

## 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 2022, the Council made approximately 2124 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, the account is taken 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 2022, plans for highway infrastructure at a number of these strategic development sites across the County were worked on, and in total, approximately 1580 major responses to these consultations were made.

#### 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. 50 audits were undertaken on improvement schemes in 2022 and 28 were completed in 2023.
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,
- 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. 25 fixed safety camera sites were in operation (ten speed, two bi-directional speed, six red light and seven combined red light and 'speed on green'). There were 136 mobile camera sites/routes (59 core sites, four core routes, five motorcycle specific routes and 68 community concern sites). Locations and further information on the scheme itself can be found at [www.speedorsafety.com](http://www.speedorsafety.com)
7. Since the break-up of the National Camera Scheme in 2007, the national site selection guidance has been used when considering the potential for new permanent camera sites. This guidance has allowed mobile 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 the Department for Transport (DfT).
8. Throughout 2022, the Camera Scheme identified 52,734 drivers travelling at excessive speeds and/or running red traffic signals across the police force area (City, County and Rutland).

### **Driver Education Workshops (DEW)**

9. Driver education remains an important part of speed management and, in 2022/23, 20,613 drivers completed a Speed Awareness course in Leicestershire as an alternative to receiving a fine and points on their driving licence. The DEW operation offers a blended approach with both online and in person classroom provision made available to clients.
10. In addition to the Speed Awareness Workshops, many drivers accused of other motoring offences were offered the opportunity to attend workshops. A total of 2,233 drivers have completed the national What's Driving Us course in Leicestershire in 2022/23. 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.
11. In 2022/23, 50 drivers accused of careless driving (often involving an accident) chose to attend the Safe & Considerate Driving Course, which combines

classroom activities and practical driving instruction, as an alternative to prosecution.

12. In 2022/23, 3,540 drivers completed the National Motorway Awareness Course (NMAC). The theory course aims to increase knowledge of the meaning of smart motorway signs, as well as improve understanding of variable speed limits and lane closures and complying with the rules on smart motorways.
13. Workshops are offered to offenders in 30 and 40 mph speed limit areas. 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 DEW in Leicestershire - a significant road safety input.

### **Advisory 20mph School Safety Zones**

14. 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. the programme was completed in summer 2014 with over 250 zones being created and maintained.

### **Mandatory 20-mph Speed Limit / Zones**

15. The requirements for a 20mph speed limit are set out by the Department for Transport - Setting Local Speed Limits. The guidance set out by the DfT suggests that mean speed for a village/road that is being considered for a 20mph limit/zone should be at or below 24mph. 24mph is the suggested speed due to the fact it falls in the lower end of the 20's and, therefore, the implementation of a 20mph limit would be self-enforcing, i.e., without the need for any physical traffic calming measures.
16. Where the mean speeds are higher than 24mph, physical calming measures such as speed humps and chicanes would be required in order to control and maintain speeds.

### **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 length of road, this is the speed limit. In 2013, speed limits on a number of local roads were changed in order to ensure, as far as possible, 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 are implemented in line with the DfT national guidance on setting local speed limits, which were published in 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 usual level of support to communities and volunteers was not possible, and thus, the Council had to adapt delivery and ran a successful volunteer free scheme in 2021/22 where educational boards were placed at various key sites of community concern to remind drivers to check their speed. April 2023 saw the return of full volunteer-based schemes in the County with 18 schemes being delivered across the police force area. Further information can be found at [www.communityspeedwatch.org.uk](http://www.communityspeedwatch.org.uk).

### **Education Training and Publicity**

20. Human error is a significant factor in many accidents. Various available training and publicity educates, alerts and informs road users about hazardous behaviours. The diverse array of initiatives which are currently employed within the County are described below.

