

ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2024-2030

Laois County Council



VISION
ZERO



April 2024

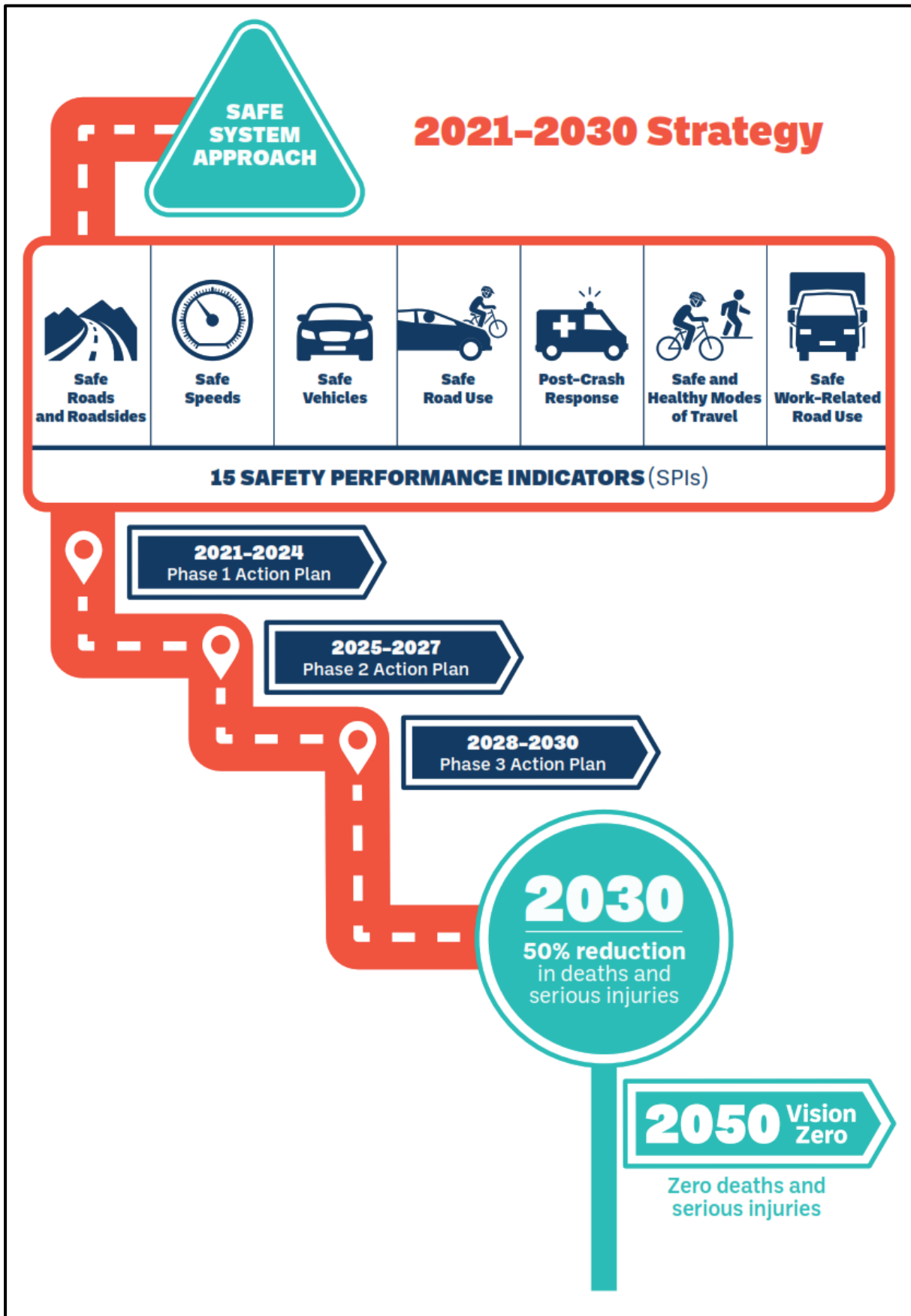
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDS AND VISION.....	2
OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS VISION ZERO	3
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Government Road Safety Strategy (GRSS) 2021-2030.....	4
1.2 Safe Systems Approach	5
2.0 PROFILE OF COUNTY LAOIS	6
2.1 Travel Patterns.....	8
2.2 Collision & Casualty Trends 2017 - 2022	8
2.3 Review of Laois Road Safety Plan 2017-2022	9
2.4 Collision Comparison with other County Councils.....	9
3.0 LAOIS ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2024 - 2030.....	10
3.1 Road Safety Working Together Group	10
3.2 Key Stakeholders.....	10
3.3 Aims & Objectives	11
3.4 Elements of a Safe System.....	12
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	16
SUMMARY.....	16

