

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21ST NOVEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	CORPORATE GOAL “HAVE A SAFE AND WELL-MAINTAINED HIGHWAY NETWORK FOR ALL USERS” PROGRESS REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR HARRY SMITH, STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on delivering services and plans which will provide assurance that, as prioritised within the Corporate Plan, all aspects of Wirral’s highway network are safe and well maintained, including an update on the performance measures in place for condition of the highway and casualty reduction.
- 1.2 The maintenance of all aspects of the highway infrastructure is a statutory duty imposed on the Council as Highway Authority. The Highway Authority also has a statutory duty to analyse road traffic accident data and to prepare and undertake measures to improve road safety.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.0.1 As part of the ‘Your Neighbourhood’ theme within the Corporate Plan 2011 - 2014, one of the Council’s goals is ‘Have a safe and well-maintained highway network for all users.’ There are two strands to this particular goal: maintenance and road safety, and this report addresses these related activities.

2.1 Highway Maintenance

- 2.1.1 Inspection and maintenance of the highway network is carried out in accordance with policy adopted in 2005, incorporating the duty to maintain the highway, and to provide a robust defence against claims against the Council for slips, trips and falls, and is at the core of the management of highway maintenance.

2.1.2 The success in achieving well-maintained highways within the Corporate Plan is measured through the annual assessment of three carriageway condition indicators, which have been adopted by the Merseyside Authorities within the Local Transport Plan 2011 to 2015 (LTP3):

- The length of principal classified roads requiring maintenance treatment (NI 168);
- The length of non-principal classified roads requiring maintenance treatment (NI 169); and
- The length of unclassified roads requiring maintenance treatment (BVPI 224b).

All of these are measured as a percentage of the network length. The condition of the highway network carriageways is subject to objective annual assessment through condition surveys carried in accordance with national guidance.

2.1.3 The annual condition survey results have recently been compiled and they demonstrate that the level of investment and types of treatment utilised are successfully addressing the deterioration of the network. Table 1 below sets out the three indicator scores for the year to date, with the last two year's data for comparison, and continues to show that the condition of the network has improved for all three measures over the 2010/11 baseline. 'Green' provides a measure of the percentage of the network not requiring structural maintenance at this time, 'Amber' requiring investigation now and 'Red' requiring maintenance now.

Indicator	2010/11 (%)			2011/12 (%)			2012/13 (%)		
	Green	Amber	Red	Green	Amber	Red	Green	Amber	Red
NI168	75.2	20.7	4.1	80.8	17.3	1.9	83.4	15.3	1.3
NI169	74.6	21.5	3.9	82.0	16.0	2.0	79.1	18.8	2.1
BVPI 224b	95.0		5.0	94.0		6.0	95.0		5.0

Table 1 – Annual Carriageway Condition Survey Results

2.1.4 The balance between the deterioration for the non-principal classified roads and the corresponding significant improvement for the principal roads since last year's surveys will be taken into consideration in the preparation of any maintenance programme for 2013/14. The improvement in the unclassified roads has resulted from the additional capital investment by the Council on residential roads.

2.1.5 Further progress will be assessed at the corresponding time in 2013 and 2014; when the annual condition survey is completed again.

2.1.6 Another potential measure of successfully maintaining a safe highway network would be the continuous reduction in cost to the Council in meeting claims against the Council for slips, trips and falls. However, there is often an inconstant time lag between receiving claims and any final legal agreement or

court decision, which would prevent it being an effective annual measure, and so is not used in the Corporate Plan. Nonetheless, an indication over a period of years can be assessed, and there remains a clear trend of improvement, with the percentage of closed claims successfully repudiated by the Council showing a year on year improvement, demonstrating that the Council has a strongly defensible approach to highways inspection and maintenance, and demonstrably meets the requirements of its policy.

2.1.7 There are a range of further aspects of the highways service, all of which are subject to strategies and plans to bring about further improvement and efficiency, to ensure that the network is both safe and serviceable:

- Co-ordination of road works, particularly in respect of the utilities' operations;
- Maintenance of footways, drainage, lighting, bridges and retaining walls;
- Enforcement of highway powers to keep the highway free of obstruction;
- Ensuring customers are well-informed, and their feedback is addressed;
- Provision of the Winter Maintenance Service
- Management of on-street parking, and the Council's car parks;
- Development of Highway Asset Management to provide integrated works programmes and optimal maintenance choices.

