



Title of report: Road Safety

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 12 May 2025

Report by: Head of Highways and Traffic

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide a review of road safety across Herefordshire, endorsing or otherwise the current arrangements and providing recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Roads and Regulatory Services.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the report, and to make any recommendations to Cabinet as they see fit.**

Alternative options

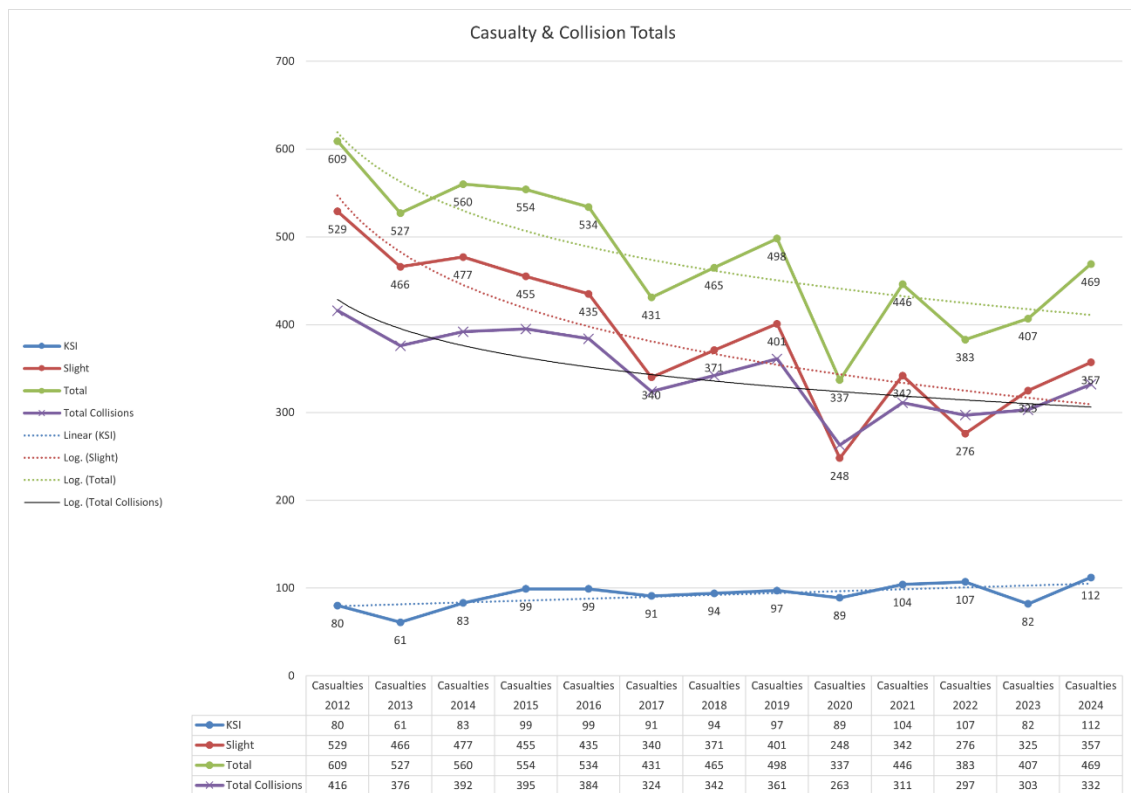
1. That the approach to road safety by the council and its partners continues as set out in this report.

Key considerations

What is the scale of the challenge?

2. Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2023, published by the government in September 2024, estimates that 1,624 people were killed in reported road collisions in Great Britain in 2023 from a total of 29,711 killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties, with a total of 132,977 casualties of all severities.

3. When considered against miles travelled, the report estimates a rate of five road fatalities per billion vehicle miles travelled in 2023, 89 KSI casualties per billion vehicle miles travelled and 398 casualties of all severities per billion vehicle miles travelled.
4. Whilst road users are not solely responsible for preventing collisions and causing casualties, it is important to note that almost all collisions involve an element of human error, ranging from simple mistakes to deliberately dangerous, illegal behaviour. The most common causes include poor driving, inappropriate speed, not wearing a seatbelt, alcohol and drugs.
5. In 2024, 112 killed or seriously injured casualties were recorded on the road network in Herefordshire along with 357 slight injury casualties. Graph 1 provides the casualty and collision totals for Herefordshire for the period 2012 to 2024. There is no obligation for people to report all personal injury collisions to the police. All collisions reported by the police and that occurred on a public highway involving at least one motor vehicle, horse rider or pedal cyclist, and where at least one person was injured, are included in these statistics. Across the county, it is not untypical to find that approximately 20% of casualties are associated with Powered Two Wheel Road Users, 25% with Young Adult Road Users and 30% with Older Road Users.
6. As Graph 1 shows, casualty and collision rates have significantly reduced over time, with all severity personal injury collisions considered to now be approximately a third lower per year than those recorded in previous decades. However, as Graph 1 shows, the current rate of reduction is slowing.



