

REPORT AGENDA ITEM 11

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR HARBOROUGH

15th SEPTEMBER 2010

ROAD SAFETY IN LEICESTERSHIRE - 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Members on the current state of road safety in Leicestershire, highlighting the recent findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Road Safety.

Background

2. The Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 (LTP2), published in March 2006, included road casualty reduction targets for 2010 and a strategy to achieve those targets.
3. The third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) is currently under development and will take effect from 1st April 2011.
4. In June 2010, the Scrutiny Review Panel on Road Safety presented its final report to Cabinet.
5. In June 2010, central government significantly reduced the 2010/11 local authority Road Safety Grant.
6. The County's annual road safety update for 2009 was published in July 2010 (www.leics.gov.uk/casualtyreport).

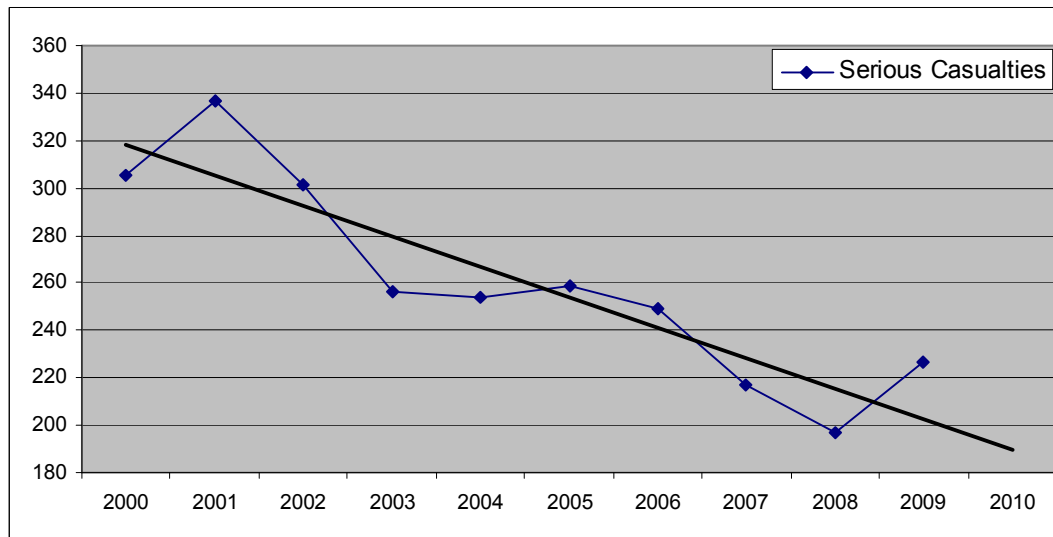
Road Safety in Leicestershire 2009

7. Details of our progress between 2008 and 2009 for each severity group are shown in the following table.

Casualty	2000	2008	2009	% change from 2000	% change from 2008
Killed	55	56	36	-35	-36
Serious	305	197	227	-26	15
Slight	3104	1986	1945	-37	-2
Total	3464	2239	2208	-36	-1
KSI	360	253	263	-27	4

Table 1 – Casualty Figures for 2009 compared with 2000 and 2008

8. In 2009, there were 35 fatal accidents resulting in 36 deaths. This is the lowest number of recorded deaths since our current records began in 1979 and marks a 36% reduction compared with 2008. Slight casualty numbers reduced by 2%, compared with 2008 and the long term reduction compared with 2000 is 37%.
9. Serious casualties increased by 15% compared with 2008, outweighing the reduction in the numbers of those killed, resulting in a 4% increase in KSI casualties compared with 2008. Notwithstanding this increase, the long-term trend, as seen in Figure 1 below, is still downwards.



Figures 1 – Serious casualties with trend line

10. In 2000, the government announced three national casualty reduction targets. Based on 1994 – 98 averages, these are to achieve by 2010:
- a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road accidents
 - a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured (KSI); and
 - a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres.
11. As can be seen from Table 2, Child KSI and the Slight national targets are already achieved and our progress towards the KSI national target is on track.

