

Gloucestershire County Council

Guidance Note for the provision of Road Safety Audits

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Safety Audit is the continuous, systematic application of consistent safety checks throughout the preparation and construction of a highway scheme to ensure the minimum collision risk to all classes of highway user within economic and practical constraints. It is not a check on the construction of the structural elements of a project, as these should be the subject of other independent checks, and neither is it an appraisal of the scheme itself or a check on design standards.

1.2 Section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act places a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent accidents on new roads. This is now generally interpreted as a duty to carry out Road Safety Audits. These guidance notes for the provision of safety audit refer to the latest Department for Transport (DfT) standard for Road Safety Audit (Currently GG119 and previously HD19/03) and the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Road Safety Audit Guidelines.

1.3 Interim Advice Note (IAN) 152/11 Road Safety Audit – Compliance with European Community Directive 2008/96/C was issued in 2011. The advice note relates only to the Trans European Road Network (TERN) and requires that at least one member of the Safety Audit Team must hold a certificate of competence to carry out audits on the TERN network. Gloucestershire only has two roads on the TERN network (the M5 Motorway see 1.6 and a small section of the A449 approx. 2.5km).

1.4 Schemes designed and implemented within Gloucestershire will be required to be supported by a Road Safety Audit in accordance with the guidance contained within this note, or the latest Highway Design note.

1.5 Developer's schemes (Highway Works and Adoption Agreements)

The Developer (or their consultant) is deemed by the County Council to be the Project Sponsor as the Developer ensures that an appropriate scheme is submitted to the Highway Authority for approval. The Developer (as the Project Sponsor) is responsible for submitting the various stages of scheme design, preliminary, detailed design and completed scheme with a Road Safety Audit Report and associated Designers Response and Exception Report. The County Council requires the Developer to provide a Road Safety Audit Report as per this Guidance. The DfT standard for Road Safety Audit includes principles of good practice and provides a national standard to which Developers can work to; although some elements included in the standard may not be applicable, depending on the nature of a particular scheme.

1.6 Motorway and Trunk Road projects are outside the responsibility of the County Council and are safety audited in accordance with procedures laid down by the DfT.

2. REASON FOR CARRYING OUT SAFETY AUDIT AND INDEPENDENCE FROM SCHEME DESIGN

2.1 Safety elements are incorporated in both the DfT and the County Council's design standards. In isolation these standards will generally produce safe layouts, but there are many elements in the design and construction of a highway scheme and in combination there is the potential for undetected hazards. When designing a scheme the Design Team responsible should consider the safety aspects of the scheme as part of the overall design. Despite this, they are not always in the best position to evaluate the scheme objectively and totally from the viewpoint of identifying potential safety hazards to all classes of highway user. To do this the scheme needs to be examined through the Road Safety Audit process which is independent from the original Design Team.

2.2 The safety audit process evaluates each scheme by examining the various objectives and outcomes that are desired. Questions like "who can be hurt here and in what way" will be

considered. The Audit Team may suggest changes to schemes that should result in a reduced risk of collisions and casualties and may also reduce the amount of remedial work required after a scheme has been completed.

2.3 It is not the role of the Audit Team to check that appropriate design standards have been applied, to impose a redesign of the scheme or to question the professional capabilities of the Design Team.

3. SAFETY AUDITORS QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

3. 1 To carry out a standard Road Safety Audit in Gloucestershire, the Audit Team Leader must be able to demonstrate compliance with at least three out of the following statements below:

- Has completed at least 10 days of a ROSPA (or similar approved) Road Safety Audit training.
- Has a background in traffic engineering, with experience in casualty reduction work and safety engineering.
- Safety audit is part of the Auditors regular work and has carried out at least five safety audits within the preceding 12 months.
- Has received on going training within the past 4 years related to road safety work.

3. 2 For schemes of a more complex or sensitive nature (as deemed by the overseeing Authority), the Audit Team Leader must be able to demonstrate and comply with all four of the statements detailed in 3.1. The minimum desirable experience for Safety Auditing more complex schemes (as deemed so by the overseeing authority) is four years experience in casualty reduction work/safety engineering.