FOREWORDS AND VISION

To be completed by Cathaoirleach, RSA and CEO

OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS VISION ZERO



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Safe mobility for all who live and work and travel the roads and pathways of Laois is of paramount importance. In line with the RSA's Road Safety Strategy 2021 -2030 entitled "Our Journey Towards Vision Zero", Laois County Council have produced this six year Strategy which sets out our vision for road safety and the policies and actions to be implemented to achieve this goal.

Continuing the work in the previous Laois County Council Road Safety Plan 2017-2022, this new Road Safety Strategy 2024 to 2030, will be delivered with a heightened focus on the provision of better infrastructure, improved road user behaviour, and better enforcement.

This Strategy aims to identify areas to promote and improve road safety within Laois through the provision of infrastructure, improved road user behaviour and better education and enforcement. The 'Safe Systems' approach is based on the premise that life and health should not be compromised to meet the demands of mobility. We are working towards a County which is safe for all to walk, cycle and travel safely and this Strategy sets out our route to achieving this.

1.1 Government Road Safety Strategy (GRSS) 2021-2030

The primary aim of the government's new road safety strategy is to reduce the number of road deaths and serious injuries on Irish roads by 50% by 2030.

The strategy will be delivered in three phases as follows:

- Phase 1 Action Plan 2021 -2024
- Phase 2 Action Plan 2025 -2027 and
- Phase 3 Action Plan 2028 -2030

Phase 1 runs from 2021 – 2024 and includes 50 high impact actions and 136 support actions. Local authority are the lead or support agency for a number of these actions. Phase 1 was backed by a €3.8bn investment.

Laois County Council has a role in delivering a number of these actions. Achieving these will be dependent on a dedicated collaborative approach and data sharing across key stakeholders. Our actions will be informed by the Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and the Climate Action Plan.

1.2 Safe Systems Approach

The reduction of fatalities and serious injuries is a shared role between road users, and all those involved in road safety. The safe systems approach to road safety is built on the following key principles.

1	2	3	4
Human Behaviour	Human Frailty	Shared Responsibility	All Parts of the traffic system need to be strengthened
People make mistakes when using the roads which can lead to collisions	The human body has a limited ability to tolerate collision impacts	To be shared amongst those who design, build, manage and use the roads and vehicles to prevent or reduce collision impacts, and those who provide post-crash response to mitigate injury	in order to multiply their effects and to ensure that road users are protected if one part in the system fails

For the 2021 – 2030 strategy, seven Safe System priority intervention areas have been identified as follows:

1. **Safe Roads & Roadsides** - To improve the protective quality of our roads and roadsides.
2. **Safe Speeds** - To reduce speeds to safe, appropriate levels for the roads being used, and the road users using them.
3. **Safe Vehicles** - To enhance the safety features and roadworthiness of vehicles on our roads.
4. **Safe Road Use** - To improve road user standards and behaviours in line with traffic legislation, supported by enforcement.
5. **Post-crash response** - To improve the treatment and rehabilitation of collision casualties.
6. **Safe and healthy modes of travel** - To promote and protect road users engaging in public or active transport.
7. **Safe work-related road use** - To improve safety management of work-related journeys.

There are a total of 186 actions in the GRSS Phase 1 Action Plan and the Laois County Council action plan will include a number of these actions which are linked to the GRSS.

2.0 PROFILE OF COUNTY LAOIS

Laois is an inland county, predominately rural covering an area of 1,720 square kilometres and is bound by five counties – Kilkenny, Tipperary, Carlow, Offaly and Kildare. The population of County Laois according to 2022 CSO results is 91,877. This is an increase of 8% on the 2016 census Figure.

