

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

Author: Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning
Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance & Waste Services
Director of Strategic Development and Growth

Wards: All Wards

Parishes Affected: All Parish Areas

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommended draft interim Swindon Road Safety Strategy 2021 for consideration by Cabinet along with proposals to carry out a consultation exercise on this revised approach to road safety.
- 1.2 The Strategic Plan for Accident Reduction was approved in 2010. With changes to national guidance and best practice and the slowing of progress in road casualty reductions, it is timely that it be updated.
- 1.3 The Vision for Swindon 2030 (originally adopted in 2015 and updated in 2018) sets out how the Council will shape the borough and deliver growth that allows communities to prosper, families to live healthy and happy lives, and children to fulfil their potential. This report contributes towards Priority three: “Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture” and one measure of performance for this priority is to achieve a reduction in casualties on our roads.
- 1.4 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the principal means of delivering the Council’s transport program. It is the statutory document that contains the transport policies and programs of the local transport authority. It identifies improved road safety as one of its key transport outcomes. The Road Safety Strategy is one of a suite of supplementary strategy documents that sits under the over-arching Local Transport Plan.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the direction of travel towards adoption of a “Safe Systems” approach for Swindon’s Road Safety Strategy.
- 2.2 Approve for consultation purposes the draft Swindon Road Safety Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 and policy regarding 20mph limits and zones in Appendix 4.
- 2.3 Authorise the Director for Strategic Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport & Planning and the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance & Waste Services to:

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

- 2.3.1 Commence a public consultation on the draft Swindon Road Safety Strategy and draft 20mph schemes policy.
- 2.3.2 Consult with the Community Safety Partnership Board on the draft strategy.
- 2.3.3 Report back to Cabinet on a proposed final document having taken into account feedback from the public consultation.
- 2.3.4 Enter into discussions with partners in the Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership to develop the Safe Systems approach across the partnership.
- 2.4 Note that this report addresses Council's concerns as set out in Minute 54, 19th November 2020 regarding the policy towards future consideration of requests for 20mph speed limits raised by Ward Councillors.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Road Safety Strategy is a crucial tool in making Swindon's roads safer for everyone. This interim 2-year strategy builds foundations for the future. It sets a direction of travel towards adoption of the Safe Systems Approach in conjunction with key partners in future years. It sets out an interim approach while this cross-agency collaboration is developed further. Consultation will take place with residents of Swindon and stakeholder groups as these plans are developed with the aim of making Swindon's roads safer. The long-term vision being to have zero deaths and serious injuries on Swindon's roads.

Background

- 3.2 In 2010, the Council launched its 'Strategic Plan for Accident Reduction - 2010 and beyond' (SPAR). In 2012 the Council adopted a road casualty reduction target in conjunction with partners of the Wiltshire & Swindon Road Safety Partnership to reduce the number of killed and seriously injured casualties (KSI's) on Swindon's roads by 40% compared to the 2005-09 3year average, by 2020. This is a key corporate performance indicator.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the annual Collision Data Analysis and Review report for 2019. As well as the casualty data for 2019 (calendar year) it provides comparisons with previous years to illustrate longer-term trends.
- 3.4 The graph on page 4 of Appendix 2 illustrates the closing position on KSI casualties on Swindon's roads at the end of 2019. Unfortunately, the target reduction of 40% has not been achieved - although this matches national and regional patterns where there has been little reduction in road casualties over the last 10 years. Casualty figures for Swindon in 2019 however remain below the south-west average for all severities and

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

despite an increase in road traffic volumes of 8% the casualty rate per billion vehicle kilometres has fallen.

- 3.5 Safety on the roads remains a subject of public concern and is a topic frequently raised with Ward Councillors by local residents. These concerns are reflected at a national level, for example, through the current review of roads policing being carried out the Department for Transport, Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council.

