



REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: ROAD SAFETY PLAN TO 2030

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Committee for the draft Moray Road Safety Plan to 2030 to be the subject of further stakeholder consultation and inform the committee of the outcome of investigation of reported injury accidents on the A98 Fochabers to Aberdeenshire boundary road.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (15) the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the duty of the Council as Roads Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee:

- i) approves the draft Road Safety Plan to 2030 attached as APPENDIX 1 for consultation with stakeholders and;**
- ii) notes the outcome of the investigation of reported injury accidents on the A98 over the ten year period 2013 to 2022.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There have been six previous Road Safety Plans prepared for Moray, the most recent being published in 2018 and covering the period 2018 to 2022 starting in the New Year. The Joint Community Council will be included in this consultation as one proposed action is to work jointly with Police Scotland to develop community road safety champions who would become the focal point for engagement and the dissemination of road safety information.
- 3.2 In Moray the trend in accident and casualty data is generally downwards, with some exceptions. It is the random nature of road accidents along with events such as weather, Covid 19, large scale sporting and entertainment events and changing travel patterns which all contribute to how many people are injured on our roads.

3.3 The draft Plan demonstrates that overall injury accident rates in Moray remain significantly lower than the rates for the whole of Scotland. Furthermore, in Scotland as a whole the majority of injury accidents occur on the urban road network, whereas in Moray (in keeping with other similar rural authorities) the majority of injury accidents occur on rural roads, as demonstrated in the table below:

Percentage of casualties by Built up or Non-built up road 2014-2021			
	Any speed limit of 40 mph or under	50 or 60 mph speed limit	70 mph speed limit
Moray	29%	71%	0%
Scotland	60%	33%	7%

3.4 It should be noted that across Scotland the five year injury accident rates have been affected by the changes in travel patterns during 2020 and 2021 associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. When these years are included in the analysis of the reported injury accidents, the results show good progress towards the targets set in the national Road Safety Framework to 2030. However the most recent accident data from 2022 shows an increase in rates as travel behaviours return to those experienced prior to the pandemic.

3.5 The draft Road Safety Plan highlights the following areas where actions could be taken to work towards the target injury accident rates as set in the Roads Framework to 2030:

- The prevalence of accidents on rural roads;
- Ongoing maintenance of the road network;
- Driver behaviour and speed management;
- On-going education of road users; and
- Provision of infrastructure for vulnerable road users (cyclists, pedestrians etc).

Rural Roads and the Maintenance of the Road Network

3.6 There are generally no discernible ‘clusters’ of accidents on the rural roads in Moray. Therefore maintenance of rural roads is the primary means of mitigating against the risk and severity of accidents on our rural roads as opposed to site specific engineering interventions. Ensuring that the condition of road surfaces does not adversely deteriorate, that road signage, markings and cats eyes are visible to road users, surface water is managed and road side vegetation is cut back can all have positive consequences on the number and severity of accidents when carried out effectively.

Driver behaviour, speed management and On-going education of road users

3.7 Every road user has a responsibility to ensure that they are competent, paying full attention to the road ahead and the task in hand, adapting to the conditions, travelling at appropriate speeds, are not impaired by alcohol or drugs (including prescribed medications), are not distracted by in-vehicle technology and are giving sufficient room to other road users, no matter what

their mode of travel. There are various national road safety campaigns which deliver targeted messaging on safe road use.

- 3.8 The setting of speed limits is determined using national guidance, which takes into consideration the roadside environment and how this will be viewed by a driver. Where there is more roadside activity and therefore a greater likelihood of vehicles joining a road at a junction, pedestrians crossing a road, cyclists using the carriageway, a driver will perceive a greater level of 'risk' and is more likely to be travelling at a lower speed.
- 3.9 The enforcement of speed limits is carried out by Police Scotland and Safety Cameras Scotland. Enforcement is focussed at locations where there is evidence of a significant number of vehicles are travelling at excessive and/or at locations where there is a history of injury accidents where excessive speed has been noted as a contributing factor. These locations tend to be on rural sections of road. The draft Road Safety Plan includes an action to continue to support the Safety Camera programme.
- 3.10 The delivery of road safety education would be through the sharing of road safety messages from national campaigns and working with our partners to deliver specific campaigns and activities. It is also proposed to seek local community Road Safety Champions through the training of volunteers from Community Councils so they understand road safety and can disseminate information to the wider community. A similar approach to developing Road Safety Champions could be embedded within schools and other education settings.
- 3.11 Continuation of the existing relationships and joint working with Police Scotland to share information and data, along with areas of concern raised by members of the public where there is a perception of excessive vehicle speeds, anti-social driving etc. will support education campaigns and the proposed introduction of community Road Safety Champions.

Provision of Infrastructure for Vulnerable Road Users

- 3.12 The number of injury accidents reported in Moray which involve a vulnerable road user (pedestrian, cyclist, horse rider etc.) remains significantly lower than Scotland as a whole. However National Transport Strategy 2, supported by funding provided by Scottish Government seeks to increase the number of everyday journeys undertaken by foot and cycle and through wheeling. The provision of segregated infrastructure for these user groups reduces the risk of injury accidents and in turn, increases the likelihood that people will choose to travel by those modes of transport.
- 3.13 The safety of these vulnerable users groups will be a key consideration in the development of proposals for new/improved active travel infrastructure, in particular users with impaired mobility and pedestrians. The plan has been the subject of an Integrated Impact Assessment (**APPENDIX 2**).

