

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2003

ACCIDENTS ON RURAL ROADS

Report by the Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to recommend to Committee that route action plans are undertaken to tackle road safety issues on rural A class roads.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In December 2002, the Committee considered a report on road casualty trends in East Ayrshire. This showed that a significant proportion of casualties occur on rural, single carriageway roads which are subject to the national speed limit of 60mph. Ten accidents on these roads accounted for 12 of the 15 fatalities on East Ayrshire's roads in 2001, 44 of the 87 serious injuries and 194 of the 358 slight injuries.
- 2.2** A number of road safety improvements have been introduced at specific sites on these roads over the last few years, but they have not been subject to a comprehensive programme of treatment.
- 2.3** A road safety assessment has been started to consider the factors which contribute to the accidents on rural roads.

3 INITIAL ACCIDENT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1** An initial accident assessment of the Police accident statistics has been carried out for the six local A class roads which are maintained by East Ayrshire Council, the A70, A71, A713, A719, A735 and A759. These roads generally carry a significant proportion of traffic between communities and account for a significant proportion of accidents each year
- 3.2** The assessment has shown that during the three years to December 2002, the rural sections of the six A-class roads accounted for 20.5% of all injury accidents in East Ayrshire and 35.7% of the fatal accidents.

3.3 The table below summarises the accident numbers and severities.

Route	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
A70	2	9	33	44
A71	3	11	36	50
A713	2	8	34	44
A719	2	8	17	27
A735	1	8	12	21
A759	0	0	1	1
Totals	10	44	133	187

3.4 The accident causations identified by the Police indicate that speeding or the use of inappropriate speed for the road conditions accounted for 59% of the accidents.

3.5 It is proposed that the Road Safety Assessment will focus on the A-class roads in the first instance. The study can be expanded to consider other rural routes when the first tranche has been fully examined.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 It is proposed to take a 'whole route' approach to the safety assessment. This would be similar to the earlier studies for the A77 Fenwick to Floak and the A76 Route Action Plan which were carried out by officials of the Council on behalf of the Scottish Office. This would allow Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) measures to be identified to address the safety issues.

4.2 Work has started on the preparation of an inventory of the existing conditions on each of the routes. This will include:-

- (i) The conditions of road markings, signs, verge markers, edges of carriageways, verges etc. Drainage problems or overgrown vegetation which could cause problems will also be noted.
- (ii) The location of accesses to steadings, fields and other private accesses. Any problems will be noted e.g. sightlines which are limited by vegetation, boundary walls or the road alignment on the approaches, tight corner radii and the close proximity of other junctions or accesses.
- (iii) The start and end point of different types of carriageway centrelines;
- (iv) Photographs to illustrate maintenance and safety issues; and
- (v) Comments of frontagers on road safety issues.

4.3 The details of each accident will be considered. This will allow the identification of :-

- (a) the problem locations which require early action and;
- (b) the measures which are needed to address the specific problems occurring at the problem locations.

5. REMEDIAL ACTIONS

5.1 Once the inventory of existing conditions and the detailed accident analysis have been carried out appropriate measures will be identified to address the specific problems.

Some examples are set out below:-

- (a) Traffic Signs to advise drivers of particular hazards such as junctions, bends, road narrows, pedestrians on the road etc.
- (b) Road markings to indicate a change in the nature of the road and help drivers be more aware of the approaching carriageway alignment. They will also encourage drivers to reduce speed or avoid overtaking. e.g. 'SLOW' markings on the carriageway, hazard warning centreline, edge of carriageway markings.
- (c) Anti-skid surfacing is an appropriate treatment where a high proportion of accidents occur during wet or icy road surface conditions.
- (d) Improvements to the delineation of the road include edge of carriageway markings, reflectorised verge markers posts, bend warning signs, chevron signs etc. Where a significant accident history exists at a bend a combination of these measures can be applied, depending on the severity of the geometry. Anti-skid surfacing can also be included in the treatment.

All the above treatments have proved successful in reducing accidents at previously treated accident sites.

5.2 The Police have previously been asked to consider sites on the A70, A71, A719, A713 & A735 for speed cameras as part of the Strathclyde Safety Camera Partnership. This resulted in a fixed camera site being installed in Newmilns on the A71 and mobile camera sites on the A70 and A77. In view of the significant proportion of speed related accidents, the Police will be asked to re-consider the need for further speed camera sites as part of their future speed camera initiatives.

5.3 It is expected that the cost of implementation of the full plans will be substantial in relation to the funds available to the Committee for road safety improvements. A prioritised programme will be submitted to the Committee in due course.

6. TIMESCALE

6.1 Because of the very substantial programme of work being undertaken by the Traffic, Safety and Transportation section and limited staff resources, it will not be possible to complete the Road Safety Assessment of the rural routes until the end of the year. The outcome of the study will be the subject of a future report to the Committee.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A further report will be submitted to the Committee on the financial cost of implementing the proposed route action plans in due course. Funding for the proposed scheme has been included in proposals submitted to the Scottish Executive for the Council's allocation of "Quality of Life" funding. Full implementation is likely to take more than one year.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) agree in principle to implement route action plans to improve safety on "A" class roads between communities in East Ayrshire;
- (b) note that a further report will be submitted to the Committee in due course setting out a prioritised implementation programme; and
- (c) note that Strathclyde Police will be asked to consider the provision of further speed cameras at appropriate locations.

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Director of Development Services

KO/KC/YK
25 February 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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