

Transport Scotland submission of 6 December 2023

PE2065/A: Improve and prioritise pedestrian safety

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 (RSF2030) was published in February 2021, with the goal of Scotland having the best road safety performance in the world. For the first time, mode and user specific targets for key priority groups such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and over-represented age groups have been created to focus attention by partners on our priority areas.

The Scottish Government recognises that vehicle speed is a crucial factor in this endeavour and through the framework, is committed to implement 20 mph speed limits on those roads where it is appropriate to do so by 2025. Our 2022 Programme for Government supports this position with a commitment to "Roll out our national strategy for expanding 20 mph zones, with more roads and areas reducing their speed limits to 20 mph – making our streets feel safer and encouraging active travel". In the fiscal year 2022-23, local road authorities were provided with £1.4 million in funding to undertake the necessary assessments of their road network to identify which roads on their respective areas should have a reduced speed limit of 20 mph. We are continuing to work with local authorities to now implement lower speed limits of 20 mph on appropriate roads by 2025.

Scotland's Active Travel Vision to 2030 has the long-term vision that our communities are shaped around people, with walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys. This helps people make healthy living choices and assists in delivering places that are happier, more inclusive and equal, and more prosperous; and where people are confident to walk and cycle more often and they value and use their local transport networks (streets, roads and path networks), which offer safe, high quality, realistic and predictable journey options for active travel.

This is supported by the National Transport Strategy and Sustainable Travel hierarchy that prioritise walking, wheel and cycling over other travel modes.

New and improved pavements and cycle paths are funded through Transport Scotland's active travel budgets; the Scottish Government budget for 2023-24 confirmed record funding of £189.2 million.

Transport Scotland are investing in ambitious on and off-road segregated walking and cycling routes, safer junctions and improved design of place; this is because public feedback and evidence shows speed and volume of traffic deters people from walking and cycling. This includes the Cycling Walking Safer Routes grant of £35 million that goes directly to local authorities on a pro rata basis.

Programme for Government of 2023 committed to realise our commitment to £320 million in active travel investment in future budgets.

In 2023-24, The Scottish Government also launched a Road Safety Improvement Fund which will provide £9.5 million to Scotland's 32 local authorities, for projects that support casualty and risk reduction, through the implementation of Safe System measures. Many of the schemes being delivered by roads authorities include measures to improve safety for pedestrians.

Furthermore, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 bans pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs, the last of the secondary legislation has been laid in parliament and, if approved, local authorities will have the tools to enforce these prohibitions from 11 December 2023. Each local authority is able to decide how best to enforce these prohibitions in their areas, including any mechanisms for reporting contraventions of the prohibitions. Transport Scotland is working closely with all local authorities to assist in preparing for enforcement procedures to come into force and is aware of some who are developing a reporting mechanism within their area, however, it would not be appropriate to develop this on a national scale.

Finally, revisions to The Highway Code in January last year created a new hierarchy of road users, a concept that places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. It seeks to ensure those who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the threat to others, and there are additional elements about right-of-way at junctions and safe passing distances for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders. As this embeds itself, roads will become safer for more vulnerable road users, particularly those who walk, wheel or cycle.

Road Safety Policy Team