4. AUDIT TEAM

4.1 The size of the Audit Team is dependent upon the nature, size and scale of the scheme. The minimum is one suitably qualified Audit Team Leader who is accompanied by an Audit Team Member, to ensure that views are not formed in isolation. In addition when ever possible it is desirable to have a representative from Gloucestershire Police who has completed a formal Safety Audit course or who have a background in Road Safety and casualty reduction to attend the audit. For schemes considered complex or specialist, additional Safety Auditors or other professionals may be required to give their expert opinions in relation to specific schemes and safety concerns.

4.2 Developer's schemes

A member from the Highways Development Management Team should be invited to attend developer Road Safety Audits. This will enable the Highways Development Management Team to highlight any common problems that may be identified and should ensure that future development proposals do not incorporate similar problems.

5. SCHEMES THAT NEED A SAFETY AUDIT

5.1 All schemes or developments which may have an impact or alter the current highway layout must go through the Road Safety Audit procedure. This includes all highway improvement schemes, developer funded schemes, and schemes designed by District or Borough Councils. Road Safety Audits do not need to be carried out on routine or minor maintenance works. However all schemes have the potential to raise safety concerns or queries and if there are any doubts, the Project Sponsor or Design Team should contact the Audit Team for advice or comments.

Temporary traffic management generally do not need to be formally safety audited as Chapter 8 of the "Traffic Signs Manual" and other guidance is fairly explicit. Also, the nature of the works enables situations to be rapidly changed. However, there are occasions when a Road Safety Audit will be beneficial.

6. STAGES OF ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

6.1 A formal Road Safety Audit is carried out at five formal stages:

- Preliminary Design, (STAGE 1)
- Detail Design, (STAGE 2)
- Completion of Construction (STAGE 3)
- 18 months after the scheme has been completed this is ensure that a full 12 months accident data is available after the scheme has been built (STAGE 4).
- Note: Safety View :- A Safety View can be requested from the Audit Team. This does not replace the need for a formal Road Safety Audit, for example those schemes where little has changed to the highway network, a view of the safety implications can me made. Site visits are not normally made, but web based maps can be used to do a desk top assessment. The Safety View may often be the opinion of a single member of the Road Safety Audit Team.

6.2 All Road Safety Audits carried out in house will be completed and returned to the Project Sponsor within 2 months of the Road Safety Audit being requested, providing that all relevant information has been received to carry out the Road Safety Audit. Although it is the aim to return all Road Safety Audits within 1 month where resources permit.

6.3 Stage 1 Preliminary Design

A Road Safety Audit at preliminary design usually has the type of scheme agreed, the plans submitted should ideally show the horizontal and vertical alignment, road widths, junction types, location of structures and so on.

6.4 Stage 2 Detailed Design

Road Safety Audits at the detailed design stage should have all aspects considered during Stage 1 and will also need to provide plans showing drainage, kerbs, edge details, lighting, landscaping, fencing, signs, markings and any signal control details. Features which affect vulnerable groups should also be examined.

6.5 Combined Stage 1/2 Audit

On very minor schemes the Engineer may choose to submit a combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 Road Safety Audit concurrently, but this must be made clear to the Audit Team Leader at the time of the request. Both Stage 1 and Stage 2 and combined Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audits are deemed valid for a maximum of two years. If after this period the scheme is to be progressed beyond the outline stage or detail design stage, then it should be resubmitted for Road Safety Audit.

6.6 Stage 3 Road Safety Audit – Completion of works

All schemes will require a Stage 3 audit. Stage 3 Road Safety Audits should be requested promptly after the completion of the scheme. The Road Safety Audit Team will visit the site to raise any safety concerns for the completed scheme.

A Stage 3 Road Safety Audit will be required in respect of a Developer's scheme before a Completion Certificate is issued in accordance with the Highway Works/adoption Agreement.

6.7 Stage 4 Monitoring County schemes

The Stage 4 Monitoring Audit is a review of the operation and performance of the scheme, carried out at least 18 months after the scheme has been open for use by the public. This audit stage investigates any collisions that have occurred so that any significant problems can be identified and remedial work recommended. Any locations which have a significant collision history after 12 months may be identified during the annual search for accident clusters by the Road Safety Partnership. Minor schemes may be omitted from the Stage 4 monitoring process providing that both the Project Sponsor and the Audit Team Leader agree that there would be little or no benefit from carrying out the Stage 4 Monitoring Audit.

