



Road Safety Plan

2022

What Dorset Council does to improve road safety

Road Safety Plan

Introduction

We all have a vital role to play in improving road safety, be it as a passenger, driver, on foot, bicycle or horseback. Our choices and behaviour while using the public highway have the greatest influence on the safety of ourselves and that of others.

A wide variety of factors influence the occurrence of road traffic collisions, many of which are outside the direct control of the council such as human error and behaviour.

This plan focuses on the elements of road safety that Dorset Council can influence and describes the business as usual functions that contribute to improving road safety.

Working together to improve road safety

Responsibility for improving road safety is shared by many authorities in Dorset, each having their own unique areas of influence.

Dorset Council is an active member of the Dorset Road Safety Partnership, which includes:

- Dorset Police
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Public Health Dorset
- DocBike (charity)

The focus of the partnership is on education, engineering and enforcement. The partnership's strategic document describes the approach and focus of the partnership and ambition for a vision of zero KSIs by 2050.

The partnership regularly provides information and updates on ongoing campaigns and operations via social media.

Dorset Council will work with our partners and local communities to improve road safety.

Six key themes have been identified by the Dorset Road Safety Partnership; these are:



For more information on these themes, please see the [Dorset Road Safe Partnership Strategy](#).

Improving road safety is a shared responsibility by all. The biggest influence on improving road safety is our behaviours and choices whilst using the road whether as a driver, passenger, on foot, bicycle or horseback.

What Dorset Council does to improve road safety

For more information on the themes below, please see our [Highway Service Plan](#).

Inspections

Roads

All the council's adopted highways, approximately 3797kms (2360 miles), are inspected for safety defects. The busiest are inspected more often than the quietest; busy town centre roads, A roads and B roads are inspected monthly. Less busy roads are inspected twice a year or quarterly. Low use residential roads and country lanes tend to be inspected once a year.

A variety of different safety defects are investigated during an inspection. These cover the condition of the road surface, signs, lines, drainage and any obstructions.

In between these routine inspections, Dorset Highways reacts to public enquiries/reports – investigating and repairing any issues accordingly.

Structures

There are approximately 1,304 structures in the Dorset council area, including bridges, culverts, retaining walls and a tunnel.

All structures are inspected every two years. The bridge inspection team assess the condition of the structure, taking photos and completing reports that are then reviewed by bridge engineers.

Maintenance

Road surface

While the overriding factor in the vast majority of collisions is human error and behaviour, improving the road surface is an element of road safety that the council can influence.

Each year, Dorset Highways delivers many types of road surface treatments – resurfacing, patching and surface dressing, to repair different levels of damage and to help roads remain in an appropriate condition.

Annual skid resistance surveys on the higher use roads helps Dorset Highways to identify where maintenance is needed. Schemes are prioritised by assessing the collision history and where the likelihood of a serious collision is high.

Drainage

Each year, Dorset Highways clears drainage gullies and makes improvements to road drainage systems to prevent surface water on roads.

Standing water on the carriageway is an immediate hazard to drivers and effects the integrity of the road surface which if left untreated could result in safety defects forming.

Winter

Dorset Highways carries out gritting of the council's road network between November and April each year. This reduces the risk of ice forming on the carriageways, which could become a contributing factor in road collisions if left untreated.

Engineering

Dorset Council has a collision reduction team that identifies sites and routes for minor and major improvements, based on evidence of a history of injury collisions.

The Community Highways Team regularly liaise with local communities on road safety concerns and arrange minor remedial engineering works to be installed where appropriate.

Although many road engineering schemes may not be delivered solely on safety grounds, if safety improvements can be made during the design process, they will be.

Engineers also work with new property developers and ensure that new connections or additions to the highway network are of a suitable design and standard.

Road safety audits are carried out on all major changes to the highway, both during the design phase of a scheme and after its construction. These audits are focused on finding possible safety issues with new schemes.

Management

Highway restrictions

On street parking restrictions are put in place in areas where parking creates a hazard that increases the risk of a collision. On street parking restrictions are regularly enforced to deter people from parking in an area that could present a hazard to other people using the road.

There are many restrictions that the council can use to better manage traffic on its network and improve safety, including speed limits, traffic calming, weight restrictions, turning bans and one-way orders.

Traffic control

The council manages and maintains all traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and electric signing in its area, ensuring that these facilities remain safe for pedestrians and that junctions work appropriately for the safety of all road users.

There are a total of 90 signalled junctions managed by Dorset Highways across the Dorset Council area.

