



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE - 7 MARCH 2024**

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the development of the Council's Road Safety Strategy, providing it with an early opportunity to comment, as part of the engagement that is being undertaken and to seek its views on the new casualty reduction targets proposed.
2. The Road Safety Strategy is not a new approach or policy but will bring together the Council's road safety work in a single document for the first time.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

3. In May 2022, the County Council approved its Strategic Plan (2022-26). It contains five strategic outcomes, one of which is 'Safe and Well', which aims to ensure that people are safe and protected from harm, live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to live active, independent and fulfilling lives. The Council's aims include an action to develop a Road Safety Strategy by 2026.
4. Road safety and casualty reduction also contribute to the other strategic outcomes ('Clean and Green'; 'Great Communities'; 'Improved Opportunities'; 'Strong economy, transport, and infrastructure'). As an example, improving road safety and reducing road casualties will help to reduce the fear of collisions, help to increase the use of active travel modes (cycling and walking), reduce the carbon footprint and support Council aims to tackle climate change and improve health outcomes.
5. In April 2023, the Cabinet considered the Environment and Transport 2023/24 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme. The Cabinet was then also advised that this included work on the development of the Council's Road Safety Strategy (it noted that progress was dependent on long-awaited guidance/policy position from the Government).

**Background**

6. Great Britain continues to have some of the safest roads in the world. Despite significant increases in traffic over the last few decades, the number of road deaths continues to fall.

7. This is due to a variety of reasons, including safer infrastructure, new vehicle technologies, improvements to driver testing including the introduction of the theory test and hazard perception testing, tougher enforcement, shifting social attitudes and better trauma care.
8. Most road traffic collisions occur on local roads under the direct control of local highway authorities (LHAs), who are key partners in the delivery of the Government's Strategic Framework for Road Safety (2011) and casualty reduction objectives.
9. Working with Council partners through the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership, including Leicester City Council, Rutland Council, Leicestershire Police and National Highways, the Council has been successfully delivering a wide range of road safety initiatives, helping to make Leicestershire's roads safer.
10. Although the Government's new Road Safety Framework has not yet been published (a timeframe of Autumn/Winter 2022 was initially indicated), a range of documents provide a clear steer on its priorities and objectives, including:
  - a) In 2015, the Government issued its British Road Safety Statement (BRSS): Working Together to Build a Safer Road System, which confirmed its commitment to investing in road safety. One of its key priorities was the adoption of a Safe Systems approach, which has five 'pillars', relating to:
    - i. Safe roads,
    - ii. Safe road users,
    - iii. Safe speeds,
    - iv. Safe vehicles
    - v. Post-collision care.

The overarching theme of the BRSS was the Government's adoption of the recommended Safe System approach to preventing death and serious injuries in road collisions. Building on current practice, it would also require some re-alignment in national road safety focus and activity over time.
  - b) In 2018, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned and published a Road Safety Management Capacity Review, which recognised that a Safe System approach should be implemented on Britain's roads.
  - c) In 2019, the Government's Road Safety Statement (2019): A Lifetime of Road Safety placed particular focus on four vulnerable groups of road users: young road users, rural road users, motorcyclists, and older road users. It also included reference to the Safe Systems approach.
  - d) In April 2022, the 'Highway Code' gave the greatest precedence to more vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists).

### Challenges

11. A range of existing and emerging challenges may impact on road safety, including:

- a) Safety fears acting as a deterrent to vulnerable road users, which could potentially impact on active travel, the health of the population and contribution to carbon reduction and the environment.
- b) Population growth, which is expected to increase the number of vehicles on the roads.
- c) Changing demographics, including an ageing population, which may impact on transportation requirements, fear of collision and the severity of collisions, if they do occur.
- d) New and emerging technology e.g., heavier electric vehicles and e-scooter use. As with all new technology, there will be a period of increasing use and acclimatisation from users and other road users, where strengths and weaknesses are assessed and addressed. As an example, depending on use in the future, electric vehicles could potentially affect casualty severity (due to weight differential), road surfaces (with their much greater use) and conflict with pedestrians, until engine noise difference is addressed/becomes familiar.
- e) Acceptance that road safety requires everyone's support and effort – it is not just down to the Government or local authorities to provide a solution.
- f) Limited Government funding, combined with public expectation that the Council is in a position to address all issues/concerns. Communication to explain the difficult financial situation is ongoing.

