

Road Safety: A Guide for Local Councillors in England



Road Safety **GB**



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Introduction

Roads are essential to our everyday lives, and to our economic prosperity. We all use the roads in some way, by driving, riding, walking or travelling as a passenger, and we depend on them to obtain goods and services. Unfortunately, this comes at a price, which includes people being killed and injured.

However, road deaths and injuries are not inevitable. The last few decades have demonstrated how effectively a comprehensive road safety strategy can reduce the number of people killed or injured on the road, despite increasing traffic levels.

Reported road deaths have reduced from about 5,500 a year in the mid 1980s to fewer than 2,000 a year now. Over the same period, road casualties have decreased from 240,000 (including 75,000 serious injuries) to just over 200,000 (including 23,000 serious injuries).¹

Despite these improvements, more than 35 people still die, and almost 450 are seriously injured, on our roads every week. There are also signs that the long term reductions in road deaths may have stopped.

These figures are for road casualties reported to the police, and so do not include tens of thousands of people who are injured in unreported crashes. Although virtually all fatal road crashes are reported to the police, a considerable proportion of non-fatal casualties are not reported, even when those involved require medical or hospital treatment. The real number of road casualties in Great Britain every year is estimated to be about 730,000 (but possibly as high as 880,000), including an estimated 80,000 seriously injured people.²

The challenge of reducing these preventable deaths and injuries has become even greater in recent years with the need to significantly reduce public spending. Local authorities in particular have faced substantial budget and spending restrictions, which affect their ability to deliver the vast range of essential public services for which they are responsible. While road safety must accept its share of these restrictions, cutting road safety services too far will mean more people being killed or injured.

Apart from the human cost, this does not make financial sense because road accidents cost billions of pounds and so preventing them saves billions. Reported road accidents, including damage-only ones, cost around £15 billion a year. If unreported injury accidents are included, the cost could increase to about £50 billion.³ It has also been estimated that congestion, 25% of which is caused by road collisions, costs the country about £22 billion a year.⁴

Despite these challenges, local authorities can continue to deliver effective road safety services that help to keep their people alive and healthy by ensuring that their road safety services are:

- Evidence-informed
- Co-ordinated with other public services
- Designed and delivered in partnership
- Evaluated to ensure effectiveness

This Guide shows how you can help to achieve this in your role as a local Councillor.

Road Casualties

Reported Road Casualties Great Britain, 2011²

User Group	Killed	Serious	Slight	All
Car	883	8,342	115,699	124,924
Pedestrian	453	5,454	20,291	26,198
Motorcyclist	362	5,247	14,541	20,150
Pedal Cyclist	107	3,085	16,023	19,215
Other	96	994	12,373	13,463
Total	1,901	23,122	178,927	203,950

High Risk Groups

The likelihood of being involved in road crashes is not evenly spread; some groups are higher risk than others, including young drivers, older drivers, at-work drivers, motorcyclists, pedestrians, pedal cyclists and children. As a Councillor, you should be aware of the high risk groups in your authority, to help inform decisions about prioritising road safety resources.

The Main Causes

Almost all road crashes involve human error, ranging from simple mistakes to deliberately dangerous, illegal behaviour. They usually involve a number of contributory factors,⁵ the most common of which are basic errors, such as failing to look properly (a factor in 25% of road deaths), loss of control of a vehicle (34% of deaths), inappropriate speed (23% of deaths) and impairment or distraction (24% of deaths).^{*} However, this does not mean that road users are solely responsible for preventing road casualties.

Road Safety Management (The Safe System Approach)

Good road safety management adopts the Safe System Approach, as advocated by the World Health Organisation⁶. People are killed or seriously injured on the road if they suffer impacts that are greater than the human body's ability to tolerate (for example, a car hitting a pedestrian at 30 mph). The Safe Systems Approach includes designing roads and vehicles so they minimise the risk of crashes occurring, and ensure that when they do occur, they are much less likely to result in death or serious injury. For example, 20 mph schemes not only reduce the risk of crashes, but also pedestrians have a much greater chance of surviving if they are hit by a vehicle at 20 mph or less, rather than at 30 mph.

