post-test riders. The cost is typically £130 however, with a £70 subsidy from the Road Safety Partnership, the rider only pays £60. In the financial year 2021/22, 97 riders took advantage of this scheme which is up on the 67 of the previous financial year. 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/smooth 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 featured at many events and biker meets.
35. The Council remains supporter of The Shiny Side Up Partnership 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, it was set up to try and drive down casualties relating to sports bike riders, however, this has now broadened to include lower capacity scooters and motorcycles also. The website has been redesigned and carries a wealth of useful information www.shinysideup.co.uk.
36. The County Council uses a variety of the partnership's 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 in Leicestershire since 1987 with a good number of Leicestershire primary schools involved. The scheme is now primarily a website-based scheme. There were three main themes for academic year 2021/22: Autumn Term (September – December): Pedestrian Safety; Spring Term (January – March): Cycle / Scooter Safety; and Summer Term (April – July): Active Travel to School <http://www.junior-rso.org.uk/>
38. Road Safety Tutors continued to provide cyclist training (Bikeability) to primary school children, training to national standards. Level 1 and 2 combined 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 2023 to support the delivery of Bikeability training to 3,025 children. Learn to Ride, Bikeability Family and Level 3 will also be undertaken by more than 200 children.
39. Cyclist training has been offered to those over 16, 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. During 2021 around 50 over 16s have taken part in cycle training. In addition to this, around 200 adults have undertaken e-bike training. The Fire Service has developed a cycle safety virtual reality film as part of their virtual reality (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 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.
44. School Streets - to address parking, congestion, air pollution and safety around schools. The four-week pilot started on 30 August 2022 at three County schools. The School Streets initiative looks to provide a solution to these issues through a time limited congestion free zone during school drop off and pick up times. This initiative prioritises pedestrians such as parents and children by providing a safe space for people to walk and cycle in the vicinity of the school through a hard or soft closure of the road or street.
45. School Engagement – dedicated Schools Officer delivering support to schools on safe/active travel – Early years / foundation – Street Feet Resource provide learning opportunities and road safety awareness through role play and activity. KS1 and KS2 bike/scooter skills and road safety assemblies reinforcing messages on cycle helmets, in car safety and walking to school supported by the Park and Stride initiative.