

Somerset Road Safety Strategy

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Cabinet Member: John Woodman

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

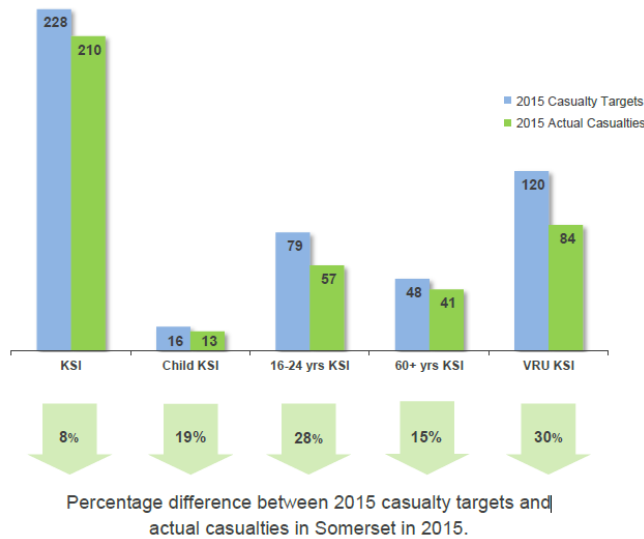
- 1.1. Somerset's current Road Safety Strategy was launched in March 2013, therefore it is now appropriate to review it and consider developing a new approach to how improved safety continues to be achieved in Somerset. Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, sets out that local highway authorities, must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety including investigating collisions arising from the use of vehicles on roads and highways and taking measures to prevent them in the future. Previous road safety work has been successful in reducing the numbers of people killed and injured on the roads of Somerset, however nationally and locally there is evidence that the impact of current road safety initiatives on road casualties is starting to plateau and the pace of reduction is slowing down. In April 2013, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, statutory duties for public health were conferred on local authorities; they were made responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services. The Public Health Outcomes Framework has several indicators relevant to road safety. Changes in the pre-existing delivery model since the last strategy also mean that a review of how road safety is delivered is appropriate.
- 1.2. The continuing promotion of Road Safety in Somerset reflects the County Plan aims of having better roads and rail, and keeping the roads safe.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the current Road safety Strategy and the new approach to improved road safety.
- 2.2. Through current road safety measures, and partnership working with enforcement agencies, there have been significant and successful efforts to reduce casualties in Somerset over the last twenty years. However some of the reduction is attributable to; safer vehicles, improved medical care, improved driver standards through changes to the driving test, and national road safety initiatives. The current challenges to road safety delivery in Somerset are also being assessed. Casualty statistics, which have been fully analysed up to the end of 2015, demonstrate a downwards trend in the numbers of people Killed and Serious Injured (KSI) persons on Somerset roads and also a trajectory towards meeting the 2020 targets.

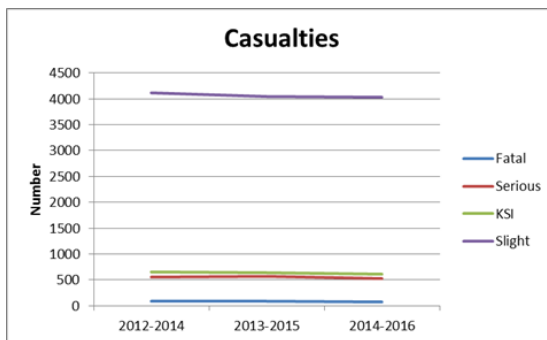
Table 1 Somerset Road Safety targets

Somerset 2015 Targets and Actual 2015 Casualties



However, nationally and locally the impact of current initiatives on KSI figures is starting to plateau and the pace of reduction is slowing down. The County Council is however keen to make efforts to keep its casualty reduction record continuing downwards through a comprehensive review of its current road safety strategy and associated action and delivery plans.

Table 2 Three-year rolling average trend of Somerset Casualties and collisions numbers resulting from Injury Collisions (2012-2016)



This gradual decline needs to be considered against a period of 2.2% traffic growth nationally (DfT, 2015), and 2.5% locally also 2015.

A 'Safe System' approach to road safety has therefore been advocated for internationally and nationally with key advisory bodies challenging local authorities and partners to review their practice and move towards a five pillar approach to managing road safety to create a truly safe system (Department of Transport; 2015, United Nations, 2010).

At a stakeholder strategy review meeting in March it was agreed that it was an appropriate time for Somerset to develop a new road safety strategy that adopts a wider-agency approach while continuing to promote evidence based approaches to road safety, health and wellbeing.