Those involved in the design and management of the road system and road users share responsibility for the safety, and safe use, of the road system. The Safe Systems Approach ensures that measures to prevent injuries extend beyond trying to change individual behaviour, and include changing vehicles, roads and vehicle speeds.

Road safety practitioners try to identify the factors that lead to road casualties, understand how they affect each other and how they can be changed, to produce a safer road environment, safer vehicles and safer road users.

^{*}Percentages equal more than 100% because crashes usually have multiple contributory factors.

Who Delivers Road Safety?

Central Government

Central government sets the regulatory framework for roads, vehicles and road users, and the country's national road safety strategy. This includes:

- Providing funding and resources to local government and others to enable the delivery of road safety
- Collecting and publishing road casualty data
- Setting standards for road design, construction and maintenance
- Setting standards for vehicles and requirements for vehicle licensing
- Managing the motorways and trunk road network
- Commissioning research into the nature, causes of, and potential solutions to, road casualties
- Conducting education and publicity campaigns (fewer than previously)
- Setting requirements for driver licensing, training and tests
- Setting road use laws, including offences and penalties, and guidance on safe road use, such as the Highway Code

In May 2011, the Department for Transport published its "Strategic Framework for Road Safety"⁷, setting out its approach to reducing death and injury on Britain's roads, and the range of measures by which it, and others, will do so. It includes a Road Safety Action Plan and a wide range of performance indicators against which progress will be measured.

Unlike, the previous national road safety strategy, "Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone", which covered the decade 2000 to 2010, the Strategic Framework does not set casualty reduction targets, but instead forecasts that road deaths will fall to between 1,770 and 1,530 by 2020.

Localism

The Strategic Framework for Road Safety also reflects the Government's overall policy of 'Localism', which aims to allow local authorities and local citizens to decide their own priorities for road safety in their areas, and to link their road safety agendas with other local agendas, such as public health and sustainable travel.

Central government supports this by providing access to guidance and information to the public and to road safety professionals. For example, English highway authorities are required to publish casualty, collision and speed data for permanent fixed camera sites on their roads, and a website will be available in Spring 2013 to allow local people to compare road safety performance in their area against other similar areas.

Local Government

Local government is the main delivery agent of road safety; local authorities have a statutory duty under section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act,⁸ to “take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents”.

Local Authorities’ Statutory Duty to Provide Road Safety

The 1988 Road Traffic Act, Section 39

- 39 (1) The Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, provide for promoting road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads.
- 39 (2) Each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may make contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies.
- 39 (3) Each local authority –
 - [a] must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or part of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area,
 - [b] must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of the roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority (in Scotland, local roads authority) and other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads, and
 - [c] in constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.

Upper Tier Local Authorities (such as County Councils, Metropolitan District Councils and Unitary Authorities) have legal responsibilities for highways and transportation in their area. Lower Tier Authorities (such as District Councils) do not, but do help to deliver road safety services.

Transport for London (TfL) manages the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), London’s traffic lights, and transport services across the capital. The rest of London’s road network is managed by London Borough Councils and the Common Council of London, each of which is a Unitary Authority.⁹

Trunk roads and motorways in England are managed by the Highways Agency.

Every Local Highways Authority has a road safety team or, in the case of some smaller unitary authorities, a road safety officer. Their role is to provide professional expertise to identify the causes of problems and to help to identify, develop and deliver solutions to those problems. This will be through educational programmes, skills training e.g. cyclist and young driver training, and publicity campaigns and programmes to inform, raise awareness and to encourage positive and discourage negative behaviours by road users. They are also able to inform planning and development design and to provide advice on policies and protocols that will improve road safety and design out potential hazards.

A few local authorities have delegated some of their education and publicity service to private contractors or other agencies e.g. where the Fire and Rescue Service is a directorate within the council, but most provide this service themselves and thus ensure quality control and retain flexibility of delivery.

Local Highways Authorities also have road safety engineering teams who seek to identify and implement road design and engineering solutions to road casualty problems in their areas. The road safety education and engineering teams should work together, as well as in co-operation with other agencies, such as the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and others.



