

Information briefing

Economy, Skills & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report from:

Transportation Policy Manager

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Summary

This briefing details the revision of the Birmingham Road Safety Strategy following public consultation. It sets out the conclusions of the consultation report and provides an overview of current road safety trends and issues. It details subsequent alterations which have been made to the Road Safety Strategy. It also sets out progress made in creating a Birmingham Road Safety Partnership, and the governance arrangements behind this.

Progress and timescales

Background

The “pre-submission Birmingham Development Plan 2031” sets out an ambition for the City to be an enterprising, innovative and green city. High levels of growth are proposed and this in turn will create additional pressures on the transport network. Birmingham Connected sets out the city’s long term transport vision to ensure that connectivity in the city supports that ambition. Greater levels of walking and cycling and public transport use are a central part of that vision and addressing road safety (and perceptions of road safety) is essential to achieving this. This in turn will support wider agendas around health e.g. addressing air quality and increased physical activity. On top of the very clear social cost, the economic cost to Birmingham of road collisions is estimated to be £176 million per annum.

A draft of the Birmingham Connected Road Safety Strategy was published for consultation on 24th July 2015. The strategy sets out an action plan to reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions, with a focus on the most vulnerable road users in the city.

The strategic outcomes for the draft Birmingham Road Safety Strategy are:

- A reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions;
- A reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured as a result of road traffic collisions;
- More people making their journeys on foot or by bike;
- More children walking and cycling to school; and
- Improved air quality.

The Strategy does not set road safety targets and instead includes a forecast of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Birmingham’s roads by 2020 from the 2005 – 2009 average. This was based on national assumptions which take account of past rates and trends, the anticipated impact of current measures and projections of traffic growth.

The action plan in the Strategy is based around three key themes:

- **Safer Roads** provides the approach towards ensuring the city's roads are maintained, operated and improved in as safe a way as possible.
- **Safer People** sets out how targeted interventions will use a programme of education, training, enforcement and promotion activities to encourage more sustainable and active travel.
- **Safer Vehicles** provides an overview of how the Council and partners will enforce, lobby and encourage compliance with regulatory standards, and the adoption of best practice, to ensure that vehicles using our roads are as safe as possible.

Consultation summary

Public Consultation on the draft Strategy ran for 15 weeks, from 24th July 2015 until Friday 6th November 2015. In total, 243 consultation responses were received from 51 organisations 189 individuals and 3 Councillors. The former Economy, Skills and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee also discussed the draft strategy on 23 October 2015 and their comments were included in the consultation review.

A comprehensive analysis of all consultation feedback has taken place and a consultation report has been compiled which is attached at Appendix A. The data shows that Road Safety is seen as a significant issue in Birmingham (83% of respondents agree with this statement 'a lot'). Amongst organisations this level of agreement rose to 94%. Road safety also affects travel choices in Birmingham, with 83% of people stating that it affects the way they, or their family, choose to travel in some way.

Responses showed strong support for the strategic outcomes of the Strategy. All the proposed outcomes were considered important, with 'reducing the number and severity of collisions' and 'reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured as a result of collisions' eliciting the highest 'very important' responses. For the majority of outcomes, only 3% or fewer of the respondents selected 'not important'. Slightly more people (11%) felt that 'more people making their journeys on foot/bicycle' was not important, and 5% felt the same about a reduction in total cost to society of collisions.

Views as to whether the draft Road Safety Strategy addressed vulnerable road users sufficiently were very varied. Organisations gave a more positive response than individuals and councillors, with 66% agreeing or remaining neutral, as opposed to 40%.

Responses were slightly more positive on whether the Strategy set the correct balance between the needs of Birmingham's road users. 78% of organisations agreed that it did or were neutral. However the response from individuals and councillors was again less positive with 52% agreeing or remaining neutral.

On the whole there was agreement that the Road Safety Strategy reflects Birmingham's road safety challenges correctly. Very few organisations (3%) disagreed with this statement whilst 18% of individuals disagreed.

Comments were also invited on the three key themes and each of the actions within the strategy. This resulted in a considerable amount of feedback. Each comment has been categorised, considered and responded to as part of the analysis. As a result, a number of recommended amendments are being made to the strategy. Some are minor amends related to the clarification of details, removing small errors, or altering text, whilst others are more strategic and have been summarised in Appendix A.

The revised strategy will also take into account increased resource pressures on Road Safety delivery, and will align closely to Future Council plans and the Business Plan and Budget 2016+. This has led to an emphasis on partnership working with the Birmingham Road Safety Partnership being a focus for Road Safety delivery across the city, combining resources, campaigns and communication and ensuring direct delivery is coordinated and prioritised in a data-led way. Aligning with the partnership, sourcing external funds and resource, particularly through Corporate Social Responsibility will be a key priority. The Young Active Travel initiative has also been integrated into Safer People delivery.

In summary, key amendments in the final strategy document include:

- A focus on the Birmingham Road Safety Partnership for coordinating all Safer People delivery,
- Development of resources for reporting local road safety and speed concerns,
- Opportunities to trial new technologies, for example Countdown Traffic Signals,
- More coordinated resources to tackle school parking enforcement,
- Alignment with the Young Active Travel initiative and Modeshift STARS,
- 20mph roll-out and supporting 'hearts and minds' programme a key priority,
- Consideration of future funding models with a focus on sourcing external funds/resource and utilising Corporate Social Responsibility,
- Combined cycle training actions reflecting the forthcoming new Bikeability delivery model,
- Expanding delivery of and support for Community Speedwatch through the BRSP; and
- Greater reference to wider cycling infrastructure guidance – Cycling Design standards and the emerging Road Space Allocation Policy.

