

**Meeting date:** 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Report to:** Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board

**Subject/report title:** Road Safety Strategy for Solihull 2017-30 – Update report

**Report from:** Solihull Road Safety Partnership

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Partnership’s Inspector Sharon Jones, West Midlands Police

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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith’s Wood |  St Alphege
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**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** Not exempt

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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Council’s Road Safety statutory duty and the range of services that contribute to reducing the number of road traffic collisions in Solihull.
- 1.2 In addition, there is an opportunity to understand the current strategies, delivered through the road safety partnership, working at both a regional and council level.
- 1.3 The report includes the casualty reduction performance data, associated Action Plan and the key themes which are driving the improvements required to meet the target.
- 1.4 Representatives from the Solihull Road Safety Partnership will be at the meeting to answer the Scrutiny Board’s questions.

## 2. **Decision(s) recommended**

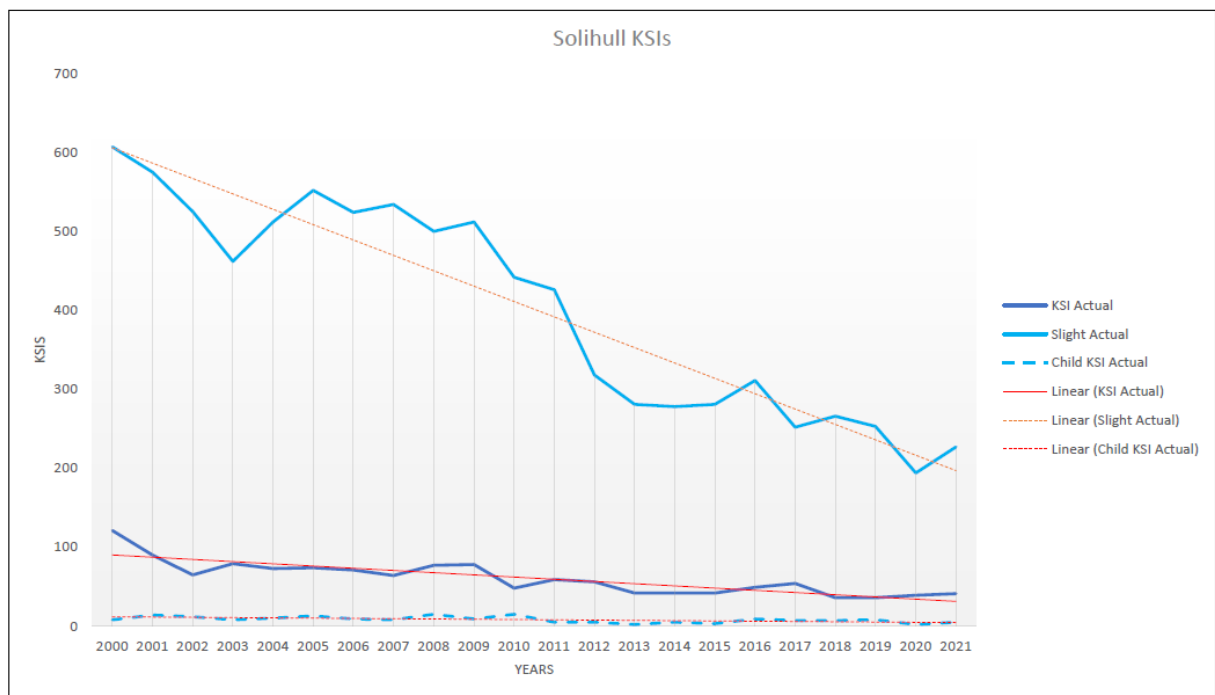
- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board is asked to note the contents of the report and provide comments which will be referred to the Solihull Road Safety Partnership and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure for consideration.

## 3. **Matters for Consideration**

- 3.1 **The Statutory Duty** – Section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act requires the Council, as the Local Highway Authority, to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety. It must carry out studies into accidents arising on its network, and take appropriate measures as appear to the Authority to be appropriate to prevent them re-occurring (see Appendix A).
- 3.2 In discharging this duty, the Council works closely with the West Midlands Strategic Road Safety Partnership, led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), and the Solihull Road Safety Partnership and reports to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure.
- 3.3 The West Midlands Strategic Road Safety Partnership consists of representatives from the 7 Metropolitan District Councils, TfWM, Emergency Services, National Highways and Road Safety Charities. The partnership meets quarterly to share best practice, review emerging priorities, and direct a technical officer working group covering the education, engineering and enforcement of road safety disciplines.
- 3.4 The Solihull Road Safety Partnership is chaired by West Midlands Fire Service, and its core membership includes Council road safety officers, West Midlands Police representatives and the Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure. Invitations are also extended to National Highways, Public Health and other stakeholders as and when required. This partnership reports to the Safer Solihull Partnership, who also monitor the number of casualties occurring in Solihull.
- 3.5 The Council's services that contribute towards discharging the Road Safety statutory duty are detailed in Appendix A.
- 3.6 **Strategy deployment** – The West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy is currently being refreshed. There are several key changes proposed, including the introduction of a stretched casualty reduction target by 2030, support the "Towards Zero" vision for Road Safety and moving to adopting a 'Safe Systems' model.
- 3.7 The Solihull Road Safety Strategy was adopted in 2017 (see Appendix B). This recognises the importance of partnership working at both local and regional level if the required casualty reduction target is to be achieved. This Strategy moved from the 3Es approach (Education, Engineering and Enforcement) and adopted the Department for Transport's recommended 5 Pillar approach:

- Pillar 1: Road Safety Management
- Pillar 2: Safer Roads and Mobility
- Pillar 3: Safer Vehicles
- Pillar 4: Safer Road Users
- Pillar 5: Post Crash Response

- 3.8 The change recognised improvements in motor vehicle design which has reduced the number of collisions and severity of injuries sustained. It also introduced the need to include learning from the monitoring and evaluation process.
- 3.9 **Local Road Network performance** – Road traffic collisions are categorised into four groups. Those where no injuries are sustained are referred to as “Damage Only”. There are no accurate data sources for this type of collision and therefore, they are generally not included in road safety analysis work.
- 3.10 The three categories of collision type, where a person or persons have been injured or died, are referred to as “Slight”, “Serious” or “Fatal”. In recent years, there has been a greater focus on a further sub-set of this data referred to as “KSi’s” or killed and seriously injured within 30 days of the road traffic collision.
- 3.11 The latest financial information from the DfT indicates that the cost to society was just under £2million for every fatality. The cost of a serious incident is now more than £200,000 per casualty.
- 3.12 The table below shows the improvements that have been achieved in Solihull over the last two decades. In 2000, there were 136 people killed or seriously injured on Solihull roads. Last year, this number had reduced to 50 casualties.



- 3.13 It is worth noting the impact of Covid on 2019, 2020, and to a lesser degree, 2021 data. Covid’s short-term impact will continue to be monitored and potentially affect the performance data, which uses a “3 year rolling average” in its calculation, until 2024.

Appendix C shows the road traffic collision performance in more detail for the period 2019 to 2021. Data for 2022 will be published during the second quarter of 2023.

- 3.14 **Discharging our Road Safety Duty** – Due to the continued low number of casualties occurring on the Local Road Network in Solihull, two different types of study are carried out every two years. These consider the road traffic collisions that have occurred near one another or “Cluster sites”. The study identifies locations where 4 or more collisions have occurred within a 20m radius, which covers an area larger than most junctions (see Appendix D). The data also looks at the main road network to identify routes or lengths of road and produces a collision rate per kilometre (see Appendix E). Both studies include data from the previous 3 years and those sites at the top of the list are reviewed in detail to identify any trends and forms of intervention which could bring about a reduction in the number of casualties.
- 3.15 These results are presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure to agree the Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP), based on available capital funding.
- 3.16 In addition to the range of new or improved highway safety features, there are revenue funding activities such as the 24 school crossing patrols, speed awareness programmes and 2 walking bus co-ordinators. External grants also fund annual educational and training programmes delivered across the Borough. These include various levels of cycle, scooter, and road safety training. The Education programmes are also supported by activities provided by officers at West Midlands Fire Services to schools and community groups across the West Midlands region.
- 3.17 The Council’s highway maintenance programmes also play an essential part in keeping Solihull’s Road Network safe. Carriageways and footways need to be resurfaced, lining, and signing needs to be replaced and cleaned, alongside specialist assets such as traffic signal and vehicle restraint systems. Vegetation needs to be kept clear in key visibility splays and streets need to be inspected frequently to ensure they remain in a safe condition.
- 3.18 The enforcement activities that support road safety are mainly delivered by our partners at West Midlands Police, including vehicle safety checks, speed and compliance enforcement.
- 3.19 The Council also supports the provision of Average Speed Camera enforcement systems and the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions.
- 3.20 Regular Multi-agency Road Safety Enforcement Exercises are held throughout the year, co-ordinated by the Police, involving partners and other agencies. These educate and improve driver behaviours and remove dangerous vehicles from the highway across the Borough.
- 3.21 **HS2 Road Safety fund**
- 3.22 As part of the HS2 project, the DfT allocated £30million to carry out works to leave a road safety legacy along the line of the project.
- 3.23 From that allocation, Solihull received £2.345million that, following consultation, has

been allocated to the 12 projects listed in Appendix F. Work has now commenced on the design of the first phase of these schemes, with the full programme to be completed by the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

