

Description of Leicestershire's Road Safety Initiatives

Providing a Safer Road Environment

Development Control

1. Most individual applications are for quite small sites and, in total during 2020, we made approximately 2172 minor responses to consultations on planning applications. In granting planning permission, the local planning authority considers comments made by Leicestershire County Council as the local highway authority. When making comments on planning applications, we take account of where the proposal is located and whether it is in an accessible location with appropriate provision for walking, cycling and public transport. We also aim to ensure that the highway infrastructure required to serve new development is designed to minimise the risk of road traffic accidents.
2. These principles also apply to large sites. Throughout Leicestershire, several strategic development sites are planned for delivery over the next 10-15 years to meet housing need across the County. These strategic sites can vary in size from a few hundred to several thousand dwellings. During 2020, we worked on plans for highway infrastructure at a number of these strategic development sites across the County, and in total made approximately 1181 major responses to these consultations.

Road Safety Audit

3. Whilst road improvement schemes are designed in accordance with established guidance and standards, unintended safety problems can arise. To guard against this, improvement schemes are subject to road safety audit by accident investigation staff that use their experience of looking into why accidents have happened at other locations throughout the County to identify and correct potentially dangerous features within an improvement scheme. The design of the scheme is checked at least once before construction commences and the scheme is checked again once construction is complete.
4. In total 18 audits were undertaken on improvement schemes in 2020.
5. Road safety audits are also undertaken on developer schemes by the private sector, as part of the development process.

Traffic Management Schemes

6. There is an ongoing programme of low-cost improvements aimed at managing existing traffic flows more effectively and thereby enhancing road safety. Such schemes generally deal with:
 - the provision of double yellow lines around junctions to prevent parking and improve visibility,

- the imposition of parking restrictions to prevent parking at locations where a potential hazard existed,
- the implementation of signing and lining schemes to improve driver perception of hazards and consequently their behaviour,
- the imposition or amendment of weight restrictions to reduce the dangers caused by HGV's using inappropriate roads.

Managing Speed

Safety Cameras

7. The Safety Camera Scheme is administered by the Road Safety Partnership. 22 fixed safety camera sites were in operation (nine speed, two bi-directional speed, six red light and five combined red light and 'speed on green'). There were 161 mobile camera sites/routes (60 core sites, four core routes, five motorcycle specific routes and 82 community concern sites).
8. Locations and further information on the scheme itself can be found at www.speedorsafety.com
9. Since the break-up of the National Camera Scheme in 2007, we have used the national site selection guidance when considering the potential for new permanent camera sites. This guidance has allowed camera enforcement at locations where traffic speeds and accident numbers are insufficient to justify a permanent camera site, but there are genuine local road safety concerns. In 2016 there were some local revisions to criteria, however, they fundamentally adhere to national guidelines as recommended by the Department for Transport (DfT).
10. Throughout 2020, the Camera Scheme identified 49,902 drivers travelling at excessive speeds and / or running red traffic signals across the police force area (City, County & Rutland).

Driver Education Workshops

11. Driver education remains an important part of speed management and, in 2020/21 over 15,000 drivers completed a Speed Awareness course in Leicestershire as an alternative to receiving a fine and points on their driving licence. Due to Covid-19, face-to-face delivery was changed to an online virtual course delivery. There was a short delay in establishing this new approach which has caused the client numbers to drop compared to the previous year.
12. Workshops are offered to offenders in 30mph and 40mph speed limit areas. The aim of the courses is to help drivers understand the adverse consequences of their driving behaviour.
13. In total around 75,000 hours of training per year is provided through the Driver Education Workshops in Leicestershire - a significant road safety input.

Advisory 20mph School Safety Zones

14. Since 2002, we have been implementing advisory 20mph safety zones at schools that have produced School Travel Plans. The zones include prominent signing and flashing amber lights to indicate their extent and times of operation. They are aimed at reducing vehicle speeds to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling to school. In summer 2014 we completed the programme, with over 250 zones being created.
15. The County Council continues to be of the view that 20mph restrictions are only effective when supported by physical measures and in the current financial climate, unless there is a proven injury accident problem at a location, we cannot justify the installation of such measures.

Traffic Management

16. It is important for the safety of all road users that drivers are advised of the maximum speed that they should be travelling at along any particular length of road, this is the speed limit. In 2013, speed limits on a number of our roads were changed in order to ensure, as far as we can, that the speed of traffic was reduced to a level consistent with the environment of the road and the hazards on it.
17. Any speed limit changes implemented are in line with the DfT published national guidance on setting local speed limits, January 2013.