Local Authority officers also share knowledge and experience with each other across the country, in many ways, including through Road Safety GB, the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and the Road Safety Knowledge Centre (www.roadsafetyknowledgecentre.org.uk).

Local Authorities Duty to Manage their Road Network

Local authorities also have a duty to manage and maintain their road networks under section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.¹⁰

Traffic Management Act 2004

16 The network management duty

- (1) It is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives—
 - (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network;

and
 - (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.
- (2) The action which the authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing—
 - (a) the more efficient use of their road network; or
 - (b) the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority

Parish Councils

As the Localism agenda develops, town and parish councils may also acquire a more important role in road safety, for example by funding speed indication devices, traffic calming or community schemes. Many highway authorities have already established forums to allow parish councils to request lower speed limits or improvements to road design. These represent important routes through which the wishes of local communities can be heard.

Town and parish councils represent the first tier of local government. While they do not have statutory highways responsibilities, they often act as a key route through which residents' views can be expressed. Improvements to transport are likely to be central elements in Neighbourhood Plans as they are developed at this level.

Police

The police enforce road traffic laws, but some areas, such as parking enforcement are the responsibility of local authorities. The police also co-operate with other agencies, such as the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), to enforce specialised traffic laws, and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to investigate serious work-related road accidents.

Roads policing supports and complements road safety education and engineering, and is an essential part of road safety. It:

- Deters illegal, dangerous and careless behaviour on the road
- Detects illegal, dangerous and careless behaviour on the road
- Identifies offenders
- Identifies the causes of crashes
- Helps to educate, and change the attitudes of, road users
- Prevents other forms of crime
- Identifies and removes dangerous vehicles

From 15 November 2012, elected Police and Crime Commissioners are accountable for how crime is tackled, and the delivery and performance of the Police service, in each Police force area in England and Wales. Police and Crime Panels scrutinise the work of each Commissioner and make sure information is publically available. The Panels include a Councillor from every Local Authority in the Police force area.

For more information, see “Police and Crime Panels: Guidance on Role and Composition”, published by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)¹¹.

In London, Transport for London and the London Local Authorities have the power, under the Traffic Management Act 2004⁹ and the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003, to take responsibility for the civil enforcement of a range of non endorsable moving traffic offences.



The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) sets out its policy for road safety enforcement in “Policing the Roads - 5 Year Strategy 2011-2015”.¹²

Fire and Rescue Service

Section 8 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004¹³ requires fire and rescue services to respond to road traffic accidents in their area.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

8 Road traffic accidents

- (1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of —
 - (a) rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents in its area;
 - (b) protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic accidents in its area.
- (2) In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular—
 - (a) secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements;
 - (b) secure the provision of training for personnel;
 - (c) make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel;
 - (d) make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1);
 - (e) make arrangements for ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from action taken for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1).

In addition to their core role of providing an emergency response service to road traffic collisions and extricating victims who are trapped in vehicles, most fire and rescue services are also active in local multi-agency partnerships in their area and many support or deliver road safety education programmes to help prevent accidents happening in the first place.

Health Service

The public health system in England has undergone radical reform, which includes the responsibility for public health being transferred to local authorities. This may provide funding opportunities for road safety.

To help councils decide where best to target resources the Department of Health publish a list of indicators in its "Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013 - 2016";¹⁴ one of which relates directly to road casualties. Indicator 1.10 is 'Killed and seriously injured casualties on England's roads'. Some of the other indicators (for example, 'alcohol-related admissions to hospitals') are also very relevant to road safety.

In England, local authorities have a duty to establish Health and Wellbeing Boards, who will have strategic influence over commissioning decisions across health, public health and social care. The Boards will bring together clinical commissioning groups and councils to develop a shared understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of the community, undertake Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) and develop a joint strategy for how these needs can be best addressed.

Each board must include at least one local authority councillor, the directors of the Authority's adult social services, children's services and public health, as well as representatives from other organisations.

Closer co-ordination of road safety (and other injury prevention fields, such as home safety) with public health provide ideal opportunities for meeting the councils' overall obligations and desire to help their citizens enjoy long, active and healthy lives.

