

Environment Scrutiny Committee	
Report Title:	Draft Road Safety Policy
Meeting Date:	8 th September 2022
Chair:	Cllr Vernon Smith
Presenting Officer:	Philip Williams
Purpose of Report:	For members of the committee to consider and comment on the draft Road Safety Policy.
Background Documents:	Draft Road Safety Policy Consultation - Cabinet Member decision, July 2022 https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1907
Appendices	Draft Road Safety Policy consultation document road-safety-policy.pdf (gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Summary

In June 2022 the Cabinet Member for Fire, Community Safety and Libraries approved publication of the draft Road Safety Policy and public consultation on ambitious plans to improve road safety in Gloucestershire.

This report draws members' attention to medium term trends in road casualties, the Vision Zero ambition by 2050 and the proposed strategy to achieve a 50% reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2032 using the Safe System approach.

The committee will also be briefed on a snapshot of interim findings from the public consultation which started on 18th July and ends on 11th September. All feedback will then be carefully considered before Cabinet is asked to approve the final Road Safety Policy, strategy and targets at its meeting in November.

Full details of the Cabinet member decision, the current road safety work of the council and its partners, the nine key strands of the strategy and a full list of the public consultation questions can be accessed using the links above.

A separate report will follow later in the year in respect of responding to Motion 901 – Road Safety in Gloucestershire. One of the resolutions was to ask officers to provide a thorough briefing on recent accidents and their causations. This requires detailed analysis and the collection of additional information which is being carried out by the road safety data team with input from other agencies.

Background

The proposed Road Safety Policy covers the statutory duties of the Council as the Highway Authority, Fire Authority, and Public Health Authority:

- Road Traffic Act 1988 section 39 - must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety.

- Traffic Management Act 2004 section 16 – duty to manage the road network.
- Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 section 122 – to secure the safe movement of traffic.
- Health and Social Care Act 2012 – assess the needs of the community (including Road Safety).
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 section 8, part 1 a and b:
 - Rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions in its area:
 - Protecting people from serious harm to the extent it deems reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic collisions in its area.

In recent years there has been growing public awareness and interest in urban and rural communities in measures to help people walk and cycle more and to improve road safety. During the pandemic lockdowns significantly less traffic on roads led to a noticeable increase in cycling and walking as people felt safer. In some areas temporary measures were introduced by the council using the government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund.

The Council’s formal policy on Road Safety, set out in the Local Transport Plan 2020 - 2041 (LTP), approved last year, states:

GCC will contribute to improved safety, security and health by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, working with partners to improve personal safety perceptions and the promotion of transport that contributes to good health and wellbeing.

Gloucestershire, like many authorities, has not had binding road safety targets for over 10 years, ever since the Department for Transport (DfT) made them discretionary and ended the link between Local Transport Plan targets, performance and funding. Towards the end of this period coordination of road safety activity was also hindered by the absence of a formal road safety partnership in the county.

A study by the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety in 2021 showed that where other authorities are continuing to make improvements, in Gloucestershire and several authorities in the South West the numbers of Killed and Seriously Injured people (KSIs) from road traffic collisions have increased.

Table 1: Least effective areas for casualty reduction efforts across Britain

Rank	In England	%age Change	In Scotland	%age Change	In Wales	%age Change
1.	Torbay	+53%	East Lothian	-10%	Caerphilly	+28%
2.	Devon	+46%	Moray	-20%	Monmouthshire	+27%
3.	Plymouth	+40%	North Ayrshire	-20%	Newport	+25%
4.	Luton	+32%	Edinburgh	-22%	Conwy	+21%
5.	Cornwall	+29%	Midlothian	-22%	Denbighshire	+16%
6.	Gloucestershire	+27%	East Renfrewshire	-24%	Torfaen	+8%
7.	City of London	+22%	West Lothian	-26%	Carmarthenshire	+5%
8.	Barking and Dagenham	+22%	North Lanarkshire	-26%	Powys	+1%
9.	West Sussex	+19%	West Dunbartonshire	-26%	Blaenau Gwent	0%
10.	Surrey	+18%	Glasgow City	-27%	Ceredigion	-1%

The trend in KSI's in Gloucestershire over the past 9 years is highlighted in table 2 below. This shows a steady increase in the number of serious injuries between 2015 – 2019.