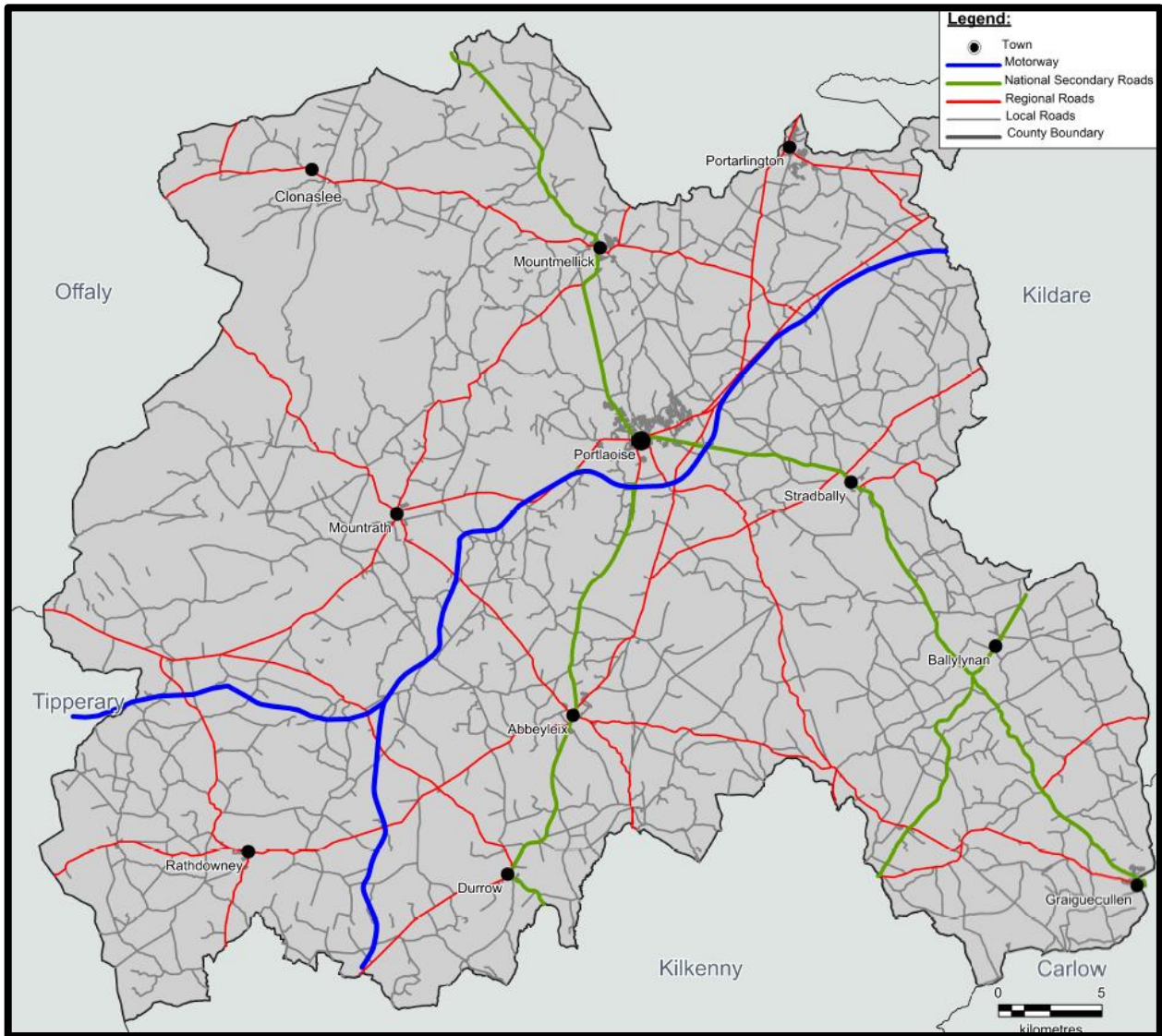
Laois County Council maintain a road network of approx. 2361 km, broken down as follows:

- Motorway – 67.0 km
- National Secondary Roads – 100.2km
- Regional Roads – 348.4km
- Local Roads – 1,845.4 km

Laois County Council actively promotes walking, cycling, public transport and other more sustainable forms of transport as alternatives to the private car, together with the development of the necessary infrastructure as we aim to address our climate action objectives and sustainability goals, Funding of works to improve pedestrian & cycle facilities are mainly funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA).

