



BEDFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Bedford's Road Safety Strategy (2011 - 2021)

November 2010



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Road safety is an important element to successfully managing the road network. Moreover the Borough Council has a statutory duty to promote road safety and to investigate road collisions. Road casualties result in high emotional and personal costs to families, friends and individuals as well as high economic costs to businesses, costs associated with the deployment of emergency services and ongoing healthcare required by injured parties in serious collisions. It is recognised that humans make mistakes and a holistic system is required to reduce the chances of mistakes on the roads having serious or fatal consequences.
- 1.2 Bedford Borough as a new Unitary authority is in a strong position to take advantage of data sources across the authority which will help us to understand some of the key 'grass roots' social aspects of increased road risk in our communities, particularly those in disadvantaged areas.
- 1.3 A key focus of this strategy is on improving the delivery of road safety, through the better use of data, more systematic exchange of information, better evaluation, supporting skills development and new arrangements for national reporting and scrutiny.

2.0 National Context

- 2.1 Although not yet formulated into an agreed national road safety strategy, the consultation document '*A Safer Way: Consultation on making Britain's roads the safest in the world* (April 2009) is the most recent indicator of the government's vision, targets and measures for improving road safety in Great Britain beyond 2010.
- 2.2 Considerable casualty analysis by government has yielded key challenges which make up the Safer Way strategy:
 - **Reducing the number of road deaths**, which have fallen at a slower rate than serious injury;
 - **Pedestrian and cyclists casualties in our towns and cities** – particularly in disadvantaged communities;
 - **Protecting children**, particularly in disadvantaged areas, **and young people**, who are greatly over-represented in the casualty statistics;
 - **Protecting motorcyclists**, who represent 20% of road fatalities but just 1% of traffic;
 - **Safety on rural roads**: 62% of all road fatalities in 2007 occurred on rural roads, which carry only 42% of traffic;
 - **Variations in safety** from area to area and road to road;
 - **Poor road user behaviour** amongst a minority, where drink- driving and failure to wear a seatbelt remain a problem;
 - **Illegal and inappropriate speed**: excessive speed was recorded as a contributory factor in 26% of road fatalities in 2007.

A National vision for the future

- 2.3 The environmental, economic and social context will influence what is achievable during the period of the strategy. Government is currently proposing to set targets over a ten-year period as this is considered long enough to be able to make an impact but not so far in the future as to make it difficult to predict the impacts of these external factors. Changes in the areas of vehicle technologies or road design may not begin to take effect on casualty numbers for some time and so government is proposing that the period of the *strategy* should be twenty years to encourage longer term steps.
- 2.4 A vision for road safety will be an important factor in enabling a diverse range of road safety stakeholders to work effectively together. The vision should be credible, challenging and engaging for all concerned. Government's long-term vision for road safety is:-

...making Britain's roads the safest in the world...

- 2.5 The rate of decline in road deaths has been less successful than for serious injuries and Government wishes to focus on this group. At the local level, road deaths are much rarer occurrences; it is therefore more reliable to address the combined deaths and serious injuries at the local level.
- 2.6 The following national targets have been proposed:
- 1) To reduce road deaths by at least 33 per cent by 2020 compared to the baseline of the 2004 – 08 average;
 - 2) To reduce the annual total of serious injuries on our roads by 2020 by at least 33 per cent compared to the 2004 – 08 baseline.
 - 3) To reduce the annual total of road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people (aged 0 – 17) by at least 50 per cent against a baseline of the 2004 – 08 average by 2020.
 - 4) To reduce by at least 50 per cent by 2020 the rate of fatal and serious injuries per km travelled by pedestrians and cyclists, compared with the 2004 – 08 average.

3.0 Local Context

- 3.1 Previously, Bedford Borough worked with the then County Council as the highway authority to deliver a local road safety strategy within the context of the previous national strategy, *Tomorrows Roads, Safer for Everyone – (March 2000)*. This strategy promoted the following targets:
- 40 per cent reduction in all fatal and serious injuries compared to the 1994 – 1998 average baseline

- 50 per cent reduction in all child fatal and serious injuries compared to the 1994 – 199 average baseline
- 10 per cent reduction in all slight injuries per 100 million km travelled

3.2 In general, performance matched the trajectories required to meet the national targets but having almost met the targets, there was a 'plateau' effect which was difficult to pass.

3.3 Stakeholders have identified safety as important for two of Bedford's transport challenges, although it is inherent in many of the others:-

- Reduce road risk and reduce casualty levels
- Incorporate personal and road safety into urban design

Bedford Borough has undertaken a detailed analysis of the historical road casualty data from 2004 – 2008 and sought to compare its own local areas of interest against those identified within the national strategy.

3.4 Bedford Borough will initially adopt the national target reductions of 33% for all Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI), and 50% KSI reduction among children and young people (0 – 17) alongside a specific investigation into casualties in areas of disadvantage. Beneath these headlines, Bedford Borough is interested in focusing efforts to improve the safety of the following user groups:

- **Car Drivers and passengers;** who represent the highest proportion of fatal and serious injury numbers.
- **Rider of Mopeds and motorcycles;** particularly riders of machines up to 125cc.
- **Adult pedestrians and cyclists;** this group is collectively represented in a high number of fatal and serious collisions.
- **Child cyclists;** a recent sharp increase in numbers has been noted among this vulnerable group.
- **Child pedestrians;** child pedestrians are extremely vulnerable and are represented in a number of fatal and serious collisions.

