



Title: **Safety Audit Policy**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Wards **All Wards in Torbay**

Affected:

To: **Transport Working Party**

Key Decision: **No**

On: **5<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

How soon does the decision need to be implemented **February 2012**

Change to Budget: **No**

Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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## **1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers**

- 1.1 To have a policy in place to ensure that material changes to Torbay's highway network have appropriate safety assessments carried out.

## **2. Recommendation(s) for decision**

- 2.1 That the 'Torbay Road Safety Audit Policy' in appendix 1 to this report is approved and adopted for all future highway schemes.

## **3. Key points and reasons for recommendations**

- 3.1 Road Safety Audits are independent assessments of potential road safety problems associated with a new highway improvement scheme.
- 3.2 Whilst it is considered good practice to carry out full safety audits to any scheme which has a material impact on the highway, a full audit is not always appropriate to more minor improvements and can add unreasonable additional costs in some cases.
- 3.3 It is important therefore that there is a policy in place to ensure that Torbay Council can fulfil its responsibilities with respect to safety assessments of highway improvement schemes.

**For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.**

**Patrick Carney  
Service Manager - Streetscene and Place**

## **Supporting information**

### **A1. Introduction and history**

- A1.1 A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is a formal, systematic, independent assessment of the potential road safety problems associated with a new road scheme or road improvement scheme. Audits must consider those aspects of a design that have an adverse effect on safety. An audit is not a check of compliance with design standards.
- A1.2 Safety audits are not a legal obligation of a highway authority unless the changes are on a trunk road or motorway, however it is considered as good practice nationally and the lack of a robust safety audit regime could result in a legal challenge if a change to highway layout resulted in a serious collision which was attributable to the road layout.
- A1.3 Procedures for road safety audits for trunk roads are set out in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' under 'HD 19/03' and the principles of this are generally adopted for audits of other road schemes. The requirement is however to use an Audit Team which is independent of the scheme and may therefore mean that external bodies are used for this purpose.
- A1.4 Whilst the use of full RSA is seen as good practice for larger highway improvements it can prove quite onerous for smaller schemes and potentially add a significant cost to the scheme. It is therefore likely that for smaller schemes a reduced safety assessment would be adequate and provide a more cost effective solution.
- A1.5 The draft policy document is attached in appendix 1 and shows four types of audits/assessments and the types of schemes to which they should apply.
- A1.6 The adoption of this policy should give considerable savings in costs as the use of external bodies would be reduced and the amount of time taken to produce the audits/assessments would be reduced for smaller schemes. The policy also makes more use of in-house resources.
- A1.7 The draft policy also includes for new developments to ensure that developers also provide RSA's for all new roads and road improvements carried out by them under agreements.

### **A2. Risk assessment of preferred option**

#### **A2.1 Outline of significant key risks**

- A2.1.1 The draft policy gives guidance as to the type of RSA or safety assessment which is appropriate for the type of scheme. If a policy is not adopted there is a likelihood that inappropriate assessments could be made with an increased risk of collisions occurring from schemes which may not have had a suitable level of assessment.

A2.1.2 Without a policy in place for RSA or safety assessment there is a risk that higher level RSA's could be used for relatively low risk schemes resulting in significant cost implications.

A2.1.3 The draft policy sets out requirements for developers schemes. The lack of policy could result in inadequate safety assessments in new roads and road improvements carried out by developers and could result in an increased risk of collisions related to road layout and to increased costs to the authority should future safety improvements be identified.

## **A2.2 Remaining risks**

A2.2.1 The policy allows for some assessments to be carried out using in house resources. This could result in a reduction in the level of independence to the design and places the responsibility for assessing the levels of competence of the officers involved with the Head of Service.

## **A3. Other Options**

A3.1 Members could consider the introduction of a policy which does not require the use of external bodies to undertake some higher level RSA's. This could leave the authority open to legal challenge if a change to road layout results in a collision related injury. The authority may also need to invest considerable funding to train the required level of competent auditors.

## **A4. Summary of resource implications**

A4.1 Full Road Safety Audits will need to be carried out by a team independent to the design. Where no suitable resources are available in-house, the authority's partner consultant, 'Jacobs' may be used.

A4.2 Road Safety Assessments and Self Audits as detailed in appendix 1 will be carried out where possible by officers in the Streetscene and Place, with the use of independent assessors kept to a minimum.

A4.3 The costs of carrying out RSA's or safety assessments will be funded from the relevant scheme budget. Members should note that such audits and assessments may result in additional physical works where problems are identified.

A4.4 Where RSA's relate to new developments the costs will be borne by the developer concerned and included in any highway agreements.

## **A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?**

A5.1 RSA's and Road Safety assessments will look to minimise risk to vulnerable highway users.

## **A6. Consultation and Customer Focus**

A6.1 No formal consultation is required for this policy. RSA's are carried out on schemes to minimise the risk to public safety.

## **A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?**

A7.1 In the event of a claim against the authority where a new road layout may result in a collision, a safety audit may be required to be presented as evidence by the authority's legal officer.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Torbay Road Safety Policy

## **Documents available in members' rooms**

None.

## **Background Papers:**

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Document HD 19/03 Road Safety Audit (DMRB Volume 5, Section 2, Part 2)