There are two further reports on the Committee's agenda, addressing key issues of concern for the Council regarding the type of materials used for highway maintenance and pavement/verge parking. The Committee's work plan also includes receiving reports on bridge management and maintenance and Enforcement campaigns at the January 2013 meeting.

2.2 Casualty Reduction

2.2.1 Since 2010, the Department for Transport (DfT) no longer sets out national casualty reduction targets that local authorities must work towards, but has provided freedom for authorities to determine the overall priority attached to road safety (including targets) within the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The DfT has however, made a commitment to monitor a number of road safety indicators relating to road death and serious injury.

2.2.2 Based on research by the Department for Transport, the cost of road casualties, to our community as a whole, amounts to some £100,000 per crash, with increased burdens on the emergency services, NHS, the Council and our economy. There is an unspecified cost associated with the disruption caused by collisions on congestion, reliability and resilience of our road network.

2.2.3 In general, the number of road casualties nationally had been steadily reducing over the last 10 years with continuous year on year reductions. For the first time in 10 years the number of casualties who were Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) rose in 2011 by 2% nationally.

2.2.4 The continuing importance to improve road safety across the Borough has been reflected in the Merseyside LTP and is recognised in the Corporate

Plan. The success in improving road safety will be measured in the LTP target:

- By 2020, reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured by 50% compared with the average for 2004-8.

The Corporate Plan milestone target for 2012 is :-

Year	Target (Killed or Seriously Casualties)
2012	104

Table 2 – Corporate Plan Target for Road Safety

2.2.5 At a local level, from the start of the 2001, the number of road deaths and serious injuries increased to a high of 203 KSI casualties in 2004 when additional measures were implemented to improve road safety. Since then, Wirral has had a continuously improving KSI casualty record. However, during 2011 road deaths and serious injuries rose by 17% from 108 in 2010 to 126 by the end of 2011 (see Chart 1 below).



Chart 1

2.2.6 Detailed analysis of the road safety records was undertaken to determine key road casualty groups. Chart 2 (below) indicates the number of KSI casualties and their proportion for the main road user groups during 2011.

KSI Casualties Jan - Dec 2011

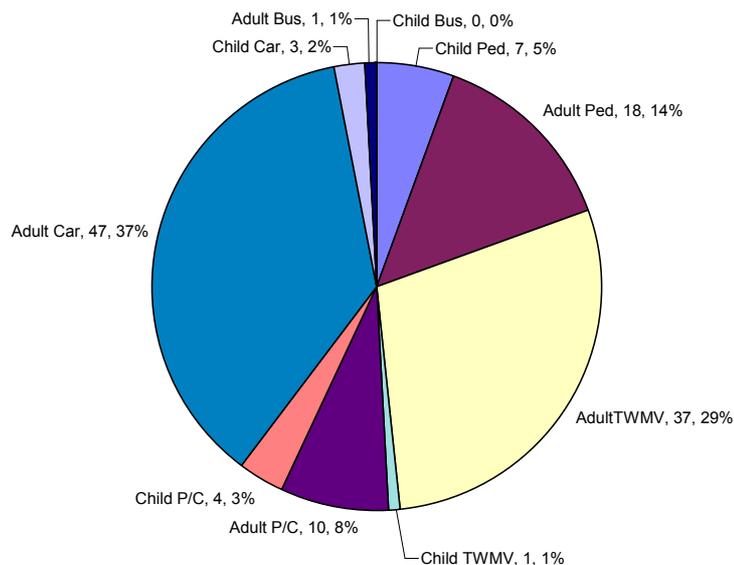


Chart 2

- 2.2.7 Given that powered Two Wheel Motor Vehicles (TWMV) ~ motorcyclists and scooter riders, form approximately only 2% of the total traffic use on our roads, they are disproportionately over-represented as KSI casualties, being 29% of the total, with 37 deaths or serious injuries. This compares to 10% and 11 KSI casualties during 2010, a 236% year to year increase.
- 2.2.8 It may be that there are more motorcyclists utilising Wirral's roads in the current economic climate. National evidence from the DfT suggests TWMV's are 50 times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident than car occupants. Additional measures have been targeted by my Road Safety Team and key partners to address this issue.
- 2.2.9 In partnership with Merseyside Police, we continue to promote and run the Bikesafe motorcycle training programme, together with other projects such as Geared and Go; publicity/marketing also feature in Wirral's 2012/2013 road safety action plan.
- 2.2.10 We have recently been successful in securing a bid for £5,000 funding from the NHS to provide additional discounted training for Wirral residents on the Bikesafe scheme and to develop a discounted additional training package for learner motorcycle / moped riders.
- 2.2.11 Ongoing analysis of the casualty data currently available for January to September 2012 has revealed a 73% reduction in motorcycle KSI casualties compared to the same 8 month time period in 2011.
- 2.2.12 In-car KSI casualties (especially those aged under 25 years) have been a long term problem. Our analysis indicated that in-car casualties also contributed toward the overall increase of KSI's in 2011.