The Department for Health has published "A Short Guide to Health and Wellbeing Boards".¹⁵



Employers

Employers also play an important role in delivering road safety improvements by assessing and managing the risks faced and created by their staff when they are using the road for work purposes. A high proportion of journeys made on the road are work-related (for example, delivering goods, driving to appointments), and it is estimated that between a quarter and a third of all road crashes involve someone using the road for work.

Therefore, employers have duties under health and safety law to assess and manage the risks faced and created by their staff when they are using the road for work. Some road traffic laws also have 'cause or permit' offences which can apply to employers.

Local authorities are also major employers themselves, and have many staff who drive, ride or walk on the road in order to do their jobs. Therefore, your local authority should have policies and measures to manage its own work-related road safety risks.

The Department for Transport and the Health and Safety Executive publish a free guide for employers: "Driving at Work: Managing Work-Related Road Safety"¹⁶, which can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk.

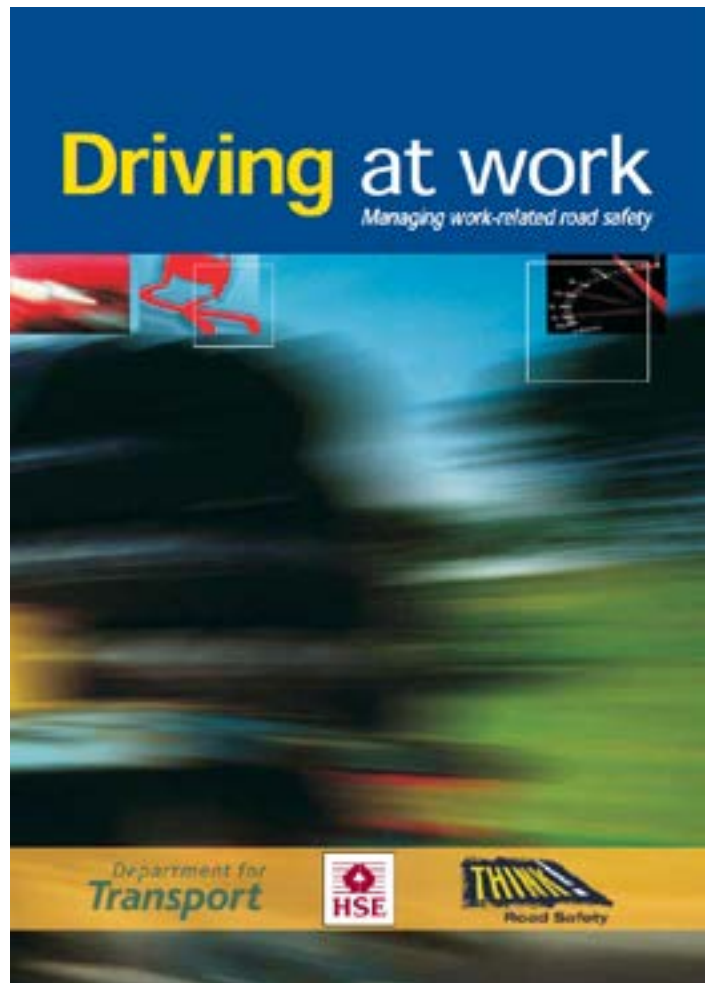
Advice and free resources to help employers manage their occupational road risk are available from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

Others

A wide range of other agencies help to deliver road safety services, for example, national and local charities and associations (such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the other organisations who helped to produce this guide).

Driver and motorcyclist trainers play a significant role in helping people become safer drivers and riders and in providing refresher and advanced training.

Youth organisations, e.g., Scouts, Brownies and others, often provide road safety courses and achievement awards. And many other groups help to improve road safety.



Local Government Road Safety

Local authorities that are a Highway Authority are responsible for highway maintenance, transport strategy and policy, including road safety, accident investigation and prevention, public transport and sustainable transport for their areas.

Local Transport Plan (LTP)

Local authorities in England (outside London) are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP) setting out their strategy, targets and implementation plan for improving transport in their community. The Plans are used to apply for government funding for local transport needs, and should show how they intend to reduce the number of people being killed and injured on their roads. However, road safety is not a stand-alone activity; every opportunity should be taken to deliver road safety benefits through for example, maintenance and traffic management schemes.

