



ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2013 - 2020

**Meath County Council
Promoting Safer Roads**





INTRODUCTION BY CATHAOIRLEACH OF MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL NIAMH MCGOWAN

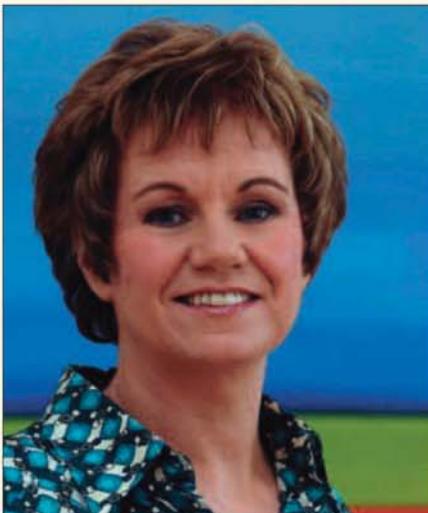
Road safety has been and remains a priority issue for Meath County Council. The County has made huge progress in the last 7 years. Countless lives have been saved through improved driver behaviour, better engineering, a robust education policy, and enhanced enforcement. Meath has now gone from being one of the worst counties for road safety, to being one of the safest.

However, lives are still being lost on Meath roads, and each one of them is a tragedy.

The targets set in this new Road Safety plan are designed to further reduce deaths and injuries on our roads, because we want to match the safety records of the best performing counties in Ireland, and those of the U.K., Netherlands and Sweden.

**Niamh McGowan
Cathaoirleach**

Meath County Council's last Road Safety Plan showed what can be achieved when Local Authorities work closely with the Road Safety Authority, the Gardai, NRA and other organisations, to improve education, engineering, and enforcement. This new Road Safety Plan aims to continue and enhance this cooperation. The success of this new plan is dependent on the continued cooperation of all organisations in the County, including voluntary groups, business organisations, press and media, and the public. The success achieved in Meath over the past few years, has shown time and again that the single most important factor is public support. By continuing to work together, we can keep Meath's roads as being amongst the safest in the country.



INTRODUCTION BY MANAGER OF MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL JACKIE MAGUIRE

As County Manager of Meath County Council I am pleased to present this Road Safety Plan for the County, for the period 2013 - 2020.

This is Meath County Council's third Road Safety Plan. It has ambitious, but reachable targets, with a clear vision of what we aim to achieve.

It sets out the practical means by which we can reach those targets.

If we apply the same spirit and stamina to this new plan, as has been brought to bear over the period of the previous plans, the benefits for our County, will be far-reaching. Reduced fatalities and injuries on our roads will benefit our economy, our emergency and health services, and will enhance our environment and wellbeing.

Implementation of the plan requires a co-ordinated approach between elected members, management of Meath County Council, the National Roads Authority, the R.S.A., the Garda Síochána, and other relevant organisations.

The Plan encourages all members of the Community to play an active part in reducing fatalities and injuries on our roads, by taking responsibility for their own behaviour as road users. Every man, woman and child using our roads has a responsibility for making them safer, and for their own individual behaviour.

I believe that with the cooperation and support of all relevant agencies, and the public, that this plan will make County Meath a safer place in which to travel, live and work.

**Jackie Maguire
County Manager**

TARGET

A reduction of collision fatalities on Irish roads to 25 per million population or less by 2020 is required to close the gap between Ireland and the safest countries.

A provisional target for the reduction of serious injuries by 30% by 2020, or 61 per million population has also been set.

There is a considerable amount of work being undertaken by the European Commission at present to establish and agree the definition of a serious injury. This work will inform the ultimate target for serious injury reduction in this strategy, when it is agreed.

INTRODUCTION

Local Authorities have a vital role to play in promoting road safety, apart from their statutory obligations and targets set by government, to make Ireland's Roads as safe as the best performing countries in the European Union and beyond. The target set is for Ireland to close the gap on countries with the most progressive road safety records by 2020.

In Meath, significant progress has already been achieved, since the County first pursued a strategic approach to road

safety in 2007. Road deaths have decreased significantly in the period 2007/2012. Robust actions in terms of Education, Engineering and Enforcement have contributed to the reduction in the number of fatalities and injuries and these actions in turn have contributed to a huge shift in road user behaviour, and attitudes towards Road Safety.

ROAD SAFETY - A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Road Safety is a shared responsibility and to be successful, must be based on co-operation and co-ordination by all the State Agencies, the general public, and the private/business sector, working together at every level. It is the responsibility of every road user to ensure their own personal safety on the roads, and to make a contribution to the safety of others through responsible road behaviour.

