

ROADS SAFETY FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 21 November 2023

Chair:

Councillor Davie McLachlan

Councillors Present:

Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ralph Barker, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Susan Kerr, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Norman Rae

Attending:

Community and Enterprise Resources

S Carle, Traffic and Transportation Team Leader; S Laird, Engineering Manager; C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services; C Smith, Engineering Officer

Finance and Corporate Resources

J Davitt, Public Relations Team Leader; N Docherty, Administration Assistant; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer

Apologies:

Police Scotland

L Hinshelwood, Local Authority Liaison Officer

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

G Tudhope, Watch Commander, Local Authority Liaison Officer

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Roads Safety Forum held on 13 June 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

In response to a query on Item 4 on Road Accident Casualty Statistics for 2022 from Councillor Barker, the Engineering Manager confirmed that the fatalities reported in the minutes were for all South Lanarkshire roads and included motorways.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Approach to Casualty Reduction

A presentation was given on the Approach to Casualty Reduction in South Lanarkshire by the following officers from Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services, Community and Enterprise Resources:-

- ◆ S Carle, Traffic and Transportation Team Leader
- ◆ S Laird, Engineering Manager
- ◆ C Smith, Engineer Officer

The presentation provided detailed information on the Council's approach towards casualty reduction which included:-

- ◆ the annual assessment process:-
 - ◆ single site/clusters of accidents
 - ◆ rural route assessments
- ◆ detailed assessments at identified locations and resultant reports
- ◆ design options/considerations and the resultant works
- ◆ the monitoring processes:-
 - ◆ all rural routes were monitored annually
 - ◆ single/cluster sites were monitored annually until no longer required
 - ◆ trends were identified within annual analysis and any new/emerging issues considered at that time

Having responded to members' questions on various aspects of the presentation, the officers were thanked for the informative presentation.

The Forum decided: that the presentation be noted.

4 20mph Speed Limits

A report dated 26 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted advising on the progress towards the National Strategy for 20mph speed limits.

On 25 February 2021, the Scottish Government had launched Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 which set national targets and measures for casualty reduction to 2030 that each roads authority contributed towards. Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) had previously committed to develop a National Strategy for 20mph zones and limits in Scotland that supported a range of policies that would assist those government national outcomes and indicators that were relevant to this area.

In addition, the 2021 Programme for Government had committed to ensuring all appropriate roads in built up areas had a safer speed limit of 20mph by 2025 and had formed a task group to plan the most effective route for implementation. An appropriate road, in the context of the National Strategy for 20mph speed limits, was considered to be all 30mph roads unless, after the road assessment, a valid reason was provided as to why it should remain at 30mph.

Road safety themed policies previously approved in the Council's 2013 to 2023 Local Transport Strategy (LTS), included supporting and encouraging driving at 20mph or below in residential areas and outside schools, which aligned with the National Framework and National Strategy for 20mph.

The National Strategy for 20mph aimed to expand 20mph speed limits across Scotland and would ensure all appropriate roads in built up areas had the safer speed limit of 20mph by 2025. The Strategy sought to introduce a consistency for 20mph speed limits across the country, thereby simplifying the speed limit for drivers. Additionally, it aimed to reduce perceptions of road danger by encouraging people to walk, wheel and cycle, therefore, providing a more equitable balance between different road users.

Transport Scotland had written to all local authorities in 2022 asking for road assessments to be undertaken. Guidance on how those road assessments should be undertaken was also provided to ensure that a consistent approach of assessment was used across Scotland. The assessments would be used to:-

- ◆ establish the number of roads affected and the financial costs for implementation of the National Strategy for 20mph
- ◆ inform policy, guidance, ministerial updates

Roads were required to be assessed against 'Place Criteria' provided by Transport Scotland, as detailed at section 4.8 of the report, to establish which 30mph roads were considered appropriate for a reduction to 20mph. Following assessment against the Place Criteria, roads were grouped into 3 categories:-

- ◆ Green – roads were suitable for 20mph with signage alone
- ◆ Amber – roads might require speed reduction measures after an evaluation of the sign-only setting
- ◆ Red – roads would require speed reduction measures as part of the implementation of the 20mph speed limit from the outset

For those routes identified as amber or green, discussions would be required with Transport Scotland regarding the cost implications of those routes being included in the 20mph roll out.

Conclusion of the assessment process, as set out in the National Strategy for 20mph, would result in the completion of a road assessment form for South Lanarkshire. The information contained on that form was detailed in sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the report.

A traffic consultant had been appointed to undertake the 20mph roads assessment work and this was expected to be completed by the end of November 2023. An initial draft of the assessment was received in June 2023 and identified the following:-

- ◆ overall number of existing 20mph roads remaining at 20mph – 1200
- ◆ overall number of existing 20mph roads changing to a 30mph – 0
- ◆ overall number of existing 30mph remaining at 30mph – 100
- ◆ overall number of existing 30mph roads changing to 20mph – 4,085

A sense check would be undertaken on all roads identified as being suitable for a 20mph speed limit to ensure a consistent approach was applied across South Lanarkshire. Examples of assessment exercise outcomes were provided in appendices 1 to 3 of the report.

Currently the introduction of a speed limit other than 30mph on a restricted road was subject to the successful promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This process could take between 6 to 9 months to be completed and could be objected to by members of the public as it progressed through an extensive consultation process.