### Opportunities

- 12. There are a wide range of opportunities which potentially affect road safety, including:
  - a) New and emerging technology, e.g., Artificial Intelligence enabled autonomous vehicles and advanced monitoring technology.
  - b) Better safety provision in vehicles.
  - c) New engineering techniques and materials.
  - d) Improved medical interventions.
  - e) Partnership work and input from communities.

### **The Road Safety Strategy**

- 13. The Road Safety Strategy presents the Council's wide ranging, high-level, evidence-based approach to road safety. Although the Council has been successfully delivering road safety initiatives for decades, it has not had an adopted position on road safety, presented the work in one place, or presented it under the Safe Systems pillars.
- 14. The new Strategy provides an opportunity to showcase the Council's successful work under the five pillars of the Safe Systems approach. It is also timely to review Council casualty reduction targets. In summary:

- a) It is not a new approach or policy, however, for the first time it draws together and presents the Council's road safety work in one document.
- b) It aligns with national legislation, guidance and priorities.
- c) It is evidence based.
- d) It supports the Council's Strategic Plan and complements and/or supports the Department's other key policies, strategies and plans, e.g., Local Transport Plan and Cycling and Walking Strategy.
- e) It is agile, providing flexibility to deal with new and emerging challenges and opportunities.
- f) It presents the Council's road safety work under the Safe Systems five pillars.
- g) It is closely aligned with the annual Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire report (the subject of a separate paper to this meeting), which monitors and reports progress against Council casualty reduction targets.
- h) The Road Safety Strategy will:
  - i. Provide potential to increase active travel through improved road safety;
  - ii. Showcase the Council's road safety work in one document, under the five Safe Systems pillars;
  - iii. Maximise benefits and focus resources;
  - iv. Set new ambitious local casualty reduction targets;
  - v. Support future funding bids (capital and revenue);
  - vi. Support and inform discussions, e.g., with Midlands Connect and the Government;
  - vii. Provide a foundation for road safety schemes and programmes;
  - viii. Provide support/mandate for officers delivering road safety initiatives and highway development management through the planning arena.
- i) Officers will review and, where appropriate, refresh the Strategy every five years, or earlier if circumstances dictate.

### **Casualty reduction targets (Killed or Seriously Injured - KSI)**

- 15. The Council is committed to supporting the Government's road safety objectives, continuing to improve road safety and reduce road casualties in Leicestershire.
- 16. The Strategy sets new ambitious medium and long-term casualty reduction targets, against which progress will be measured:
  - a) **Medium-term target to 2035 (from baseline\*) - 40% reduction in KSI casualties by 2035** (Note: The baseline refers to the average number of killed or seriously injured casualties per year between 2016 and 2022, not including 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on traffic and casualty statistics. This equates to 221 KSI's per year between

2016 and 2022, not including 2020 and 2021, with a target of 133 by 2035 (numbers rounded up).

- b) **Long-term target (to 2050) - Zero deaths caused by road traffic collisions by 2050.** Significant road safety progress and investment has been made in Leicestershire over past decades. Establishing a zero deaths by 2050 long-term target instils a 'vision zero' Safe Systems approach, which is consistent with the vision of many other organisations for road safety. This is based on the collective belief that no death is acceptable due to road traffic collisions. The goal of a vision zero, Safe Systems approach is to ensure that inevitable human errors do not lead to a collision, but if a collision does occur, its effects are sufficiently mitigated so as to not cause death.

17. Council long-term 'zero deaths by 2050' target is consistent with an evidence-led, vision zero, Safe Systems approach, as part of the continued work to reduce casualties. The Council will follow the principles of safe systems, working with its partners, communities and the Government, to provide an integrated approach, reducing risk, enhancing road safety and protecting the lives of local communities.
18. Progress towards achieving these targets will be monitored through Council annual Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire report, which is presented to this Committee. Where appropriate and based on evidence, these targets may be adjusted.

### **Engagement**

19. As stated previously, the Road Safety Strategy is not a new policy or approach but presents in one document everything that the Council does to improve road safety. Given this, light touch engagement will be taking place (rather than a formal consultation exercise).
20. Early discussions with stakeholders have begun, including with the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group and the Council's Communities Board, to help steer its early development.
21. It is intended to undertake a four-week public engagement on the draft Strategy starting in late March/early April 2024. The draft Road Safety Strategy will be circulated to the Committee at that time.
22. The Committee's views and any further comments from members arising from consideration of the draft Strategy documents will be reported to the Cabinet in June, when the Cabinet will be asked to approve the final Strategy.
23. Individual road safety schemes will of course continue to be subject to consultations with local members and the public.