Safe Systems Approach

- 3.6 In 2015 the Department for Transport published its Road Safety Statement "Working Together to Build a Safer Road System", setting out the government's national vision, values and priorities for road safety. This statement promoted a Safe Systems approach to support road users and the economy whilst encouraging everyone to make safer choices.
- 3.7 In 2019, the Department for Transport published its Road Safety Statement – "A Lifetime of Road Safety" which set out the governments approach to road safety and reiterated the basis of an integrated approach looking at the transport system as a whole. This is a "Safe System" approach. It recognised the key role to be played by local highway authorities as the holders of the statutory duty for road safety.
- 3.8 The Safe Systems approach to road safety underpins the UN's Global Plan for Road Safety and is based on four key principles;
- 3.8.1 People make mistakes that can lead to road crashes
 - 3.8.2 The human body has a limited physical ability to tolerate crash forces before harm occurs
 - 3.8.3 A shared responsibility exists amongst those who design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles and provide post-crash care to prevent crashes resulting in serious injury or death
 - 3.8.4 All parts of the system must be strengthened to multiply their effects; and if one part fails, road users are still protected.
- 3.9 An increasing number of local authorities in England and Wales have now either adopted the Safe Systems approach or are moving towards adopting it along with their local partners and it is seen as best practice by Road Safety Practitioners.
- 3.10 In Swindon the longer term casualty trends are static and many of the injury hot-spots on Swindon's roads are recurring year on year with the obvious improvements having already been implemented. As a result, along with the predicted increase in trips and users on the network, further reductions may prove difficult to achieve. Therefore, it is

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

felt an alternative approach to road safety management needs to be considered to continue to achieve road casualty reductions over the coming decade. The Safe Systems approach provides this step change.

- 3.11 The key differences between the traditional approach to road safety and the Safe Systems approach are set out in Table 2 of Appendix 2. It highlights the main emphasis being on preventing the most serious and fatal casualties, being proactive rather than reactive with interventions and having responsibility shared amongst the whole community rather than just individual road users.
- 3.12 For the highway authority, considering the “Safe Systems” approach, means protecting people against death or serious injury by upgrading the road network by targeting sections and areas of highest risk.

Swindon Road Safety Strategy 2021

- 3.13 With the end of the 2020 casualty reduction target, a road safety strategy that is now 10 years old and an update of the Local Transport Plan, as an umbrella document to supplementary strategies such as Road Safety, in progress, the need to review and update this strategic policy for Swindon has been highlighted.
- 3.14 It is not proposed to adopt a completely different policy in terms of how the Council seeks to improve the safety of Swindon’s roads. However, the Council recognises now more than ever that it has to take a multi-agency approach, to co-ordinate and join its resources and intelligence to the best effect and to shift the focus to preventing serious injuries as a result of collisions. To help achieve this Cabinet is recommended to adopt a “Safe System” approach in Swindon.
- 3.15 The diagram on page 10 of Appendix 2 illustrates the five pillars of the Safe Systems Approach and how they fit together, across multiple partners, to deliver a “safe system”. The five pillars of action are: safe roads and roadsides, safe road users, safe speeds, safe vehicles and post-crash response.
- 3.16 To support the development and delivery of road safety initiatives across Swindon and Wiltshire a Road Safety Partnership exists consisting of Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service, Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner, South West Ambulance Service and Highways England. These organisations work closely to determine a strategic Wiltshire and Swindon approach to road safety and then develop and implement action plans to deliver the strategy. Governance is through a high-level Strategic Group of senior representatives from each partner supervising the work of a Delivery Group implementing the agreed delivery plan.
- 3.17 The Wiltshire & Swindon Road Safety Partnership has recently been subject to change following its re-establishment under the Wiltshire & Swindon Community Safety

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

Partnership. Discussion at the Road Safety Partnership Strategic level is also considering a Safe Systems approach and partners are looking to commission support from external experts to carry out a review of the Partnership's operations and provide a forward plan on how it could effectively work to reduce harm across the road transport network of Swindon and Wiltshire. They have recently issued a "Wiltshire Strategic Road Safety Partnership Strategy Statement" for 2020/1-2021/2 which sets out the aims of the partnership over the next 12/24 months whilst a full strategy is developed. This reflects and reinforces the work outlined in this report and is included as Appendix 3.

- 3.18 All the partners recognise that they have to take a multi-agency approach to co-ordinate and join resources and intelligence to the best effect as well as to shift focus to preventing serious injuries as a result of collisions.
- 3.19 For the highway authority, considering the "Safe System" approach, means protecting people against death or serious injury by upgrading the road network by targeting sections and areas of highest risk. To this end, network design should seek to provide crash protective roadsides at high-risk sites to prevent head-on collisions and address run-off road collisions. It should achieve safe speeds at intersections and where non-motor traffic volumes are high. It should also separate motor traffic from unprotected users except where speeds are low and improve highway surfaces particularly on busy footways and those parts of the carriageway used by cyclists and powered two-wheelers.
- 3.20 Other partners contribute through their areas of involvement or expertise, for example around enforcement, post-collision response, driver training or vehicle design and maintenance.
- 3.21 Aligned to the principles of the Safe System approach the updated strategy proposes a vision 'to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads' with the following supporting objectives/outcomes:
 - 3.21.1 Reducing the number of vulnerable people being injured on our roads
 - 3.21.2 Reducing inequalities in the likelihood of road collisions
 - 3.21.3 Accommodating growth without an increase in road collisions
 - 3.21.4 Making road space safer for all users, thereby encouraging non-car trips and improving air quality
- 3.22 As the Council moves forward to develop the Safe Systems approach with its partners the partnership will seek to agree a meaningful road safety target that all parties are accountable for as part of a longer term strategy and action plan using that approach. In the meantime a series of indicators have been identified against which continued

