



CABINET – 21 JUNE 2024

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the development of the Council's Road Safety Strategy (RSS), which includes new casualty reduction targets, and to seek approval of the Strategy.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) the Council's Road Safety Strategy (attached as Appendix A to this report) be approved, noting the inclusion of new casualty reduction targets;
 - b) The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, be authorised to make future minor amendments as considered necessary to the Road Safety Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The RSS is not a new approach or policy, but it presents in one document, for the first time, everything that the Council does to improve road safety. It informs Leicestershire's communities what the Council does, how it does it, and how the approach may need to evolve in the future to meet new challenges.
4. To set new ambitious casualty reduction targets, which will support continuous improvement to road safety and road casualty reduction.
5. Where appropriate, minor amendments will ensure that the Strategy is kept updated.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. A report was considered by the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 March 2024. Its comments are included at paragraph 38 in Part B of this report.

7. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Council's RSS will be published on the Council's website in June 2024 and appropriate parties informed of its publication.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. 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. This objective includes an action to develop a road safety strategy by 2026.
9. Road safety and casualty reduction also contribute to the other strategic outcomes ('Clean and Green'; 'Great Communities'; 'Improved Opportunities'; and 'Strong Economy, Transport and Infrastructure'); for 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 the Council's aims to tackle climate change and improve health outcomes.
10. In March 2024, the Cabinet approved the Environment and Transport 2024/25 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme. The Cabinet was advised that this included work on the development of the Council's RSS.

Resource Implications

11. Despite being one of the lowest funded county authorities by the Government, 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.
12. The Strategy presents existing road safety programmes (capital and revenue), which have been, or will be, delivered within existing agreed budgets, subject to approval of the future Medium Term Financial Strategy.
13. The delivery of the Strategy is dependent on funding, which mainly comes from the Government, but may also be from other sources, such as 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, such as Government competitive funding streams and the planning arena via Section 106 and Section 278 agreements.
14. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance were consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. None.

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PART B

Background

16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Most road traffic collisions occur on local roads under the direct control of local highway authorities, who are key partners in the delivery of the Government's Strategic Framework for Road Safety (2011) and casualty reduction objectives, including those highlighted in the Government's latterly published road safety statements.
19. Working with the Council's partners through the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership (LLRRSP), 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.
20. In advance of any new Government road safety framework or strategy, 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 Systems 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 commissioned and published a Road Safety Management Capacity Review, which recognised that a Safe Systems 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

21. A range of existing, emerging and future 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 such as 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 and concerns. Communication could help to manage expectations and explain what the Council can and cannot do. As an example, the ongoing challenging financial situation for local government, not all issues can be solved by an engineering solution, evidence is used to focus resources and maximise benefits and monitoring may be the most appropriate action.

Opportunities

22. There are a wide range of opportunities which potentially affect road safety, including:

- a) New and emerging technology, such as 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

23. The RSS 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 in one place, or under the Safe Systems approach.
24. 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 considered timely to review the Council's 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 Environment and Transport Department's other key policies, strategies and plans, such as the Local Transport Plan and the Cycling and Walking Strategy, which promote active travel.
 - 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 sets new ambitious casualty reduction targets. As such, it is closely aligned with the annual Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire report, which monitors and reports progress against Council casualty reduction targets and is presented to the Highway and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year.
 - h) In addition to the above, the RSS will:
 - i. Maximise benefits and focus resources;
 - ii. Support future funding bids (capital and revenue);
 - iii. Support and inform discussions, such as with Midlands Connect and the Government;
 - iv. Provide a foundation for road safety schemes and programmes;

- v. 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 where circumstances dictate. The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, will make future minor amendments to the RSS as considered necessary.

Casualty reduction targets (Killed or Seriously Injured - KSI)

- 25. The Council is committed to continuing to improve road safety and reduce road casualties in Leicestershire.
- 26. 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 KSI casualties per year between 2016 and 2022, but 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, excluding 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.
- 27. The Council's 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.
- 28. Progress towards achieving these targets will be monitored through the Council's annual Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire report. Where appropriate and based on evidence, these targets may be adjusted.

