LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR MELTON

17TH APRIL 2008

CASUALTY REDUCTION AND RED ROUTES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Purpose of Report

1.   To compare the Red Route casualty reduction strategy employed by some local highway authorities with the Leicestershire approach.

Background

2.   Designation of the A606 as a Red Route was recommended to this forum on 7th February by Mr Lockyer, the Rutland District Manager for the Fire Service, on the grounds that it would raise people's awareness of this high risk road.

3.   In response, Mr Karkowski confirmed that the County Council had previously looked at the issue of Red Routes in a report to the Harborough Forum. The general view was that the signing of Red Routes was not as effective as targeting particularly bad areas on a road.

4.   In each of the last two years, 2 routes through Leicestershire have been recognised by EuroRAP (the European Road Assessment Programme) as being amongst Britain's most improved roads.

5.   Although the County Council's A and B class roads represent approximately 18% of the total County road network, due to above average traffic levels and speeds, they account for approximately 50% of all accidents. These roads therefore present a valuable focus for cost-effective casualty reduction measures along individual routes.

Common Elements of Casualty Reduction

6.   Within most highway authorities, an accident database is used to establish a priority list of routes and lengths of road to be investigated, based on the frequency of road traffic accidents. In some authorities, the worst routes/lengths are designated as Red Routes, whereas within Leicestershire they are held within a single priority list, reproduced here at Appendix A. The process is almost identical.

7.   Whilst an important element of Leicestershire's casualty reduction strategy falls on A and B roads for the reason described in Para. 5 above, the Red Routes within some authorities are drawn exclusively from the A & B road network, for similar reasons.

8. Each authority generally looks at the worst routes/lengths, and uses specific engineering measures to improve the sites at which accidents have been recorded. The Red Route designation will generally have little impact on this process.

9. Whilst police enforcement activity is generally heightened on Red Routes, speed cameras play an increasingly important enforcement role. Within Leicestershire, over 90% of camera sites are on class A and B roads and, as the sites themselves were chosen on the basis of accident numbers and excessive speed, it follows that the enforcement activity will be concentrated on higher risk routes. In other authorities, these are likely to be Red Routes.

Red Route Elements of Casualty Reduction

10. Red Routes and their dangers are publicised extensively but, whatever criteria are used, there will always be one route that just qualifies as a red route and one that just doesn't. Such routes will be very similar, yet the message being given to drivers is that one route is significantly more dangerous than the other. The message should be that all routes are potentially dangerous and that care must be taken at all times, not just when driving on the Red Routes. Giving such a misleading message could conceivably make the situation worse rather than improve it.

11. Although all Red Route publicity carries the same basic message, there is no national standard for the choice of these routes, therefore providing an inconsistent message to drivers moving between counties.

12. Red Routes often display signs or posters advising motorists of the accident numbers over a certain length over a specific timescale. We would contend that such general information is, if it can be seen at all, of little help to drivers. Conversely, it is extremely important to warn them of specific dangers through the use of say triangular warning signs and chevron boards. Drivers are better able to negotiate hazards if they know precisely what they are about to confront rather than being given general accident data that is difficult to interpret.

13. The Red Route strategy is often used as a focus for maintenance activity which can, in itself, have a significant impact on road casualties. Although when preparing our annual resurfacing programme account is taken of the accident data as well as the structural condition of A & B roads, we do recognise that this is an area where further benefits can possibly be achieved through better co-ordination. This issue is currently being investigated.

Conclusions

14. Routes through Leicestershire have recently received national publicity for casualty reduction, which reflects well on the effectiveness of our engineering, enforcement, education and maintenance initiatives. Whilst many elements of our casualty reduction strategy are common to the Red Route strategies, the latter has a strong yet inconsistent publicity element over which we have some concerns.

15. Leicestershire has a record of casualty reduction of which it can be proud, but the record will only be sustained if the techniques and initiatives that we deploy target real accident problems and are constantly reviewed. Whilst the Red Route approach used in its totality is unlikely to be helpful for Leicestershire, such initiatives are always worthy of consideration as we seek to continually develop and improve our casualty reduction strategy.

Officer to Contact

Steve Karkowski   Tel: 0116 305 0001
Email: skarkowski@leics.gov.uk

Background Papers

Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011

Outstanding Routes Awaiting Investigation – April 2007

Route	Description	Length km	KSI Accidents per km
A6 - N of City	ii) Loughborough boundary (N) to M1 (J24)	8.0	2.25
B5493	i) County boundary (W) to A42	1.8	2.22
B5380	i) A47 to A46	2.6	1.54
A50	i) City boundary (W) to M1 (J22)	9.3	1.51
A6 - N of City	i) Birstall boundary (N) to Loughborough boundary (S)	10.9	1.28
B6047	ii) A47 to Market Harborough boundary (N)	15.6	1.22
A47 - E of City	i) City boundary (E) to County boundary (E)	17.5	1.20
A6006	ii) A46 to Melton Mowbray boundary (W)	10.9	1.10
A60	i) Loughborough boundary (N) to County boundary (N)	4.8	1.04
A606	i) County boundary (N) to Melton Mowbray boundary (N)	7.9	1.01
A426	i) Whetstone boundary (S) to Lutterworth boundary (N)	10.3	0.97
A607	i) A46 to Melton Mowbray boundary (W)	14.7	0.95
B4669	i) B4114 to Burbage boundary (E)	5.7	0.88
B6540	i) A50 to County boundary (N)	2.3	0.87
A453	i) A42 to M1 (J23a)	8.4	0.83
B4116	i) County boundary (W) to A444 (Twycross)	7.3	0.55
B6047	i) Melton Mowbray boundary (S) to A47	17.8	0.73
A444	i) A5 to County boundary (W)	20.7	0.72
B581	ii) B4114 to A426	5.7	0.70
B676	i) A60 (Loughborough) to Shoby Crossroads	11.7	0.68
B581	i) Earl Shilton boundary (S) to B4114	6.0	0.67
A6 - S of City	i) Oadby boundary (S) to County boundary (S)	18.1	0.66
B585	i) A50 to B582	6.1	0.66
A6006	i) County boundary (N) to A46	6.1	0.66
A5199	i) Wigston boundary (S) to County boundary (S)	18.0	0.61
A4304	i) Market Harborough boundary (W) to M1 (J20)	18.4	0.60
B5414	i) A4304 (North Kilworth) to A5199	3.9	0.51
B582	i) Enderby boundary (N) to A447	17.7	0.51
A4303	i) M1 (J20) to A5	4.3	0.47
B676	ii) Melton Mowbray boundary (E) to County boundary (E)	15.4	0.45
B4116	ii) A444 (Twycross) to A42	10.0	0.60
A607	ii) Melton Mowbray boundary (E) to County boundary (E)	15.3	0.39
B591	i) A511 to A512	7.9	0.38
B587	i) County boundary (N) to A511 (Ashby)	6.7	0.30
A426	ii) Lutterworth boundary (S) to County boundary (S)	4.1	0.24
B664	i) County boundary (S) to County boundary (E)	9.4	0.21
B578	i) A5 to Burbage boundary (S)	2.2	0.00
B585	ii) A444 to B4116	3.5	0.00

Priority is based on the number of KSI (killed or seriously injured) accidents per km.