

Cabinet

12 October 2022

Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships

Councillor John Shuttleworth, Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Rural Communities and Highways

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To seek approval from Cabinet to adopt a Road Safety Strategy 2022-2032 embedding a strategic partnership approach to engage with all road user groups to promote safer use on our roads to better safeguard the county's road users.
- 2 To establish a reporting mechanism for the recording of casualties and associated interventions to reduce the impact that road traffic accidents have on society.

Executive summary

- 3 The strategy was produced to assist in the coordination of all road safety related activities to assist in the aims and objectives of the County Durham Vision 2035 and the Safer Durham Plan 2025.
- 4 To establish a framework for the recording of all interventions that address casualty reduction and to provide partners with an annual performance plan linked to a County Durham and Darlington delivery plan.
- 5 To establish a mechanism for all strategic partners to follow a collaborative, efficient and effective approach to casualty reduction.

- 6 In County Durham total injuries have reduced by 36% in 2021 from the 2017-19 average, however, fatal and serious injuries have only reduced by 2%.
- 7 40% of all injuries in County Durham in 2021 had the failure to look properly named as a contributing factor to the collision, but in 2017-19, this was 51%.

Recommendations

- 8 Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (a) note the report and authorise the implementation of the new Road Safety Strategy.

Background

- 9 The previous road safety strategy has expired and was previously developed when the Department for Transport (DfT) issued highway authorities with casualty targets and provided additional funding to work towards meeting these targets.
- 10 The previous strategy and delivery plan provided the County Durham and Darlington Casualty Reduction Forum (The Partnership) with specific road safety targets to meet, to address those issued by the DfT.
- 11 The County Durham and Darlington Casualty Reduction Forum consists of partners from:
 - (a) Durham Constabulary;
 - (b) Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service,
 - (c) National Highways,
 - (d) Darlington Council; and
 - (e) Durham County Council.

The aim of the Partnership is to assist in the coordinating of road safety interventions that improve the safety of residents, promote safer sustainable travel choices and educate road users as riders, drivers, passengers and pedestrians.

- 12 Road casualty data was previously analysed on a yearly basis to establish partnership performance in respect of delivering programmes that are reducing casualties and improving safety.
- 13 The delivery plan detailed the actions that partners were taking to improve safety, and this was used as a tool for evaluating performance and reporting to the Safer Durham Partnership and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.
- 14 The previous strategy was delivered using a 'Specific Road Safety Grant' allocated to Durham County Council by the DfT.
- 15 This grant ended and the central government road safety strategy was replaced with a Road Safety Statement without setting any specific performance targets or issuing any additional funding to aid delivery.
- 16 The current Partnership continued to operate without an underpinning strategy to assist with the coordination and delivery of road safety interventions.

- 17 The Strategic Road Safety Partnership was established to provide a senior level reporting mechanism for delivery of interventions and allocation of resources. This group requested that the Partnership develop a road safety strategy to assist with the coordination of all activities against an agreed delivery plan.
- 18 A new strategy was produced prior to the national lockdown and a consultation exercise was undertaken.
- 19 This exercise was delayed due to the pandemic and partners re-evaluated delivery based on the difficulties faced because of Covid. A high proportion of road safety education or training involved a community setting or face-to-face with groups or individuals. Given the restrictions faced by delivering this model an alternative methodology for interventions has been developed. This resulted in delays to publishing the strategy.

The Strategy

- 20 The strategy is based on the effective analysis of recorded injury collisions, underpinned with a delivery plan broken down into addressing safety amongst the following groups:
 - Children;
 - Older Road Users;
 - Pedestrians;
 - At Work Drivers;
 - Young Drivers;
 - Cyclists and Motorcyclists;
 - Car drivers and passengers.
- 21 In addition to these key road user groups, there are a number of higher risk taking behaviours that contribute to the number and severity of people injured on our roads. Therefore, the strategy looks to target the following areas:
 - Speeding;
 - Mobile phones;
 - Drink/Drug driving;
 - Seatbelts/Restraints.

- 22 The Partnership has been redefined to reflect this coordinated approach to delivering interventions. The strategy focuses predominantly on the Education, Training and Publicity aspect of casualty reduction. However, to reflect the holistic approach to road safety, for recording and reporting purposes Engineering and Enforcement interventions have been included.

Consultation

- 23 A comprehensive countywide stakeholder / public consultation focused on seven key road user groups who have been identified as particularly at risk from injury in the development of the new road safety strategy.

These include:

- Younger drivers (age range) (17-24);
- Older drivers (age range) (55+);
- Children (age range) (0-16);
- At work drivers;
- Cyclist;
- Motorcyclist;
- Pedestrians.