The LTP should include all road safety engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement activities planned for the next five years, including involvement with other agencies. It should also review the effectiveness of the measures employed in the previous plan. Road safety managers are best placed to lead the development of the road safety part of the LTP. Some councils also produce a separate Road Safety Plan and Annual Review.

In London, each local authority produces a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) setting out how it will meet the mayor of London's Transport Strategy.

Data

Good road casualty data is essential to ensure that limited resources are targeted at the right groups, areas and issues, in the right priority order and in the most effective way. Before any road safety programme (engineering, education, enforcement or a combination) can be planned, it is essential to identify the problems that need to be tackled and the most appropriate ways of doing so, otherwise there is the very real risk of spending those resources ineffectively.

Local Data

The police collect casualty data from reported road accidents, which is held by the local authority or an organisation contracted to the local authority. Your authority's work is dependent on the quality and timely transfer of this data from the police; a Service Level Agreement may be in place between the two agencies to ensure this.

Subjective information may be obtained through consultation with local residents or community groups but should be treated cautiously.

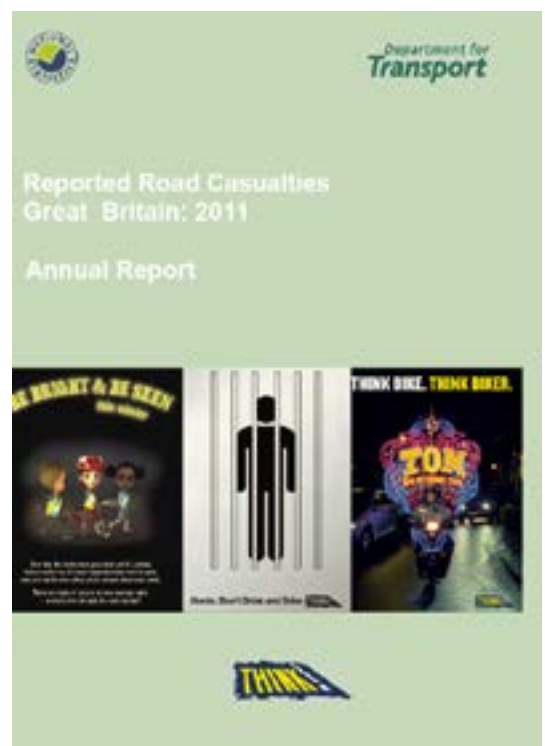
National Data

Casualty records from around the country are compiled into a national report, "Reported Road Casualties Great Britain" published annually by the Department for Transport.³

Your authority's road safety department will constantly monitor its database of accidents and casualties on the authority's roads to understand what types are occurring, where, when and how, who is involved, and the likely causes.

This enables them to identify priority problem areas, roads and/or groups (e.g., young drivers) and to plan road safety programmes to reduce the likelihood and severity of these accidents recurring.

If no action is taken, they will continue to occur.



Research Evidence

Some local authorities produce or commission reviews of their overall casualty situation or about particular groups of road users. For example, Cornwall Council and Plymouth University have produced a range of road safety reports¹⁷ to inform and support the council's road safety education, engineering and enforcement initiatives.

Road Safety Officers also use other published research to help guide their priorities and activities. Two useful online tools that provide access to a wide range of road safety research and good practice are the Road Safety Observatory and the Road Safety Knowledge Centre.



Road safety programmes designed from the analysis of this data and research may involve road safety education, engineering, enforcement or a combination of some or all of these approaches.

Road Safety Education Training and Publicity (ETP)

Education is a broad based activity, which deals with ideas and concepts such as hazard perception and management of personal risk in the road environment, and the development of coping strategies, and encourages understanding of our personal responsibilities to other road users. It is a gradual process, which takes place over a number of years.



Training is mostly concerned with creating or developing practical skills, is short term in duration and includes activities such as pedestrian training, cycle training, post-test driver training and motor cycle training. Central government funding may be available for some activities, such as, currently, the Bikeability standard cycle training course.