The motorway road network in the county, namely the M7 and M8 is managed and funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the maintenance is carried out by operators on their behalf.

Please see map on the following page outlining the road network in County Laois.



2.1 Travel Patterns

The CSO census 2022 provides details of national travel data and the table below shows travel data by means of travel to work or education for Laois. It can be seen that 47% of trips in Laois are by car or van with 37% by sustainable travel mode (including car passengers) and 6% predominantly working from home.

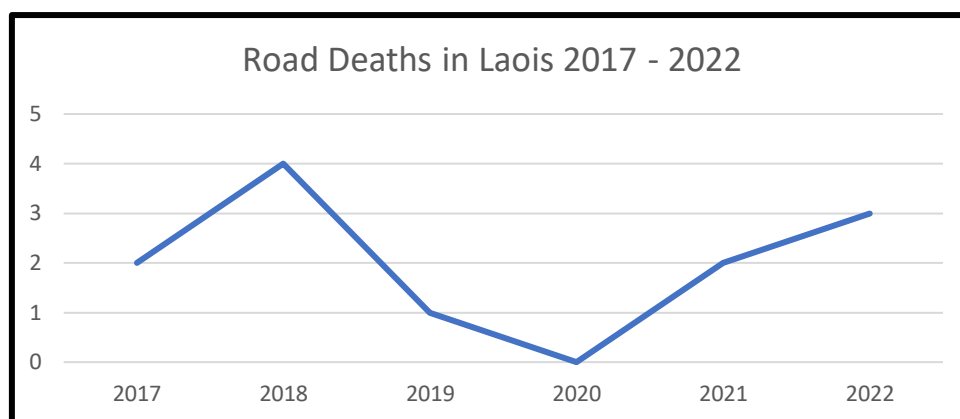
Census 2022: Population aged 5 years and over by means of travel to work, school or college		
Means of Travel	Total (Work & Education)	Percentage excluding not stated
On Foot	5,523	9.1%
Bicycle	798	1.3%
Bus, Minibus or coach	4,604	7.6%
Train	1,250	2.1%
Motorcycle or Scooter	71	0.1%
Car Driver	24,917	41%
Car Passenger	15,924	26%
Van	3,682	6.1%
Other	385	0.6%
Work from home mainly	3,597	6%
Not stated	4,411	
Total	65,162	100%

2.2 Collision & Casualty Trends 2017 - 2022

The tables below provide an overview of the reported collision and casualty trends in Laois over the period 2017 – 2022. This data was obtained from the Road Safety Authority (Collision Fact Reports). Collision data is compiled by An Garda Síochána at the scene of a collision and forwarded to the RSA. Road Casualties Laois 2017 -2022.

Road Casualties 2017-2022		
Year	Persons Killed	Persons Injured
2017	2	172
2018	4	160
2019	1	95
2020	0	
2021	2	
2022	3	

This trend can be seen on the chart below:



2.3 Review of Laois Road Safety Plan 2017-2022

Laois County Council adopted a Road Safety Plan for the County in 2017. This plan extended to 2024. The aim of the Road Safety Plan is to reduce the number and the severity of collisions along our counties road network under the headings of Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation. Among the main actions carried out under the plan were the following:

- New and upgraded pedestrian & cycle infrastructure on roads throughout the county.
- Urban renewal schemes in various towns county wide with a focus on greater pedestrian connectivity and traffic management.
- Completion of one national road realignment schemes to deal with poor visibility & to improve infrastructure for vulnerable road users.
- Introduction of 30km/hr speed limits and slow zones in residential areas across the county
- Continued provision of a school warden scheme
- Establishment of a Road Safety Working Together Group
- Implement safety schemes at high risk locations on regional and local roads.
- Portlaoise Cycle training park
- Phase 1 of the Triogue Way
- Installation of Speed radar signs
- Safe Routes to schools
- Pedestrian improvement schemes

2.4 Collision Comparison with other County Councils

To examine how Laois is performing with regard to road safety and preventing fatalities per population, it is helpful to compare with other counties. The table below, based on the 2016 census data shows a notable improvement in Laois from 2016 to 2021.

