

**Forward Plan reference number:** Not applicable

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| <b>Report title:</b> Alteration to the Selection Criteria for Casualty Reduction Sites   |                      |
| <b>Report to:</b> Councillor Lee Scott, Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport  |                      |
| <b>Report author:</b> Paul Crick – Director, Highways & Transportation   |                      |
| <b>Date:</b> 29th September 2023   | <b>For:</b> Decision |
| <b>Enquiries to:</b> Jo Heynes – Head of Network and Safety<br>Ian Henderson - Team Leader Road Safety Engineering, Essex Highways<br>Email: <a href="mailto:ian.henderson@essexhighways.org">ian.henderson@essexhighways.org</a> Telephone: 07841368022 |                      |
| <b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex  |                      |

## 1 Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to amend the way in which Casualty Reduction Sites (CRS) are selected. The proposal does not result in a change to the amount of the funding allocated to this work but proposes changes to the criteria that is used to initially identify CRS'.
- 1.2 Essex County Council as part of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership has signed up to the Vision Zero Pledge with the aim of having zero fatal or serious road deaths on the roads in Essex by 2040. Progress towards Vision Zero can be achieved through the safe system response. Changing the way that CRS are first selected forms two of the key layers in terms of safer roads and roadside and post collision response.
- 1.3 In 2022 alone, in the administrative area of Essex, there were 47 fatal road collisions and 582 serious road collisions which equated to 47 people losing their lives and 646 people being seriously injured.
- 1.4 The average cost to society of a fatal personal injury collision is £2,266,705 and a serious personal injury collision is £262,200 (DFT Tag Values 2022). In collision prevention there is a benefit of economic savings to the Council and society as a whole. Collision reduction also identifies with the Council's aim that residents enjoy life into old age as it assists in reducing the risk of death and injury.
- 1.5 Fewer collisions on the network will also lead to reduction in stationary vehicles which contributes to the climate change objectives of ECC.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree to the amendment in selection criteria for Casualty Reduction Sites as part of the annual collision / cluster site analysis programme as set out in paragraph 3.7 of this report.

### **3 Background and Proposal**

#### **Current CRS Criteria:**

3.1 The current criteria for the identification of the Casualty Reduction Sites (CRS) was last approved in November 2016.

3.2 Currently CRS are firstly selected as follows:

- On 20, 30 and 40mph roads, sites are required to have 4 or more personal injury collisions(\*) within a 50m radius in the last full 3 calendar years.
- On 50mph and above roads, sites are required to have 3 or more personal injury collisions within a 250m radius in the last full 3 calendar years.

(\*) collision in which a person(s) is fatally, seriously or slightly injured.

3.3 CRS are then secondly analysed to determine:

- If there is an identifiable pattern of the cause of the incidents; and
- If there is an engineering solution for treating the identified cause.

3.4 From this analysis, a definitive list of CRS would be produced, and the funding for these CRS remedial measures would come from the annual allocated CRS budget (£600k). The process of designing the measures required for these sites would begin the next financial year.

3.5 In 2020, the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, which delivers a coordinated road safety service across the area covered by ECC, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council adopted Vision Zero, which is the aspiration that there should be no deaths or serious injuries on the roads by 2040. Vision Zero is the ethical position that deaths and serious injuries are not an acceptable consequence of human error on public roads. Traditional road safety approaches tend to focus on the responsibility of individual road users. Vision Zero expands this responsibility to include all people involved in designing, building, operating, maintaining and using the road network. Vision Zero does not diminish the responsibility of individual road users to comply with road traffic laws, but builds upon this by adding layers of prevention and protection to account for human error.

3.6 The current CRS criteria looks at all collisions, fatal, serious and slight collisions. With the drive towards Vision Zero being focused on fatal and serious injury reduction, it is proposed to alter the criteria so that every CRS initially selected would have at least one or more fatal or serious injury collision. The

current criteria could mean that a CRS is selected where the collisions have resulted in personal injury collisions where there have only been only slight injuries (i.e., injuries of a minor character such as sprains, bruises, shock or cuts which are not severe or do not require medical treatment).

### **Proposed Amended CRS criteria:**

- 3.7 The recommendation is that on all roads (20, 30, 40, 50 and National Speed Limit), CRS will be selected on the basis of 3 or more personal injury collisions within a 250m radius, with a minimum of one fatal or serious injury collision within the last 3 full calendar years.
- 3.8 Multiple testing scenarios were run in terms of different cluster radius size and differing levels of required fatal and serious collisions to inform this recommendation. Previously, with the 50m radius in 30 and 40mph limits, cluster sites would fail to be identified due to one single collision falling just outside this area, (despite it having similar circumstances). To ensure these sites were not overlooked going forward, the option to increase the cluster site radius was explored. In having the CRS radius between 50m and 200m, it was again established that outlier collisions which could form part of a site were not being picked up. In contrast, increasing the CRS radius any further above 250m, resulted in too many random isolated collisions (on neighbouring roads) being selected, which wouldn't form part of the overall analysis. The proposed 250m radius, gives a consistent high number of sites along individual roads with the added element that each one of these sites will have had a fatal or serious collision. This allows for analysis over a much wider area but still focuses on collisions which are on the same road, with the same pattern.
- 3.9 Table 1 below shows the comparison of CRS numbers initially identified when applying the new proposed CRS criteria and current criteria that was used to identify CRS in 23/24. There can be confidence that the change in CRS criteria won't be to the detriment to the goal of Vision Zero that has been set. In addition, each one of those 487 identified sites (using the new criteria) will have had one or more fatal or serious collision, whereas this will not have been the case in the previous year's 23/24 site analysis. For those sites which have been further analysed and an engineering solution identified, the suggested remedial measures will be proportionate and viable to ensure that the allocated CRS budget is not exceeded.