Community Speed Watch

18. Community Speed Watch continues to be a popular initiative which encourages local communities to get involved in identifying speeding motorists; and thereafter encouraging them to drive at more appropriate speeds.
19. Due to Covid-19 we were unable to offer our usual level of support to communities and volunteers. We had to adapt delivery and ran a successful volunteer free scheme where educational boards were placed at various key sites of community concern to remind drivers to check their speed.
20. The scheme also incorporates the ongoing use of mobile vehicle activated signs and 40 are now being deployed within 48 communities across Leicestershire (some communities share signs). The community speed watch website has further details of both schemes accessible at www.communityspeedwatch.org.uk

Education Training and Publicity

21. Human error is a significant factor in many accidents. Education training and publicity educates, alerts and informs road users about hazardous behaviours and the following outlines the diverse array of initiatives which are currently employed within the County.

Driver Education Workshops

22. In addition to the Speed Awareness Workshops discussed previously, many drivers accused of other motoring offences were offered the opportunity to attend workshops. Over 1,300 drivers have completed the national What's Driving Us? course in Leicestershire in 2020. This three-hour classroom-based course has been adapted to be delivered virtually due to Covid-19 and can be offered to drivers committing traffic light offences and other offences such as using a mobile phone whilst driving.
23. Driving 4 Change was introduced in 2013. This is a two-hour practical course with a focus on driver skills rather than attitudes. The police decide on which course to refer the drivers to. A relatively small number of drivers are offered this course.
24. In 2020, around 100 drivers accused of careless driving (often involving an accident) chose to attend a Safe & Considerate Driving Course, which combines classroom activities and practical driving instruction, as an alternative to prosecution.
25. In 2020, just over 2000 drivers completed the National Motorway Awareness Course (NMAC). The current online theory course aims at increasing knowledge of the meaning of smart motorway signs, improve understanding of variable speed limits and lane closures and complying with the rules on smart motorways.

Drink-Driving

26. Whilst the police continue to target drink and drug drivers throughout the year, the two main month-long campaigns reminding drivers of the risk they take if they choose to both drink and drug drive, are held throughout December and June.
27. Local media, including daily and weekly newspapers, radio and TV remain very supportive of the drink and drug drive campaigns and there is continued newspaper coverage along with regular interviews of police spokespersons to remind people not to drink and/or drug drive and/or consider alternative means of transport such as buses, taxis or identifying designated sober drivers in order to get home safely and legally. The December 2020 campaign was supported by a paid for social media campaign which targeted drivers aged between 17 and 65 via Facebook, Instagram and Google Display Network. 84% of the drink-drive audience along with 70% of the drug-drive audience were reached, that had actually viewed the advert in their social media feeds.
28. During December 2020, 104 people were caught drink-driving, along with 28 for drug-driving, across the Leicestershire Police force area (December 2019 saw 109 drink and 28 drug drive arrests). Twenty of these arrests were made following a road traffic accident, and although 64 of the arrests were made in Leicester City, there were also significant numbers in Charnwood (21) and North West Leicestershire (11). There is no formula to determine how much

any one person can drink in an evening and be safe to drive the next day. It depends on several factors, including weight, gender, age, metabolism and how much food has been eaten. The penalties for drinking and driving are a minimum 12-month disqualification, which rises to three years for a second offence within 10 years, a fine of up to £5,000 and up to six months in prison.

29. Leicestershire Police now use roadside drug testing kits to help enforce legislation introduced in March 2015 which makes it unlawful to drive with certain levels of illegal and prescription drugs in the bloodstream. The new law can be enforced with the use of kits that detect traces of cannabis and cocaine in saliva. More traditional “field impairment tests”, including measuring the size of a driver’s pupils or asking them to walk in straight line can also be used where impairment through other drug groups is suspected.

Pre- Driver Training

30. In 2020 pre-driver days were paused due to Covid-19 and the restrictions on face-to-face contact. 2022 should see the return of the course offerings at Mallory Park and dates will be posted on our website www.tjunction.org.uk. In 2019 there were five events and over 100 participants, concentrating on driver responsibility, peer pressure, impairment and the costs of motoring. Each participant had two driving sessions with approved driving instructors on the Mallory Park circuit where they were introduced to the basics of car control. The Official Theory Test was also explained and tried by the participants on iPads equipped with the test.

Older Car Drivers

31. The ‘Safer Driving with Age’ (SAGE) scheme for drivers aged 60 and over operates throughout the County. Older drivers need to ensure that they have undertaken an eyesight check, answer a health questionnaire and undertake a driving assessment in their own vehicle with an Approved Driving Instructor. During 2020 there was continued interest in the scheme and work continues to encourage drivers to take part. It is noted that there is ‘an aging population’ and continuing to drive safely helps to tackle social isolation and can contribute to general wellbeing.

Winter Driving

32. Driving conditions throughout the winter months can be very different from those experienced by motorists throughout the remainder of the year, with clear road safety implications. Alerting motorists to these changing conditions is an integral part of our ongoing road safety advice.

Publicity Campaigns

33. Much of the campaign work is now channelled and supported by the Road Safety Partnership. In 2020, social media road safety campaigns specifically focussed on the close passing of cyclists, encouraging motorcyclists to ride safely and courteously, a reminder to commercial vehicle owners about the

lower speed limits on dual and single carriageways and a reminder about the dangers of drink and drug driving. The first three of these campaigns were timed to coincide with the gradual increase of traffic volumes as the pandemic lockdowns eased.