Publicity is designed to provide information, raise awareness and give advice on appropriate behaviour; it can also reinforce positive attitudes.

All three activities aim to influence the behaviour of road users, by improving their knowledge of the causes and consequences of road crashes, improving their skills as road users and fostering positive attitudes towards behaving in a way that reduces the risk of causing or being involved in a road accident.

Although road user education is incorporated within the Scottish curriculum, it is currently an optional element in England and Wales, and so is dependent on local enthusiasm and commitment down to the level of each individual school and teacher.

Road Safety Engineering

It is important that a range of officers are involved in creating safer road environments, including road engineers, planners and urban designers in close consultation with local communities to create a safer road environment that:

WARNS	road users of any unexpected features or those requiring special attention
INFORMS	road users about what is expected
GUIDES	road users, making appropriate behaviour an easy choice
CONTROLS	road users as far as possible where conflicts may exist
FORGIVES	error or inappropriate behaviour

Road safety engineers and urban designers use a wide range of measures to improve the safety of the road environment for all road users and to encourage increased use of streets as places that meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and not just the movement of motor vehicles, as outlined in “Manual for Streets”¹⁸ and “Manual for Streets 2”¹⁹. These measures can range from improvements to road signs and markings, road surface improvements, applying ‘naked streets’ principles to street clutter, junction re-design, traffic calming schemes, 20 mph limits and zones, improved walking or cycling facilities to major road improvement schemes or Shared Space schemes.

Local safety schemes provide excellent value for money in places with existing accident problems.

By focusing on sites and areas with poor accident records, road safety engineers concentrate their efforts on places where it is known that people are actually being killed or injured, rather than on perceived risks.

Safety engineers usually have an even greater impact on casualty reduction by undertaking area-wide or route-based safety schemes rather than focusing only on selected individual sites.

Road safety engineers also conduct road safety audits of existing roads and planned developments to identify road safety problems and solutions.

Maintenance

Road maintenance is a fundamental feature of safe roads, and factors such as surface condition, road alignment, drainage, signs, road markings, traffic signals and gritting in the winter can reduce the chance of a crash.

Enforcement

Enforcement of road traffic laws is the duty of the police but some areas, such as parking enforcement, are the responsibility of local authorities. In London, Transport for London and the London Local Authorities have the power, under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003, to take on responsibility for the civil enforcement of a range of non endorsable moving traffic offences.

Sustainable Travel

Local authorities are implementing active travel programmes to meet a range of policy objectives, including public health, climate change, reducing congestion, community cohesion and local economic performance. Central Government is supporting active travel through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). A key way of achieving these goals is to encourage walking and cycling by introducing measures to make them a safer, convenient and more practical alternative to other forms of transport, especially for shorter journeys. There are many aspects of this in which your local authority can play an important role.

Cycling

Local authorities are seeking to encourage more people to cycle more safely and more often by making the roads safer for cyclists, providing cyclist training, cycle parking and safer routes to school projects.

Walking

Local authorities are promoting walking as a healthy and better alternative to driving for short journeys and are working to make walking safer, and more convenient and enjoyable.

School Crossing Patrol Service

Local authorities provide School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) to help children walk to and from school safely, although it is not a statutory (legally required) service.

They help children, and anyone accompanying them, to cross roads which are too busy for them to cross safely without help, but not busy enough to justify a zebra or light controlled pedestrian crossing.

Road Safety Great Britain publishes "Guidelines for the Management of the School Crossing Patrol Service"²⁰ which help local authorities to ensure they are able to provide their School Crossing Patrol Service where appropriate and in the most cost-effective manner possible, especially in these times of reduced public spending.



School Travel Plans

School communities (children, parents, teachers and governors) usually have school travel plans that were developed with help of grant funded School Travel Advisors. This grant funding has now ended and most of the posts have been discontinued, but school travel plans are still used in some authorities within their road safety programmes of work. Travel plans offer a way forward for healthier, active children through improved walking and cycling routes, journey planning, incentives, cycling and pedestrian training, safer routes and better parking management. Road safety education and training are an integral part of any travel plan, and will contribute to a reduction in congestion and accidents on the way to and from school.

