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**How safe is the English Strategic Road Network?
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST CRASH COST CENTRE PLEDGES
"NEAR ZERO DEATHS OR INJURIES" BY 2040**

- £2.1bn cost of crashes on Highways England network
- Cost of crashes does not include traffic delays
- A21 in East Sussex is most persistent high-risk road on HE network
- M6 section is HE's most improved
- HE commits to 90% of journeys on its roads to be 3-star or better by 2020
- HE commits to a clear long term goal to bring the number of people killed or injured on the network as close as possible to zero by 2040

Reducing harm on the roads is both a moral and an economic imperative for the new Highways England, according to a report out today from the Road Safety Foundation, which highlights the £2.1bn cost of crashes on the English Strategic Road Network between 2011-13 ... costs which exclude traffic delays.

In its annual analysis of 45,000kms by the road safety charity, this year's report, sponsored by Ageas UK: *How much do road crashes cost where you live?* includes, for the first time, a map of risk for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England.

Highways England, the new corporation responsible for national roads in England, has put in place a clear long term goal to bring the number of people killed or seriously injured on the network as close to zero as possible by 2040. It has pledged by the end of 2020 that 90% of travel on its roads will be on roads with a 3-star EuroRAP safety rating or better. The corporation is the largest single crash cost centre in Britain with serious crash costs in excess of £2.1bn in the period 2011-2013 covered by the report.

Most improved

The most improved road on the strategic road network is the 11km section of the M6 between junctions 33 and 34. Here, fatal and serious crashes reduced by 77% from 13 to 3 between the two data periods surveyed, improving the route from a low-medium

risk to low risk. The improved rate of crashes on the route removed the route from being at the national investigatory level. Improvements to the route included a major resurfacing scheme and upgrading the central barrier from metal to concrete.

Most persistently high-risk road

Highways England's highest risk road is the A21 between Hurst Green and Hastings. The 23km single-carriageway route is rural, passing through several villages. Generally, the long stretches without bends or junctions are safe however there is a concentration of accidents at bends and junctions.

Several local schemes have been put in place along the route to improve blackspots. Fatal and serious crashes dropped from 44 (2008-2010) to 39 (2011-2013), moving it from a "black" high risk rating to "red" or medium to high risk. However, the high risk is now attributed to a route issue and prioritising improvements for a route like the A21 within the strategic road network has been difficult. All strategic roads were once subjected to the same criteria and so priority was always given for motorways which carry a higher volume of traffic.

Route-based safety improvements are proposed for the A21, including improved visibility of villages and to standardise the designs within each; and improved driver behaviour and awareness of the road conditions. The viability of average speed cameras is being explored and the speed limits currently in place are being revised.

The A21 was studied as part of an RSF research project in 2014 and Star Ratings were obtained. The rural, high speed sections achieved only 2-star in its entirety. The route performs well for the maintenance measure but more action needs to be taken to achieve a minimum 3-star for the route. Roadside objects need to be moved/removed so that the distance to them is longer and the run off area needs to be widened as the route sees just 0-1m to the roadside in its current state.

"We know that, across the British EuroRAP network of motorways and A roads outside the urban core, single carriageway A roads are eight times the risk of motorways," says Caroline Moore, author of the Road Safety Foundation Report. "Risk on Highways England single carriageway A roads is six times higher than motorways, and just 3% of travel is on these roads.

"However the cost of fatal and serious injury crashes on single A roads on the HE network is £19 per thousand vehicle km travelled, against just £3 per thousand vehicle km travelled on its motorways. This gives a clear understanding of where Highways England can focus its efforts to make its whole network safer overall, and address its £2.1bn crash costs."

Commenting on the report Lord Whitty, Chairman of the Road Safety Foundation says: "Much of the genuine progress in reducing casualties this last decade has come from safer vehicles. Our results suggest that advances in safe vehicle design may be working better on more predictable purpose-built motorways than on the more variable higher speed single carriageways.

“On many ‘A’ roads, the margin for human error is often small. The largest single cause of death is from running off the road where there is often poor roadside protection, while junctions remain the largest source of serious injury where vehicle side impact protection is at its most limited. Although we can expect improvements in vehicle collision detection systems at junctions, road infrastructure and new vehicle systems need to be developed hand in hand.”

The report is sponsored by Ageas UK, whose Chief Executive, Andy Watson says: “As Britain’s third largest car insurer, we are committed to supporting initiatives that improve safety on our roads. This latest annual report is rich in data and mapping which local authorities and government agencies can use to reduce road crashes in their areas. It will stimulate a wider debate on the challenges that major changes to national roads and local authority finance bring and the new opportunities it gives us to reduce death on the roads.”

Ends/more

Notes to editors

The detailed data used to produce these results was commissioned from TRL Limited and included the creation of the British EuroRAP network of road sections, assignment of crashes and traffic data to individual routes and classification of crash types.

The full report is temporarily available at <http://roadsafetyfoundation.org/british-eurorap-results-2015-embargoed-content.aspx> and will be on the Road Safety Foundation website www.roadsafetyfoundation.org on Tuesday 15 September.

For embargoed interviews please contact the numbers below.

Media contacts

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