Consultation

29. Early targeted engagement took place to help steer the development of the Strategy, including with the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG) and the Council's Communities Board.
30. The RSS is not a new policy or approach. Instead, it presents in one document everything that the Council does to improve road safety. Given this, a shorter (four-week) consultation took place from 25 March to 22 April 2024.
31. Members, parish councils, the LECG and LLRRSP were advised separately, along with the public through the Council's 'Have your say' webpage. A link to the draft document was provided and particular focus was given to gathering views on the approach and ambitious casualty reduction targets.
32. The consultation also noted that, as the Council is committed to continually improving road safety and reducing road casualties in Leicestershire, new and ambitious casualty reduction targets had been set, as detailed in paragraph 26 above.
33. In total, seven separate responses were received – two from LLRRSP members, one from the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and four from members of the public. The responses are summarised below.

Comments of LLRRSP members

34. Leicestershire Police commented that it was 'an excellent document placing ongoing emphasis on collaboration and partnership activity. The Safer Systems approach is very well documented, laying the basis for a joined-up casualty reduction strategy going forward ... This will be a most useful document for all LLRRSP members'.
35. A suggestion was also made regarding the possible use of alternative images that show more high visibility clothing. This has been explored with the partnership, along with a review of free stock images. Relevant images will be amended where possible, subject to suitable images being available, such as through ongoing partnership road safety programmes.
36. Rutland Council commented that 'the strategy was comprehensive and the ambitious targets are what we all aspire to'.

Comments of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

37. The Committee considered a report on the development of Leicestershire County Council's Road Safety Strategy on 7 March 2024, prior to the start of the consultation.
38. Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- a) In response to a question regarding the A5, the Director advised that this was managed by National Highways. The Strategy would include a commitment from the Council to work collectively with National Highways regarding those parts of the A5 which passed through Leicestershire.
 - b) Members noted that fewer traditional 'cluster' sites in terms of accidents were coming through due to measures introduced in those areas. However, the Strategy retained the Council's commitment to look at sites or stretches of road where recorded personal injury collisions demonstrate certain patterns of behaviour. The Council would continue to seek to understand these and respond appropriately. It was acknowledged that a single approach would not be appropriate.
 - c) The Council looked at the motorway network, including the M1, to help its understanding of how this impacted the use of roads in the County for which it was responsible. Through the Road Safety Partnership information and learning was also shared. However, the County Council would not intervene in measures adopted on such roads. This was a matter for National Highways.
39. It was noted that individual road safety schemes would continue to be subject to consultations with local members and the public.
40. No further comments were received from the Committee during the consultation.
41. The draft Strategy has been amended to include the following text: 'Where appropriate, we will continue to work with National Highways regarding those parts of the strategic road network, such as the A5, that passes through Leicestershire'.

Comments received from members of the public (grouped by topic)

42. Four comments were received from members of the public (or those writing in a personal capacity), two of which covered a wide range of issues including content/style of the Strategy, high-level road safety issues, delivery of local measures and the Council's response to local concerns. The comments and subsequent actions have been summarised below.

a) **Document content, style and format**

These comments related to a wide range of issues, including the length and style of the document, typographical error and questioned the inclusion of references to the Government's Road Safety Investigation Branch (RSIB) in view of no further announcement from the Government on the progress of its establishment.

Action

With regard to the length and style, the document serves several purposes, including for use and reference by officers, partners, stakeholders and members of the public. The Strategy, therefore, is required to be comprehensive to serve its many purposes. However, to improve accessibility, a summary version has also been produced (Appendix B). These comments will also be taken into account when reviewing and developing the next RSS.

With regard to the typographical error, the document has been amended.

With regard to the inclusion of reference to the Government's RSIB, the reference in the Strategy to the RSIB is correct, appropriately reflecting the Government's stated position on the matter. The reference will be reviewed at the next RSS review point.

b) Data / evidence

The suggestion was made that current speed data should be collected and utilised to help prevent collisions, rather than using collision data.

Action

The RSS explains the use of evidence/data and the need for longer-term monitoring to identify and address road safety issues, rather than reacting prematurely in response to data collected over a short period.

Schemes and initiatives take account of a range of data, including recent data. These include requests for pedestrian facilities, safety cameras, the community speed enforcement initiative and design standards for engineering measures and new developments.

