

Appendix 1



***Local
Road
Safety
Strategy***

October 2004

1. Vision

A vision of West Berkshire, where people who live here and others who are visiting or passing through feel safe no matter how they are travelling. Where children in particular are not at risk of being killed or seriously injured on our roads.

2. West Berkshire

- 2.1 West Berkshire is a predominantly rural unitary authority. With an area of 272 square miles, it accounts for approximately half of the Royal County of Berkshire. Much of the authority lies within the North Wessex Downs area of outstanding natural beauty, characterised by 'vast dramatic, undeveloped and locally distinct chalk downlands'¹. River valleys cut through the chalk, while lowland wooded areas and common land are other recognisable features of this nationally important landscape.
- 2.2 West Berkshire is bordered by the counties of Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire and Reading and Wokingham District unitary authorities. London is only 50 miles to the East. The Western mainline railway runs east to west through West Berkshire as does the M4 motorway, the A34 is the main north – south link. The Kennet and Avon canal was a strategic waterway however it is now mainly used as a leisure amenity.
- 2.3 The population of West Berkshire at the time of the 2001 census² was approximately 144,500. In the period between 1991 and 2001 the population grew by 6%, this was a significantly higher rate of growth than the national average, but slightly below average for the South East of England. Children (under 16) account for 20.8% of the population, this broadly reflects the national average. Only 2.6% of West Berkshire residents are from ethnic groups other than White compared to a national average of 9.1%, this is broadly in line with other predominantly rural areas in England.
- 2.4 2001 Census data shows that people in West Berkshire consider themselves to have significantly better health than the national average. They are more likely to have qualifications and more likely to be in employment. Whilst house prices are, on average £70,000 higher than the rest of England and Wales, people in West Berkshire are more likely to own their own homes. 97% of households have at least one car (or van) and virtually half have two or more, this can be attributed both to the relative affluence and the rural nature of the area.
- 2.5 West Berkshire shares in the overall affluence of the South East. It is part of the Thames Valley, recognised as the most dynamic and competitive sub-regional economy in the UK outside of Central London due to its major clustering of world-class knowledge-based companies. The Thames Valley sub-region accounts for 15% of UK computer services employment. Over the next 10 years, according to the Thames Valley Economic Partnership (TVEP) this area will grow at a faster rate than the South East and UK as a whole, and is expected to generate 105,000 new jobs between 2000 to 2015. Many

¹ North Wessex Downs Management Plan 2004

² 2001 Census, Office of National Statistics

residents travel considerable distances to work, with some villages having an average daily work journey in excess of 18 miles. Similarly, high levels of employment can lead to difficulties in recruitment and large numbers of jobs in West Berkshire being filled by people who live outside the area.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Management of the roads within the West Berkshire geographic area is shared between the Highways Agency (M4, A34 and A339) and West Berkshire Council (all other roads). The A339 was recently handed over to West Berkshire Council under the de-trunking process. The strategic activities within this document focus on those roads that are the responsibility of West Berkshire Council, although reference will be made to the totality of highways to give the broader overview. West Berkshire Council manages a total of 1225.9km of highway, and the Highway Agency 89.7km. Our roads range from dual carriageway A-roads through to single track country lanes (over half of the WBC road length is C-class or unclassified). Whilst of low status, these minor roads are vital to the rural community and provide for social as well as economic needs. It is not anticipated or foreseen that there will be any significant new, non-residential, roads built in the area in the future.
- 3.2 A large number of ancient rights of way, public footpaths, bridle paths and other 'green' roads criss-cross West Berkshire. They too serve a valued and strategic purpose, nationally and locally and all warrant consideration within a strategy for road safety
- 3.3 The area also has a busy agricultural and equestrian community. These old-established West Berkshire activities have their own unique safety issues and require their own consideration.
- 3.4 Locally travel and transport issues have a high profile, both in the Community Plan³ and the Corporate Plan⁴. A Transport Action Group is one of only five West Berkshire Partnership (WBP) Action Groups, whilst target reductions in the numbers of people killed or injured on the roads of West Berkshire that are more stretching than national expectations are a part of our local Public Service Agreement (PSA).
- 3.5 The characteristics of high levels of car ownership, economic prosperity, complexity of commuting and school travel movements and competing needs of the range of road users set a range of road safety challenges. As a result our approach to improving road safety in West Berkshire has led us to developing a strategy which draws on a range of approaches based on our own experiences of what is effective and drawing on best practice from our partners.