- 4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**
- 4.1 Working in partnership at both a local and regional level is the most appropriate operating model for road safety as this delivers efficiencies around communication, service delivery and sharing of best practice.
- 4.2 Partnership links with TfWM and our neighbouring authorities at Birmingham and Coventry City Councils are working well. Regularly strategic and officer group meetings take place to support the regional priorities and cross boundary initiatives. Links with National Highways colleagues who manage the Strategic Road Network (SRN) that runs through Solihull (M42 Motorway and A45 (part)) are not as established. However, this relationship has improved recently and is important as the Solihull casualty figures also include those from collisions occurring on the SRN.
- 4.3 The Solihull Road Safety Strategy does not currently include a vision statement. At a regional level, the introduction of a vision is being considered and the “Towards Zero” campaign is currently emerging as the preferred option. It is suggested that Solihull adopt the same vision statement if agreed regionally.
- 4.4 The collision data confirms that road safety continues to improve in Solihull, and the number of people being injured on the local road network is reducing. However, there are still too many people being injured in avoidable road traffic collisions.
- 4.5 From a regional perspective, the casualty reduction target is currently under review.
- 4.6 When the Solihull Road Safety Strategy was refreshed in 2017, it was supported by an Action Plan which contains 14 themes (see page 41 in Appendix B). Good progress has been made against each one and all of them remain relevant to achieving a long-term casualty reduction target. The following four themes are of particular importance:
- 4.7 **Data:** Road Safety is very much a data led service which relies heavily on the collision records captured by the Police at the scene of the road traffic collision. Through the STATs 19 system data is captured, shared, and analysed to help monitor performance and inform future intervention strategies. The relatively new CRASH data base also makes this data available freely to the public.
- 4.8 **Technology:** Making the best use of technology is crucial to delivering further improvements. Independent organisations, like the Road Safety Foundation, are helping to achieve these improvements with systems such as the iRAP route safety assessment process now being widely adopted. The TfWM Data Insite team have developed tools, some of which have been used in the preparation of this report. In addition, there are many ongoing developments in the field of ‘Connected Autonomous Vehicle’ technology that when adopted will be fundamentally important in preventing people from being injured on our roads.

- 4.9 **Communication:** Whilst the data indicates that Solihull's Road Network is amongst the safest in the country, local communities continue to raise road safety concerns about traffic speeds. 12 petitions for action were received in 2022 alone. The Action Plan identified improved communications, and since the Strategy was adopted, regular road safety messages are shared by the partners via various communications channels.
- 4.10 **Finance:** Road Safety funding pressures continue to be an issue. The service relies on successful grant funding applications which are available for specific projects, but generally these do not come with any supporting revenue to grow and continue delivering the improvements.

## 5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The purpose of this report is to share with the Board the latest position regarding Road Safety in Solihull, there are no specific recommendations requiring approval.
- 5.2 Nevertheless, it would be helpful to know the Board's view in respect of Road Safety services generally. Members of the Solihull Road Safety Partnership will be available at the meeting to answer any questions.

## 6. Implications and Considerations

- 6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

| Priority:   | Contribution:   |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.</li> <li>2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it.</li> <li>3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>4. Enable communities to thrive.</li> </ol> | Not applicable. |
| <p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres.</li> <li>6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2.</li> <li>7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.</li> </ol>  | Not applicable. |

| Priority:  | Contribution:   |
|--|-----------------|
| Environment:<br>8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. | Not applicable. |
| 9. Promote employee wellbeing  | Not applicable. |

## **6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:**

6.2.1 None required.

## **6.3 Financial implications:**

6.3.1 Overall, future funding risks in relation to delivering further road safety improvements are highlighted within the report which include on-going increased cost pressures from enhanced infrastructure and the challenges of funding these from within available budgets. Any recommendations emerging from the discussion with the Board will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure to consider so any financial implications can be fully evaluated and identified before any decisions are taken.

## **6.4 Legal implications:**

6.4.1 The report sets out the Council response in respect of its statutory duties.

## **6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:**

6.5.1 None.

## **6.6 Equality implications:**

6.6.1 None.

## **6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):**

6.7.1 The Solihull Road Safety Strategy is closely aligned to the regional strategy and supported by the West midlands Strategic Road Safety Board.

## **7. List of appendices referred to**

7.1 Appendix A – The Road Safety duty in full and list of contributing Council services.

7.2 Appendix B – Solihull Road Safety Strategy 2017 – 2030

7.3 Appendix C – Road Traffic Casualty data 2019 to 2021

7.4 Appendix D – Site analysis from 2020

7.5 Appendix E – Route analysis from 2020

7.6 Appendix F – HS2 Road Safety Fund programme of schemes

**8. Background papers used to compile this report**

8.1 West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy 2030.

8.2 West Midlands Strategic Transport Officers Group report 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022, item 6. Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy.

**9. List of other relevant documents**