6.8 Road Safety View

A member of the Safety Audit Team involved in the audit should be accessible to comment on safety aspects of a scheme at any time during its planning, design and construction. This form of continuous safety monitoring is intended in lessening the Designer's workload at the formal intervention points by obtaining mutual agreement to acceptable layouts and designs. Discussions and outcomes of such meetings must be recorded by the Scheme Promoter/Design Team and be submitted with the documentation for the formal Road Safety Audit.

6.9 Highways Development Management schemes

Developers will need to submit a Safety Report, including a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit, a Designers Response together with Risk Assessments and an Exception Report if necessary, before the Final Certificate can be issued.

6.10 Audits during the hours of darkness for Stages 3 and 4.

In practice after dark Road Safety Audits have raised few issues and during the summer months undertaking an after dark Road Safety Audit will involve site visits at a late hour which can have resource and safety implications for the Audit Team. As such after dark Road Safety Audits may be grouped together so more than one can be carried out during the hours of darkness. In most cases these will not be carried out but if the Project Sponsor for GCC schemes or overseeing authority for Developer schemes requires an after dark audit at either stage 3 or 4 this must be made clear on the Road Safety Audit Request form (Annex A).

7. SUGGESTED INFORMATION TO ENABLE A SAFETY AUDIT TO BE CARRIED OUT (AUDIT BRIEF).

7.1

- A completed Road Safety Audit Request Form (Annex A)
- For all stages of the Road Safety Audit procedure, a location plan and description of the scheme is required.
- State the Road Safety Audit stage required.
- Scheme plans are required at an appropriate scale including areas beyond the scope of works. The plans must clearly show the scheme, and at Stage 2 and beyond construction details, departures from standards, the lighting and signs, road markings, tactile kerbs, swept paths, Utility stats drawings, and drainage details are required.
- Any previous Road Safety Audit reports should be supplied if they are not already available. Also, previous responses to comments made within Road Safety Audits, and Exception Reports, together with copies of notes of any previous interim audit discussions.
- Supply appropriate size plans for the Audit Team Leader's use to mark up and annotate
- A general arrangement or master plan that gives an overview of the complete works can help the audit team, when looking at large or more complex schemes.
- Give details and reasons for any departures or relaxation from the standard or confirm that there are no relaxations or departures from the standard.
- State any areas of concern which the Project Sponsor may have and wishes to bring to the attention of the Audit Team Leader.
- Provide details of any changes brought about since a previous stage in the Road Safety Audit process.
- Provide any accident statistics, traffic flows, and speed survey results if available.
- State the cost code for charging the work if applicable.

8. SAFETY AUDIT PROCESS AND REPORT

8.1 When conducting a Road Safety Audit the Audit Team should look at the scheme to identify the safety concerns for all types of road users. It is vital that all vulnerable groups are considered.

8.2 Where the Audit Team considers there is insufficient information to carry out the Road Safety Audit, the missing documentation will be requested from the Project Sponsor. The Road Safety Audit request received date will not be validated until all documentation has been received.

8.3 The Road Safety Audit Report should include:

- Location, District and brief description of the scheme
- Road Safety Audit stage
- Referencing details (Job No., Project Sponsor's reference, Auditors reference)
- List of drawing numbers and documentation
- Names and details of Audit Team and Audit Team Observers in attendance/involved.
- Where applicable, details of site visit specifically for the Road Safety Audit (date, time, those present, weather, traffic conditions).
- Where specific site visit for the Road Safety Audit have not been undertaken, this is to be stated with an appropriate clarifying statement.
- A statement confirming that the Road Safety Audit has been carried out in accordance with these guidelines, signed by the named Audit Team Leader and dated.
- The report should normally be laid out in the problem/recommendation format for each issue raised. Where specific road safety problems are identified, the location and background reasoning must be stated together with a description of the problem, the potential collision likely to occur and a Risk Assessment. This must be followed by a recommendation.
- An appropriate size annotated location plan should be used to reference any problems, together with any other clarifying documentation (e.g. photographs).