The Healthy Schools movement has encouraged schools to take a whole school approach to a wide range of health issues. Schools are encouraged to adopt a whole school, whole community approach to safety, where they and the local authority work together to improve health outcomes for children, families and staff by encouraging active lifestyles while reducing the risk of accidents on the roads, in the playground and on school visits. This includes taking account of the health benefits achieved when children (and staff) walk or cycle to school.

If you are a school governor, you can help to make sure that your school's Travel Plan is up to date and has the support of the children, parents and local community.

Planning and Development Control

Where a local authority is the local planning authority, it is responsible for regulating and controlling new developments within its boundaries. Officers and councillors decide whether or not proposals for new developments are acceptable. The council must process and determine applications for planning permission, and regulate the schemes and developments which may be granted planning permission.

This presents opportunities to anticipate and avoid potential road hazards, and to make walking, cycling and the road environment safer at the design stage – always the most effective (and cost effective) way. It prevents problems before they arise, ensures that new road safety risks are not created and can also provide extra road safety measures to reduce the effects of increased traffic and changes in routes resulting from residential or commercial developments.

Getting the Most out of Limited Road Safety Resources

Evidence

The first step to making the most effective use of road safety resources is to ensure, as far as possible, that they are targeted at the council's most pressing road safety needs. These should be identified through analysis of the council's road casualty data and trends, including its demographic data, and analysis of local, national and international research.

An evidence-based approach should also include an assessment of the likely effectiveness of road safety measures and programmes in addressing the identified road safety problems so that the most appropriate measures can be chosen. This should also help to inform the design of the planned road safety programmes.

Evaluation

Help and guidance on how to decide achievable outcomes, plan and conduct evaluations of road safety programmes is available at www.roadsafetyevaluation.com. This contains an interactive road safety evaluation toolkit called E-valu-it to help road safety practitioners plan, carry out and report the results of road safety evaluations.

Partnership

A multi-agency, partnership approach allows resources to be shared and maximised and widens the pool of expertise available to all the partners. Councils are in an ideal position to act as hubs for partnerships which can improve the road safety of their constituents, and have considerable experience of working in this way.



Road Safety Partnerships

Road Safety Partnerships operate across the country based around police force areas. Many started as Safety Camera Partnerships, and many are called Casualty Reduction Partnerships. But whatever their name, they normally comprise local authorities, police, courts, fire and rescue service, the health authority and other bodies. Their main aim is to work together in a co-ordinated approach to reduce the number of casualties on the roads in the Partnership's area, and make the best use of their combined efforts and resources.

Road safety is also often a feature of local authority community safety partnerships.

Public health is an increasingly important partner for local authorities (see page 9), especially through the local Health and Well Being Boards.

Employers

Employers are an important partner as they are able to influence the way their staff drive, to communicate your authority's road safety messages and campaigns to their staff and are often able to support your authority's road safety activities.

Co-ordination with Other Policy Areas

Road safety services can complement, and be mutually supportive of, many of your council's other service areas, and vice versa. For example:

- Wider transport strategy
- Trading standards
- Environmental health
- Economic development
- Public Realm Improvements
- Health
- Education
- Land use planning
- Community cohesion
- Social services
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Environment

What You Can Do

As an elected councillor, you can help to ensure that your local authority has a comprehensive local road safety strategy that is effective in reducing road accidents and casualties on your roads, and the roads of neighbouring authorities. In particular, you can:

Influence Decision and Policy Making

Road safety is a subject that affects everyone; communities are very sensitive to road safety and related and perceived issues such as speeding, heavy vehicles and so on. You will be faced with making tough decisions about allocating finite resources between competing priorities; this may affect the resources available for road safety activity. This is why it is important that you are familiar with the value of road safety to your community, and to make the links with other policy agendas.

As a representative of your community, you can inform and influence the decisions through your cabinet or committee structure to ensure that road safety resources are used to the best effect, that opportunities to improve safety on the road are not missed and that any possible adverse effects on road safety are fully understood. Some members also sit on other committees and can raise the profile of road safety on the agendas of these organisations.