OUR ROAD TO SAFETY

The biggest single success factor in Meath's improved Road Safety performance, since 2007, has been the marked change in personal behaviour and attitudes to responsible road user behaviour. The people using Meath's roads, deserve huge credit for their commitment to, and engagement in road safety. The challenge now, for Meath County Council's Road Safety Plan, 2013/2020, is to avoid complacency, build on the culture that has developed, and ensure that Meath's road users continue to engage in saving lives, and preventing injuries.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2013 – 2020

This Meath County Council Road Safety Plan covers the period 2013 – 2020. It offers a Strategic Direction for Road Safety in the County, in terms of Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Evaluation.

It aims to save lives and prevent injuries by reducing the number and severity of collisions on its roads network.



ROAD SAFETY PLAN TARGETS

INTRODUCTION:

The setting of quantified Road Safety Targets can contribute to improved Road Safety performance provided a realistic safety programme is developed to help achieve the target (European Transport Safety Council, 2003). The main targets being set as part of this Road Safety Plan, area as follows:-

- A reduction of Collision Fatalities on its roads to 25 per million population or less by 2020.
- A Provisional Target for the reduction of serious injuries on its Roads by 30% by 2020 or 61 per million population.

The targets set for the reductions in fatalities and serious injuries are in line with those set out in Road Safety Authority Strategy, 2013 - 2020, and are required to close the gap between Ireland and the safety Countries.

The achieving of the targets is dependent on:

- Continuation of effective Engineering, Education Delivery, Enforcement, and Communication Actions.
- The maintenance of Garda Traffic Corps strengths.
- Continuing and enhancing the outsourcing of the operation of safety cameras, and
- The introduction of Chemical Roadside Testing for drugs.



PROFILE OF COUNTY MEATH

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Collision numbers in the County should be set against the large increase in vehicle ownership since 2001, and the resultant growth in travel. The table below shows the growth in the number of Licensed Vehicles in Meath since 2001.

It is also worth noting that County Meath has become a prominent commuter belt for the greater Dublin area. The County Roads are used daily by large numbers of commuters from Counties North and West of its boundaries, travelling to and from Dublin, and by large Northern Ireland traffic volumes.

Vehicles Licenses in Meath - 2001 - 2012	
YEAR	LICENSES
2001	101,601
2007	121,479
2012	118,708

Supplied by Vehicle and Driver Statistics, 2001/2007/2012
DOELG Shannon

Population Trends in County Meath - 2002 - 2006 - 2011

YEAR	Population
2002	133,800
2006	162,626
2011	184,135

Figures compiled from the 2011 Census of Population in respect of County Meath, show that there was an increase of 21,509 persons resident in the County, as compared with the 2006 figures. This is a trend which has been ongoing since 2002.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Meath is the 14th largest of Ireland's 32 Counties in area, and 9th largest in terms of population. It is the second largest of Leinsters 12 counties in size, and 3rd largest in terms of population.

Its Roads Network includes:

- The M1 Motorway Linking Dublin & Belfast
- The N2/M2 Motorway Linking Dublin & Derry
- The N3/M3 Motorway Linking Dublin & Cavan
- The N4/M4 Motorway Linking Dublin & Sligo

In total the County has 211 km of motorway and it also has 170.576 kl of National Roads, 521.614 kl of Regional Roads and 2,528.389 kl of Local Roads.



PROGRESS AND TRENDS

Since the Strategic approach to Road Safety was first adopted by Meath County Council in 2007, a very substantial reduction in fatalities and injuries on its roads has occurred. In this chapter, an overview of the progress made is outlined for the periods of the two previous road safety plans in the County i.e. 2007/2009 and 2010/2012.

Table A - Collision trends in Meath County Council Area 2006/2012

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fatal	21	14	9	12	6	3	14
Injury	312	277	307	285	240	194	160
Total	333	291	316	297	246	197	174

Table B - Casualty trends in Meath County Council Area 2006/2012

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fatal	22	14	9	12	6	4	14
Injury	397	388	442	429	358	279	252
Total	419	402	451	441	364	283	266

VULNERABLE ROAD USERS 2006/2012

Table hereunder outlines the overall fatal collision trends, for various road user categories, during period 2006/2012.

Fatal Collisions in Meath County Council Area 2006/2012

Casualties	2006 - 2012
Pedestrians	5
Motor - Cyclists	6
Cyclists	3
Car - Users	60
Other/Unknown	7
TOTAL	81

A perusal of those figures reveals that pedestrians, cyclists, and motor-cyclists are particularly vulnerable road user groups in County Meath.