The Road Safety, Highways and Transport Commissioning and Public Health Teams are working together with other parts of the County Council, and appropriate external bodies, to explore how this vision could be applied and achieved in Somerset through the development of a cross-directorate road safety

strategy.

- 2.3.** The strategy is being developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. A Somerset County Council strategy steering group was formed with area specific sub-groups to develop the detail of the strategy action plan, and delivery through an Action/Delivery Plan and a Transition document.

- (a) Evidence and data subgroup (*SCC, Avon and Somerset Police and Severn Trauma Network*)
- (b) Safe Road Users Sub-group (*SCC, Avon and Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire Service, Highways England*)
- (c) Safe Speed Sub-group (*SCC, Avon and Somerset Police*)
- (d) Safe roads and roadsides (*SCC internal stakeholders*)

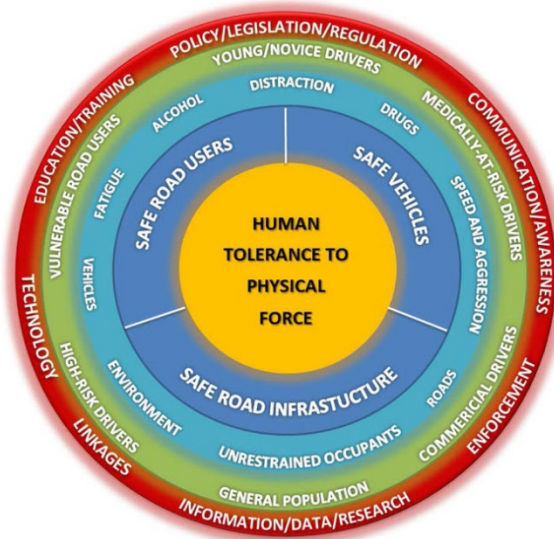
The strategy embraces work with many partners such as Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, South-west Ambulance Service Trust, Advanced Motoring Groups, and Highways England in seeking to have a maximum impact on reducing the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Somerset's road network.

3. Background

3.1. A Safe System Approach

A Safe System approach to road safety originated in the 80's and 90's and has been termed 'sustainable safety', 'vision zero' and 'towards zero' in different countries. Its key message is that traffic is seen as part of a 'safe system'. No human should be killed or seriously injured as a result of a road crash and the traffic system should be designed to this end. In this approach, serious outcomes from crashes are prevented in the first place. **Four guiding principles of a safe-system;**

- (a) People make mistakes;
- (b) The human body has a known, physical limit to tolerate crash forces before harm occurs
- (c) Individuals have a responsibility to act with care and within traffic laws; however a shared responsibility exists with those who design, build, manage and use roads/vehicles and provide post-crash care; and
- (d) All parts of the system must be strengthened in combination to multiply their effects ensuring that road users are protected if one part fails.



Source OECD “Zero Road Deaths and Serious Injuries Leading a Paradigm Shift to a Safe System”

A Safe System approach to road safety requires a change in attitude and recognition that, even with comprehensive road safety interventions, people will always make mistakes on the road and that the human body has a known, physical limit to tolerate crash forces before harm occurs. A Safe System approach does not disregard that all road users have a responsibility to act with care and within traffic laws, with enforcement being integral to this; however it highlights that a shared responsibility exists with those who design, build, manage and use roads/vehicles to ensure that they enable safe road use. Alongside this it is essential that good quality post-crash care is available should a collision occur.

The balance between safe roads and mobility is a constant debate in discussions of road safety, public health and economic prosperity. In a safe system approach, safety is embedded into design as early as possible to reduce the need for future expensive retro-fitting. There are challenges in a rural county like Somerset with significant lengths of rural roads, many of which have historic and constrained layouts. The use of a safe system approach will need to consider identifying high risk locations, prioritising treatments and balancing the needs of proactive assessments of highway improvements whilst maintaining the rural character of the County.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. *In addition to specific consultation with;*
 SCC Planning Conference other stakeholders, and
 Targeted consultation with road user special interest groups (See Appendix)
 Wider public consultation on the strategy is planned for October 2017.