Casualty	Target 2010 (%)	Progress by 2009 (%)	
	Great Britain	Great Britain	Leicestershire
KSI	-40	-42	-36
Child KSI	-50	-60	-63
Slight	-10	-38	-41

Table 2 Progress towards 2010 Target (National figures are 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009)

12. Whilst the targets that we set ourselves relate to the whole county, the progress being made within individual districts is shown in Table 3. As one might expect, year to year performance can be variable, but the more important characteristic of the table is that the overall trend in each area is downward.

All Road Casualties	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Blaby	564	533	608	535	464	476	439	380	332	389
Charnwood	715	640	623	631	572	574	550	483	458	453
Harborough	452	493	498	447	422	453	400	333	333	334
Hinckley & Bosworth	581	561	517	447	520	473	461	421	363	315
Melton	259	281	217	222	270	191	150	208	179	189
North West Leicestershire	726	716	645	655	618	610	525	511	427	394
Oadby & Wigston	167	157	147	113	150	155	111	102	146	134
County Total	3464	3381	3255	3050	3016	2932	2636	2438	2239	2208

Table 3 – Casualties by District or Borough

13. Despite significant reductions in casualty numbers recorded since 2000, we continue to face ongoing challenges i.e.:-
- Most casualties (68% in 2009) are car occupants. This is not unexpected as cars nationally make up about 79% of traffic volumes and, in 2009, were involved in 93% of reported injury accidents in Leicestershire.
 - The comparative vulnerability of cyclists, pedestrians and particularly motorcyclists also remain a feature of the 2009 figures. Compared with other forms of travel, these make up only 5% of the distance travelled but form 24% of all casualties and 38% of KSI casualties in 2009.
 - Young people continue to be significantly over represented compared to distance travelled. This is particularly evident for 17 to 20 year olds where 2009 casualties in this age group are 3 times their share of distance travelled.

Road Safety Grant

14. Under the national safety camera scheme, all costs associated with the running of individual local authority schemes were met by central government. When the national scheme was dissolved in 2007, the funding stream changed. Between 2007 and 2010, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland received specific Road Safety Grant as part of the Local Transport Plan settlement (capital) and Area Based Grant (revenue). This money has been used to maintain the safety cameras scheme and, for 2010/11, the County received approximately £200k capital and £850k revenue.
15. Following the general election, the Department for Transport reduced the revenue allocation by approximately £230k and withdrew the capital allocation completely. Local authorities have been left to set their own priorities and are therefore at liberty to re-allocate funds to support the safety camera scheme.
16. Since April 2002, safety camera activity has been an important element of our road safety strategy and alternative funding arrangements, together with the scale and scope of the scheme, are currently under review.

Scrutiny Review Panel

17. The Panel's review focused on the following terms of reference covering both physical and behavioural measures:-
- Evaluation of some of the County Council's measures to reduce road casualties and of alternative cost-effective ways of doing so which could produce better results.
 - Examples of existing measures to be evaluated include vehicle activated (VA) signs, street signage, and speed limits.

- Comparison of the County Council's use of and types of VA signs, street signage and speed limits with those of other authorities, and comparison of outcomes.
 - Consideration of the County Council's policy on the use of blind spot mirrors.
 - Exploration of how emerging technologies may enable greater compliance with speed limits.
 - Evaluation of how the provision of information can change behaviour, especially that of the age range 17-24 years.
 - Investigation of how far "greener" driving can improve safety.
18. The Panel considered these issues through a series of meetings based on officer presentation and detailed discussions. Their final report was presented to Cabinet in June 2010 and its 14 conclusions and recommendations have been reproduced at Appendix A. Overall, the Panel concluded that:-
- At present, physical work on the highway is very much focused on place and usually seeks to meet specific concerns of the public, supported by officers' professional judgments, related to improving road safety. Behavioural work is seen as more general but can have a more wide ranging benefit, although this is very hard to measure directly. A combination of the two is considered best practice and should include campaigning in the vicinity of specific places where physical work is also envisaged.
 - Further work needs to be done to establish whether a significant change in driver behaviour and attitudes can be achieved such as to make physical work less important. Whilst work can be, and is, done on this subject locally, it is a wider national and cultural matter. The Panel notes this point and believes the Council should look forward to the results of further research and possibly legislation. Subject to and within the constraints of capital versus revenue funding streams, these in turn may lead the Council to consider a re-allocation of resources between physical and behavioural measures.
19. Progress made against the full conclusions and recommendations will be monitored and assessed in 2011.