Graph 1: Casualty and Collision Totals for Herefordshire – 2012 to 2024

How are we responding to the challenge?

7. Road safety has traditionally responded to the three E's – engineering, education and enforcement, but has more recently moved more towards a target based approach to road safety looking at specific groups, issues and risks.

Engineering

8. In terms of responding to the road safety challenge by way of engineering measures, this starts with an annual interrogation of collision records for the county by the council's Highways Accident Investigation and Safety Manager. This work generates approximately 120 locations with multiple collisions and is based around a search of the preceding five-year period.
9. Following analysis of locations and routes featuring defined clusters of recorded personal injury collisions, further specialist investigation of collision information will look at various physical factors found at these sites with a view to improving those elements which may contribute to a road user's "inability to cope" with specific road layouts or features. This work will often be done in partnership with the Traffic Management Advisors (TMAs) from West Mercia Police who work within the Road Safety team and act as the focal point for professional advice and police representation in relation to current and proposed highway schemes, highway and traffic legislation and safety matters.
10. Physical improvement work will often take the form of increased warning signing, lining or markings, improvements to existing visibility, drainage or road surface condition, together with fundamental changes in operation such as the signalisation or physical realignment where required.
11. Once identified, locations are prioritised for potential intervention. Based on historic resource levels, approximately five locations have been taken forward on an annual basis and typically involve minor works. A selection of examples of previous interventions are given in Appendix 1. Once treated, sites are monitored to ensure condition is maintained and that previously installed measures remain effective as part of the annual analysis of locations and routes featuring defined clusters of recorded personal injury collisions. Approximately 300 such sites exist across the county and that are inspected and maintained as part of the Public Realm Contract.
12. Two sites exist within the county at Locks Garage, Allensmore and at High House, Upper Sapey, where all previous options have been exhausted and that now require significant investment in large scale improvements, such as signalisation and realignment. Initial work to understand the options at both locations has commenced with a view to completing both schemes on the ground by the end of March 2027.

Education, Training and Publicity

13. The role of a local authority is to provide education, training and publicity for all road users.
14. Road safety education typically focuses on vulnerable road users, pedestrians, children, older drivers and those who appear most at risk when looking at collision and casualty data.
15. Training is mostly concerned with creating or developing practical skills, such as pedestrian training, cycle training, post-test driver training and motorcycle training.
16. Publicity is designed to provide information, raise awareness, give advice on appropriate behaviour and reinforce positive attitudes.
17. In Herefordshire, road safety education, training and publicity is delivered through a full-time post from within the Transportation and Parking team. The postholder is responsible for managing the five council-employed school crossing patrols and supporting the school-employed crossing patrols. The postholder also directly delivers training in schools as well as older driver training schemes. Work with partners takes place on a regular basis, including with the Highways Accident Investigation and Safety Manager following any collisions on the network, developing new schemes in line with national guidance and responding to request for

education and supporting material. More recently, work has included supporting the emerging school streets initiative. Appendix 2 provides a list of the work undertaken between September 2024 and March 2025.

Enforcement

18. Enforcement and roads policing is essential to road safety and supports and complements road safety engineering and education. Policing deters illegal, dangerous and careless behaviour on the road, identifies offenders, identifies the causes of crashes, helps to educate, and change the attitudes of, road users, prevents other forms of crime and identifies and removes dangerous vehicles.
19. Roads policing across Herefordshire is undertaken by West Mercia Police through a specialist team that is made up of police staff and officers. Departments include Operations, Communications, Data and Performance, Enquiries, Film Reading, Traffic Management and the Camera Ticket Office (CTO).
20. Addressing road safety concerns, in particular speeding, is consistently one of the most important topics that is raised by communities in Herefordshire. Whilst Herefordshire Council are responsible for setting local speed limits following the Department for Transport circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits', updated in March 2024, it is West Mercia Police who are responsible for enforcement. Further information regarding speed limits in Herefordshire can be found at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/speed-limits>
21. West Mercia Police operates a number of different types of speed enforcement sites, which is dependent on data, the physical layout of the road and other activity that is taking place. This includes mobile van and motorcycle-based camera enforcement, which is in addition to the one fixed speed enforcement site in Herefordshire on the 30mph A465 Belmont Road.
22. For the past ten years, the police have also operated a Community Speed Watch initiative across Herefordshire, which enables volunteers to address concerns about inappropriate traffic speed on local roads in their area. The initiative is coordinated by the Road Safety team and is in place for areas that do not meet criteria for speed enforcement.
23. Community Speed Watch involves trained volunteers from the community monitoring the speeds of vehicles with approved, hand-held speed measurement devices. Where vehicle speeds are found to be inappropriate, a letter is sent to the registered keeper by the police with the aim of encouraging them to reduce their speed when driving in the future.
24. A Community Speed Watch scheme is initiated when 'speeding traffic' has been identified as a community road safety concern by a parish council or safer neighbourhood team. However, a number of criteria must be met before a scheme can be established:
 - The area must have a 30mph or 40mph speed restriction.
 - Speed data collected by West Mercia Police must show that speed levels in the area do not meet the national industry requirements for police enforcement.
 - No other enforcement activity is currently in place.
 - There must be at least six volunteers in each Community Speed Watch scheme.
 - Speed checks must be conducted by at least three volunteers at any one time.