### **Drink Drug-Driving**

21. Whilst the police continues 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 summer and winter drink drug drive campaigns and there is ongoing 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 Winter 2022 campaign started a week earlier than on the usual 1 December in order to coincide with the Qatar World Cup. A paid for social media campaign themed around the football championship supported the campaign which targeted male drivers aged between 35 and 65 via Meta (Facebook and Instagram along with Google display network) and subsequently reached 25% of the target audience, that is those who actually viewed the advert in their social media feeds.
23. During December 2022, across the Leicestershire Police force area 129 people were caught drink driving, 36 drug driving and eight failed to provide a sample (December 2021 saw 111 drink and 38 drug drive arrests). Of these, 36 arrests were made following a road traffic collision, and although 97 of these arrests were made in Leicester City, there were also significant number of arrests in the County (16 in Charnwood, 14 in Hinckley and Bosworth and 13 in Blaby). There is no formula to determine how much any one person can drink in an evening and be okay to drive the next day as 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 2022 there were four events and over 85 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. The events were also supported by the Road Safety 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, answered a health questionnaire and undertaken a driving assessment in their own vehicle with an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI). During 2022, there was continued 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 Council ongoing road safety advice.

### **Publicity Campaigns**

28. Much of the campaign work is now channelled and supported by the Road Safety Partnership. In 2022, social media road safety campaigns specifically focussed on drink driving to coincide with the World Cup, a reminder about the illegality of e-scooters, encouraging older drivers to consider taking a Leicestershire County Council SAGE course and a “carry over” message from the previous year, which ran from September 2021 until April 2022, reminding drivers of the importance of stopping at red traffic light signals. During 2023, campaigns reminded drivers of the change to the Highway Code (Hierarchy of Road Users in 2022) and focused on the risks to vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclist, horse riders) and a reminder about the illegality of private e-scooter use on highways and pavements.

### **The FATAL4 Clinics**

29. Over the past 11 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, motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists are primarily targeted. 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 2022/23, 89 riders took advantage of this scheme which is down on the 97 of the previous financial year. A variety of different methods are now being used to publicise the scheme, including social media, and promotion through events and with training providers.
33. Compulsory Basic Training (CBT+) offers four hours of additional on-road tuition to newly qualified riders allowing them to focus on areas where they need to improve their confidence. The Road Safety Partnership provides a £75 subsidy towards each course with the rider paying £30. In the financial year 2022/23, 127 courses were delivered.
34. 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.
35. 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.

36. The Council remains a supporter 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](http://www.shinysideup.co.uk).
37. 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**

38. The Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme has been operating in Leicestershire since 1987 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 2022/23: Autumn Term (September – December): Pedestrian Safety; Spring Term (January – March): Cycle / Scooter Safety; and Summer Term (April – July): Active Travel to School. More information can be found at <http://www.junior-rso.org.uk/>.
39. Road Safety Tutors continued to provide cyclist training (Bikeability) to primary school children, training to National Standards. Level 1/2 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 2025 to support the delivery and upscale of Bikeability training to reach 80% of children in Year 6, i.e., target 6531 children. Bikeability Level 3 will also be undertaken by more than 175 children.
40. 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. During 2022 around 80 over-16s have taken part in cycle and e-bike training. This is slightly lower than the engagement in 2021 but 2021 numbers were higher and reflective of the demand built up over Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns when training was paused. The Fire Service has developed a cycle safety virtual reality (VR) 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.
41. The School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service continues to help children and parents across busy roads at school journey times. A number of patrollers have involved themselves in wider aspects of road safety work, such as road safety talks in schools.

42. 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?
43. 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.
44. School Keep Clear – Camera Project 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.
45. The School Streets initiative addresses parking, congestion, air pollution and safety around schools during school drop off and pick up times. A School Streets 4-week pilot ran in August/September 2022 at three County schools. In June 2023 the pilot was further extended with the two of the pilot schools, with a view to them possibly becoming a permanent feature. 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
46. School Engagement is carried out by dedicated Schools Officer delivering support to schools on safe/active travel. Early years/foundation are engaged via Street Feet Resource which provides learning opportunities and road safety awareness through role play and activity. KS1&2 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.