The Fatal4 Clinics

34. Over the past ten years, Leicestershire Police, with the support of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Road Safety Partnership, have held a series of FATAL4 clinics at locations across the Police force area. These are designed to reinforce concerns about speeding, using mobile phones (while driving), not wearing seatbelts along with drink/drug driving.
35. Since 2013 FATAL4 operations targeting HGV drivers and other drivers using the local motorway and trunk road network have taken place. Police officers travelling in an unmarked HGV tractor unit covertly filmed those drivers seen to be committing FATAL4 offences who were then escorted by a following patrol car to a nearby safe place off the motorway to be dealt with accordingly.

Improving Road Safety for Vulnerable Road Users

36. In looking to improve safety for vulnerable road users, we primarily target motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists. Details of the initiatives employed for these three groups are given below.

Motorcyclists

37. The Enhanced Rider Scheme (ERS) is a national rider training scheme for post-test riders. The cost is typically £130 but, with a £70 subsidy from the Road Safety Partnership, the rider only pays £60. In the financial year 2020/21, 67 riders took advantage of this scheme which is down on the 79 of the previous financial year. It should be noted that due to the first pandemic lockdown in the Spring, there was a two-month hiatus on course delivery. A variety of different methods were used to publicise the scheme, including social media, and promotion through events and with training providers.
38. Bike Safe workshops are run by Police Class 1 Advanced riders from the police motorcycle section, accredited for the delivery of training. The purpose of Bike Safe is to reduce casualties among bikers by giving them an insight into safer/smooth riding and a heightened awareness of possible hazards.
39. The Road Safety Partnership in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council purchased a Triumph motorcycle to be used for Road Safety purposes including the promotion of training for motorcycle riders. To help promote this further the bike has been transferred to staff at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service who have capacity to use this resource. The bike has been re-branded as "FireBike". The bike has featured at many events and biker meets.

40. We remain supporters of the Shiny Side Up Partnership (SSUP) an East Midlands motorcycle safety partnership. The group presently consists of Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Derbyshire County Council. Originally set up to try and drive down casualties relating to Sports Bike riders, this has now broadened to include lower capacity scooters and motorcycles. The website www.shinysideup.co.uk has been redesigned and carries a wealth of useful information
41. The County Council uses a variety of SSUP roadside posters at sites that have a poor motorcycle casualty history these messages include Bike Crash Site Ahead and Think Bike. The roadside posters are bright yellow and have become a regular seasonal way of reminding riders and other road users to take extra care and look out for each other.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

42. The Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme has been operating in Leicestershire since 1987 so for more than 30 years with a good number of Leicestershire primary schools involved. JRSO is now primarily a website-based scheme. There were three main themes for academic year 2020/21: pedestrian safety; cycle/scooter safety and active travel to school
<http://www.junior-rso.org.uk/>
43. Road Safety Tutors continued to provide cyclist training (Bikeability) to primary school children, training to National Standards. In 2020/21 delivery was impacted by lockdown and the closure of schools. Level 2 training usually takes place in the last year of primary school and can encourage children to cycle when they move to high school. Funding has been secured to March 2022 to support the delivery of Bikeability training to 3,000 children. Training using balance bikes will also be undertaken for more than 300 children aged four to six. This 'Bikeability Balance' training gives children the confidence to begin riding. Funding for this also continues to March 2022.
44. Cyclist training has been offered to over 16s who either cannot cycle, have not cycled for a while or who wish to develop their skills and confidence through on and/or off-road training. The Fire Service has developed a cycle safety virtual reality film as part of their VR education programme (existing young driver film). Such films are very engaging and use 360-degree camera footage and are played using a mobile phone connected to a VR headset.
45. The School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service continues to help children and parents across busy roads at school journey times. A number of the patrollers have involved themselves in wider aspects of road safety work, such as road safety talks in schools.
46. Walking to school is a genuine safety concern for many parents as children living less than three miles from the catchment area school for their home address (two miles for primary school age children) are only provided with free transport by the Council if their walking route is assessed as 'not available'. The

availability of such a route is assessed against local criteria (based on national statutory guidance) which look at highway-related safety issues. Walking route assessments look at the issues which might affect a child walking to school, accompanied (as necessary) by a responsible adult. When walking along the road, the main issue is the presence or otherwise of a footway but, where there is no footway, the assessment asks:

- Is there a verge to step onto to avoid oncoming traffic?
- What is the traffic flow?
- Are there suitable sightlines?

47. Crossing of the road is also assessed and here the main issues are the visibility of approaching traffic and how long pedestrians must wait for a suitable gap in that traffic.
48. School Keep Clear – Camera Project which aims to change the behaviour of parents when taking their children to school by ensuring the entrances to schools are clear of traffic, reducing the risk to children.