Birmingham Road Safety Partnership

Although Road Safety is a statutory duty for highway authorities, the Strategy sets out that addressing the challenges cannot be achieved by the Council in isolation and that action must be delivered in partnership with a range of other organisations across a range of sectors.

The former Birmingham Road Safety Partnership had been wound down and it was identified that there was a need to set up a new group to enable collaboration with partners on road safety issues. Following discussions with the then Cabinet Member for Inclusion and Community Safety, a new Birmingham Road Safety Partnership has been set up.

To support the partnership, a small piece of work was commissioned to scope the various work streams being undertaken by the various partners. This identified that there were opportunities to enhance delivery of road safety initiatives through a more joined up approach.

A number of the responses to the draft Strategy consultation criticised it for a lack of SMART and targeted actions. Having considered these responses it is felt that the Strategy should set out at the strategic level the scope of the initiatives and actions which will contribute towards the delivery of the Road Safety Strategy outcomes and who is best placed to deliver them. Going forward underpinning the Strategy will be a rolling action plan, co-ordinated by the partnership group. This is currently being developed and will set out the priorities for road safety activities of the partners and will be informed by road safety data and intelligence. This approach allows partners to respond collectively to emerging road safety agendas as well as continuing to focus on the more established priorities.

Following discussions with the Assistant Director for Equalities, Community Safety & Cohesion it is proposed to formally link the BRSP to the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Board. The proposed governance arrangements would allow Birmingham Community Safety & Crime Board's and its Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) to have oversight of the BRSP's activities.

BRSP will provide a quarterly update to PDG setting out progress on road safety issues and activities being undertaken by the group. It is also proposed that BRSP will formally report annually on progress in delivering the Road Safety Strategy Delivery Action Plan to the Birmingham Community Safety Police and Crime Board.

A draft Terms of Reference for the partnership has been developed and partners have been consulted on these and proposed changes to the Strategy to reflect the collaborative delivery approach. As noted, work is underway to draw up a detailed work plan with input from Members on the structure of this.

Road Safety Statistics

On 30th June 2016, the Department for Transport released data on all reported road casualties in Great

Britain for 2015. In 2015 there were 4,158 reported casualties as a result of road traffic collisions in Birmingham. Analysis of city-wide data shows that the number of casualties is on a downward trend. There were a total of 646 KSI casualties in 2000; and this has come down to 443 in 2015 - 26 fatalities and 417 serious accidents.

Further analysis of KSI casualties for different travel modes shows that most are on a downward trend since 2000 including adult pedestrians, child pedestrians, young drivers and child cyclists. The numbers of cyclists and motor cyclists killed and seriously injured has been increasing in recent years. Aside from trends, the actual figures for most KSI casualty types increased during 2015.

Overall, the total number of casualties in Birmingham had been declining year on year until 2012, but has increased since then. This increase is primarily being seen within the 'slight' casualties. A breakdown of slight casualties suggests that much of this increase has been amongst vehicle passengers and drivers, whilst the percentage of slight casualties who were cyclists or pedestrians has remained relatively stable in recent years.

Analysis of Contributory Factors provides further insight into the causes of collisions. Police officers who attend the scene of an collision are able select up to six factors which they thought had contributed to the collision. This information is valuable for the understanding the cause of collisions and identifying interventions that could reduce the risk in the future. The most prevalent contributory factors for 2015 were: 'Failed to look properly (driver)', 'Failed to judge other persons path or speed', 'Failed to look properly (pedestrian)' and 'Careless or reckless or in a hurry (driver)'.

For all road safety statistics it is important to remember that the data has limitations. There is no single underlying factor that drives road casualties. Instead, there are a number of influences. These include:

- The distance people travel (which is partly affected by economic externalities)
- The mix of transport modes used
- Behaviour of drivers, riders and pedestrians
- Mix of groups of people using the road (e.g. changes in the number of newly qualified or older drivers)
- External effects such as the weather, which can influence behaviour (for instance, encouraging/discouraging travel, or closing roads) or change the risk on the roads (by making the road surface more slippery)

It is very hard to disentangle many of these factors between years. In particular, police-reported road casualty data only gives a limited amount of information about behaviour changes and it is very rare to be able to identify such changes between individual years.

Many influences such as weather conditions and economic factors are beyond the control of authorities. Human error is the most significant factor in most road traffic collisions. Over time, this can be influenced by external factors such as the engineering of roads and vehicles, enforcement of laws relating to issues such as vehicle standards as well as driver behaviour, and shifts in social perceptions, such as the general unacceptability of drug and drink-driving, wearing of seat belts and mobile phone use whilst driving in today's society.

The revision of Birmingham's Road Safety Strategy will include a more detailed review of recent data to try to further understand patterns, whilst being cognisant of its limitations. The information will be used to inform the Birmingham Road Safety Partnership Action Plan, where a data led approach will be key. The vulnerable road user groups which were identified as being most at risk in the consultation Strategy remain a clear focus.

To support and provide additional insight into road safety data, MAST, an analysis tool providing collision data and insights into the people involved in collisions, will be used. It aligns collision statistics and casualty postcodes with MOSAIC demographic profiles, which can be a very valuable tool for

informing road safety interventions and communication strategies.

We will also continue to explore opportunities to improve intelligence on road safety through the use of new technologies or the analysis of additional data sets such as Hospital Episode Statistics.

Next Steps

Endorsement for the final version of the strategy is being sought from West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Police, as key delivery partners. ROSPA have also acted as a 'critical friend' in reviewing and supporting the document. It is intended that the revised Road Safety Strategy will be taken for Cabinet approval in October 2016. A draft of the strategy is included as Appendix B.

Subject to approval by Cabinet it is proposed that the Strategy should also be considered and agreed by Full Council.

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