³ West Berkshire Partnership (local strategic partnership) Community Plan 2003 - 2008

⁴ West Berkshire Council Corporate Plan 2003 - 2008

4 Road Safety – Our priorities

- 4.1 ‘Tomorrows Roads – safer for everyone’⁵ sets out the national road safety strategy. The simple aim of this strategy is to dramatically reduce the number of deaths and injuries that occur unnecessarily on our roads and paths every year. Children, whose understanding of the potential dangers are often limited, are particularly vulnerable. The strategy has a particular focus on minimising the hazards that could cause death or serious injuries to our young people.
- 4.2 In West Berkshire we are working with Central Government to implement the national strategy at a local level. We want to demonstrate our own commitment to reducing the risk of death or injury on our roads, and are setting out how we intend to achieve this. We have consulted widely with local people and professional organisations to understand what matters to them, we have drawn this information together with our existing knowledge of the situation in West Berkshire to produce this Local Road Safety Strategy.
- 4.3 This strategy is important to us and the people of West Berkshire, because it is a strategy to save lives. It brings together local knowledge and road safety best practice into a framework for delivering better education, better engineering and better enforcement. It explains how we engage drivers and passengers, how we educate children about the dangers and what we do to support other vulnerable road users including cyclists, walkers and horse riders, older people and disabled people.
- 4.4 We will support this strategy with clear targets for reducing the numbers of children killed or seriously injured on our roads, the numbers of all people killed or seriously injured and also the numbers of people suffering any form of reported road accident related injury. This strategy will define our work from 2002 to 2010. By 2010 we intend to reduce these casualties by at least the amount proscribed through ‘Tomorrow’s Roads – safer for everyone’. The targets in this strategy incorporate a range of targets with a particular focus on our Public Service Agreement target for the number of people killed or seriously injured on West Berkshire’s Roads. All of our targets will be reviewed as part of our next Local Transport Plan covering the period 2006 – 2011.
- 4.5 We see this strategy as providing a framework that extends beyond 2010. It has been developed, with Appendix 1, in a way that it can be reviewed and updated without altering the strategic objective.

⁵ Tomorrow’s Roads – safer for everyone, DETR March 2000

5 Our Objectives

5.1 Our objectives for Road Safety are set out in our Local Transport Plan 2001 / 02 – 2005 / 06 and are as follows:

LRS1: To consider road safety as an integral part of all road schemes in West Berkshire;

LRS2: To reduce the number of casualties locally in line with the national targets for 2010;

LRS3: To annually review casualty reduction progress and the effectiveness of engineering, education and enforcement measures undertaken by the Council and its partners;

LRS4: To raise the profile of road safety across all Council Departments;

LRS5: To expand the road safety education and training programmes in schools;

LRS6: To develop links with other organisations such as the local health authority, businesses, schools and voluntary groups to promote road safety

LRS7: To work with Thames Valley Partnerships to develop road safety related offender rehabilitation schemes.

5.2 This Local Road Safety Strategy, including Appendix 1, is the formal Council strategy. It does not conflict with the strategy or policies within the Local Transport Plan but strengthens the approach to delivering the identified Road Safety objectives.

6 Our Policies and how we deliver them

6.1 As set out in Section 3, the diversity of West Berkshire's road users and complexity of movement has led us to develop a portfolio of policy approaches and actions based on the following activities, which are all supported with appropriate investigation work:

- Education, Training and Publicity
- Engineering
- Enforcement

6.2 In the case of our approach to Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) we have adopted a 'whole' of life approach. This involves working with children and young people, those at work and with the elderly, to promote the skills for safer road use as well as specific road user groups. This reflects the demographics and characteristics of road users within West Berkshire. ETP underpins all of the policies set out below. The wider opportunities to develop and deliver the road safety message are detailed in Appendix 1.

