

Considering a systems approach to road safety north of the border

Scotland is pushing ahead with ambitious plans to improve road safety. CIHT policy advisor Shalini Kumar explores some of the recent progress.

Earlier this year the Scottish Government published a Road Safety Framework to 2030. It sets out a vision for Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world by that date, and has an ambitious long term goal where no one is seriously injured or killed on the country's roads by 2050.

Progress with reducing fatalities and serious injuries on road networks is a global priority for governments around the world, with road safety being included in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

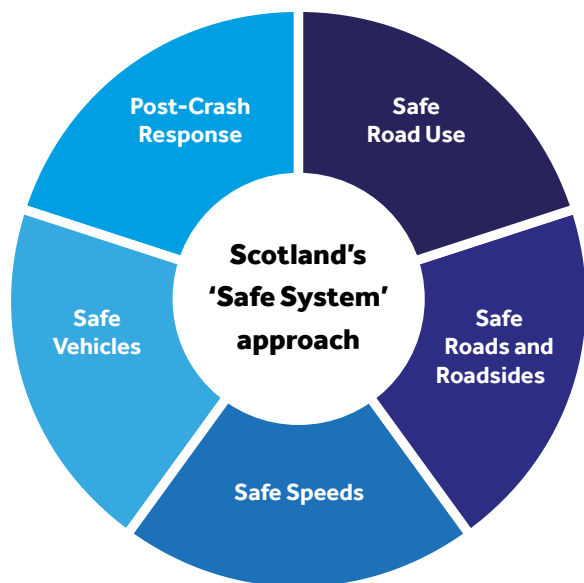
To achieve its 2030 aim of having the best road safety performance in the world Scotland has embedded a 'Safe System' approach, with five pillars illustrated in the diagram below and explained here.

The strategy puts people at its centre and aims for a more forgiving road system taking human error and vulnerability into account. This system provides a more holistic approach to road safety, focusing efforts on reducing road traffic casualties



CORNFIELD - SHUTTERSTOCK

↑ Speed cameras help reduce injury collisions



and road traffic danger. Here are the broad aims of each pillar:

1. Safe Road Use

- Shifting behaviours: safe road users will know their responsibilities and have respect for others at all times.
- Reduce car traffic: delivering initiatives to encourage more active travel.
- Education interventions: ensuring road users are risk aware.

2. Safe Roads and Roadsides

- Design and maintenance: implementing strategies to ensure that roads and roadsides can be as safe as possible.
- Road segregation: keep different kinds of road users apart and segregate the traffic moving in different directions or at different speeds.
- Enforcement: use speed limits and signage where applicable.

3. Safe Speeds

- Speed limits: establish appropriate

speed limits to avoid crashes and reduce impact.

- Criteria based local speed limits: taking account of the history of collisions, road geometry and engineering, road function, composition of road users, existing traffic speeds and road environment.

4. Safe Vehicles

- Occupant safety: 'active' safety measures such as autonomous emergency braking, which can also help protect pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists.
- Safe technology: feedback from the speedometer and seatbelt reminders.
- Intelligent transport system: manage traffic through the use of autonomous vehicles and smart infrastructure.

5. Post-Crash Response

- Emergency services: enabling the best response to collisions, to quickly locate and provide emergency first responder care.

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Working together

Examples of joint working by Transport Scotland to improve road safety include a multi partnership Road Safety Working Group set up in the Scottish Borders.

Members of the group include the local council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Road Safety Scotland, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Southeast Scotland Safety Camera Unit and Amey.

Another is the Scottish Safety Camera Programme – a partnership set up by Transport Scotland to contribute to the country’s road safety vision and road safety targets.

The programme brings together the Scottish Safety Camera Programme, which administers grant funding for camera enforcement activity and Police Scotland, which is responsible for the operational delivery of the programme.

Police Scotland has since developed ‘Safety Cameras Scotland’ to reduce the number of people injured or killed through targeted camera enforcement and improved driver behaviour. Safety Cameras Scotland is divided into three safety camera unit areas: North, East



FOTOKON – SHUTTERSTOCK

↑ Autonomous emergency braking can protect cyclists

and West to manage speed and red light cameras across Scotland.

Cameras have been primarily deployed where they have the greatest potential to reduce injury collisions, and where there is evidence of both collisions and speeding.

Casualty reductions

There were 4992 road casualties reported last year in Scotland. This is 35% lower than 2019 and a decrease of 61% compared to 2011. According to Transport Scotland, the large decrease in casualties in 2020 is likely to be related to lower levels of traffic during the pandemic.

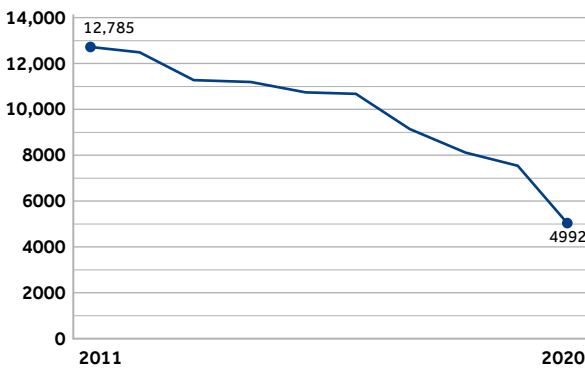
In its Road Safety Framework to 2030, Transport Scotland is committed to reducing the number of children aged under 16 who are killed on the roads by 50% and the number seriously injured by 65%. Last year Scotland met these casualty reduction targets, reducing the number of children killed by 76% and seriously injured by 77%.

Also last year the charity Children in Scotland – funded by Cycling Scotland and Transport Scotland – engaged with children and young people about its Bikeability programme.

Workshops found that children prioritise being safe while cycling and that traffic and busy roads often put them off cycling. More importantly, it was found that the volume and speed of cars had a big impact on how much children enjoyed cycling.

Transport Scotland is trialling a training course explaining what the Safe System approach means for organisations and individuals. It is also set to produce six videos, one about the approach generally and one each for the five pillars; promoted on the Road Safety Framework website.

Head of road safety policy Bertrand Deiss said: “Transport Scotland will ensure the Safe System approach to road safety is embedded in the development, design and delivery of all maintenance schemes from lighting, drainage or landscaping schemes to road reconstruction.”



↑ Total number of road casualties SOURCE: TRANSPORT SCOTLAND



OKSANNA PERKINS – SHUTTERSTOCK

↑ Safe road users have respect for others at all times

Intervention examples explored

Safe Speed: mobile enforcement on the A944

In October the A944 near Kingswells was established as a mobile enforcement site by Police Scotland after collision data showed five recorded injury collisions, including one pedestrian fatality over the most recently assessed five year period.

During the first two weeks of enforcement, 135 vehicles were detected to be speeding within the 40mph limit.

Safe Road Use: motorcyclist communication

Transport Scotland is working to encourage the uptake of further motorcycle training.

Transport Scotland, RoSPA and Police Scotland delivered communications campaigns with messaging designed to improve receptiveness and increase the number of motorcyclists accepting further rider training.