- 3.14 At present the draft Road Safety Plan to 2030 is awaiting completion of infographics and revisions to the layout of the draft Plan. After the layout has been completed, consultation with stakeholders involved in the development of the draft plan will take place, along with consultation with the Joint Community Council.
- 3.15 The final approved Plan will be published on the Council website and used to support applications to the Scottish Government's Road Safety Improvement Fund. The plan will be subject to a mid-term review in 2027 to assess progress against national targets and to see where joint working has been successful/could be enhanced

4. A98 FOCHABERS TO CULLEN ROAD – REPORTED ACCIDENTS

- 4.1 Concerns have been raised regarding the number of reported accidents on the A98 Fochabers to Cullen Road (see Question raised at Moray Council committee on 28 September 2022, para 25 of the minute refers). The A98 connects to the A96 (Trunk Road) at Fochabers and passes through the coastal plain and into Aberdeenshire. The road is a strategic route which carries traffic accessing the harbours, distilleries and bringing goods and services into the area. It is a former Trunk Road and is therefore designed to a high standard, with ease of movement being the priority. The roadside environment generally has wide verges, good forward sightlines and appropriate warning signage and, where necessary, vehicle restraint systems. However on certain sections of the road there are a series of side road junctions and individual property accesses.
- 4.2 The draft Road Safety Plan (see table on page 22) sets out the accident rates per kilometre per year for the A class roads in Moray, including the A98 and the rate for similar roads A class roads for the whole of Scotland for the period.
- 4.3 Further information, including a summary of the reported injury accidents on the A98 between Fochabers and the Aberdeenshire boundary has been uploaded to CMIS along with the agenda, as an additional meeting document. The number of accidents reported over the ten year period from 2013 to 2022 is too low to infer any statistical significance or discernible pattern.
- 4.4 As indicated in paragraph 3.12, ensuring the roads are well maintained can reduce the numbers and severity of accidents. The A98 is a strategic road which on its eastern section carries some 9,000 vehicles per day and therefore should be prioritised in terms of ensuring that road markings and signage are in good condition, surfaces offer good skid resistance and good visibility is provided through the control of roadside vegetation. In terms of providing good visibility, it is also important that individual property accesses and private roads have good visibility in both directions and that obstructions out with the roadside verge are removed.

- 4.5 Finally, concerns have been raised regarding the speed of traffic using the A98, in particular where it passes through Arradoul. Within Arradoul there is a permanent traffic counter which also measures vehicle speeds. Observed speeds from this counter show that within the 50mph speed limit in Arradoul average vehicle speeds are below the speed limit. It is however acknowledged that there is a small number of drivers who travel at excessive vehicle speeds on the A98. The Scottish Road Safety Camera Partnership and has three sites on the A98, at Slackend, near Broadley and near Carnoch Farm, which seek to address this driver behaviour through speed enforcement and education.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The key policy documents which are relevant to Road Safety are the LOIP September 2021, the Moray Corporate Plan 2024 and the Moray Economic Strategy.

(b) Policy and Legal

Council has a duty under Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. However revenue budgets for the maintenance of road safety measures such as road markings, cats' eyes and road signs have reduced since approval of the last Road Safety Plan. The allocation of revenue and capital budget is a matter for corporate prioritisation in the budget setting process, and applications for external funding are made wherever possible.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no new risk implications arising from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications as this process forms part of existing duties. However any reduction in staff resources will have an impact on the ability to deliver the plan.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no negative impacts on any protected groups were found. An action in the Road Safety is to provide active travel infrastructure which would be utilised by users with protected characteristics (Disability and Age). An individual Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as individual schemes are developed to seek to maximise the benefits of each scheme.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

An action in the Road Safety is to provide active travel infrastructure. Promoting Active Travel is one of the key actions in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Provision of dedicated active travel infrastructure can provide a positive impact on the climate through enabling and encouraging alternative modes of travel through Moray. Reduced emissions supports nature recovery and the overall improvement of environments.

(i) Consultations

Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Transport Scotland, Amey Limited, North Safety Camera Unit, the Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Grampian, Moray Council Education and Environmental Health officers have been consulted and their comments incorporated in the plan.

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment & Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Legal Services Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Equalities Officer and Committee Services Officer (L Robinson) have been consulted and any comments taken into consideration.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The draft Moray Road Safety Plan covers the period up to 2030, when it is anticipated that the next Scottish Road Safety Framework to 2040 will have been published.**
- 6.2 The draft plan takes into account the Safe System approach to Road Safety which was introduced in the Scottish Road Safety Framework to 2030. The draft Plan also promotes joint working with neighbouring local authorities and other public sector bodies.**
- 6.3 Available accident data up to 2022 has been reviewed and presented in the draft Road Safety Plan. The review shows downward trends in the number of accidents and a reduction in the number of people injured or killed.**
- 6.4 Accident rates in Moray remain significantly lower than rates across Scotland, in particular the rates involving pedestrians and cyclists. The trend for accidents across Scotland is for more accidents to occur in the urban environment as opposed to on rural roads. However in Moray the majority of accidents occur on rural roads.**
- 6.5 There are no discernible clusters of injury accidents in Moray. However the on-going maintenance of road markings, cats' eyes and roads signage, the management of surface water and the cutting back of vegetation on rural roads can all contribute to keeping accident rates low. Any requests for capital funding will be made through the capital planning process to develop and implement road safety schemes identified during the plan period. Applications will be made to the Road**

Safety Improvement Fund for any improvement schemes which meet the fund criteria.

- 6.6 Stakeholder consultation will take place for 8 weeks, after which the updated Road Safety Plan will be reported to this committee. It is proposed to review the plan mid- term (2027) against the national targets and to see where joint working has been successful/could be enhanced.**
- 6.7 A review of reported injury accidents occurring on the A98 Fochabers to Cullen road has been undertaken for the period 2013 to 2022. The results of this review shows no discernible patterns or clusters of reported accidents, no requirement to reduce the speed limit in Arradoul and no site specific mitigation measures.**

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Background Papers: Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030
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