A continuing Education Programme, with particular emphasis on vulnerable road users, together with widespread distribution of hi-visibility materials, and road safety documentation is essential, and is continuing throughout the County, to assist in reducing fatalities and injuries in those categories.







IMPLEMENTING THE ROAD SAFETY PLAN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Meath County Council has adopted a strategy for road safety centred on:-

- Engineering
- Education
- Enforcement
- Evaluation

The relationship of those four is an important concept particularly in the areas of Engineering and Education. Whereas 'Engineering' measures often result initially in large collision savings, this reduction in collisions may decrease with time as road users become accustomed to a particular measure. The opposite is the case for 'Education' as the number of persons exposed will form a small proportion of the total of road users and the immediate impact in terms of collision reduction will be relatively small. In time, it is hoped that consistent road safety education and encouragement will achieve significant behavioural changes, which can be expected to lead to a reduction in the number of collisions and casualties. Greater Garda Enforcement is also effective in improving driver behaviour through compliance with traffic laws.

Continuing encouragement from Meath County Council through road safety initiatives is providing a greater awareness of the collision problem and associated individual responsibility. The following sections outline sub-targets for Engineering, Education, Enforcement and

Evaluation as they apply to Meath County Council, and also identifies a number of actions to achieve the targets.

4.2 ENGINEERING

Research has shown that the vast majority of road collisions can be directly or indirectly attributed to inappropriate road user behaviour/performance, often involving human error. In a small proportion of cases the road environment is a contribution factor. Furthermore, it has been found that Engineering measures offer the most effective way of reducing collisions in the short to medium term by tackling problems in the road environment directly and by seeking to counter or reduce the scope for inappropriate road user behaviour/performance. The following lists sub-targets and actions for engineering measures to help reduce fatal and injury casualties in the County.

Sub Target 1 Carry out collision remedial measures on 3 collision prone locations per year

- Develop a ranking of collision prone locations using Meath County Council collision data.
- Carry out detailed collision investigation at these sites and implement remedial measures.
- Carry out a review of the collision investigation and prevention programme to date.

Sub Target 2 Continue to implement Local Traffic Calming Measures

- Carry out a review of the traffic calming to date in terms of collision reduction and make recommendations for future traffic calming in the County.



- Review the speed limits every 2 years, and seek approval for changes, if considered necessary, to enhance Road Safety.

Sub Target 3 Carry out Road Safety Audits on all major Roads and Traffic Schemes in the County.

- Continue to implement Meath County Council Road Safety Audit procedures on non national routes and the NRA Road Safety Audit procedures on National routes for all road and traffic schemes including QBCs.
- Provide training on the Road Safety Audit process for relevant staff.

Sub Target 4 Implement the following action programmes over the period of the plan

- Continue to provide improvements to pedestrian facilities throughout the County to cater for the needs of pedestrians including the mobility impaired and disabled.
- Provide assistance in having a written Road Safety Plan drawn up for schools in consultation with teachers, pupils, parents, Gardai and transport providers, as outlined in Action Plan 13, Road Safety Strategy 2007 - 2012.

4.3 EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

The aim of education and encouragement in Road Safety is to educate all road users in the proper and safe use of roads in order to change user attitudes and behaviour and to stimulate an awareness of the need for improvement in

Road Safety. International research has consistently identified human behaviour and human error, as the main contributory factor in collisions.

Data provided by the Gardai for fatal/injury collisions for the period 2007/2011, demonstrates the following contributory factors to the collisions:

- Driver Error - 84.8%
- Pedestrian Error - 7.8%
- Road Condition - 4.6%
- Environment - 2.5%
- Vehicle - 0.3%

Road user behavioural changes are necessary to help reduce and prevent road collisions. This can be partly achieved through awareness programmes of education, training, publicity and promotion.

Meath County Council has been active in developing and promoting road safety in schools and to the wider community through road safety education, training and publicity. The following lists the sub-targets and actions for further Road Safety education and training measures to help reduce casualties in the County, during the lifetime of this Plan.

Sub Target 1 Support schools in delivering road safety education and encouragement to young road users throughout the County.