Fatality Rate per 10,000 Population 2017 to 2021					
County Council	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Laois	0.2	0.6	0.1	0	0.2
Kilkenny	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.2
Carlow	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0
Tipperary	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.7

3.0 LAOIS ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2024 - 2030

3.1 Road Safety Working Together Group

To ensure that Laois County Council produce and implement a Road Safety Strategy that will succeed in introducing initiatives and producing results with regard to the reduction in the number of collisions on our roads, we will continue to operate and expand the Road Safety Working Together Group. This group comprises the main stakeholders involved in road safety in Laois as follows:

- An Garda Síochána
- Laois Fire Service
- Road Safety Authority
- HSE
- TII
- Laois County Council Depts.; Roads; Active Travel; Major Emergency Management
- Road Safety Officer Laois County Council
- IFA
- Chairperson Transportation, Environment and Emergency Services SPC

The primary objectives of the Road Safety Working Together Group were as follows:

1. To oversee the implementation of the Road Safety Strategy 2021-2023.
2. To discuss road safety priorities and communicate good practice.
3. To enhance the knowledge of all those on the Working Group.
4. To endeavour to seek funding for road safety initiatives.
5. To recommend and provide input into Council transportation and road safety policies.
6. To foster links with other organisations that may have a role to play in Road Safety.
7. To review and report on progress in the Road Safety Strategy over the 5 years.
8. Input into the County Speed Limit Review
9. Develop the Road Safety Action Plan

3.2 Key Stakeholders

Laois County Council

Laois County Council is responsible for the construction and maintenance of public roads in the County. This involves ensuring road safety is a key consideration in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of roads to provide a safe and efficient road network. The Council also has a road safety awareness role in schools and among the general population in terms of creating awareness and addressing road safety issues. The Council has recently been granted funding for a Road Safety Engineer. This position will be dedicated to progressing the design and construction of Road Safety Improvements across the road network in County Laois.

An Garda Síochána

The aim of An Garda Síochána in the area of road safety is an attempt to reduce the incidence of fatal and serious injuries and improve road safety and they commit to working in partnership on education and targeting enforcement activities to reduce deaths and serious injuries. Laois County Council and An Garda Síochána work closely together on traffic issues and road safety campaigns.

Road Safety Authority

The aim of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) is to save lives and prevent injuries by reducing the number and severity of collisions on the road. The functions for which the RSA is responsible are set out in the legislation. The mission of the RSA is to make Irish roads safer for everyone.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Transport Infrastructure Ireland is a state agency in Ireland dealing with national roads and public transport infrastructure. The body was established in 2015 by merging the former National Roads Authority and Railway Procurement Agency.

TII's mission is to deliver transport infrastructure and services which contribute to the quality of life for the people of Ireland and support the country's economic growth. TII endeavours to provide a safer network of national roads and to mitigate safety problems on existing national roads. They are working towards the objectives set out in the Government Road Safety Strategy for 2021-2030.

Laois Fire Service

The purpose of the Fire Service is to respond quickly and efficiently to fires and other emergencies, including road traffic incidents, throughout the County. This response consists of a pre-determined turnout of appliances and equipment based on the nature, magnitude and severity of the incident. There are a total of eight fire stations in Laois.

Health Service Executive

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for providing health and personal social services for everyone living in the Republic of Ireland. The HSE recognises that it has a key role to play in Road Safety as Road Traffic Collisions are a significant social problem resulting in death, injury and long-term disability which impacts the health system as well as society as a whole. The Irish Health Service deals with the many health related outcomes of road crashes and collisions from the Ambulance Service, A&E Services, hospital services, rehabilitation, longer term and community care.

