

3.2.4 Road Safety in Bradford district

Context

Road safety is a component part of “Safer Roads” a shared priority with the government that seeks to provide a safer roads environment which promotes travel choice, increased safety including reductions in road crashes and injury, and other community benefits including the reduction in intimidation caused by increasing road traffic and aggressive and dangerous driving.

Safer Roads also contributes to increased mobility for all age groups, reducing health inequalities, providing healthy travel opportunities, for example walking and cycling, and links to education through safer routes to school and learning opportunities, including the provision of life skills. In doing so there are also strong links to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

The Safer Communities Partnership takes responsibility for Safer Roads in the Bradford district through the road safety plan “Safer Together”. “Safer Together” is based on an empowerment model for local communities to be part of the work that the Council does together with partner agencies to deliver safer roads. Safer Together promotes community engagement along with personal and social responsibility for safer roads issues.

Partner agencies include West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, NHS Bradford and Airedale, West Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership and Bradford Safeguarding Children Board.

National and local targets

Forecasts, rather than targets, for casualty reduction in Great Britain have been made within the Strategic Framework for Road Safety, which has been produced by the Department for Transport (DfT).

The Strategic Framework for Road Safety includes forecasted projections for reductions in the number of people killed and all people killed or seriously injured (KSI). Forecasts are based on central projections - expected in the absence of any significant new measures, and low projections - where new measures are introduced and are successful. The forecasts for the reductions in the number of fatalities by 2030 are 41% (central) and 57% (low) and all KSI's, 55% (central) and 70% (low). It is acknowledged by the DfT that these targets may be optimistic.

The West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 includes all road casualties (people killed and seriously injured) as one of its 10 high level indicators. The Plan will be performance managed by the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) and seeks a 33% reduction, using the 2006-2010 5-year average as a base, by 2026. Incremental targets are set at 3-year intervals.

Bradford Council sets its own, challenging, casualty reduction targets for all KSI's and Child KSI's through its Performance Clinics. These targets are based on absolute year-by-year figures and also 3-year rolling averages. Monitoring takes place on a quarterly basis.

The absolute targets for 2011 are: -

All KSI's – 200

Child KSI's – 34

Relevant strategies and local documents

The Department for Transport published its Strategic Framework for Road Safety in May 2011. The framework identifies the key themes for Road Safety as:



- Making it easier for road users to do the right thing and going with the grain of human behaviour
- Better education and training for children and learner and inexperienced drivers
- Remedial education for those who make mistakes and for low level offences where this is more effective than financial penalties and penalty points
- Tougher enforcement for the small minority of motorists who deliberately choose to drive dangerously – extending this approach to cover all dangerous and careless offences, not just focusing on speeding
- Taking action based upon cost benefit analysis, including assessing the impact on business
- More local and community decision making from decentralisation and providing more local information to citizens to enable them to challenge priorities
- Supporting and building capability by working with the Road Safety community on better tools to support Road Safety professionals

The West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 identifies 3 main objectives, one of which is Quality of Life, and aims to enhance the quality of life of people living in, working in and visiting West Yorkshire. The Plan supports continued improvements to Road Safety to reduce casualties further, with a particular focus on changing behaviour rather than physical engineering measures.

The objectives link to other government strategies including those from Department for Health, Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government. Bradford has been involved with these government agencies in developing and informing national policy and practice.

Locally safer roads issues are included in the Big Plan, the corporate plan, the Children and Young People's Plan and the Safer Communities Strategy; these are also included in the Local Area Agreement.

The Council's Road Safety Plan "Safer Together" promotes partnership and community engagement and is supported by Bradford Safeguarding Children Board's "Getting Serious About Safety" and the Bradford District Roads Policing Plan. The Road Safety Plan is currently being updated for release in 2012, but continues the key themes of the existing plan.

What do the data tell us?

Road casualty statistics are issued annually as a review of long and short-term trends in road injuries, with a year on year comparison. The latest figures are detailed in Bradford District Road Casualties 2010. The following is a summary of the current position.

Another low casualty record was achieved by Bradford in 2010. A total of 2,089 road users were injured in 2010, a significant reduction (11%) from the 2,342 in 2008. However, the overall performance hides some disparities within the district. Casualty reduction amongst the more vulnerable road user groups has not been spectacular, but at least the momentum of the downward trend has been maintained.

