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## A New Draft Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy and 20 mph Speed Limit Policy

**Purpose of report:** To inform and seek the views of the Select Committee on the new draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Road Safety Strategy based on the principles of a 'Vision Zero' Safe System approach, including a new policy for 20 mph speed limits.

### Introduction:

1. In recent years the annual number of road casualties killed or seriously injured on Surrey's roads has not reduced. Surrey has some of the highest numbers of pedestrian and cycling road casualties of any local authority in Great Britain, with most of these resulting from collisions with motor vehicles in urban 30 mph speed limit areas. Alongside this data, high vehicle speeds are a prime concern of Surrey's residents.
2. Therefore, a new draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy has been developed in collaboration with Surrey Police (including the Police and Crime Commissioner), Surrey Fire and Rescue and National Highway colleagues. The new strategy (presented in **Annex 1**), follows on from previous strategies in 2012 and 2018, and adopts the best practice Vision Zero and Safe Systems approach. This includes a new target for reducing collisions where someone is killed or seriously injured by 50% by 2035. and a new policy for a more flexible approach to implementing 20 mph speed limits.

### Introduction

3. Whenever there is a road collision reported to the police resulting in personal injury, the details are recorded by each police service using a national standard format. This data is then compiled nationally to inform national road safety policy and interventions. It is also shared with the local highway authority who use computer mapping to identify locations and patterns of collisions on the road network to prioritise casualty reduction highway improvements, and to analyse overall trends in the data<sup>1</sup>. Casualties are categorised as either fatal,

<sup>1</sup> Summary data is available for viewing on [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk) and national data (including an interactive dashboard) is available here: [Road accidents and safety statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics)

serious, or slight depending on the severity of the injury suffered, using standard definitions.

4. Summary analysis of the trend in the total annual numbers of fatal, serious, and total number of road casualties on Surrey's roads has shown that:
  - The longer-term reduction in fatal casualties has stalled in recent years.
  - The trend in the combined total of fatal and serious casualties has remained mainly static since 2020, with some recent increases due mostly to recent changes in the recording method use by the police.
  - Overall, the total number of road casualties continues to decrease.
5. Considering this data, the County Council and partners need to do things differently if we are to be successful in reducing fatal and serious casualties in the future. Therefore, the County Council has worked together with Surrey Police (including the Police and Crime Commissioner), Surrey Fire and Rescue and National Highways to create the new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy presented in **Annex 1**.
6. The new draft strategy includes a summary analysis of the trend in road casualties, proposes a new casualty reduction target, and describes a new flexible approach to implementing 20 mph speed limits. This meets our commitment within our [Local Transport Plan 4](#) to develop a new road safety strategy for Surrey, building on the best practice Vision Zero and Safe Systems approach, replacing the previous [Surrey Road Safety Strategy](#) that has now expired.

### **Vision Zero and Safe Systems**

7. Our new Vision Zero based strategy puts people at its centre, coming from the belief that every road death or serious injury is preventable. It is built upon the underlying principles that:
  - Human beings make frequent mistakes that lead to road collisions.
  - The human body by nature has a limited ability to sustain collision forces with known tolerance to injury thresholds.
  - It is a shared responsibility between stakeholders (road users, road managers, vehicle manufacturers, etc) to take appropriate actions to ensure that road collisions do not lead to serious or fatal injuries.
8. A Safe System approach recognises these facts and seeks to design them out of the equation. Put simply it means that all elements of the road system, for example vehicles, infrastructure, road users, and post-collision care, work together as one to minimise the chance of a collision, or, if a collision does take place, to prevent death or serious injury from occurring. The approach is a

shared responsibility (road users, highway managers, enforcement agencies and vehicle manufacturers) to act to ensure that road collisions do not lead to serious or fatal injuries. A Safe System approach has five pillars that work together to minimise risk, namely:

- Safe roads and streets
- Safe speed
- Safe vehicles
- Safe road users and behaviours
- Post collision care

9. A Vision Zero approach to road safety was endorsed by the intergovernmental conference on road safety in 2019 which resulted in the Stockholm Declaration for a 50% reduction in fatal and serious collisions by 2030, compared to 2020<sup>2</sup>. To achieve a similar ambitious reduction in road casualties in Surrey, we will need to work toward roads that are designed with a ‘forgiving’ infrastructure, that recognises the vulnerability of human beings and the mistakes they make. This includes setting speed limits and managing vehicle speeds to an appropriate level for the different types of roads and their use by vulnerable road users such as people walking, wheeling, cycling and riding horses.

#### **Our Vision Zero Target**

10. The new draft strategy outlines a vision for there to be zero death or serious injury on Surrey’s roads by 2050. In the early 2000s there were 60 to 70 fatal collisions per year in Surrey, whereas in more recent years that number has reduced to 20 to 30 collisions per year. Therefore, we believe that this vision zero target will be challenging, yet achievable.
11. To work toward Vision Zero by 2050 we have set an interim target for a 50% reduction in people being killed or seriously injured (KSI) by 2035 with reference to a baseline average for 2019 and 2022. We have selected these two years for the baseline because they are more likely to represent the typical annual number of KSIs in Surrey, because these years were unaffected by COVID (unlike 2020 and 2021) and were less affected by a change in the police reporting system (unlike 2018). We have also set the year 2035 for the target because by the time our final strategy is published in 2024, we will be several years into the current decade.