- 2.2.13 Education/training programmes, including the Pass Plus theory and practical driver training initiative aimed at young drivers aged 17-25 have been developed to help this group understand the skills they need to be safer on our roads. Development of road safety interventions aimed at businesses to educate their workforce about road safety (not only when driving for business use, but also commuting to and from the workplace) are also included in the 2012/13 road safety action plan.
- 2.2.14 Analysis of the data shows that to date for 2012, compared to 2011, there has been a 34% decrease in in-car KSI casualties.
- 2.2.15 Pedal cycle KSI casualties have increased slightly with 15 KSI in the period Jan to August 2012 compared to total figure of 14 for 12 months in 2011. It should be noted however that KSI casualties were at their second lowest ever level in 2011. The number of adult pedal cycle KSI casualties has increased whilst child pedal cycle KSI casualties have remained broadly the same. Again, the reason for the increase in casualties in this road user group could be similar to that noted for TWMV casualties and the recent changes in the current economic climate - with more pedal cyclists utilising the highway.
- 2.2.16 Wirral continues to operate a Casualty Reduction Partnership to help achieve Road Safety targets. The Partnership consists of a number of agencies (Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, NHS Wirral and Wirral Council) and a Road Safety Action Plan. This Plan was revised earlier this year to ensure a robust and streamlined approach is taken to tackle the significant and challenging road safety problems. The plan consists of a number of themes covering enforcement, education, training and promotion, engineering schemes together with marketing and publicity.
- 2.2.17 In order to reflect the ongoing challenges and ensure that activities focus on improving road safety and the achievement of the KSI reduction target, this Action Plan is reviewed regularly by senior officers from the agencies involved at partnership meetings to see if modifications or new actions are required.
- 2.2.18 Provisional data for the nine month period to the end of September 2012 indicates that Wirral is currently on target with 78 KSI casualties during this period. Based on this information Wirral is on track to meet its 2012 KSI target of 104 KSI's (see chart 1). This indicates that the analytical work together with the various education, engineering and enforcement initiatives are achieving their desired results. The overall success of the Corporate Plan goal and target for road safety will be determined after the DfT publishes final KSI figures for 2012.
- 2.2.19 The LTP settlement for the Transport Block, which is used to fund transport measures including road safety engineering improvements, has reduced significantly since 2010 equating to a reduction of nearly 50% in 2012/13.

- 2.2.20 Engineering measures have been shown to be an effective way to address known road safety problems and whilst in 2013/14 and 2014/15 the LTP Transport Block settlements increase marginally there may still be a need to identify funding to enable continued emphasis on ensuring effective prioritisation of road safety improvements.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 Highway maintenance is a statutory requirement and failure to deliver the service in accordance with the Council's policies will impact on the Council's reputation, the condition of the network and claims against the Council for slips, trips and falls.
- 3.2 Changes in investment in highway maintenance will have a consequence in meeting the performance targets set in the Corporate Plan. It seems likely that significant reductions in resources for highway maintenance over the next few years will have inevitable consequences for the condition of our roads.
- 3.3 For highway maintenance and casualty reduction targets, the case for funding from the Council's Capital Programme in future years will be made through the Capital Programme Business Case bid process. External funding opportunities will continue to be sought.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 This report provides an update on progress only.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Area Forums are consulted for their views on carriageway and footway maintenance schemes which they consider should be included in the annual Structural Maintenance Programme

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no specific implications arising from this progress report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 There are no specific implications arising from this progress report, other than as described at Section 3 above.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Highway maintenance and the clearance of ice and snow are both duties placed on the Council by statute

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this progress report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific implications arising from this progress report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Note the progress made to date in achieving this Corporate Plan goal.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Committee's scrutiny of the progress of this Corporate Plan aim is an important factor in developing and improving the services provided for the safety and maintenance of highways, and ensuring that service objectives are achieved.

REPORT	Rob Clifford	David Rees
AUTHORS:	Service Manager (Highways Management) telephone: (0151) 606 2479 email: robertclifford@wirral.gov.uk	Road Safety Manager (Traffic & Transportation) telephone: (0151) 606 2111 email: davidrees@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26 September 2011