Safer Roads for Children and Young People

We will work with parents, children and young people and schools to provide education in road safety and identify physical improvements to create a safer road environment.

The actions that we will take to achieve this are:

- i) we will employ an Education, Training and Publicity Officer who will be responsible for supporting school cycle training, we will provide training for cycle trainers and qualified examiners.
- ii) cycle training courses that are run through schools will be free for the children. Courses that run during school holidays will be expected to cover costs through an affordable fee for each participant.
- iii) we will continue to invest in the Safer Routes to Schools and Safety Outside Schools engineering improvements programmes.

Safer Roads for Vulnerable Road Users

We will work with our partners to develop a programme of works to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. This will be supported by Education, Training and Promotion to raise awareness of the needs of all road users.

We will work with our partners in rural areas to identify opportunities for improving the safety of the physical environment, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. This will be supported by Education, Training and Promotion to raise awareness of the needs of all road users.

The actions we will take to support these policies are:

- i) we will continue to improve footway facilities and traffic calming measures in residential areas
- ii) we will produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan that identifies how we will improve strategic rights of way that facilitate off-road walking and horse-riding in West Berkshire.
- iii) we will consult with cyclists, through the West Berkshire cycling forum, to identify opportunities for safer cycling, we will implement schemes as part of our highway maintenance and improvement programmes.
- iv) where specific hazards to vulnerable road users are identified we will look to include safety improvements within our on-going work programmes.

Development of Safer Roads for All

We will continue to assess our highway network in order to develop and implement appropriate engineering and signing measures to remove hazards and / or reduce risks. In addition all our local road improvement schemes will be safety audited and implemented in a way that supports safe road use.

We will work with partners, including our local businesses, to identify and provide appropriate education and training for regular road users, including people who drive as part of their work.

The actions that we propose are:

- i) we will conduct safety audits on all highway improvement schemes.
- ii) we will investigate the causes of road accidents that result in death or injury and take appropriate measures to support road safety at sites where specific hazards are identified.
- iii) we will look to protect the status of our quieter roads through our on-going signage and road improvement programmes.
- iv) we will support employers in West Berkshire that seek to manage occupational road risks encountered by their employees through the provision of a dedicated road safety presentations officer, to work directly with organisations operating within the district.
- v) we will develop a speed management programme, working with parish councils to reduce incidents of speeding on West Berkshire roads and to identify sites where speeding is a specific road safety issue. This programme will use mobile speed indicator devices and we will where possible, train local volunteers to use these devices.

6.1 Enforcing Road Safety

We will work with Thames Valley Police in their role of enforcement, including involving them in the development of schemes and proposals where their success will rely on enforcing measures.

The actions we propose are:

- i) we will support Thames Valley Police where possible, particularly in relation to seatbelt use, mobile phone use and speeding. We will also through our publicity programme support and add local value to national campaigns relating to driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and driving when tired.
- ii) we will support national road safety initiatives, adding value through local awareness raising initiatives.

7 Delivery

- 7.1 The approach to delivery of road safety in West Berkshire is taken forward in a number of different ways ranging from engineering solutions through the partnership working with the Police and local authorities. The Council commits both revenue and capital funding to the delivery of Programmes within the Local Road Safety Strategy and also secures funding on an annual basis from the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership. Appendix 1 sets out in detail some of the different approaches that the Council is pursuing. The key elements are set out below:

Engineering Focused

- The Council has adopted programmes of work for delivering Safer Routes to School and Safety outside Schools. These involve capital investment by the Council and the schools involved are involved in their implementation through consultation.
- All engineering schemes are safety audited.
- The Council's capital programme includes funding for the delivery of a range of road crossings, introduction of street lighting, the delivery of our Accident Reduction Programme and the review of Village Speed Limits.