Conclusions

20. Leicestershire has a record of casualty reduction which is at least as good as, and often better than, national trends. Given progress made, we propose to continue the innovative development of the existing casualty reduction strategy.

21. In responding to the challenges outlined in this report, we will continue the development of the casualty reduction strategy as set out in our Local Transport Plan (LTP2) into LTP3 and seek further improvements through the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Review Panel. However, this work must ultimately be guided by the government's proposed road safety strategy post 2010, whose publication is imminent.

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Background Papers

The Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011

Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on Road Safety Measures (Cabinet 15/6/2010)

Road Safety in Leicestershire – 2009

Scrutiny Panel Conclusions and Recommendations

(a) The Panel welcomes the consistent progress made by the County Council in reducing the number of accidents in Leicestershire and its progress towards the 2010 Department for Transport (DfT) national casualty reduction targets.

(b) In order to build on and learn from this success, the development of monitoring processes for local safety schemes implemented from 2004 onwards should be afforded greater emphasis and built into routine arrangements to allow the Authority to maintain more useful records, including through participation in the UK MoRSE database.

(c) The Panel supports the approach of the County Council to casualty reduction in creating 20 mph zones, usually in conjunction with physical speed reducing measures. However the results of the Portsmouth City Council alternative for such zones should continue to be monitored as, if successful, this could potentially reduce the costs of the Authority's own schemes.

(d) It is considered there is nowhere in Leicestershire that presently justifies the necessary investment to remove street signage and furniture but the amount of street signage in the County should be kept under review and where it is considered it can be 'decluttered' with no adverse effects on safety this should be done in the interests of efficiency.

(e) The County Council's use of simple and effective VAS which delivers improved safety levels over alternative models whilst directing resources in a cost effective way is to be commended.

(f) There is insufficient evidence to suggest that blind-spot mirrors make a positive contribution to road safety.

(g) The Panel therefore recommends that the County Council policy for not allowing the use of blind-spot mirrors on the highway be retained.

(h) The Authority should be more assertive in raising awareness of the responsibilities of landowners and developers in relation to road safety. The return of powers of direction to the Highways Authority in relation to planning and road safety may be an area in which the Local Government Association should be requested to lobby Government in future.

(i) The Panel commends the innovative ways in which road safety education and awareness is undertaken for offenders, young drivers in the 17-24 age bracket and for young children.

(j) A target of 100% participation in the Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme in Leicestershire schools should be established with the Chairmen of Leicestershire Highway Forums being asked to write to those schools not currently participating, to encourage them to do so.

(k) The County Council should be urged, as part of its fleet management review, to incorporate 'Green Driver and Fleet Driver Defensive Programmes' for the benefit of both employer and employee in efficiency savings and safer driving. It should also encourage its partners, such as the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) whose vehicles formed part of the fleet on the County Council's Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence, to do so.

(l) Having developed and incorporated 'Green Driver and Fleet Driver Defensive Programmes' for its own and partners' fleets, the County Council should be urged to commend such programmes to the wider business sector through appropriate provision of promotional and training services.

(m) At present, physical work on the highway is very much focussed on place and usually seeks to meet specific concerns of the public, supported by officers' professional judgments, related to improving road safety. Behavioural work is seen as more general but can have a more wide ranging benefit, although this is very hard to measure directly. A combination of the two is considered best practice and should include campaigning in the vicinity of specific places where physical work is also envisaged.

(n) Further work needs to be done to establish whether a significant change in driver behaviour and attitudes can be achieved such as to make physical work less important. Whilst work can be, and is, done on this subject locally, it is a wider national and cultural matter. The Panel notes this point and believes the Council should look forward to the results of further research and possibly legislation. Subject to and within the constraints of capital versus revenue funding streams, these in turn may lead the Council to consider a re-allocation of resources between physical and behavioural measures.