Community impact

25. Whilst there are no direct community impacts as a result of this report, collisions and casualties create a range of community impacts from emotional distress and potential bereavement through to monetary costs associated with medical care and treatment, damage to property and lost output.

Environmental Impact

26. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
27. Whilst there are no direct environmental impacts as a result of this report, improving road safety in Herefordshire will help contribute towards providing a highway environment that encourages the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel- in particular walking and cycling. The introduction of new highway engineering schemes seeks to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Equality duty

28. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
29. A full Equality Impact Assessment is not required as a direct result of this report, however casualty analysis from national and local data identifies that:
 - a. In 2023, the majority of road fatalities occurred on rural roads, whereas the majority of all casualties occurred on urban roads.
 - b. A higher proportion of road casualties live in areas of high deprivation than low deprivation, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
 - c. Nationally, in 2023:
 - i. 75% of fatalities and 61% of casualties of all severities were male
 - ii. 5% of fatalities and 10% of casualties were aged 16 years old and under
 - iii. 23% of fatalities and 29% of casualties were aged 17 to 29 years old
 - iv. 22% of fatalities and 8% of casualties were aged 70 years old and over
 - d. Nationally, the age group with the most male fatalities in 2023 was 30 to 49 year olds with 357 fatalities. For females the age group with the most fatalities in 2023 was 70 year olds and over with 148 fatalities.
 - e. Nationally, the age group with the most male casualties in 2023 was 30 to 49 year olds with 26,768 casualties. For females the 30 to 49 year old age group also had the most casualties in 2023 with 16,230 casualties.

- f. Across the county, it is not untypical to find that approximately 20% of casualties are associated with Powered Two Wheel Road Users, 25% with Young Adult Road Users and 30% with Older Road Users.

Resource implications

30. Total revenue budgets of £101k were allocated to Road Safety in 2024/25 for, as set out in Table 1.

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Budget Allocation</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| School Crossing Patrols (5 established patrols) | £37k |
| Road Safety Promotion and Publicity | £8k |
| Staff Costs | £56k |
| Total | £101k |

Table 1: 2025/26 Revenue Budgets

31. Total capital budgets of £1,950k have been allocated to Road Safety in 2025/26 for, as set out in Table 2.

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Budget Allocation</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| Minor Safety Schemes/Safety Enhancement Schemes | £450k |
| Major Road Safety Schemes | £1,500k |
| Total | £1,950k |

Table 2: 2025/26 Capital Budgets

32. It should be noted that the budgets set out in Tables 1 and 2 are separate to the Traffic Management revenue and capital budgets and which are used to support the introduction of items such as Traffic Regulation Orders and other traffic engineering measures.

Legal implications

33. Central government sets the regulatory framework for roads, vehicles and road users, and the country's national road safety strategy.
34. Herefordshire Council has a statutory duty under section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act to "take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents".
35. Section 39 (2) states that each local authority must prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may make contributions towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies.
36. Section 39 (3) states that each local authority – [a] must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or part of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area, [b] must, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of the roads, the giving of practical training to road users or any class or description of road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority (in Scotland, local roads authority) and other measures

taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads, and [c] in constructing new roads, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.

37. The police enforce road traffic laws and co-operate with other agencies, such as DVLA, DVSA and National Highways. There is no obligation for people to report all personal injury collisions to the police but where notified, an officer will normally attend any report of a personal injury collision. Where necessary, more specialist investigation work will be undertaken for serious and fatal collisions with Council Officers and Traffic Management Advisors from the police undertaking joint site visits.
38. Fire and Rescue Services have duties to respond to road traffic accidents under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
39. Most road traffic law pertaining to speed limits (except limits on special roads as defined in section 16 of the Highways Act 1980) is contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Other relevant legislation includes the Highways Act 1980, in particular Sections 90 A to F concerning the construction and maintenance of road humps and Sections 90 G to I on other traffic-calming works.

Risk management

40. There are no direct risk implications as a result of this report, the purpose of which is to seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee regarding Road Safety.
41. Any recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee will be subject to a Cabinet Member decision that will set out the full risks and opportunities to the council.

Consultees

42. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee regarding Road Safety.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Examples of previous road safety interventions.

Appendix 2 – Road Safety Education

Background papers

None identified.