5. Implications

- 5.1. The delivery action and transition plans will consider the impacts of this new

strategy and will look at any structural and any budgetary impacts. Closer working with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that road safety culture is spread more widely across Somerset will be a key aim. The development of the strategy is required to help ensure that injury collisions, particularly the ones involving most severe injuries, continue to be reduced.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** Somerset's Future Transport Plan (2011-2026)
- County Plan (2016-2020)
- Highways and Transport (2015/16) Three year commissioning plan
- Road Safety Strategy 2013
- School Crossing Patrol Policy (to be amended)
- Casualty Review (2015)
- Active Travel Strategy (2012)
- Cycling Strategy (2012)
- Walking Strategy (2012)
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2012-2020)
- JSNA (live)
- Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF: Numbers Killed or Seriously Injured)
- SCC Road Safety KPI's
- Somerset Traffic Data 2015 Traffic
- Motorcycling Strategy (2012-2016)

Appendix 1 - Road Safety Strategy Delivery Plan

Appendix 2 - Road Safety 'interest group' survey: Response analysis

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

Appendix 1: Road Safety Strategy Delivery Plan

Action	Impact	Outcome	Partners
Partnership working and managing by objectives			
Increased partnership working	Wider road safety delivery	Road Safety delivery has increased focus and effort	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Highways England, Public Health
Use data and evidence from across the system to inform preventative road safety interventions	Increased data sources used to support Police data	More data available	Public Health, Severn Trauma Audit Network
Lead from the front over promotion of road safety and corporate responsibility for road safety	Road Safety influences spread wider around SCC and Somerset	Greater Road Safety culture	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Highways England, Public Health, Councillors, One Teams
Work with Public health and Health Authorities, Trauma Audit Network, Air Ambulance over further developments in post-crash care	Increased data sources used to support Police data	Reduced serious and fatal casualties	Public Health, NHS, Air Ambulance
Safe road users			

Action	Impact	Outcome	Partners
Promote a sense of shared responsibility between all road users	Safer roads and greater use of alternative modes	Greater Road Safety culture and increased cycling and walking	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Highways England, Clinical Commissioning Group (BBG) / Local Medical Committee (LMC)
Encourage compliance with traffic law and educate road users of the risks of excess speed, fatigue, distraction and being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while using the road, and the need to promote continued safe road use	Reduced high severity collisions	Safer Systems approach embraced in Somerset	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Clinical Commissioning Group (BBG) / Local Medical Committee (LMC)
Promote corporate responsibility for fleet management policies and work driver training	Businesses at the forefront of considering road safety	Safer driving and reduced business costs	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Highways England, & Businesses

Provide and promote coordinated road safety education and awareness raising in partnership with key stakeholders and Somerset residents in a range of appropriate formats e.g. face to face, virtual and through social media/broadcasts.	Increased road safety messages available to the community	Greater road safety awareness	Avon & Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue, Highways England, & Businesses, local Councils and newspapers
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Safer Speeds

Action	Impact	Outcome	Partners
Working towards self-explaining roads/consistency to enable appropriate speed	Greater compliance with speed limits	Reduced speed of traffic	Avon & Somerset Police
Ensure that roads are designed or adapted to help guide and enable road users to adopt the posted speed	Greater compliance with speed limits	Reduced speed of traffic	Avon & Somerset Police
Protect vulnerable road users by separating them from fast moving and/or heavy traffic	Safer roads and greater use of alternative modes	Reduced vulnerable road user casualties	

<p>Continue to increase the use of 20mph limits and zones as appropriate particularly in areas where vulnerable road users are injured and will be mixing with motorised vehicles e.g. town centres and outside schools during pick-up times</p>	<p>Safer roads and greater use of alternative modes</p>	<p>Reduced vulnerable road user casualties, especially children</p>	
<p>Work with communities and Police to identify, assess and enforce areas where speed of motorised vehicles is a concern</p>	<p>Greater community satisfaction with lower speeds</p>	<p>Lower speeds greater community safety</p>	<p>Avon and Somerset Constabulary</p>
<p>Increase road users understanding of the benefit of speed reduction, and promote an ethos of shared responsibility between all road users</p>	<p>Reduced traffic speeds</p>	<p>Road Users travelling at lower speeds appropriate to the environment</p>	<p>Avon and Somerset Constabulary</p>

Safe roads and roadsides

Action	Impact	Outcome	Partners
Review current approaches to provisions for vulnerable road users to ensure those most vulnerable to serious injury are protected, including area wide treatments and filtered permeability	Safer communities	Increased community safety and more sustainable travel and reduced obesity	
More detailed information as possible available throughout the investigation into fatal injury collisions	Greater and quicker understanding of collision causation occurrence	Reduced killed and serious injury collisions	Avon and Somerset Constabulary & Coroner's Office
Work with highways maintenance colleagues around current practices around reviews of existing road network and recorded injury collisions in relation to passively safe alternatives	Greater spreading of road safety influence	Reduced killed and serious collisions	Skanska