### **Resource Implications**

24. Despite being one of the lowest Government funded county authorities, following on from years of austerity and budget savings, the Council has continued to provide a wide range of successful road safety initiatives in Leicestershire.

25. Going forward, Local Integrated Transport Settlements (LITS), funded via Network North monies, might provide greater scope for funding of safety schemes and initiatives, but this will be subject to the DfT guidance on the use of LITS funding.
26. The Strategy presents existing road safety programmes (capital and revenue), which have been/will be delivered within existing agreed budgets, subject to approval of future Medium Term Financial Strategy.
27. The delivery of the Strategy is dependent on funding, which mainly comes from the Government, but may also be from other sources, such as land developers. The Strategy will place the Council in the best position to maximise opportunities to secure future external funding for road safety schemes and initiatives, e.g., via Government bids and the planning arena, such as Section 106 and Section 278 agreements.
28. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance were consulted on the content of this report.

### **Conclusion**

29. Future road safety targets are now required to be set, to help the Council monitor and evaluate the continuing success of its road safety programmes. Therefore, ambitious new medium and long-term targets have been proposed, ensuring that the Council continues to challenge itself, supports Government objectives and delivers the best outcomes for its communities.
30. The Committee is asked to comment on the approach to the Road Safety Strategy, particularly on the proposed new casualty reduction targets.

### **Background Papers**

24 April 2023 – Cabinet – Environment and Transport 2023/24 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7075&Ver=4>

9 March 2023 – Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire  
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1293&MId=7172&Ver=4#A174535>

May 2022 – County Council Strategic Plan (2022-2026)  
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/faq/2022/4/12/Appendix-B-LCC-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf>

Department for Transport Policy document – Road Safety Statement 2019: A Lifetime of Road Safety  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety>

Department for Transport and Systra – Road Safety Management Capacity Review (2018)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/717062/road-safety-management-capacity-review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/717062/road-safety-management-capacity-review.pdf)

Department for Transport Policy Paper – Road Safety Statement: Building a Safer Road System (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-working-together-to-build-a-safer-road-system>

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Equality Implications**

31. Initiatives to improve road safety and reduce road casualties benefit all road users but are particularly important for vulnerable groups such as pedestrians, motorcyclists, cyclists, the young/elderly and those with a disability.
32. An equality screening was undertaken at the start of the process to develop the Road Safety Strategy, with the likely impact of the Strategy being identified as positive/neutral. After early discussions with stakeholders, including the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group, the draft Strategy was amended, taking account of comments received.
33. Feedback from the forthcoming four-week engagement will be assessed, including for equalities implications and, where appropriate, the Strategy will be updated.
34. Where appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken during the review of departmental policies and strategies or the development of measures and schemes.

### **Human Rights Implications**

35. Initiatives to improve road safety and reduce road casualties benefit all road users, focussing limited resources where they will provide the most benefit.
36. Reducing fatal and serious casualties supports Part 1, Article 2 of the Human Rights Act (Right to life).
37. Where appropriate, human rights implications will be assessed during the review of departmental policies and strategies or the development of measures and schemes.

### **Environmental Implications**

38. As set out in paragraph 3 of this report, one of the key outcomes in the Council's Strategic Plan is 'Clean and Green'. Improvements in road safety and casualty reduction help toward achieving this outcome. Improving road safety through casualty reduction helps to reduce both extant and perceived safety concerns associated with greater use of vulnerable but more sustainable modes, such as

cycling, walking and wheeling, help to improve air quality, carbon reduction and public health through mode shift away from car use.

39. Environmental Impact Assessments will be carried out in relation to work undertaken on individual projects and programmes where appropriate.

### **Health Implications**

40. As set out in paragraph 2 of this report, one of the key outcomes in the Council's Strategic Plan is 'Safe and Well'. Improvements in road safety and casualty reduction help toward achieving this outcome. Casualty reduction achieved through road safety programmes outlined in this report have positive health implications, protecting the health and wellbeing of people, through reducing severity and number of casualties.
41. Improving road safety through casualty reduction helps to reduce both extant and perceived safety concerns associated with greater use of vulnerable but more sustainable modes, such as cycling, walking and wheeling, help to improve air quality, carbon reduction and public health through mode shift away from car use.

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