8.4 Risk Assessment.

All safety concerns raised in a Road Safety Audit and the need to carry out an after dark and a Stage 4 Monitoring Audit should be risk assessed using the simple matrix set out below, with each concern ranked as either Low/Medium/High or Very High.

Severity / Frequency	Frequent	Probable	Occasional	Remote
Fatal Injury	Very High	High	High	Medium
Serious injury	High	High	Medium	Medium
Slight injury	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Damage only	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

This is to try and ensure that the concerns are properly prioritised to ensure that the resources are allocated according to the risk and that appropriate action is taken in respect of each safety concern.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 The Project Sponsor must ensure that a scheme goes through the appropriate Road Safety Audit process.

9.2 The Project Sponsor must ensure that there is documented evidence that :

- The scheme has been Road Safety Audited at the following stages: Feasibility (Stage F) if required; Preliminary Design (Stage 1); Detail Design (Stage 2); Completion of Construction (Stage 3); After Dark site visit if required and Monitoring (Stage 4) if required.
- The recommendations of each Road Safety Audit have been incorporated in the scheme through a Designers Response, or the Designer has proposed an alternative solution
- When the Design Team proposes an alternative that makes significant changes to the original design, this is referred back to the Audit Team for a further view.

9.3 The Audit Team Leader will, if necessary, make various recommendations within the report for each safety concern identified at every stage of the Road Safety Audit process, to ensure that the scheme will be as safe as possible upon completion. Where recommendations are made the Project Sponsor will ensure that a written response is provided by the Design Team confirming that the recommendation will be incorporated into the scheme or propose an alternative solution in a Designers Response Report. Where the recommendations are not accepted, the Project Sponsor will complete an Exception Report.

9.4 Designers Response / Exception Report

The Project Sponsor responsible for the scheme should make any decisions relating to the scheme and the Audit Team does not hold a power of veto over it. Equally, it is expected that the Audit Team's recommendations will generally be accepted. Where problems do occur it is hoped that they can be resolved following discussions between the Project Sponsor and the Audit Team Leader. Should the Project Sponsor ultimately decide (for whatever reason) that any problems raised to be:-

- Insignificant or outside the terms of reference
- That the solutions recommended are not suitable given the relevant economic and environmental constraints

They should clearly record this in an Exception Report, giving the reasons for the decision. This should include a risk assessment assessing the severity, and the frequency of the problem happening and what measures have been put in place to mitigate the risk. The Project Manager responsible for the County Council scheme and the, Highways Development Legal Agreement Team for Developer schemes must approve such an outcome. If the Project Manager or Highways Development Legal Agreement Team are not happy with the response and risk assessment contained in the designers response to the safety concerns the Network Manager can be called in to arbitrate.

10. Monitoring

10.1 The Road Safety and Transport Data Team in liaison with the Area Programme Manager and Local Highways Managers review collision sites to identify accident clusters annually.

10.2 It is expected that safety issues which may arise in the first 12 months after scheme implementation can be identified by the Road Safety and Transport Data Team (or their representatives) within routine highway inspections and from the normal working practices of Divisional offices and once the scheme has one year of collision data available, where resources permit, the collision record should be examined and the safety of the scheme reviewed.

10.3 Information obtained from both Road Safety Audit work and collision reduction work should be fed back to the County Council's Road Safety Team and Transport Data Team. Problem areas relating to local and national standards can then be identified to enable documentation to be amended and updated as appropriate.

11. Storage of audits

11.1 Copies of each Road Safety Audit should be kept either electronically or in paper form. The audit reports should be filed together with the Designers Response, Exception Reports and the plans for the scheme and kept for a period of 10 years by the Project Sponsor for County Council schemes and by Development Management for Developer's schemes.

12. Reference Documents:

GG119 Road Safety Audit November 2018

DMRB Volume 5 Section 2 Part 2 HD19/15), (Superseded by GG119)

Guidelines for the Safety Audit of Highways 2008

DMRB: Vol 5 section 2 HD 19/03, IHT, (Superseded by HD19/15)

Interim advice note 152/11