Work closely with Highways England to develop a regional incident and casualty reduction plan to reduce injury collisions on the trunk road network	Better liaison over trunk road issues	Reduced incidents and congestion for community, business and tourists	Highways England
Ensuring that the needs of vulnerable road users (VRU) are prioritised in planning and new developments	Reduced impact of new developments	Increased sustainable travel	District Councils, Developers
Identifying those roads with highest risk, particularly for VRU and prioritising evidence based engineering measures to mitigate against those risks	Continued successful programme of road safety engineering	Reduced vulnerable road user casualties	
Safe vehicles			
Action	Impact	Outcome	Partners
Work with Highways England to widen roadside safety checks of HGV's, and all vehicle tyre checking	Reduced collisions and less incidents/congestion	Safer roads and less incidents/congestion	Highways England

<p>Lobby and encourage compliance with regulatory standards, and the adoption of best practice, to ensure that vehicles using our roads are as safe as possible</p>	<p>Safer vehicle fleet</p>	<p>Reduced injuries, particularly serious and fatal</p>	<p>National Government, Trading Standards</p>
<p>Vehicle design and technology both play important roles in ensuring the safety of road users, but this relies on appropriate use of systems such as seatbelts, child car seats, and in-vehicle insurance telemetry. The County Council will advise on these and provide appropriate road safety campaigns</p>	<p>Safer road users</p>	<p>Greater road safety awareness</p>	<p>Parents</p>
<p>Continue implementing our programme of Trucks and Child safety programmes (TACS) to help promote safe behaviour around large vehicles on our roads</p>	<p>Mitigation of HGV's on SCC network</p>	<p>Improved child safety</p>	

Encouraging the adoption of the Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety (CLOCS) programme for HGV operators	Mitigation of HGV's on SCC network	Improved road safety and perception of safety	HGV operators
Consider the implications of connected and autonomous vehicles on road safety and the Somerset road network.	Safer road travel but different demands on SCC network management	Reduced collisions and reduced traffic	National Government, Motor manufacturers

Appendix 2: Road Safety 'interest group' survey: Response analysis

There were four respondents to the survey. Three of these were external interest groups, namely:

- Taunton Area Cycling Campaign
- Taunton Transition Town
- Institute of Advanced Motorists Roadsmart

There was also a response that appeared to be from within SCC, but the specific team was not stated.

Given the limited number of responses from diverse organisations few conclusions can be drawn. The summary sections against each answer below attempt to synthesise the responses, and suggest matters for consideration for the final strategy.

Question 1: A Safe System approach recommends tackling road safety through five key pillars. What does your organisation think are the main challenges and opportunities that need to be considered to enable this in Somerset?

Safer Vehicles:

- A particular concern regarding large vehicles with lack of view from the cab, and the danger this poses to cyclists.
- Not much Somerset itself can do with vehicle design but Somerset CC can encourage say cycle maintenance classes at schools
- Safety concerns should include not only incidents but emissions that result in thousands of premature deaths. All changes that result in less exposure to emissions should be part of safety initiatives and be prioritised.

Summary: The respondents focused mainly on vehicle design issues, with a recognition that design is not something Somerset can influence. But there may be opportunity through purchasing and commissioning to influence vehicle selection, in relation to both visibility from HGVs and PSVs, and emissions. Vehicle maintenance is only touched on regarding cycle maintenance classes. Is there a need to do more regarding maintenance of motor vehicles, noting recent enforcement campaigns in London revealing many unroadworthy HGVs, notably in the construction-related trade?

Safer roads and roadsides

- Much current road design has an emphasis on creating capacity for motorised traffic, appears to work against walking and cycling. SCC should adopt a design hierarchy putting walking and cycling at the top. Best practice should be used (Design Manual for Streets 2 and London cycle design guide). We have concerns that the safety audit process can result in rather illogical and convoluted layouts from a cycling and walking perspective, resulting in people not using the 'facilities' and trying to avoid diversions and delays.. The Cycling Level

of Services tool should be used, with road safety auditors and highway designers giving full consideration to level of service as well as safety. The current SCC criteria for dealing with surface issues doesn't seem to recognise the risk to cyclists of having to take sudden swerves or positioning to avoid bad surfaces. Barriers along footways and on cyclepaths are often counterproductive, encouraging risk taking, as do long and convoluted crossings such as around the A358 park and ride site. There also needs to be a better trade-off between the amount of signing (including illumination) and the need to reduce street clutter. It is not clear to what extent SCC use a route and area based approach to safety management (see comments on safe speed)

- Pot holes and overgrown verges add to hazards and reduce information for road users
- Consideration in design for all road users, cyclists pedestrians, those with partial sight etc.
- Improve the network of pedestrian and cycling paths so that "cycling and walking become the natural choice for shorter journeys"(gvt. Cycling and walking strategy)

Summary: Three of the respondents strongly emphasise the need to design for all road users, with the case either stated explicitly or implicitly that SCC appears to design primarily for motor vehicles, to the detriment of people using other modes. Support for improving network of cycle and pedestrian paths.