The Council will continue to use data, evidence, the Government's guidance and best practice when assessing and developing all schemes and initiatives and the Council will continue to be flexible and open to new ideas and innovation, where appropriate.

As the comment also relates to the day-to-day activities of the Department, anonymised extracts from comments received were forwarded to the relevant Council team for information.

c) Development

Concerns were raised that pavements are not being built from new developments, enabling residents to access services such as shops and passenger transport.

Action

The RSS includes several references to facilities for cycling, walking and wheeling in new developments, including considering whether the

proposed access to the site is safe and appropriate for all network users when making highway observations on planning applications and considering road safety during the development, design and delivery of new schemes, such as cycling, walking and wheeling facilities.

It notes that land-use planning and highway development management are important starting points for safe roads, which include consideration of travel demand, mode choice and the provision of safe and sustainable journeys, including walking, wheeling, cycling and passenger transport.

Given this, no further changes are proposed to the draft Strategy.

d) **Notification of consultation**

This comment related to the late notification of the consultation.

Action

It is not clear whether this was a wider issue, or specific to a certain location (the two comments made on this issue were from the same location). Parish councils were notified at the start of the consultation via the Council's parish webpage, Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Council's email and parish bi-weekly email, with the consultation appearing on the Council's 'Have your say' webpage.

The Council will continue to ensure that parish councils, partners, stakeholders and the public are notified as soon as possible. The Council will take this comment into account during the planning of future consultations.

e) **Local issues**

Two comments from the same location related to dissatisfaction with the Council's response to local concerns regarding road safety and safe design/new building works. It was suggested that the Council's replies should be quick, supportive and positive.

Action

As comments related to the day-to-day activities of the Department, anonymised extracts from comments were forwarded to the relevant teams in the Council for information.

Conclusion

43. The Road Safety Strategy is not a new approach or policy, but it presents in one document, for the first time, the extensive work that the Council does to improve road safety, letting Leicestershire's communities know what the Council does, how it does it and how the approach may need to evolve in the future to meet new challenges.

44. The Strategy includes two new casualty reduction targets:
- a) Medium-term target to 2035 - 40% reduction in KSI casualties by 2035;
 - b) Long-term target to 2050 - Zero deaths caused by road traffic collisions by 2050.
45. These targets are being set to ensure that the Council continues to challenge itself, supports the Government's objectives, monitors and evaluates the continuing success of its road safety programmes and delivers the best outcomes for Leicestershire's communities.
46. A consultation took place from 25 March to 22 April 2024. Seven responses were received, including from the LLRRSP. Other comments received have been reviewed and the Strategy has been amended to address these where appropriate. Comments have also been forwarded to specialist officers, a new summary document has been produced and comments will be taken into consideration during the development of the next RSS.
47. Other changes that have been made include additional references to health and wellbeing, reference to intelligent speed assistance in vehicles and the provision of a Foreword.

Equality Implications

48. 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 and elderly, and those with a disability.
49. An equality screening was undertaken at the start of the process to develop the RSS, with the likely impact of the Strategy being identified as positive/neutral. After early discussions with stakeholders, including the LECG, the draft Strategy was amended, taking account of comments received.
50. Feedback from the four-week engagement was assessed, including for equality implications and, where appropriate, the Strategy was updated.
51. 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

52. Initiatives to improve road safety and reduce road casualties benefit all road users, focussing limited resources where they will provide the most benefit.
53. Reducing fatal and serious casualties supports Part 1, Article 2 of the Human Rights Act (Right to life).

54. 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

55. As set out in paragraph 9 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.
56. Environmental Impact Assessments will be carried out in relation to work undertaken on individual projects and programmes where appropriate.

Health Implications

57. As set out in paragraph 8 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.
58. 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, and helps to improve air quality, carbon reduction and public health through mode shift away from car use.

Background Papers

February 2024 - Department for Transport – Local Transport Fund allocations 2025 to 2032

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-fund-allocations>

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

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>

May 2011 - Department for Transport – Strategic framework for road safety

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-framework-for-road-safety>

Appendices

Appendix A - Leicestershire County Council Road Safety Strategy

Appendix B – Road Safety Strategy Summary Document