|                     | <b>24/25 sites<br/>(new CRS<br/>criteria)</b> | <b>23/ 24 Sites<br/>(old CRS<br/>criteria)</b> |
|---------------------|---|--|
| <b>Basildon</b>     | 57  | 33   |
| <b>Braintree</b>    | 49  | 42   |
| <b>Brentwood</b>    | 28  | 33   |
| <b>Castle Point</b> | 22  | 13   |
| <b>Chelmsford</b>   | 55  | 47   |
| <b>Colchester</b>   | 55  | 61   |
| <b>Epping</b>       | 84  | 65   |

|                   |            |            |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Harlow</b>     | 20         | 9          |
| <b>Maldon</b>     | 17         | 17         |
| <b>Rochford</b>   | 25         | 11         |
| <b>Tendring</b>   | 52         | 32         |
| <b>Uttlesford</b> | 23         | 23         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>487</b> | <b>386</b> |

Table 1

## 4 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision:

- Enjoy life into old age

The primary aim of casualty reduction sites is to prevent collisions from occurring on the Essex Road Network. Whenever a collision (particularly fatal and serious) occurs there is the potential for it to have a devastating effect to a person(s) or connected families quality of life. In preventing these collisions (particularly those of the highest severity) from occurring in the first instance, we move towards the goal of improving people's quality of life for hopefully many years to come.

4.2 Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:

When road traffic collisions occur on the network, there can often be a substantial delay to road users as investigations are undertaken. In the event of fatal and serious collisions traffic as a result can remain stationary for several hours. In preventing these collisions from occurring in the first instance, traffic can remain free flowing, helping us to move towards the goal of reducing carbon emissions on the network.

4.3 This report links to the following strategic priorities in the emerging Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':

- A high-quality environment
- Health wellbeing and independence for all ages

Numerous casualty reduction sites come with the focus of improving safety for children, elderly individuals, pedestrians and cyclists. By providing engineering measures that make these road users feel safer, we are improving the quality of the environment in which they are interacting with daily. This has the added benefit of giving these user groups more confidence to travel on our network outside of the motor vehicle, thereby improving their health levels, and their independence and reducing the carbon impact on the environment.

## **5 Options**

### **5.1 Option 1: approve the amendment to the criteria used to select CRS.**

This would ensure that the Council is being proactive and is seen to be taking clear steps towards deliver its Vision Zero pledge.

### **5.2 Option 2: continue with the current process of selecting CRS**

Casualty reduction benefits will continue to be seen through the standard CRS programme, however these won't be as heavily weighted towards fatal and serious injury collision reduction.

## **6 Issues for consideration**

### **Financial implications**

- 6.1 All works associated to casualty reduction sites will continue to be contained within the existing service budgets. For 2023/24 the Capital Casualty Reduction budget is £600,000.

### **Legal implications**

- 6.2 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 places statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities in respect of Road Safety to carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads, within their area and for which they are the responsible Highway Authority and in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.
- 6.3 The Council's process for considering Road Casualty Reduction Schemes was amended in 2016 to ensure that Sites are prioritised on a countywide basis and that proposals are prioritised on the basis of reduction in number of people killed or seriously injured against the cost of implementation of the scheme. The prioritisation process provides a transparent process which is as objective as possible and demonstrates that the Council monitors the safety of the roads for which it is responsible.
- 6.4 Monitoring accident data and responding to changing trends is a key way of preventing road casualties and effective use of the process will reduce the risk of a prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 or under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
- 6.5 Changes will be required to the terms of reference for the LHPs to reflect the proposals in this report.

## **7 Equality and Diversity Considerations**

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a protected characteristic.

## **8 List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA)

## **9 List of Background papers**

None declared.

|  |                                  |
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| <b>I approve the above recommendations for the reasons set out in the report:</b><br><br><b>Councillor Lee Scott - Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport</b> | <b>Date</b><br><b>29/09/2023</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|

**In consultation with:**

| <b>Role</b>  | <b>Date</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Director Highways and Transportation</b><br><b>Paul Crick</b> | 27/09/2023  |
| <b>Head of Design Services</b><br><b>Julia Johnson</b>           | 28/09/2023  |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Head of Network and Safety</b><br><b>Jo Heynes</b>   | 28/09/2023 |
| <b>Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)</b><br><br><b>Katie Bray on behalf of Paul Turner</b> | 21/09/2023 |