Is there a need for SCC to critically assess its current design processes, including safety audit, to ensure that the needs of all road users are properly incorporated in schemes? With active travel prioritised?

Safer road users

- Much can be done to enhance the mutual understanding of drivers and cyclists. The recent West Midlands police safe overtaking campaign is an excellent example. There is a tendency for some drivers to overtake cyclists, then abruptly stop because they haven't read road conditions ahead (e.g. Cheddon Road). Taunton Area Cycling Campaign would welcome a positive dialogue with Avon and Somerset Police.
- Education to improve road users' skills and attitudes
- Education but not just learner drivers, drivers of all ages need refreshers
- Give cyclists priority over motor vehicles and install signage to this effect

Summary: Calls for greater education of road users, and increasing understanding e.g. overtaking cyclists.

Safe speed

- There needs to be better enforcement of existing speed limits with the use of average speed cameras. Community speed watch schemes should be given more support. There appears to be evidence that area wide 20mph reduce severe injuries. A particular

problem for cyclists is vehicles racing to get through sections of road which are restricted in width, e.g. Cheddon Road with parking narrowing the road.

- It is the few who drive with excessive speed who endanger the others. mobile speed cameras could target roads where speeding is a problem
- Reduce urban speed limit to 20mph

Summary: Support for 20mph from two respondents, and for better enforcement of speed limits.

Post-incident response

- This is an area where Somerset CC and police can work together to identify accident hot spots and decide if there are education issues or road layout issues.

Summary: Just one response above. No respondents referred to post-incident response in relation to survivability of the injured in serious collisions, which is an important factor especially in a rural context. Nor was there any response in relation to the quality of post-collision investigation and reporting, and the need for robust data from both police and NHS sources to inform decisions on improvements that may be needed to highways.

Q2. We know that certain road users are more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the road, either due to risk taking behaviour, inexperience or due to increased vulnerability from crash forces. We would be interested to hear of any local education or interventions you are undertaking with any of these key groups.

Vulnerable road users (cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians)

- Mainly through talking to local cyclists, discussing road safety issues, but nothing formally yet.
- We work with Taunton Area cycling Campaign in their initiatives to advocate safer cycling

Older adults

- Driving assessments offered by IAM Roadsmart
- We support and promote all action that encourages walking and cycling and makes this choice of travel a healthier more pleasant and safer option.

Young drivers (16-24 years old) – none cited

Children and young people (0-15 years old) – none cited

Motorcyclists

- Advanced rider courses offered to improve safety through skill

Car users and owners

- Advanced Driver courses offered to improve safety through skill
- Employers of people who drive at work (including 'self-employed' drivers)
- As an employer, we test drivers of Council vehicles every two years with our own in-house driving test

Summary: IAM Roadsmart offers training courses for motorists. TACC appears to be intelligence gathering informally. Nothing reported aimed at employers of drivers, which could be an important area given the significant proportions of travel that are either to and from work or involve driving for work.

Q3. If there is anything that you would like to add, please use the box below.

- Changing road user attitude and behaviour is a long game but ultimately the one most likely to succeed.
- Reckless cycling on pavements is a danger to pedestrians, and pavement parking is a nuisance for pedestrians, particularly those partially sighted. Education and a sense of community responsibility can reduce this.
- We support and promote all action that encourages walking and cycling and makes this choice of travel a healthier more pleasant and safer option.

Summary: All three respondents to this question emphasise encouragement and education as the answers to problems identified, but these appear to be assertions rather than based on any evidence of effectiveness.

Overall Conclusions:

1. None of the respondents oppose the Vision Zero approach, but nor do they explicitly support it either.
2. The encouragement and education of good behaviours is a strong theme throughout.
3. Speed is recognised as a critical factor.
4. There is support for inclusive design of roads and roadsides, ensuring the needs of vulnerable users, including disabled users, are properly designed for, not secondary to motor vehicle movement.