Table 2: Gloucestershire KSI's between 2012 and 2021

Severity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Killed	33	32	29	26	27	20	28	20	23	23
Serious	222	181	195	228	253	294	257	297	254	302
Total KSI	255	213	224	254	280	314	285	317	277	325

Actual number KSI recorded between 2012 and 2021

In the past three years the council has been receiving increasing demands for lower speed limits, particularly 20mph, and for local communities to be able to use Vehicle Activated Signs and Community Speed Watch cameras to help highlight and manage speeds.

Developing a new Road Safety Policy

Stakeholder Workshop

In December 2021 the council convened a workshop with a wide range of stakeholders to review current practices and develop a broad consensus to taking forward a new road safety strategy. Delegates included town, parish, district and county councillors, different mobility user groups, cyclists, horse riders, road haulage association, as well as Police, Fire & Rescue, Ambulance, Public Health and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety reported on a global plan to reduce casualties by 50% by 2030 and interest from the UK government, from Project EDWARD about their award-winning UK road safety campaign and from a road safety consultant about the rationale behind the Safe Systems approach.

Delegates identified how road safety supports wider policy objectives, they set out the main challenges with achieving ambitious targets and priorities for resourcing, listed activities which support a Safe System approach and gaps and considered ways of engaging target audiences.

In December 2021 we also surveyed parish and town councils, and district councillors in Gloucester and Cheltenham – urban areas which are largely unparished – to seek views on 20mph speed limits. This showed a strong level of support for more 20mph limits, but also showed that where we have already introduced these limits, the compliance with them was not high. A DfT study in 2014 showed that 20mph limit schemes which rely on signage alone are less likely to be effective than those which include physical measures to effect lower traffic speeds. More details can be found in the background paper to the Cabinet Member decision

taken in July 2022.

Safe Systems and Partnership Working

Gloucestershire's ambitions to improve road safety cannot be achieved in isolation and can only be done by partnership working.

A cornerstone of the new strategy is the 'Safe Systems Approach'. Whilst engineers could design a perfect road system, human interaction with that system would mean that mistakes will happen.

There is a shared responsibility amongst those who design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles to prevent collisions resulting in death or serious injury, therefore, it is very much a collaborative approach to deliver road safety 'with' the community instead of 'to' the community. Rather than Local Authorities having a reactive approach to road safety, the Safe Systems approach requires Councils and other organisations to be proactive and consider how risk can be reduced from a particular stretch of road, instead of only treating roads where there is already a collision problem.

There are 6 elements to the Safe Systems Approach:

- Safe Roads
- Safe Vehicles
- Safe Road Users
- Post-Crash Response
- Safe Speeds and
- Road Safety Management

The best performing authorities in road safety are those which are adopting the Safe System approach and who are demonstrating good levels of governance and accountability. They also have clear targets and monitoring systems in place. Staffordshire and South Gloucestershire who have both adopted this approach appear in the list of the best performing authorities in England.

Last year Safer Gloucestershire agreed a governance structure to improve multi-agency road safety coordination and in December 2021 the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership was re-established. This reports into Safer Gloucestershire, meets quarterly and provides a forum for coordinating strategic direction and resources. Each partner organisation retains its own internal governance for formal decision making and remains accountable for its statutory responsibilities.

As part of the consultation process for the draft Road Safety Policy members of Safer Gloucestershire have been invited to comment.

The Vision Zero ambition

The council's Corporate Strategy includes the following ambition:

On road safety, we want to deliver safer roads, healthier streets; lowering speed limits where people live and building more crossing points to achieve the Vision Zero road safety ambition by 2050.

Vision Zero is an aspiration to eliminate death and serious injury from roads and traffic, by 2050, by taking a safe system approach. The aspiration is that by 2050 there will be zero, or as close to zero as possible, road fatalities or life changing injuries; that the Safe System will be the normal approach to road safety, and also that walking and cycling will be a safe and easy choice for personal transport.

To ensure that long term goals are achieved the proposed strategy has included interim ambitions to half KSI's over the next 10 years, by 2032. Using current road safety data for Gloucestershire this would mean reducing KSI's to the levels set out in table 3. The baseline is the average number between 2017 and 2019, predating the Covid pandemic.

Table 3: Indicative pathway for Gloucestershire 50% KSI reduction by 2032

Severity	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Killed	23	22	21	20	18	17	16	15	14	13	12
Serious	254	241	229	216	203	191	178	165	152	140	127
Total KSI	277	263	250	236	221	208	194	180	166	153	139

To achieve this ambition means we need to be able to reduce the estimated total KSI figure of 277 for the whole of 2022 to 139 by the end of 2032. This represents a significant challenge, given that we are likely to see more vehicles on the road. Thus, the need to act now is imperative if we are to encourage change and improve road safety for future generations.