You may also sit on other bodies (such as a school governing body or a Health and Well-Being Board), either as a representative of your authority or as a local community representative, where you can make a difference.

Many councils operate some form of area committee system, which is often a perfect arena for considering road safety issues with other councillors and possibly the public. Area committees can allow comparisons between schemes at a more local level in a transparent way.

Ensure Road Safety Services are Evidenced-based and Evaluated

Road safety priorities and programmes should be based on casualty data and road safety research, and be evaluated, to ensure that the authority's limited resources are being used in the most effective way in response to the most pressing road safety needs. This evidence supports and underpins why and how decisions are made and demonstrates that the approach is both objective and fair.

Your responsibility is both to question the data to make sure that it is accurate and robust, and also to help present it to the public.

Ensure Services are Co-ordinated

The interaction between human factors and road features has important implications for safety engineering and road user education, and highlights the need for engineers, road safety officers, roads police and others to work closely together. These disciplines can only work effectively if they are linked, so that engineers understand how people use and interact with the road network, road signs and so on and so road safety officers and the police can report their experiences of how things work back to engineers.

The specialism of understanding the human factors is part of the road safety officer's expertise and training and their role should be to provide that knowledge to the other disciplines by a combined problem solving approach to highway design and accompanying campaigns and information.

This enables the road user to be at the heart of design, education and enforcement work. Councillors are in a unique position to enhance this partnership and to become actively involved in making their roads safe, through their membership of Partnership bodies, and by making sure that officers are working closely with colleagues and other agencies.

Champion Road Safety for All Road Users

Councillors can become aware of a problem because of complaints from constituents before they are reflected in the casualty statistics, and can bring this information to the notice of officers for further investigation. Equally, they can also make constituents aware of the authority's road casualty situation and its road safety initiatives.

A challenge for councillors is how to respond to constituents' calls for action to prevent what they believe is an "accident waiting to happen" at a particular location. With limited resources, it is even more important to target road safety at real rather than perceived road safety problems.

"Do we have to wait until someone is killed?"

There is a real challenge facing many councillors when balancing requests from local residents with the need to allocate resources properly across the whole of your council's area. Local residents will campaign for action on their own street or estate, and will expect you as their local Councillor to support them. However, you will have to balance your role as local champion against that as a councillor with responsibility across your whole area. Road Safety Officers will be able to present the evidence, but if it shows that a perceived problem in an area is not actually a road safety problem at all, this can be a difficult message for a councillor to convey. A perceived problem, however, may be a real barrier to people choosing to walk and cycle, and therefore, may justify action as part of the council's overall sustainable travel strategy.

Support Your Council's Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is a key part of local authority structure and practice. Scrutiny Committees help to ensure that the council's policies, plans, decisions and actions are being made in the community's best interest. They give councillors, officers and members of the public an opportunity to consider new ideas and challenge existing policy to improve a council's services.

Scrutiny Committees will consider a council's road safety policies (for example, whether to adopt a 20 mph limit policy for residential roads), and it is essential to ensure that the committee has reliable and comprehensive evidence on which to base its decisions.

Scrutiny can be a great way of challenging the evidence and assumptions made by officers, as well as bringing partners together and looking at new and innovative ideas for reducing accidents and casualties on the roads.

As a scrutineer, you will want to see the evidence for what your council is doing or plans to do. You should consider speaking to other key partners as well as your own officers and cabinet members. Many other scrutiny committees across the country have looked at various aspects of road safety, - check the Centre for Public Scrutiny website (www.cfps.org.uk) or go to the library for copies of reports, which provide useful information

Ensure Your Council Manages its Occupational Road Risk

As a major employer, your council will have hundreds and possibly thousands of staff who drive, ride or walk on the roads in order to do their jobs, and will use a wide variety of vehicles for many different purposes.

This means that you and the council's staff face and create risks for yourselves and everyone else using the road.

Proactively managing these risks means that they are less likely to be exacerbated by work pressures, such as journey schedules that encourage speeding. Familiarise yourself with your council's 'At-work Road Safety' or 'Managing Occupational Road Risk' policies, which should apply to all council staff, including contractors and elected members.

This could also be a good topic for your council's Scrutiny Committee.

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