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

progress on reducing road traffic casualties may be measured. Some of the indicators will be monitored monthly whilst others reported in an annual report.

- 3.23 This review of the plan first introduced in 2010 is therefore designed as an interim two year strategy. Delivery of the strategy is set out in an action plan for 2021 – 2023 which is included in Appendix 2. The two-year action plan has been prepared to outline the initiatives and activities that will be developed and delivered to help Swindon Borough Council work towards adopting a Safe Systems approach to road safety. Some actions build upon activities already underway but with a renewed focus on road safety, whilst others will be new initiatives built around the 5 pillars of action. A brief outline of the key new initiatives and/or activities that will be delivered as a result of this new strategy is provided below.

3.23.1 We will work with our partners across the Road Safety Partnership to develop and agree a Wiltshire & Swindon-wide strategic plan for road safety that builds on collaborative working to collectively reduce harm on our roads. This strategy will be reviewed and updated to support the Partnership's strategy to 2030.

3.23.2 The safety rating of Swindon's roads will be considered based on a wide range of factors including casualty statistics, casualty rate by vehicle volume, compliance with speed limits and presence of vulnerable road users. Areas of high risk will be identified and appropriate safety improvements, such as the use of passively safe street furniture, delivered to improve the performance of our network.

3.23.3 The speed limits on Swindon's roads will be reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate and enforceable. Particular attention will be given to the safety of vulnerable road users and the use of 20mph speed limits on residential streets. In addition we will share data with the Police to aid effective and efficient targeting of enforcement resources.

20mph speed

- 3.24 At the Council meeting on 19 November 2020 a motion was considered regarding policy towards requests for 20mph speed limits. Minute 54 states: This Council requests: That the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services continues to investigate specific cases for the introduction of 20mph speed limits as raised by ward members, and, Consults on the new approach following the report to Cabinet in February and ensures that the council's website guidance is reflective of the new policy.
- 3.25 Our previous approach to road safety prioritised resources according to historic accident records rather than any other factors. Consideration of 20mph speed limits in residential areas was not therefore considered to be a priority unless there was also a history of injury collisions in the area. The new approach, if adopted, would take a wider range of factors into account to judge the over all level of risk when prioritising the works

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

programme. This approach will therefore direct greater attention, for example, to residential streets where there is greater risk of collisions between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists. In such circumstances vehicle speeds play a significant part in determining whether death or serious injury occurs or whether any injuries are of a minor nature.

- 3.26 While the national technical guidance issued by the Department for Transport (Setting Local Speed Limits, 2013) has not changed, the proposed change in overall approach locally will allow greater priority to be given to the introduction of 20mph speed limits or zones where appropriate. This will justify the allocation of Local Transport Plan capital funding for such schemes in the annual highways capital budget.
- 3.27 In response to the Council Motion Appendix 4 sets out the background to 20mph speed limits and zones and presents the draft approach to be followed in future in respect of Ward Member requests if the new Road Safety Strategy is approved following consultation.

Consultation

- 3.28 Appendix 2 sets out the draft Swindon Road Safety Strategy and explains the proposed approach and range of interventions that are available. The Draft strategy will be presented to the Community Safety Partnership Board as part of the consultation process, and then again for their endorsement/comment on the final draft prior to it going to Cabinet for adoption.
- 3.29 The draft will be subject to public consultation for a period of 8 weeks. Consultation will take place on the draft Strategy with the public and key stakeholders invited to comment primarily through a dedicated web page and supported through social media and press releases. Responses will be requested through e-mail and on-line forms. There will be a further report to Cabinet on the final proposed strategy once responses have been considered in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Strategic Infrastructure, Transport and Planning; and Highways Maintenance and Waste Services.
- 3.30 The priority remains to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Swindon. No amount of casualties is acceptable. There is a moral and statutory duty to make our communities safer and to preserve human life. The long-term vision must therefore be to eradicate deaths and serious injuries from Swindon's roads altogether.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The development and delivery of road safety is not the sole responsibility of the Council but requires a shared commitment by many organisations and agencies. The Council could attempt to deliver its road safety strategy in isolation but there is a high risk of

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

failure without partnership working. The Wiltshire and Swindon road Safety Partnership is considered the most effective way of taking this forward.