10 people were killed in 2010. This is the lowest total since modern data collection began, and represents a stepped change from recent figures in the low-mid 20's.

208 road users were killed or seriously injured in 2010; again this is the lowest ever recorded. This has consolidated the stepped change seen in the previous year, when the number was 211 in comparison to preceding years with figures in the mid 200's.

A total of 35 children were killed or seriously injured in 2010 in the district, compared with 41 in 2009, 51 in 2008 and 58 in 2007. The 2010 year figure therefore demonstrates a continuing downward trend and also achieved the central government 2010 target of a 50% reduction for this age group (up to and including 15 year olds) set in 2000.

The current indications are that 2011 will see a further reduction in the overall number of casualties, however the child KSI figure, up to September, has already exceeded that of 2010.

Disadvantaged communities and children in particular are at an increased risk of road injuries. This is of particular relevance in the Bradford district, where figures from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010 show that 94 of the 307 Super Output Areas a figure equivalent to 31% of the total, fall within the 10% most deprived SOA's nationally. Bradford Safeguarding Children Board together with the Council have undertaken a major study of road crashes involving children which will inform the allocation of resources and facilitate community engagement in locations where there is most risk.

A more detailed breakdown and further analysis on related problems point to societal issues, particularly concerning disadvantaged communities where there may be an increased risk of road injuries to the population overall and significantly to children. Related problems include those of other forms of unintentional injury, for example, children are around four times more likely to be involved in road injuries in deprived communities and unlicensed drivers are twelve times more likely to be involved in a road crash. There are also issues around behaviour including the non-wearing of seatbelts, pressures on families that may leave children inadequately supervised and the use of older vehicles that do not have the safety measures fitted in newer vehicles.

Future needs and gaps in provision

There is a clear need to address a number of issues to continue the downward trend in road crashes and injuries and to deliver the associated community benefits.

A comprehensive forward strategy, the Safer Roads Remedial Action Plan, was approved by Bradford Council's Executive Committee on the 8th September 2009 to work together with our partners agencies and our communities to develop and deliver a remedial action plan to significantly increase enforcement, increase community engagement and, together with partners, use high profile publicity to give a strong message about responsible behaviour. Within the Action Plan there is delegation of responsibility and budgets to the Area Committees for increased local decision-making linked to the Neighbourhoods Initiative. However, funding for highway safety schemes, engineering measures, has been substantially reduced following central government cuts in overall transportation spending. A further report on the new Road Safety Plan is expected to be presented to the Councils five Area Committees early in 2012.

Perceived gaps in provision have been related to resources that could be committed to safer roads activities, principally in policing activity and, within the Council, the resource that can be given to education, training and publicity and community engagement. In previous years central government had made specific provision for this for local authorities by allocation of the Road Safety Grant, however this ceased at the end of the 2010/11 financial year. As a result funding for targeted enforcement action has been withdrawn and this is now reliant solely on the Police and therefore subject to their own priorities and allocation of resources. The withdrawal of this grant will also impact on the delivery of a wide range of education, training and publicity initiatives across the Bradford district, of which pedestrian skills training in schools is a high profile part. The grant funded primary and secondary school delivery programme, which addresses key themes highlighted in 'Relevant strategies and local documents', is under threat in its entirety.

Fire and Rescue Services are becoming an increasingly important additional resource and are committed to the prevention of road crashes and injury. Again though, resources are limited and subject to the Fire Service's own priorities.

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board are promoting further joint working, dealing with all non-intentional injury to children and bringing in additional partner agencies.

Summary of priorities

Assessment of priorities needs to take account of current activities that are contributing to the reduction of road casualties and prevent conflict and intimidation in local communities caused by road traffic issues.

The continuation of district-wide education, training and publicity initiatives, including pedestrian skills training in schools, is essential but is under threat due to the withdrawal of the Road Safety Grant. If the school's training is lost for one year in Bradford it would take many years to get back on an even keel in terms of delivery and hierarchical knowledge. Efforts to seek out alternative funding are ongoing. The Council's programme of highway safety schemes continues to change the road environment throughout the district and to give greater protection to vulnerable road users and local communities. Through the Bradford district Safer Roads Steering Group, ongoing attention is also being given to safer roads issue through partnership working.

There is evidence that previous activity is leading to a reduction in road crashes and injuries, the future challenge is to maintain the downward trend in the number of casualties with ever diminishing resources.