

PRINCE MICHAEL INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY AWARDS WINNERS OF SAFER ROADS CATEGORY

BRITAIN'S MOST IMPROVED ROAD

Summary

For nearly a decade, Britain has been among pathfinding nations in seeking to measure systematically the risk posed to road users from road infrastructure. Since 2002, the Road Safety Foundation (RSF) has been mapping the rate of death and serious injury on Britain's roads annually applying the protocols developed through the European and International Road Assessment Programmes (EuroRAP in Europe). During this time improvements have been tracked, particularly progress in eliminating very high-risk sections of major routes.

Practical support from Britain's leading authorities means that measures of the risk of death and serious injury on our motorways and main roads are now available across 45,000km of network. The results published on November 14th 2016 revealed that less than 2% of this network in Britain shows a significant reduction in fatal and serious crashes in the most recent analysis (2012-2014).

There have however been major positive developments in the past year. The new corporation, Highways England is now responsible for the network of strategic roads. It is introducing programmes to reduce infrastructure risk systematically, in particular on its busy high risk single carriageway roads. The Department for Transport is also becoming active in fostering action on persistent high risk roads identified by the EuroRAP results which are the responsibility of local authorities. HRH's award is an important signal of encouragement and recognition for those authorities that act effectively.

The region with highest risk major roads in the results to be announced on November 14th is now the South East where the overall risk of death injury is nearly double that of the safest region. RSF would like to nominate Kent County Council for an award for the substantial reduction in fatal and series casualties achieved on the A227 as this year's 'most improved road'.

Route information

The most improved route is the A227 between Tonbridge High Street and Borough Green (A25) in Kent.

The Route characteristics are:

- 2-lane single carriageway, corridor length 12km
- Speed varies from 30mph in the urban areas (Tonbridge) and through the villages of Ightham and Shipbourne to 50mph on the rural sections with a short 40mph buffer on the approach to Tonbridge
- The route is approximately 60% rural and 40% urban
- Junctions are mostly at-grade priority junctions with several roundabouts and signalised intersections within Tonbridge
- The route carries approximately 14,850 vehicles a day with a lower than expected HGV presence for an A class road.
- Speed limit carriageway roundels and dragon's teeth markings are used to emphasise speed limit change in rural villages
- Footways are present through built up areas and rural villages
- Good quality signing/lining throughout including edge lines and road studs
- Double white centre lining used in rural sections where forward visibility is limited

Statistics

The route had 10 crashes that caused death or serious injury between 2009 and 2011 which reduced significantly to 2 crashes between 2012 and 2014. The route has experienced an 80% reduction in fatal and serious crashes between the two periods compared to a 5% reduction on the GB EuroRAP network as a whole. This single carriageway route to move from a medium-high risk (red) route to a low-medium risk (yellow) route.

Measures undertaken

Below is a summary of measures undertaken on the route:

- Improved traffic signing including yellow backed warning signs at hazardous locations
- Road marking improvements including double centre line, speed limit roundels and village gateway treatments
- Carriageway resurfacing
- Regular routine maintenance of traffic signs and road markings including pedestrian crossings and central hatching
- Road safety education and training programme with key audiences including young pedestrians and cyclists; young drivers and motorcyclists

Outside the survey period, a speed limit reduction was also introduced in the village of Shipbourne in 2015.