- 4.2 The Safe Systems approach is regarded as current best practice and is most likely to achieve consensus amongst delivery partners as a result. It is therefore appropriate to set this direction of travel while the Partnership develops an overarching agreement for the group.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The costs of preparing the review of the Road Safety Strategy is met from existing budgets
- 5.2 The Swindon Road Safety Strategy is a policy document, and as such, does not necessarily commit the Council itself to funding proposals contained within it. Any funding requirement would be subject to Cabinet approval.
- 5.3 Capital works delivered on the highway are mainly funded through the Local Transport Plan capital grant received from central government. The apportionment of that grant is subject to an annual report to Cabinet for approval.
- 5.4 Elements of education and training are funded either by specific grant (eg Bikeability training in schools) or through the Council revenue budget.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.5 The Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 39 imposes a statutory duty on every Highway Authority in England to promote and improve road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads. The Act states that each local authority:
- 5.5.1 Must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads, or parts of roads, within their area
- 5.5.2 Must in light of such studies, take measures as appear to be appropriate to prevent such accidents and
- 5.5.3 In constructing new roads must take such measures as appear to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use
- 5.6 Swindon Borough Council has a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the Council's policy for consulting and engaging with individuals, communities and other stakeholders in the preparation and revision of policy documents amongst other matters. Any consultation must adhere to the SCI, as well as be adequate and fair.

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

- 5.7 Human Rights considerations have been taken into account by the author in compiling this report. At this stage the report is just asking for approval of the draft Road Safety Strategy to go to consultation. As such the content of this report will not have a direct implication on human rights issues. In the unlikely event they do, any minor implication will be proportional within the need for the Council to comply with its obligations in reviewing its road safety strategy.

Climate Change Impact

- 5.8 Measures that may be implemented through the Road Safety Strategy have the potential to increase or decrease carbon emissions from vehicles and therefore can have a positive or negative impact on climate change.
- 5.9 Measures that might alter speed limits or impact on the flow of vehicles (such as traffic calming features) may cause vehicle engines to work more or less efficiently and result in more or less exhaust emissions.
- 5.10 In the detailed implementation of measures related to the plan officers will need to work through the requirement to mitigate any adverse carbon impact as well as seeking opportunities to positively contribute to the climate change agenda.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.11 There are significant health inequalities to child injury collisions. Children and young people who live in more deprived areas are at a much greater risk than children from the most affluent. Nationally there would be around 810 fewer serious or fatal injuries to pedestrians annually, and 100 fewer serious or fatal injuries to cyclists, if all children and young people had a risk of injury as low as those in the least deprived areas.
- 5.12 The Road Safety Strategy is therefore likely to have a significant positive impact on health inequalities for groups that are more socially and economically deprived.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.13 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been prepared and a copy is available from the report author.
- 5.14 The assessment has identified that access to private cars is lower than average in a number of the equality groups and there is therefore a greater reliance on walking and cycling for essential journeys. Road safety for these vulnerable road users is therefore a higher issue of concern in those equality groups.
- 5.15 A number of equality groups have been identified with poorer health outcomes (including obesity) than average and access to active travel modes (such as walking and cycling) without fear for safety concerns, would have wider benefits.

Swindon Road Safety Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 3rd March 2021

Risk Management

- 5.16 Without carrying out this review of the Road Safety Strategy there would be a significant risk that the Council would be in a position where its current road safety strategy, by its age and through changes to best practice, could be considered as being unfit for purpose. As a consequence the Council would not be meeting its duties under the Road Traffic Act 1988 or Equality Act 2010.
- 5.17 It could also risk undermining the Council's vision to "Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture" through an on-going reduction in casualties on our roads.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Collision Data Analysis & Review 2019
- 8.2 Appendix 2: Draft Swindon Road Safety Strategy 2021
- 8.3 Appendix 3: Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership Strategy Statement
- 8.4 Appendix 4: 20mph speed limits and zones

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for March 2021.