- 24 Opinions were sought from the wider public on the proposed approach to the Strategy, the main objectives of the Strategy being as follows:

- to ensure there is a better coordinated approach amongst partners;
- that, in working with our partners, we support each other in delivering schemes and projects;
- we work together to devise interventions and implement a delivery plan, and that we can monitor frequently and evaluate success;
- we can update and amend annual programmes and initiatives based on the evidence and data we collect;
- have a delivery plan that details project actions against key road user groups.

The consultation asked if it is right to focus on a co-ordinated, supportive partnership working approach and introduce a robust process to ensure actions are completed and outcomes as evaluated

and understood. Also, if it is right to produce an annual review of road casualties to help determine future programmes of initiatives.

- 25 There were 110 responses to the consultation, all of which have been assessed and the results of which have been fed into the development of the strategy.
- 26 This consultation took place during the Covid pandemic and national and local lockdowns resulting in delays and a re-focus on delivery mechanisms. The delays in delivering the strategy allowed road safety partners to re-evaluate delivery mechanisms in light on lockdown and distancing guidelines.
- 27 Comments made in respect of the strategy have been taken into account and included:
- a more holistic approach to casualty reduction with recording of engineering and enforcement schemes included in reporting;
 - the Road Safety Partnership to include engineering and enforcement groups as part of its delivery mechanism;
 - recording of all schemes that contribute to casualty reduction and safer roads;
 - inclusion of community groups to assist in delivery;
 - integration of education into other areas of casualty reduction;
 - closer working with other groups such as the Fire & Rescue service, and the British Horse Society to help disseminate information;
 - involvement of community fire stations to stage events;
 - link to wider strategies such as accident investigation and prevention, speed management etc;
 - cycle safety in schools;
 - general road safety in schools;
 - young driver and older driver training programmes;
 - setting of road safety targets.
- 28 There was substantial support for the delivery of road safety and the identification of key road user groups.
- 29 The recording and reporting of success, delivery and evaluation of interventions and the production of reports was supported.

- 30 A request was made to set ambitious casualty reduction targets. This has not been included in this strategy but will be reviewed if the Government set wider road safety targets.
- 31 Many responses focused on the delivery of traffic engineering schemes which fall outside the scope of the consultation and the strategy. However, by developing an education-based strategy this should result in safer road use by all.
- 32 A response requested that the strategy needed to consider wider casualty reduction including engineering and wider enforcement strategies. The strategy focuses on the delivery of education, training and publicity. However, the Road Safety Partnership attendance has now been changed to record and monitor engineering/traffic schemes and those targeted enforcement campaigns. Representatives from those sectors are now attending partnership meeting to report on their casualty reduction initiatives.

Conclusion

- 33 The production of a Road Safety Strategy that covers the County Durham and Darlington area enables all of our key strategic partners to work towards a common delivery plan.
- 34 Having a robust mechanism for recording, evaluating and reporting casualty performance provides accountability to all partners involved in the collaborative approach to delivery.

Appendices

- Implications

Background papers

- Road Safety Strategy Jan 2022
- Links to County Durham Vision 2035 - *Actively take steps to encourage community cohesion by co-delivering services for the benefit of our residents.*
- Safer Durham Partnership Plan 2021-2025 – *Strategic Priority 1 - Promote being safe and feeling safe in your community - targeted partnership approach to address those key road user groups over-represented in casualty statistics.*

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 39) requires local authorities in Great Britain to:

- take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents
- prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety
- 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
- take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Section 122) requires local authorities in Great Britain to:

- to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians)

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (Section 16) requires local authorities in England and Wales to manage and maintain their road networks to:

- secure the expeditious movement of traffic on, and the efficient use of, their road networks
 - avoid, eliminate or reduce 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.
- Finance

The Partnership will seek out opportunities to secure funding to enhance delivery.

Finance

None.

Consultation

A consultation exercise was undertaken 2020/21 the results of which are detailed in this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The strategy aims to address all road users equally.

Climate Change

The strategy aims to ensure that it complements the Walking and Cycling strategy in the promotion of safe and sustainable modes of travel.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

The strategy contributes to reducing anti-social use of the road through enforcement activities.

Staffing

The strategy will be delivered using existing staff across the partnership area.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Serious road traffic collisions attract significant media attention and the Council's actions to reduce their occurrence comes under regular media scrutiny.

If casualty numbers increase this may distract residents from adopting sustainable forms of travel if County Durham is perceived to be unsafe.

Procurement

The Partnership will follow all recognised procurement guidelines.