- The Council pursues an integrated approach to the delivery of road schemes such that opportunities to provide improved road safety is incorporated into the development of highway improvements, even if the priority for the work has derived from a different objective.
- Identifying opportunities for partnership working. For example additional gritting is provided in Lambourn during the winter months which is funded by the Racecourse Trainers Association and the Parish Council in order to address safety issues for the racecourse business.

Education, Training and Promotion Focused

- Undertaking cycle training programme. We are working with partners from our Local Cycling Forum to develop trainers to manage some of the previous volunteer difficulties that the Council had experienced.
- Using Speed Indication Devices around the district to raise awareness of speed limits and safety issues associated with speeding. This includes training of parish councils to maximise opportunities for use of the equipment
- The recruitment of a “Presentations Officer” who is delivering road safety programmes developed by the Education, Training and Promotions Officer. These programmes include promotion of Road Safety for Businesses.
- Support for national campaigns

Partnerships

The Council is proactive in delivering its Local Road Safety Strategy in partnership with other public sector organisations as well as the wider West Berkshire Community. Such partnerships include:

- The Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership
- West Berkshire Partnership’s Transport Action Group
- West Berkshire Cycling Forum
- Thames Valley Police
- Local schools
- Local business

7.2 The key outcomes are:

- To reduce the number of road accidents in West Berkshire.
- To reduce the number of children killed or injured in road accidents in West Berkshire.
- To reduce the number of people killed or injured in road accidents in West Berkshire

8 Targets

8.1 In April 2003 West Berkshire Council entered into a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) with central government with the intention of further improving the services to local people that the Council provides. One of the targets included was to reduce deaths and serious injuries on the roads in West Berkshire.

8.2 The Council is committed to delivering the Government Strategy entitled "Tomorrows Roads – Safer for Everyone" which sets national casualty reduction targets for 2010. Local Highway Authorities are required to develop strategies to contribute to meeting the national targets – a 40% reduction in the total number of people killed or seriously injured and a 50% reduction in the number affecting children (15 years or under). The Council is also required to effect a reduction of 10% in slight casualties per million vehicle kilometres, based on the average achieved for the years 1994 – 8.

8.3 The baseline average figures West Berkshire will be working to for all its Road Safety related work will therefore be:

1994-8 average baseline for Killed/ Seriously Injured (KSI) is 113.

As this is a national target the Council is expected to achieve a 50% / 40% reduction in KSI by 2010. It is the intention that through the LPSA that the number of KSI as at December 2005 will be reduced to 83. This is delivering the estimated reduction a year earlier than the 2010 target would have expected.

8.4 Because of the relatively small number of KSI that West Berkshire experiences for children it was not considered appropriate to include these figures in the LPSA. In addition, as part of the negotiations with Department of Transport and ODPM on this target it has been agreed that the target will exclude both the M4 and the A34 bypass.

8.5 The targets set in the LPSA run up to December 2005. It is proposed that this target together with the other Road Safety Targets will be reviewed for submission with Local Transport Plan 2 covering the period 2006 / 07 to 2011/12.

8.6 Effective monitoring of data will allow appropriate changes in approach as the situation demands. A key issue will be migration – where engineering changes a road use or even where fashion changes transport mode (such as the growth of motor scooter ownership in the 16-18 group). Likewise, activities like the secondary safety work done by manufacturers, can change the status of a casualty from Killed to Serious, or Serious to Slight, without actually changing the simple number of casualties. Unexpected changes in vehicle distance travelled will also influence the 'Slight' statistics without any change in the numbers of casualties.

8.7 Our monitoring process will involve several strands. Simple provision of data and statistics will remain a key function, using the primary data supplied by Thames Valley Police. Systems are in place for the verification/validation of this data. Collected data will provide Best Value and Annual Performance Review returns; casualty reduction monitoring; project evaluation, and future planning information.