

# Report to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

**8 November 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Highway Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 – Report of the Working Group
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Borough Economy Alice Davey
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## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board consider and comment upon the outcome of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Working Group regarding the Highway Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.
- 1.2 That, in relation to the Highway Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030, the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board be requested to present the findings of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board to Full Council.







## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 On 18 January 2022 Full Council requested the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board to conduct a review into the Strategic Road Safety Plan. The Strategic Road Safety Plan covered the period 2017-2022 and was therefore due for renewal.



- 2.2 On 23 October 2023, members of the working group, alongside officers from the Council’s Highways department, met for a final time to consider the contents of the Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.
- 2.3 The findings of the working group are set out in section 4.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people:</b> The new strategic plan will help ensure good, well maintained and safe highway infrastructure to encourage more walking and cycling among our younger people increasing their wellbeing and health, improving road safety, reducing road casualties and promoting cleaner air quality.</p>
	<p><b>People live well and age well:</b> A safe and well-maintained highway environment plays an important role in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from health, independence, social inclusion and interaction.</p>
	<p><b>Strong resilient communities:</b> A safe highway infrastructure will make our communities feel safe, more protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods.</p>
	<p><b>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods:</b> The new strategic plan will ensure all new housing estates are designed and construed with the community’s safety in built from the start.</p>
	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy:</b> Our local highways are the arteries of our communities. They connect our residents to employment, education, local services and the wider world. They enable economic growth, social mobility and are vital in ensuring good health and economy.</p>
	<p><b>A connected and accessible Sandwell:</b> Our residents will have excellent public transport that connects them to jobs and opportunities not only in the West Midlands region but across the nation and safe sustainable links to allow them to access these public transport services</p>



## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 On 18 January 2022 (Minute No. 22/22(a)), the Council requested that the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board conduct a review into the Strategic Road Safety Plan. The Strategic Road Safety Plan covered the period 2017-2022 and was therefore due for renewal.
- 4.2 Several meetings occurred throughout the 2022/23 municipal year between members of the working group and highway officers to discuss the contents of the plan.
- 4.3 Following a change in membership of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board in May 2023, a final working group was established in July 2023 to complete the review.
- 4.4 On 23 October 2023, members of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board working group, alongside officers from the Council's Highways department, met for a final time to consider the contents of the Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.
- 4.5 Members received a detailed presentation in relation to Road Safety legislation as well as Sandwell Council's Statutory Duty under Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.
- 4.6 The Working group noted the importance of ensuring the safety of roads and how enabling sustainable mobility played an important role in providing for basic humans needs as well as helping mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 4.7 It was highlighted that a "Safe System" approach was built on the principle of Vision Zero whereby no one should be killed or seriously injured whilst using the road network. It also recognised that human bodies are fragile, and minds are prone to making mistakes. Consequently, a Safe System considered road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide post-crash care.
- 4.8 Members also noted that a Safe System approach considered that 5 elements must work together as one to minimise risk; Safe Road Use, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, Safe Roads and Roadsides, Post-Crash Response and agreed that all should remain a priority.
- 4.9 It was highlighted that Sandwell had traditionally held a good record of reducing road casualties in the borough. Over the past 22 years, total



road casualties had halved, including those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. More encouragingly child casualties had reduced by two thirds.

- 4.10 Members discussed the general layout of the Borough and how, when compared to other authorities in the region, accidents tended to be more spread out; possibly due to the lack of a “city centre” such as ones seen in Wolverhampton or Birmingham.
- 4.11 Clarification was provided on what could be done to improve the road safety on roads that did not experience frequent crashes or injuries but were still considered dangerous by residents. Although funding could not always be obtained to change the layout of the areas of concern, line-painting and signage could be considered to increase safety. Officers also highlighted that roads usually perceived as more dangerous, frequently had less accidents due to the change in driving style as motorists were more cautious when using those road networks. Members suggested the publication of a document that detailed priority areas for road safety improvements and the reasoning as to why the aforementioned areas were being prioritised to begin with to help residents understand the process.
- 4.12 Information was also provided on the West Midlands Regional Refreshed Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030, which integrated Vision Zero as the region’s long-term mission, supported by the Safe Systems approach. The strategy also stretched the previous Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualty reduction target from 40% to 50% by 2030, to align with the UN General Assembly’s latest target.
- 4.13 The new Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 would continue to utilise and build on the previously successful Sandwell Safe System approach to support and complement the refreshed West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy at a local level.
- 4.14 Sandwell’s new Strategic Road Safety Plan would stretch its casualty reduction targets to complement the regional and UN aspiration, as well as embracing Vision Zero. It was unrealistic to expect Vision Zero can be achieved within the timeframe of this new strategy, but it was vital that the right building blocks were put in place for the future to ensure that in time people would be able to use Sandwell’s road network without the risk of death and serious injury.
- 4.15 The Road Safety Plan was to be considered by Cabinet in December 2023 for final approval.
- 4.16 The working group was satisfied with the Road Safety plan and



members thanked officers for their hard work in helping make Sandwell's roads a safer place.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Road safety and infrastructure improvements are funded through various approved Capital Budgets, Grants and revenue allocations, who spend is prioritised through evidence led campaigns and interventions.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	<p>The principal legal statutory duties and processes required to implement the highway improvement and traffic management requirements are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Highways Act 1980.</li> <li>• The Road Traffic Act 1988</li> <li>• The Traffic Management Act 2004</li> <li>• The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984</li> </ul> <p>Road Casualty Reduction Safety targets match those published by the United Nations and World Health Organisation and those required in the regional West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	Without a Strategic Road Safety Strategy, Policy and Action Plan the risk is that the Council will not meet its statutory duties in relation to road casualty reduction.
<b>Equality:</b>	The introduction of a targeted road safety policy will benefit the most vulnerable user groups on the highway network and will help balance the needs of all road user.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Improvements to the road safety environment will ensure all users of the highway network are protected and managed safely to reduce the risk of conflict and injury. Greater encouragement of sustainable travel choice will inevitably improve the health and wellbeing of the neighbourhood. Adoption of Vision Zero will aim to reduce all serious and fatal casualties to zero in the future.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Social Value benefits are derived from the important role a well-maintained and safe highway environment plays in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from social



	inclusion, sustainable travel choice and social interaction.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	A well maintained and safe highway infrastructure will encourage more walking and cycling, reducing car borne trips and improving air quality.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	A Road Safety Strategy is vital in ensuring that Children are protected on Sandwell's highways.

## 6 Appendices

Appendix A – Strategic Road Safety Plan Summary

Appendix B – Road Safety Plan, Policy and Legislation

## 7. Background Papers