The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation Scotland (SCOTS) was concerned that the TRO approach would complicate the timing of the roll out and could foresee a situation where the promotion of many TROs would not be a top priority for a council. A national change to the restricted roads speed limit from 30mph to 20mph would forgo the requirement to promote TROs on restricted roads. TROs would, however, be required to introduce 20mph speed limits on non-restricted roads (A class and B class) and to retain 30mph speed limits on restricted roads. Discussions were ongoing between SCOTS and Transport Scotland to determine the best way forward for this project.

Following agreement by the Scottish Government and COSLA leaders, funding of £1.4 million had been distributed across the 32 local road authorities to resource the 20mph roads assessment. South Lanarkshire Council's share of that funding was £84,000. Significant funding would be required to progress and implement any outcome of the assessments.

There followed a lengthy discussion during which members:-

- ◆ recognised that a reduction in speed limit on appropriate roads in built-up areas would contribute to road safety and casualty reduction. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for pedestrians and other road users
- ◆ expressed concerns about the practicalities of enforcement, particularly given that Police Scotland resources were stretched
- ◆ expressed concerns about increased levels of congestion
- ◆ queried the initial draft results from the assessment on all existing 20mph and 30mph roads in South Lanarkshire, specifically:-
 - ◆ the fact that only 100 existing 30mph roads would remain at 30mph compared to 4,085 that would change to 20mph based on the place criteria used for the assessment
 - ◆ the need for further detail and discussion to ensure that if implemented as a 'big bang' approach, the Council got it right first time
 - ◆ recognition that there were lessons to be learned from other local authorities that had reverted some 20mph roads back to 30mph
- ◆ highlighted that the place criteria used for the assessments might need to be adapted for some rural locations
- ◆ recognised that behavioural change would be required from drivers and this would not be easy to achieve
- ◆ asked if consideration had been given to the environmental impact due to the potential congestion and idling time resulting from reduced speeds. It was suggested that such detail be provided in future reports under the Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications section
- ◆ recognised the importance of adequate funding being allocated to local authorities should a national change be introduced

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Forum decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 November 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

Councillor Kerr left the meeting during this item of business

5 Education, Training and Publicity Initiatives

A report dated 2 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on a range of road safety education, training and publicity initiatives being undertaken in South Lanarkshire.

Detailed information was provided on the following initiatives:-

- ◆ Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme (JRSO)
- ◆ Calendar Competition
- ◆ Bikeability Scotland Cycle Training
- ◆ WOW (Walk Once a Week) Travel Tracker – Living Streets
- ◆ Go Safe: Ziggy's Road Safety Mission

The annual calendar competition had concluded and the overall winner was Ruby Coia, a Primary 6 pupil at Muiredge Primary School, Uddingston. The Chair, on behalf of the Forum, extended congratulations to the overall winner.

The Engineering Officer responded to a members' question about officer support for individual schools and localities for the JRSO.

The Forum decided: that the contents of the report be noted and future road safety education, training and publicity activity in South Lanarkshire be supported.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 January 2023 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Police Scotland - Lanarkshire Division Road Safety Update

A report dated 30 October 2023 by the Local Authority Liaison Officer, Police Scotland was submitted on national and local road safety campaigns.

Details were also provided on the following local and national initiatives and issues:-

- ◆ across South Lanarkshire, roads and community policing officers had carried out speed checks outside schools. Pop up police had been used to deter excess speeds and education and enforcement used where required
- ◆ during July, August and September 2023, the increase in detections for drink and drug driving had continued. Patrols and road checks were increased to actively target intoxicated drivers who remained a key threat in terms of serious or fatal road traffic collisions
- ◆ drug driving continued to be a problem but the statistics showed that the Roads Policing unit (RPU) was targeting the correct drivers
- ◆ there was a reduction of 43 posts in the national RPU and this had presented some issues in relation to providing the same level of service to road users. Posts had been lost in all areas and this presented a risk in relation to meeting public expectation, demand, achieving performance increases and reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road.

Where possible, social media had been used to promote campaigns and raise awareness.

The report provided details on road safety and road crime incidents for the period April to September 2023 and compared with figures for the same period of the previous year. In terms of statistics to September 2023, there was a decrease in most road crimes in the period compared with the previous year, however, there was a 29.5% increase in mobile phone offences and a 52.6% increase in seat belt offences.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 13 June 2023 (Paragraph 9)]

7 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) – South Lanarkshire Area Road Safety Update

A report dated 6 November 2023 by the Local Authority Liaison Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) was submitted on national and local road safety campaigns.

Details were provided on road traffic incidents attended by SFRS for Quarter 2 (Q2) in 2023/2024 and compared with data for Q2 in the previous year. There had been a decrease of -8% of non-fatal casualties across South Lanarkshire compared with the same reporting period last year. During Q2 there were 3 fatal incidents within South Lanarkshire and this had increased from zero from the same reporting period in the previous year.

Details were also provided on the following future engagements:-

- ◆ Lanarkshire's Community Action Team continued to utilise virtual reality (VR) headsets to promote road safety, engaging with young drivers at school, college or those identified through partnership work
- ◆ the Youth Volunteer Scheme had now been established for over a year. All adult instructors were fully trained and 11 young people from across Lanarkshire had been identified to participate in the 3-year rolling scheme
- ◆ presentations would be delivered in schools throughout South Lanarkshire and 2 colleges in the next quarter
- ◆ SFRS would be working with the charity BRAKE and would be promoting a road safety week from 19 to 25 November 2023. The theme this year would be 'Let's talk about speed' and would be the UK's biggest annual road safety campaign

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 13 June 2023 (Paragraph 10)]

8 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.