The health service deals with the trauma, tragedy and results of crashes and collisions on our roads on a daily basis.

3.3 Aims & Objectives

The main objective of Laois County Council's Road Safety Strategy 2024 -2030 is to reduce the number of collisions and casualties on our roads in line with the National Targets and beyond them if possible.

The principal aims of the Laois County Council Road Safety Strategy 2024 to 2030 are as follows:

- To revitalise and continue the engagement with other road safety agencies through an expanded Road Safety Working Together Working Group.
- In consultation with other key stakeholders, to develop an Action Plan to promote and improve safety for all road users in County Laois.
- To highlight the scale of the fatal and injury collisions that are occurring at present on the County Council's road network.
- To provide a focus on road safety and to ensure that road safety underpins all transportation policy measures and active travel schemes in the County Laois.
- To develop new initiatives to focus on specific vulnerable road user groups.
- To play a role in meeting national road safety targets set out in the National Road Safety Strategy 2021 to 2030.

3.4 Elements of a Safe System

The following 4 tables provide an overview of actions outlined in the GRSS 2021 – 2030 where Laois County Council has a lead or support role.

Safe Roads & Roadsides – involves planning, design and operation of roads and roadsides and provides the framework for safe road and vehicle use.

Road Safety Strategy Actions under Safe Roads and Roadsides		
Action Number	Action	Lead/Support Agency
4(i)	Fund and implement a minimum of 150 low-cost safety schemes as identified by local authorities on the regional and local road network per year and progress the implementation of a minimum of 4 larger specific safety schemes per year.	DOT, CCMA, LCC
4(ii)	Address National Road High Collision Locations, identified under TII's Network Safety Analysis programme (in accordance with GE-STY01022 of TII Publications). Schemes will be progressed where engineering measures are deemed appropriate.	LCC, TII
4(iii)	Address hazards on the National Road Network, identified under TII's Road Safety Inspections programme (in accordance with AM-STY- 06044 of TII Publications). KCC will address identified hazards based on priority ranking for treatment.	LCC, TII
4(iv)	Carry out Road Safety Audits on proposed road, greenway and active travel schemes, in accordance with GE-STY-01024 of TII Publications.	LCC, TII, DOT
4(v)	Comply with TII's inspection requirements for temporary safety measures at road works, in accordance with CC-STY-04002 of TII Publications).	LCC, TII
4(vi)	Continue to progress timber post and rail fencing retrofit programme on National Roads, with a view to completion by 2025 subject to landowner agreement.	LCC, TII
5	Over the period 2021 to 2025, 1,000km of segregated walking and cycling facilities on the national, local and regional road network, to provide safe cycling and walking arrangements for users of all ages.	DOT, NTA, CCMA, LCC
56	Review and make recommendations on facilitating cyclists and pedestrians at junctions, including measures that do not require powered traffic signals	DOT, NTA, LCC
61	Complete a minimum of 100% of LA 16 Collision Reporting and Evaluation Procedure forms where a fatality, or collision that is likely to become fatal, has occurred	DOT, TII, LCC
62	Provide timely and appropriate road traffic collision data to local authorities, and agencies with responsibility for road improvement and maintenance, to inform their work.	DOT, CCMA, LCC
63	Review and make recommendations for the provision of a dedicated road safety engineering resource in each Local Authority to progress road safety schemes and strategy actions.	TII, DOT, LCC
66	Deliver training to key stakeholders to provide guidance to An Garda Síochána and Local Authority staff on collision analysis and reporting from an engineering perspective, and to provide guidance on the design of roads utilising the safe system approach	TII, LCC

68	Each Local Authority to publish/renew their prioritised plan on road building construction and maintenance (including footpaths and cycle lanes) on an annual basis.	LCC
69	Tender and implement the upgrade of public lighting to appropriate standards using LED lighting to improve visibility and enhance safety for road users.	CCMA, LCC

The following is a list of actions to be undertaken by Laois County Council in the area of Safe Roads and Roadsides:

1. Carry out 5 low-cost safety and accessibility improvements each year.
2. Progress 3 cycling improvement schemes each year as part of the development of a cycle network.
3. Carry out 10 road improvements (under RI and RM schemes) each year
4. Carry out 10 footpath improvements each year.
5. Complete 100% LA16 fatal collision forms in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.
6. Work closely with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority to identify collision prone locations in the County.
7. Publish/renew a prioritised plan on road building construction and maintenance (including footpaths and cycle lanes) each year.
8. Minimise street clutter as part of all pedestrian and cycle and public realm enhancement schemes and maintain clear footways in the interest of accessibility by reducing obstructions.
9. Work closely with the National Transport Authority in the development of guidelines for the design of walking and cycling facilities and provide training to key staff.
10. Upgrade 2,000 public lights to LED lighting under the public lighting retrofit plan.
11. Maintenance of existing low cost safety schemes and existing road signage
12. Installation of new and replacement road signs and road markings along the regional road network.

Safe Speeds – central to the Safe System approach. It involves consideration of road and vehicle planning and design, the setting of injury minimising speed limits, as well as public education and awareness, and the enforcement of these limits.

Road Safety Strategy Actions under Safe Speeds		
Action Number	Action	Lead/Support Agency
6	Establish a working group to examine and review the framework for setting of speed limits. As part of this review there will be a specific consideration of the introduction of a 30kph default speed limit in urban areas.	LCC /DOT
8	Expand speed management measures on National, Regional and Local roads using Periodic Speed Limits at schools, Vehicle Activated Signs and Average Speed Cameras in collaboration with An Garda Síochána at appropriate high-risk locations.	LCC /AGS
78	Extend the number of 30kph speed limit zones in high-risk locations (urban city/town centres) for Vulnerable Road Users in line with best practice models.	LCC /DOT
79	Examine the feasibility of 30kph speed limit or lower in school vicinities and report on progress.	LCC /DOT

The following is a list of actions to be undertaken by Laois County Council, in conjunction with Elected Members and key agencies:

- Review and update the Speed Limit Byelaws in line with national guidance.
- Introduce appropriate forms of traffic calming around the County, where deemed necessary, including:
 1. junction improvements,
 2. chicanes,
 3. pedestrian improvement schemes, public realm enhancement schemes and pedestrianisation schemes.
- Work closely with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority on road safety awareness campaigns related to speed such as ‘Go-slow’ and European Day without a Road Death (EDWARD) day.
- Work closely with An Garda Síochána to identify suitable locations for speed detection and speed alert cameras.
- Work closely with other stakeholders on the Road Safety Together Working Group, identifying and supporting the implementation of the key actions that promote safer road use.

Safe Road Use – this incorporates a wide range of safety behaviours such as compliance with the posted speed limit, driving without impairment (due to alcohol, drugs, fatigue or distraction), use of handheld mobile phones or similar devices, helmet wearing, seat belt wearing and correct use of child restraints.

Road Safety Strategy Actions under Safe Speeds		
Action Number	Action	Lead/Support Agency
6	Establish a working group to examine and review the framework for setting of speed limits. As part of this review there will be a specific consideration of the introduction of a 30kph default speed limit in urban areas.	LCC /DOT
8	Expand speed management measures on National, Regional and Local roads using Periodic Speed Limits at schools, Vehicle Activated Signs and Average Speed Cameras in collaboration with An Garda Síochána at appropriate high-risk locations.	LCC /AGS
78	Extend the number of 30kph speed limit zones in high-risk locations (urban city/town centres) for Vulnerable Road Users in line with best practice models.	LCC /DOT
79	Examine the feasibility of 30kph speed limit or lower in school vicinities and report on progress.	LCC /DOT

The following is a list of actions to be undertaken by Laois County Council in the area of Safe Road Use:

- Sign up to the European Road Safety Charter following the adoption of the Road Safety Strategy.
- Review the operation of the Road Safety Working Together group and expand membership to include Elected Members and other stakeholders as required.
- Work closely with An Garda Síochána on day-to-day road safety and traffic matters and road safety awareness campaigns and ensure road safety is a key agenda item as part of the quarterly public Joint Policing Committee.

- Greater use of social media to promote various RSA awareness campaigns throughout the year.

