



SAFER ROADS STRONGER COMMUNITIES FAQS

What is the Safer Roads Stronger Communities initiative?

The purpose of the Safer Roads Stronger Communities initiative is to create a national road safety partnership with Town & Parish Councils across the UK who can share issues and identify best practice. A problem shared is a problem solved. Ethos believes, based on our experience and knowledge, we can provide the necessary support to Town and Parish Councils that deliver safer roads that build stronger communities.

We have noticed that there can be a clear disconnect between Town / Parish Councils and the Local Highway Authorities across the country. Our mission is to support you with your aims to achieve safer towns and villages that enhance local communities without the need to compromise on unsightly traffic infrastructure like speed humps.

Underpinning the initiative are four options that allow Ethos to take a more proactive role with you. Our involvement can range from simply providing you with guidance documents to allow you to undertake your own road safety "self-assessments" through to undertaking a comprehensive assessment, developing a robust report outlining all suitable road safety interventions, and providing support with community consultations.

The costs involved in these four options is based on how much of our time is involved. All four options are subject to heavy concessions as this is an initiative that we want to see grow across the country, allowing our professional experts to influence positive change with road safety.

Ethos can provide a lot more detail on the initiative, so please reach out to us today to find out more.

What do you mean by road safety?

The overarching aim of road safety is to keep all users on the road safe. To achieve this, Ethos believe there are three key areas that need to be considered.

- The speed of traffic through a community;
- The volume of traffic through a community;
- The classification of vehicles travelling through a community.

Our approach is to ensure our proposals consider all three of these areas. Achieving this can be difficult, and may require interventions to be delivered in phases, but with your support, and our ambition, we are confident that we can significantly enhance road safety for everyone within your local community.

What can a Parish / Town Council actual do and achieve?

A Parish / Town Council can have a substantial influence on what is and isn't delivered on the public highway. It is the level government closest to the community, which means it's often the first-place residents and businesses will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason, a Parish / Town Council play a vital part of any community.

Despite the Local Highway Authority (LHA) being the ultimate decision maker for road safety interventions, Parish / Town Councils are increasingly becoming more involved and more important in the process. It's unlikely an LHA will implement interventions a Parish / Town Council do not support. It's also common to see Parish / Town Council priorities delivered, especially if funding is available.

Based on what we have learnt from supporting Parish / Town Councils engage with their LHA, there is a clear link between the success achieved and how proactive the Parish / Town Council is. Therefore, if you are willing to commit funding to investigate and deliver road safety interventions within your local community, it's much more likely your LHA will provide you with support (i.e. match funding), and approval for your priorities.

How can participate if we don't have much money?

If your Parish / Town Council has a made Neighbourhood Plan you can receive 25% of all the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds collected from new development within your area. If your Parish / Town Councils doesn't have a Neighbourhood Plan you can only receive 15% from the CIL.

CIL funding can be used to investigate and deliver road safety interventions. Ethos Consultants have many years' experience in dealing with the CIL and can advise further.

Local Authorities can provide match funding, i.e. 50% to increase the funding that you have, and in some instances provide all the funding required to investigate and deliver road safety interventions.

There are also external funds that Parish and Town Councils can submit bids to throughout the year. Again, Ethos Consultants can advise you further on this.

How effective can road safety interventions be?

The effectiveness of road safety interventions will differ dependent on the measure/s implemented and the location. However, some lower cost interventions can be just as effective as the more higher cost alternatives when used appropriately. Ethos Consultants draw upon our 12 years of experience to ensure we identify the most appropriate low-cost solutions for your community.

Ethos's recommended approach is to deliver road safety interventions throughout a local community as opposed to focusing on the more problematic areas. This holistic approach ensures there is a consistent speed reduction throughout the local community which in turn has many wider benefits.

Can you improve road safety without speed humps?

Yes. Speed humps are traditionally the most effective method to reducing speed and are usually a cost-effective intervention. However, there are several drawbacks to speed humps and as such, unless our clients specifically request their inclusion, it isn't an intervention we usually include in our catalogue of interventions. This is because there are many alternatives

that can be as effective without the negatives that exist i.e. detracting from the local environment and causing an ongoing issue for local residents.