4.0 Vision, key aims and approach

4.1 Bedford Borough believes that with the support of all its partners it will be possible to break through the 'plateau' and further reduce road casualties in such a way to deliver the national vision.

4.2 The need for focusing on casualty reduction is created by other socio-economic factors, some of which are listed below:

- Competing financial pressures, both at central and local level

- Many people still aspire to own a car
- Flexibility in parental choice of schools and patient choice of hospital encourages more and longer car-borne trips
- Congestion in Bedford appears to be encouraging more people to consider walking and cycling
- The health agenda is similarly causing people to consider more active modes of travel

4.3 Bedford Borough very much sees the Local Transport Plan and other contributory strategies as the key to achieving a holistic safety system. Indeed some of the most beneficial strategies to delivering road safety are likely to not even be specifically transport related, such as the Play Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and the Healthy Bedford Strategy. However strong links will be made with the Network Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan activities, in order to move our predominantly reactive maintenance regimes towards a more added value, proactive approach. We will adopt the following vision,

.... to embed road casualty reduction into Bedford Borough's activities and service delivery and work with communities to reduce road traffic casualties in line with national targets and aspirations....¹

4.4 Bedford Borough's road safety strategy will be embedded using a whole authority delivery approach and will seek not only to react to identified trends but notably it will seek with partners to go to the root causes of road casualties, which may lie in issues of social disadvantage.

4.5 Delivery of the strategy will be very much based on the right person, organisation, community or group who is best placed to take responsibility for their and others safety. Key themes in our approach will be:-

- An ongoing focus on attitudes and behaviour through awareness, training and campaigns
- Ensuring that the streetscene gives clear messages on the likely hazards and behaviours needed
- Regulation and enforcement to reinforce appropriate behaviours

¹ For further information, please see DfT's A Safer Way: consultation on Making Britain's Roads the safety in the world at: www.dft.gov.uk

5.0 Delivery Action Plan

Road Safety Objectives	
National	Reduce all fatal and serious injuries by 33 per cent by 2020.
National	Reduce all fatal and serious injuries among children and young people (0 -17) by 50 per cent by 2020
Local	Car Drivers and passengers: Reduce KSIs
Local	Rider of Mopeds and motorcycles; Reduce KSIs particularly riders of machines up to 125cc.
Local	Adult pedestrians and cyclists; Reduce KSIs
Local	Child cyclists; Investigate increase in numbers
Local	Child pedestrians: reduce KSIs

Action Plan	
Item	Task
1.	Identify all potential internal and external partners
2.	Carry out specific analysis of casualties in disadvantaged areas and prepare a specific plan for casualty reduction as appropriate.
3.	Carry out full consultation as part of the Local Transport Plan to determine the community vision for road safety.
4.	With the right partners prepare a framework for the application of Urban Safety Management within Bedford and Kempston.
5.	Work with communities to determine the best ways to deliver road safety and to engage community road safety champions
6.	Develop a programme of casualty reduction based engineering improvements on both urban and rural routes.
7.	Work alongside Bedfordshire Police to target enforcement against irresponsible road use.
8.	Investigate and where appropriate install 20mph zones in residential areas and around schools.
9.	Review and confirm arrangement for collection and corroboration of casualty data via Stats 19 system.

6.0 Resources and Partnership working

- 6.1 It is clear that the Borough Council cannot deliver the road safety vision and objectives alone and we will therefore continue our efforts to maintain and extend close partnership working with a broad range of organisations. The delivery of road safety will be achieved through facilitating and engaging with key partners to achieve delivery of the action plan.
- 6.2 A key mechanism for delivering road safety will be through established networks such as the Community Safety Partnership. Through these networks and their action plan road safety and casualty reduction initiatives can be owned and brought forward to effectively build communities around the subject.
- 6.3 The uncertainty over future dedicated funding for road safety and other areas of work means it will be essential to ensure that added road safety value is achieved through ever possible avenue.

Revenue Budget

- 6.4 The revenue budget from the casualty reduction partnership budget has been used for education, training and publicity and to conduct a casualty review of all casualty data in the 5 year period between 2004 and 2008. This review provides a new baseline for understanding the extent and scale of road risk casualties in the Borough and provides a firm foundation to build and measure the success of future initiatives.
- 6.5 Following the loss of specific Government funding for casualty reduction in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the future of the Casualty Reduction Partnership is now under review.

Capital Budget

- 6.6 For the year 2010 -2011 the current capital budget for casualty reduction schemes is approximately £155,000 but this forms part of the Integrated Transport block allocation from Central Government which has been cut by one third nationally in the CSR. In future, we will have to bid for additional funding from the new Sustainable Transport Fund or rely on growth related funding which makes it even more important to embed road safety and casualty reduction into everything that we do.