Safe and healthy modes of travel –acknowledges that there is a substantial difference in fatal and serious injury risks across different modes of travel and aims to promote and protect road users engaging in public or active transport.

Road Safety Strategy Actions under Safe & Healthy modes of travel.		
Action Number	Action	Lead/Support Agency
40	Continue to implement active travel infrastructure scheme where Local Authorities can apply for funding to develop improved active travel infrastructure.	DOT, LCC, NTA, RSA
41	Encourage modal shift to support Environmental, Safety and Health objectives by promoting the use of sustainable and active modes of travel	DOT, LCC, NTA,
42	Promote and support an expanded Cycle Right training programme which includes online theory and practical skills for children and adults	DOT, LCC
44	Conduct a case study of countries that have adopted mechanisms to reduce traffic (for example car free streets in urban areas) to enhance the safety of other road users and make recommendations for Ireland.	DOT, LCC, TII
176	Develop in collaboration with the relevant local authority and TII, comprehensive cycle network plans covering each local authority.	NTA, LCC
177	Roll-out of the Safe Routes to Schools Programme and provide “front-of-school” treatments to a minimum of 500 schools.	NTA, CCMA,LCC, RSA

The following is a list of actions to be undertaken by Laois County Council in relation to safe and healthy modes of travel:

1. Progress 5 active travel infrastructure schemes each year in line with best practice.
2. Work with various agencies to promote sustainable and active modes of travel.
3. Support the delivery of cycle training to over 500 pupils per year under the Department of Transport Cycle Right programme.
4. Work with the National Transport Authority to develop a Cycle network plan for the County and learn about best practice elsewhere in Ireland and Europe.
5. Carry out front of school treatments to 5 schools per year in line with the National Transport Authority

Best Practice guide and road safety measures.

Of the seven safe system priority areas, Laois County Council has no lead or support role in the following priority areas:

Safe Vehicles – the safe vehicles element of the safe systems approach addresses the safety of road users both inside and outside the vehicle through legislative standards, consumer information, public procurement and industry initiatives.

Safe work-related road use – this involves the planned, systematic safety management of work journeys on the roads, aiming to reduce the risk of death and serious injuries.

Post-Crash Response – this concerns the rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of survivors of road traffic collisions and aims to reduce the severity and consequences of injuries in the event of a collision

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This road safety strategy, in order to be effective, needs to be reviewed annually to ensure that targets are being met in relation to our aims and objectives. The Road Safety Working Together Group (RSWTG) will meet twice annually and a sub-group consisting of Laois County Council and An Garda Síochána will meet a further twice per annum. A report will be prepared annually, in conjunction with the RSWTG, in relation to the monitoring and implementation of the plan and will be presented to the Transportation Policy SPC and the full Council to ensure that we are meeting our targets. In addition, any statistical information required by the RSA or the CCMA will be co-ordinated by Laois County Council. The Road Safety Strategy will be delivered in the following stages and may be subject to change: 2025 – 2027 and 2028 -2030.

SUMMARY

Road Safety statistics illustrate the requirement for a refocus and strengthening of efforts, to achieve a reduction in deaths and injuries, compatible with other, best performing, countries, in the EU.

There is a continuing need to focus on vulnerable road-users and causal factors, where there are low levels of compliance, and this will be a major focus of the Government Road Safety Strategy 2021—2030.

The Laois County Council Road Safety Strategy 2024 to 2030 will focus on the holistic Safe System approach to road safety management. The Safe System approach emphasises a shared responsibility, amongst those who design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles, to prevent or reduce collision impacts.

Key to the success of this Strategy is the Road Safety Working Together Group. A pro-active, diligent and committed Road Safety Together Working Group will support the pursuit of the targets set out in the Government’s Road Safety Strategy 2021 - 2030. Collectively and collaboratively, the first priority for the Laois Road Safety Together Working Group will be the development of a Road Safety Action Plan, assigning key road safety responsibilities to the appropriate agencies, having regard to the resources available.

Finally, this Strategy also encourages every member of the community to play their part in reducing road collisions, by taking responsibility for their own behaviour and actions on the road network. Road safety awareness and education campaigns will be arranged to support this.