Pedestrian crossings play an important role in preventing pedestrian injury. The total number of formal pedestrian crossings managed by Dorset Highways are:

- 98 Pelican/Puffin crossings (pedestrian)
- 20 Toucan crossings (cyclist and pedestrian)
- 47 Zebra crossings

Third parties

Utility companies have a right to access their assets under the highway for repairs and replacement.

Dorset Highways is responsible for ensuring that these temporary works are carried out safely – making sure the correct temporary traffic management is used, suitable diversion routes are appropriately signed, and that the reinstatement of the road/pavement is to the appropriate standard.

Dorset Highways also facilitate events taking place on or impacting on the highway. Safety Advisory Groups meet in the run up to major events and Dorset Highways are an active member alongside event staff. The purpose of these groups is to ensure the correct temporary traffic management is used for the safety of event staff, visitors and other road users.

Collision Investigation

The 1988 Road Traffic Act, Section 39, places a statutory duty on the local authority to undertake studies into road collisions and take steps both to reduce and prevent collisions and casualties.

Each year we use the collision and casualty data received from Dorset Police to help identify any areas where works might be required to help reduce the number of collisions and casualties on Dorset's roads. This is done by both Cluster Site and Route Analysis.

We also conduct individual joint site visits with Dorset Police for every fatal road traffic collision to consider what steps if any are required to improve safety at the location.

Safer Travel

Speed Indicator Devices

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) are deployed across the Dorset Council area by local communities.

The community SID programme is managed and overseen by Dorset Council as the highway authority. There are approximately 71 community owned sites across the Dorset Council area.

Evaluation has shown SIDs are effective at improving adherence to speed limits where people were previously often travelling above the speed limit.

For more information see the [SID programme](#) web page.

School Crossing Patrols

Dorset Council provides a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service in line with national guidelines. The SCP service helps contribute towards promoting health & wellbeing and safeguarding. Currently there are 36 approved SCP sites, 33 sites are fully funded, with an additional 3 sites sponsored through external funding (sponsored sites).

Bikeability

Dorset Council is an accredited Bikeability provider (corporate branding for national standard cycle training), accessing significant national grant funding and Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding. Training is provided by approved national standard instructors throughout Dorset. Each year around 2,000 children receive Bikeability training.

For more information see the [Bikeability](#) web site.

Safer Routes to School

Dorset Council provides support and guidance regarding safety outside schools in relation to pedestrian safety. An allocated budget is available for low key safety measures, including parking restrictions and minor changes to road/footway layout.

Walked School Route Assessments

Where a child lives within the “statutory walking distance” of their nearest qualifying school, transport will be provided if the walked route to school prevents a child accompanied by an adult, from walking in reasonable safety. A detailed assessment is carried out by Road Safety Officers in accordance with national guidance. The measurement of the “statutory walking distance” is not always the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk in reasonable safety. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways, as well as roads.

For more information, please see the web page for the [walked school route assessments](#).

New Traffic Management Measures

In addition to identifying new safety measures, we work closely with local communities to consider requests such as a reduction in speed limits. This year we have implemented a new [20mph policy](#) and all such requests must be passed through local parish and town councils or the locally elected Member. We cannot accept requests directly from individual residents.

Challenges

A particular challenge for improving road safety within the Dorset Council area is the rural nature of much of the highway network.

Road users are more likely to be killed or seriously injured if involved in a crash on a rural road than if on an urban road.

Dorset Council will continue to deliver services that can positively influence road safety.

The functions detailed earlier in this plan show the wide variety of work that is undertaken as business as usual and that efforts are being made to improve road safety, within available resource.

Monitoring

The number of people killed or seriously injured is one of the indicators reported via the Performance Leadership Forum.

Dorset Highways shares information online about the number of road traffic casualties on roads within the Dorset Council area. This includes an [interactive map](#) that shows brief information on reported road traffic injury collisions for the latest available five-year period.

Dorset Highways know that not all road traffic collisions are reported to the police or result in injury. A [‘Report a Collision’](#) on line form is available for people to report non-injury collisions and near misses. The information included on these reports is used with the reported road traffic collision data provided and validated to Dorset Highways by Dorset Police.

Road traffic collision data has a lot of information on the circumstances of each collision, the types of vehicles and the people involved. This data is used to identify and analyse sites/routes for engineering investigations and, also to identify behavioural themes that could be addressed through the delivery of road safety education, training or publicity campaigns.

Each year the council completes a review of road traffic collision data. The latest report is available on the Dorset Council website by clicking on the link below:

[Road Traffic Collision and Casualty data review 2021](#)

A [new data dashboard](#) is available to review the latest yearly collision and casualty figures.