A key part of our road safety assessments we undertake is our cost / effectiveness calculation. Our bespoke criteria allow us to score how effective an intervention is compared to how much it costs. This allows us to prioritise all interventions based on the score, ensuring lower cost interventions can be prioritised to manage budget constraints.

What if the Local Highway Authority (LHA) isn't interested/doesn't have resources?

One of the most common lines we hear from Parish / Town Councils is the lack of engagement with their LHA. Whilst it may often come across that they do not care about the local community, it's almost always due to resource available.

10+ years ago, it was often a lot easier for Parish / Town Councils to engage with LHAs, including the assessment of road safety within local communities. For the LHA this is a revenue charge for their staff. Due to the amount of external transport / infrastructure funding that is available for LHAs, often for high-profile multi-million-pound schemes, the vast majority of their revenue charge is absorbed into funding applications and business case development.

However, the delivery of road safety interventions is a capital cost for an LHA. This funding is often more readily available, especially for lower cost schemes that can be funded from "minor works" budgets (usually capped at £50,000-£75,000).

This means if you can undertake the "revenue" tasks i.e. the assessment, and evidence base, there is a much greater likelihood the interventions can be delivered. This is especially the case if you have funding that can support funding available from the LHA.

How do Parish Council engage with the police over road safety?

This is dependent on location, and different Road Policing Units (RPU) will have a slightly different process. Most will be happy to attend Parish / Town Council meetings to give advice and listen to concerns. This is useful as it's important that priority interventions are supported by the RPU, as they will be a statutory stakeholder for any Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

As with all emergency services, your local RPU will have limited resource, which makes it important to engage early and compromise with availability. Most RPUs will commit to attending a Parish / Town Council meeting within a 3-6-month period.

Some RPUs will be more reactive, especially with Parish / Town Councils that have SpeedWatch programmes in place, as there will be a more direct route to officers, and the RPU will have more accurate evidence.

What can be done to improve road safety outside local schools?

LHAs are more likely to consider road safety interventions outside schools. There are several school related road safety schemes that are now given greater emphasis such as "School Streets". As directed from central government, some interventions should be prioritised outside schools compared to other areas within local communities, such as 20mph zones.

If you have a concern with road safety outside your schools, there is a greater chance that your LHA will fund the intervention(s). This allows funding you may have to be used elsewhere

within the local community. Engagement with the LHA is important, as is the evidence base put forward, which can be presented through a road safety assessment.

How can you stop “rat running” through our community?

“Rat running” through a local community is one of the most common concerns raised by Parish and Town Councils. However, it is also one of the harder concerns to address, due to the reason causing traffic to “rat run” in the first place. Most drivers will decide to use a local area as a cut through when they believe the most appropriate route will take longer. This usually involves congestion on the strategic road network i.e. motorways, and A-class roads. To address this, an LHA will require substantial funding potentially into the hundreds of millions. Securing this funding will be extremely difficult, and will take many years to achieve, and deliver.

As a result of this, our advice to Parish / Town Councils is to prioritise road safety interventions that will make their community less desirable as a cut through. There are many ways this can be achieved without needing to implement interventions that will have a negative impact on residents and the local environment i.e. speed humps.

Our road safety assessments will identify whether a local community is being used as a “rat run” through site assessments, surveys, and feedback from yourselves. If this is established as an area of concern, the road safety interventions we develop will have a heavy focus on mitigating this, along with improving road safety more broadly.

How long does it take before road safety measures can be implemented?

There are several factors that can influence the timescales involved in delivering road safety interventions. This includes the scale of the area, how proactive the Parish / Town Council are, how proactive the LHA is, and the level of support from within the local community.

Broadly speaking, it will take approximately 4-6 weeks for a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken. A similar amount of time should be included for engagement with the local community to demonstrate strong support to the LHA. Engaging with your LHA can take time and should be planned well in advanced of when the engagement should be held. The LHA will need time to consider the assessment, and the prioritised road safety interventions, so a four-week period should be allocated for this.

Funding is the element that could impact the timescales most within the process. If you have funding secured this will be a considerable time saving on the process. If you need to secure funding, it could take 3-12 months to achieve this, depending on the funding route i.e. CIL.