

From: Michael Payne, Cabinet Member – Highways & Transport
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director – Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 19 January 2021

Decision No: N/A

Subject: **Vision Zero The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 - 2026**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - June 2021

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary: This paper updates Members on the draft Vision Zero The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026 which aims to reduce Road Casualties in Kent. The Strategy has been developed following extensive research into national and international best practice and in discussion with partners and stakeholders, and it is now proposed to go to a full public consultation between January and March.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to approve the draft Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2021 - 2026 go to full public consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Keeping our roads as safe as they can be and tackling death and injury is a key priority for the County Council. We have a Statutory Duty to promote road safety and to act to reduce the likelihood of road casualties occurring (Section 39, Road Traffic Act 1988). In addition, reducing casualties also serves to prevent long term disability and ill health. Road safety, and the feeling of safety, is one of the main community concerns expressed by Kent's residents.
- 1.2 The Vision for this strategy is to reduce road fatalities in Kent to zero by 2050. We aim to reach this target through a linear reduction in fatalities measured over five-year periods. Experience across the UK clearly shows the benefits of having a target for road casualties.
- 1.3 The Safe Systems Approach is based on the acceptance that humans make mistakes, and therefore we must design a system that aims to significantly reduce the risk of human error resulting in fatal or serious casualties. Furthermore, where an incident does occur, Safe Systems aims to ensure that these mistakes do not cause a death or a life-changing injury.

- 1.4 Safe Systems brings together a set of inter-dependent strands, encompassing safer speed, safer vehicles, safer behaviours, and safer streets.
- 1.5 The achievement of Vision Zero will require collaboration, coordination and cooperation across all KCC departments, with our partners and stakeholders and crucially with our residents and businesses. The five-year strategy is based on proactive, local level engagement to address our communities' concerns about road safety and incorporates six key elements as outlined below.
- 1.6 We will be proactive in working with Kent's Communities and our approach to local engagement will be through the 'Community CIRCLE' detailed below.

Community Concern - align injury collisions with factors that strengthen the case for intervention, such as concerns about speed, air quality & noise
Injury reduction priority but feeling safe and quality of life are also important
Research & pilot - speed camera criteria to include community demand - pilot average speed camera corridor for evaluation.
Common responsibility for safety - road users, local community, highway authority
Localise campaigns focus on casualty cluster sites
Engagement with community at cluster sites - discuss solutions together

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 We will collaborate with partners and KCC departments to seek cost savings from joint working, such as working with the public health team, making travel both feel and be safer, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing obesity rates and working with fleet managers to improve both the safety and emissions of vehicle fleets.
- 2.2 The Department for Transport estimates that the cost of dealing with a fatal crash is £2.2m. The cost of injuries can in the long run be even more expensive for local councils as some injuries can require 24-hour care which can cost up to £2000 per week.
- 2.3 The Strategy makes the case for targeted funding to help achieve casualty reduction targets and reduce risk on Kent's roads. The Strategy includes a set of measures, presented in a Delivery Action Plan, which represents a refocusing of existing budgets. This strategy however sets out an approach rather than an annual delivery plan.
- 2.4 The Department for Transport makes it clear that future budgets will be allocated according to building an evidence base and following the Safe Systems Approach, both of which are core to this strategy.

DfT Road Safety Statement 2019

"We.. encourage use of the safe systems approach. Future investment in vehicle technology, in infrastructure, and in our evidence-base are all part of the building blocks of future success."

3. The Policy Framework for Vision Zero

- 3.1 This strategy reflects key relevant themes in the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2016-2021- *'Growth without gridlock'*. Traffic collisions cause congestion and smooth flowing traffic at a regular speed limit is safer, produces less emissions and reduces congestion. The Active Travel Strategy (2013) and whole systems approach to reducing obesity, would be supported by safer roads and streets, as local and national surveys show that fear of road danger is one of the principal barriers to more walking and cycling.

4. The Strategy

- 4.1 The proposed Road Casualty Reduction Strategy is presented at **Appendix 1**. In summary the strategy will be:

Proactive

We will engage locally with communities to listen to their road safety concerns and while quantifiable data on safety will be required, we will take local community concerns on board to strengthen the case for intervention.

Data Led:

We will use existing data sources such as statistics on collisions, speed and traffic volumes. We will use advanced traffic analytics to identify roads in Kent where re-engineering is needed most urgently.

Coordinated:

'Hard' and 'soft' measures work best when used together so a key success factor will be the coordination of education, engineering and enforcement resources.

Supported by Training:

Training has proven to be an effective tool. We will seek to extend our training programmes such as:

- Driver training – NDORS (National Driving Retraining Scheme), KCC fleet
- Cycle training – children and adults, e.g. FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) Safer Urban Driving (SUD)

Promoted:

We will raise public awareness of our Vision Zero objectives and safety advice, along with enforcement campaigns to make offenders aware that they face a real risk of being caught.

We will aim to engage the 'silent majority' asking them to 'speak up' in support of safer behaviours, safer speeds, safer vehicles, safer roads and streets. This will be key to changing the culture of road use.

Supported by Education campaigns:

We will educate stakeholders and the public about the benefits of the latest in-car technology such as autonomous emergency braking.

Collaborative:

We will work with partners and stakeholders across Kent to achieve Vision Zero. This will include working with Highway England's Driving for Better Business

(DfBB) programme to promote safer, cleaner vehicles to fleet managers throughout Kent.

Based on Real Time Evaluation:

Evaluation is at the heart of the Safe Systems approach. We will use technologies such as pneumatic loops, cameras and algorithms to record the impact of interventions. This will include measuring what effect campaigns have on traffic speed and measuring impacts of in-vehicle technology (telematics) on driver behaviour.

- 4.2 By adopting this approach, we will produce an evidence base for further actions based on an improved understanding of road safety techniques and strategies that work in different areas, and which can be shared countywide and nationally. This will help to raise awareness of our road safety aims and build relationships with local communities.

5. The Consultation

- 5.1 The formal consultation will invite stakeholder and public consultation on the attached draft strategy. It will be available on a dedicated page on the Kent County Council website. It will run from Tuesday 26th January to Tuesday 16th March 2021. We will arrange online workshops throughout this period so that all stakeholders can have their say, and we will invite written comments.
- 5.2 A further report summarising the results of the public consultation together with an updated draft strategy will be presented to this Committee on June 25th for adoption.
- 5.3 The EQIA is attached in Appendix 3 and will also be consulted on as part of this process.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Reducing death and injury on Kent's roads is a continuing priority, and the concerns of not feeling safe is a frequent community concern expressed to Kent County Council as the Local Highway Authority. While technology advances, road safety is the responsibility not only for the Highway Authority, but for a wide variety of stakeholders including schools, workplaces, fleet operators, visitor attractions, town and district councils, the blue light services, hospitals, the NHS and every road user in Kent. We aim to engage locally to deliver the safer roads and streets, safer speeds, safer vehicles, and better behaviours that Kent's communities deserve. This draft strategy is the first step on that journey.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to approve the draft Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2021 - 2026 go to full public consultation.

8. Background Documents

8.1 A wide range of policy, data and research documents have been considered in the development of the Strategy. The majority are available for review on-line and these are all referenced, including their web links, in Appendix 2 of the Casualty Reduction Strategy.

Appendix 1 – Full Strategy Document

Appendix 2 - Data Pack

Appendix 3 - EQIA

9. Contact details

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