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<sup>2</sup> [Stockholm Declaration - RoadSafetySweden](#)

## Speed Management and a New Approach to 20 mph Speed Limits

12. There is overwhelming research evidence that faster motor vehicles increase the risk of collision and make the consequences worse<sup>3</sup>. Concern over vehicle speeds is a frequently mentioned highway issue raised by Surrey's residents.
13. In June 2022 the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Road Safety allocated an additional £3million over three years to help tackle excessive vehicle speeds and road safety on Surrey's roads<sup>4</sup>. This funding is being invested in more average speed cameras, spot speed cameras, traffic calming and junction improvements at the sites with the worst speeding and collisions. At the time of writing several new average speed camera schemes have just been (or are just about to be) implemented across the county.
14. The County Council has already embarked on a proactive, strategic review of rural speed limits with the aim of replacing all the existing 60 mph national speed limits on rural roads with lower speed limits that are set at a more appropriate level more in keeping with the use and nature of the road. The first of these were implemented in September 2023.
15. To realise the ambition of the Vision Zero road safety strategy there also needs to be an enhanced focus on reducing speeds in town centres, residential areas, and village centres, especially near schools, where the exposure to risk for people walking, wheeling, and cycling is greater. For example, in 2022 nearly half of all Surrey's road casualties (49%) were located on 30 mph speed limit roads most of which are in built up areas. Also, 81% of pedestrian casualties took place on 30 mph speed limit roads with nearly all involving collision with a motor vehicle. Similarly, 69% of cycling casualties took place on 30 mph speed limit roads, with 79% of these resulting from collisions with a motor vehicle.
16. Most leading international and national organisations that advocate for road safety, public health and climate change also advocate for lower 20 mph speed limits in urban areas. This was also endorsed in the Stockholm Declaration. Therefore, we want to allow greater flexibility to implement more 20 mph speed limits across a greater number of Surrey's roads, especially in town centres, village centres, residential areas and near schools where people want them. This is because lower speeds, especially where there are more people walking, wheeling, and cycling, will provide a range of benefits including:
  - Reduced risk and severity of collisions, especially for people walking, wheeling and cycling

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<sup>3</sup> [Road Crash Trauma, Climate Change, Pollution and the Total Costs of Speed: Six graphs that tell the story | GRSF \(roadsafetyfacility.org\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth Decisions - Monday, 27 June 2022.](#)

- Making places easier and more pleasant to walk, wheel and cycle
  - Reduced noise and air pollution
17. Our new approach to 20 mph limits is presented in detail within the new draft Surrey RoadSafe Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy and has been developed with consideration to the following principles:
- Any new 20 mph speed limits must be supported by local people and the local County Councillor.
  - We do not advocate a blanket approach and recognise that some main roads should remain at 30 mph.
  - We will only implement 20 mph speed limits that are predominantly self-enforcing to retain credibility with road users. Therefore, we will only use additional supporting measures where existing speeds are higher.
  - There should be no expectation that Surrey Police would be required to provide additional enforcement across Surrey’s road network over existing levels to make any new 20 mph limits work.
  - Any new speed limit will be evaluated to check how successful it has been in reducing speeds, and if necessary further supporting measures will be considered to improve compliance.

<b>Financial and Value for Money Implications</b>
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18. The Department for Transport publish the average value of prevention per reported casualty and per reported road collision for Great Britain every year, for use in cost benefit calculations. The most recent data published in September 2022 is presented in **TABLE 1** below.
19. In recent years, within Surrey there have been between 24 to 36 fatal collisions per year. The resulting estimated value of preventing these fatal collisions would be between £50million to £76million, and there would be further substantial savings from reductions in serious and slight injury collisions too.

**Table 1: Average value of prevention per reported casualty and per reported road collision: Great Britain**

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Cost per casualty (£)</b>	<b>Cost per collision (£)</b>
Fatal	2,114,526	2,342,203
Serious	237,614	270,421
Slight	18,318	27,320
Average for all severities	83,752	112,243
Damage only	-	2,522

20. It can be seen that reductions in road collisions and casualties can result in large savings to society, though it should be noted that these savings do not necessarily accrue to the organisations undertaking the investment.

#### **Conclusions:**

21. The Council proposes to set a target of zero, or as close as possible, fatalities and serious injuries by 2050 with a 50% reduction by 2035. We propose to achieve this by developing and implementing a new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy for Surrey based on the principles of the 'Vision Zero' and a Safe System approach. This includes a new 20 mph speed limit policy.
22. If approved by the Cabinet on 19 December 2023, it is proposed that the new draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy, including the new 20 mph speed limit policy, will be published for public consultation starting in January for a period of ten weeks. The results of the consultation and any recommended changes to the strategy and 20 mph policy will then be brought back to Cabinet in the Spring for final approval.

#### **Recommendations:**

23. That the views of the Select Committee on the new draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy, including a new draft 20 mph speed limit policy, be provided to the Council's Cabinet in advance of Cabinet considering this matter on 19 December 2023.

#### **Next steps:**

24. The draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy including a new draft 20 mph speed limit policy will be presented to Cabinet on 19 December 2023. If agreed by Cabinet, draft new strategy will be published for public consultation in January for a period of 10 weeks. The comments received will be analysed and a new strategy with amendments will be brought back to the Cabinet for final approval in May 2024.

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#### **Report contact**

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#### **Contact details**

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## **Sources/background papers**

[Pedestrian safety in areas of deprivation - Report and review of the research, June 2021, RoSPA, Birmingham](#)

[www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)

[Road accidents and safety statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Local Transport Plan 4](#)

[Surrey Road Safety Strategy](#)

[Stockholm Declaration - RoadSafetySweden](#)

[Managing speeds on Surrey's roads - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

[Road Crash Trauma, Climate Change, Pollution and the Total Costs of Speed: Six graphs that tell the story | GRSF \(roadsafetyfacility.org\)](#)

[Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth Decisions - Monday, 27 June 2022.](#)

## **Annex 1: Draft Surrey RoadSafe Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy**

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