Against this backdrop vehicles are becoming safer and include greater levels of automation to reduce human error, such as reading speed limit signs, Intelligent Speed Assistance, Emergency Braking, Pedestrian Detection and Lane Assistance. The level of automation in vehicles in 2040 and in 2050 is likely to be considerably greater and more advanced than today. Medical interventions / treatment is also expected to improve survivability after collisions.

Consultation on the draft Strategy

The proposed strategy for delivering road safety to 2032 relies upon the Safe System approach and nine thematic areas of activity:

1. Reduce fatalities, serious injuries, number, and severity of collisions
2. Develop a data and evidence base, including research, and monitoring of existing approaches
3. Develop toolkits and programmes
4. Increase levels of safety for walking
5. Increase levels of safety for cycling
6. Improve collaboration between partners and stakeholders

7. Embed the Safe System approach
8. Promote Vision Zero to Gloucestershire's public
9. Lead by example

Details of the activities within each area are set out in the consultation document which can be viewed using the link on the front page of this report.

A key element of the first theme is the proposed '20mph speed restriction policy statement'. This is designed to apply to urban and rural locations, prioritising locations:

- With an existing casualty history;
- adjacent to or in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan network or which form part of urban realm/liveable street improvements;
- with limited footway provision;
- with widespread community support; and
- supported by statutory consultees and officers.

As part of the consultation process organisations and members of the public have been asked 34 questions about the strategy. These aim to identify areas of support and concern about the Safe System Approach, Vision Zero, 20mph policy, ambitions for 50% fatal and serious casualty reduction by 2032, and ask to what extent people agree with each of the nine strategic themes.

At the time of writing the report over 430 consultation responses had been received with around twice the number of responses supporting a Safe System approach compared with not supporting it. A similar pattern of responses was given to the ambition for a 50% reduction in KSI's by 2032.

A verbal update will be provided at Committee by the presenting officer with further details.

Financial Implications

The council has a £47m highways capital programme which is part funded by the DfT. This covers a wide range of front line investment across areas including structural maintenance for roads and footways, structures/bridges, lighting, drainage, integrated transport, cycling and local safety schemes, which target collision hot spots.

Road Safety data-led schemes typically have a very high benefit/cost ratio and 'before and after' studies have demonstrated significantly reduced collision numbers. In recent years the road safety capital programme budget has reduced to around £400k. This means that only projects under £250k can be considered for inclusion. More expensive schemes rely upon third party grants and funding. Smaller ones often rely upon Highways Local, developer contributions and match funding.

This year an additional £600k one off funding has been allocated to support **Community Speed Watch** activities - £250k capital, £300k revenue and £50k from

the OPCC. This money is available to support communities taking part in Community Speed Watch, including road safety advice, speed surveys, signing, and monitoring equipment. Parish and community groups have been invited to bid for funds against criteria from the Community Approaches to Road Safety toolkit, which is being refreshed. A verbal update on this will be given at the Committee.

Looking ahead, it is not unusual for a council of this size to invest considerably more in measures to improve road safety. Additional targeted investment would be expected to result in lower KSI's and could also support the council's wider policy objectives for transport decarbonisation, improving the cycle network and helping more people walk to school. Funding for such measures is normally secured through the MTFs process. This is likely to be challenging given the current public finance pressures however measures such as making more use of in-house traffic engineer resources would help to make schemes more affordable and quicker to implement.

Climate Change implications

Many of the proposed actions within the Road Safety Plan will have a positive impact on climate change. Making it safer to walk and to cycle will increase the proportions of short journeys undertaken with these modes, which will contribute significantly to the decarbonisation of transport. Physical infrastructure measures such as segregated cycle paths, controlled crossings and lower speed limits are also necessary to deliver long term changes.

Equalities implications

Collision data shows that young people and older drivers are over-represented in KSI figures for the county, and also that male drivers, particularly younger male drivers are the highest risk group. A full EIA has been completed for this draft policy and can be viewed with the Cabinet Member decision paper published in July 2022.

Social value implications

Transport is a key determinant of levels of social inclusion of people in society. Over 40,000 households in Gloucestershire are without a car or van to enable them to access essential services. These tend to be households where one or more members have a disability. This is why improving levels of safety for cycling and walking is essential to enable communities to access employment, training and essential local services.

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