The education of young road users is important in establishing road safety attitudes and behaviour. Exposure





to road traffic education and training skills at this early age can increase awareness in the safe use of the road environment. Parents and teachers have a role to play in ensuring that young people under their charge stay safe while on the journey to and from school. The County Council, along with other stakeholders will continue to support parents and teachers in delivering effective road safety programmes in schools by the following measures:

- Promote the concept of ‘Road Safety Awareness’ in schools.
- Support and encourage participation of ‘Walk to School’ day/week and other initiatives.
- Promote and encourage further, the practical applications of the Training Programme in the senior cycle of primary schools.
- Continue and support the Programme of cycle Training in Primary Schools.
- Increase road safety awareness in schools through annual exhibitions, and competitions.
- Continue areas of co-operation with an Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Road Safety Authority in the area of Road safety education and encouragement.
- Develop a facilitator programme for School Wardens to reinforce road safety education to young road users in schools.
- Continue to develop and support road safety in schools through the provision of Road Safety booklets, CDs, leaflets, and items displaying road safety messages.

Sub Target 2 Implementation of local road safety campaigns for vulnerable road users

In recognizing the concern of all road users and that safe learning for life is essential for safe use of the road network, the County Council will continue to target

vulnerable road users through specific local campaigns and promotions in line with the National Strategy for Road Safety. These measures will include:

- Community based or area based road safety targeting of specific road users through awareness and publicity campaigns.
- Provision of high visibility vests and armbands,
- Road Safety Presentations to Clubs, Associations, and Groups.

Sub Target 3 Encouragement of individual responsibility for their own actions when they use the road network.

The encouragement of walking and cycling forms a part of the wider strategy to encourage walking and cycling as a healthy and sustainable transport alternative to use of the private car. Pedestrians need to take responsibility for crossing the road at appropriate safe places while cyclists need to be aware of the traffic environment while cycling in heavy traffic routes. Drivers, especially goods vehicle drivers, need to be aware of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and two wheel riders while driving in an urban environment. The specific measure area as follows:

- Encourage the safe use of cycling, observance of road traffic law and use of cycle helmets through training and through the Meath County Council website.
- Encourage drivers and riders to use dipped headlights as a road safety measure.
- Continue to target all major events in the County for the distribution of Road Safety materials.
- Extend the use of road signage to encourage safe use of the road environment.
- Encourage schools and parents to develop and promote road safety through school travel transport plans and strategies.

4-4 ENFORCEMENT

The primary responsibility for enforcement of road traffic legislation rests with An Garda Síochána. A strategic goal set in An Garda Síochána Policing Plan is to 'reduce the incidence of fatal and serious injury collisions and to improve traffic flow'. This is to be achieved through a comprehensive action plan.

A critical success factor in the improving statistics relative to fatalities on Meath's roads, and nationally, is increased enforcement by the Gardai. The resources in the Garda Traffic Units, the extension of penalty points, and the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) have all played a part in bringing about improvement.

The introduction of chemical roadside testing for drugs will lead to further improvement.

Meath County Councils main role is the enforcement of parking restrictions. The County Council will continue to target vehicles that are parked in a dangerous manner for enforcement action. Meath County Council works closely with the Gardai in dealing with road safety issues in the County. The following actions are proposed to improve communication between Meath County Council and the Gardai on road safety issues:

Sub Target: Ensure continuing liaison with An Garda Síochána on Road Safety issues in the County.

- Continue to explore areas of co-operation with the Gardai in the area of road safety engineering and education through quarterly meetings.
- Arrange regular meetings between Meath County Council and the Garda Collision Prevention units at an area-based level. This will provide focus on collision prone locations.

The success of the previous Road Safety Plans, 2007/2009 and 2010 - 2012, adopted by Meath County Council, can be gauged from the table hereunder:

Casualty Trends in County Meath for period 2004 - 2012									
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fatal	22	30	22	14	9	12	6	4	14
Injury	296	420	397	388	442	429	358	279	252
Total	318	450	419	402	451	441	364	383	266

4-5 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a particular service refers to the extent it achieves its objectives. It is vital that the Road Safety Strategy, as set out in this Plan, be monitored to establish its effectiveness and allow changes to be made, if required, at the end of each year. Analysis of targets is imperative in guiding the delivery of the Road Safety Plan.

As part of this Road Safety Plan, a review will be undertaken annually outlining progress being made on achieving the main targets and sub targets based on casualty data from the NRA Road Collision Facts. This annual report will highlight the range of actions undertaken during the particular year.

SAFETY PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring arrangements that were instrumental in the success of the previous plan will be maintained. There will be an annual review of the plan involving all relevant agencies, and personnel. Progress in implementing the plan will be reported, and will be informed by consultation with stakeholders.

A mid-term evaluation of the plan will be implemented in 2016, which will provide an opportunity to recalibrate targets, and to implement adjustments to the Education, Engineering and Enforcement measures as required.