KANTAR PUBLIC

Department for Transport

Process Evaluation of the Safer Roads Fund

Phase 1 Report

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Contents

1. Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
EuroRAP	The European Road Assessment Programme is an international not for profit association dedicated to saving lives through safer roads. The programme aims to reduce death and serious injury through a programme of systematic assessment of risk, identifying the major shortcomings that can be addressed by practical road improvement measures. It forges partnerships between those responsible for a safe road system – civil society, motoring organisations, vehicle manufacturers and road authorities – and aims to ensure that assessment of risk lies at the heart of strategic decisions on route improvements, crash protection and standards of route management. EuroRAP supports the principles of Safe Systems.
iRAP	The International Road Assessment Programme is a registered charity dedicated to preventing deaths on roads and making roads safer, in more than 70 countries across the world. iRAP uses an evidence-based programme designed to present unnecessary deaths and suffering through a suite of tools, which provide road safety assessments. They developed and oversee the running of ViDA and all associated protocols and the overall methodology for how to work with such tools in the treatment and improvement of roads.
KSI (or FSI)	Killed and serious injuries (KSI), also known as fatalities and serious injuries (FSI). A description of the more serious collisions that Safe Systems interventions seek to reduce. By injury, we mean an injury involving a hospital stay.[1] In the data used for the calculations for SRF, serious injury was defined by the police officer attending the collision. In the future, these could be recorded as serious or slight.
LAs	Local Authorities.
RSF	Road Safety Foundation. A UK charity advocating road casualty reduction through simultaneous action on all three components of the safe road system: roads, vehicles and behaviour, publishing reports that have provided the basis of new legislation or government policy. RSF used their mapping tools to identify the top 50 most dangerous roads targeted for funding in SRF. RSF partnered with DfT to provide support and coaching to LAs participating in SRF. RSF led the establishment of EuroRAP and manage it in the UK. RSF also provides input into iRAP and its aims.
Section 151 Officer	Responsible Financial Officer in Local Authorities.
SRF	The Safer Roads Fund. A large-scale DfT investment to improve the top 50 most dangerous roads in England, and the focus of this evaluation report.
Safe Systems	Safe Systems is a risk-based approach towards roads and traffic free from death and serious (life threatening) injury. It takes a holistic approach to road safety, focusing on risks and the overall system. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.1 of the report.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/668504/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-2016-complete-report.pdf, , p. 23-24.

SRIP	Safer Road Investment Plans are output reports, which provide information on cost effective road improvements to increase safety, known as countermeasures. This is a protocol, based on changing the attributes collected during star rating to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries and calculating the economic benefits of these changes. The change to the attributes is termed a countermeasure. Countermeasures generally involve investment in engineering projects, which will change the infrastructure of a road and reduce the risk to the road users. The object of a safer roads investment plan is to help get these countermeasures implemented.
Star Rating	A road safety-rating tool used by iRAP to highlight road risk. Star Ratings are based on road inspection data and provide an objective measure of the level of safety 'built-in' to the roads for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, pedestrians and bicyclists. 5-star roads (green) are the safest, and 1-star (black) are the least safe. Star Ratings can be completed without reference to detailed crash data.
UDIP	A User Defined Investment Plan is an adaption to the SRIP, developed by RSF to support Local Authorities in the UK context. At the time of Phase 1 fieldwork, it was still under development.
ViDA	ViDA software uses road survey data to suggest interventions, which will improve the star rating of a stretch of road, by reducing the risks. This is the online software/central database developed by iRAP that gathers road data from all around the world. It houses many of the protocols the LAs needed to access to develop their bids, such as the Risk Mapping, Performance Tracking, Star Ratings and SRIPs.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

The Department for Transport (DfT) introduced the Safer Roads Fund (SRF) to support road safety in England, and it is part of a wider package of investment into Britain's road network.[2] SRF targets the 50 most dangerous stretches of road in England, as identified through the Road Safety Foundation mapping programme utilised for SRF.

DfT commissioned Kantar Public to undertake a process evaluation between 2017 and 2020. The evaluation aims to better understand how SRF is being administered, and whether and how it is encouraging LAs to adopt Safe Systems principles as they design their interventions. This report provides the Department with Phase 1 findings. The evaluation approach is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Evaluation approach

Read Chapter 3 for more details.

2.2 Key findings

Local authority experiences of building a business case for SRF

- The **practical aspects of administering SRF working well** are those that help to remove room for interpretation by LAs about what they need to do to meet the requirements of the application the first time with as little burden on LAs as possible. This includes guidance and spaces to learn and share progress (briefing and training events, DfT support and RSF Engineers) and hands-on support to produce an application that meets DfT's expectations (RSF Engineers, consultants, DfT support).
- LA experiences of **what worked less well** point towards opportunities for refining SRF to support LAs to more effectively and efficiently engage with SRF. DfT should not underestimate the challenging nature of the local context and what is needed from LAs to engage with SRF, including managing key local stakeholders' expectations and input, and the time and resources to engage with a grant scheme the scope and scale of SRF.

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-funding-information-pack

- **LAs shared their suggestions** for how DfT could practically improve aspects of each stage of the application process to support their engagement with SRF. These range from small but powerful changes to how Information is shared between LAs and DfT and the word limits and expectations of application sections, to comparatively larger undertakings such as improving the functionality of ViDA and more clearly mapping out the parameters and assessment criteria for how funding can and cannot be used.

Read Chapter 4 for more details.

Local Authority attitudes to and experiences of the distinctive features of SRF

- SRF has five distinctive features DfT expected would distinguish it from past grant giving schemes. These include a non-competitive and targeted roads approach, and for LAs to use ViDA survey and outputs, Road Safety Foundation engineers and the principles of Safe Systems in building a business case. The **targeted bidding approach** was broadly accepted, and LAs recognised its advantages compared to a competitive approach. Some LAs maintained that the funding was not guaranteed. There are likely three reasons for this. First, LAs are accustomed to competitive procurement processes and fell into habits. Second, the language used by DfT in the application form suggests competition, for example, 'Bid Manager,' 'bid roads' and 'bid for funding'. Instead, 'selected roads' and 'application manager' could be used. Third, as we see in Chapter 4, LAs were unclear about the assessment criteria – if they do not spend all the grant is it taken away?
- Scepticism about the data used to conduct the analysis to **select roads** undermined some LAs buy-in to the targeted road approach. The use of retrospective crash data to identify stretches of roads was seen as problematic; old data does not capture roadworks that may have been done since, and LAs hold more recent local intelligence that could complement and reinforce data used. This targeting also limits the extent LAs can engage in public consultation, limiting the collaboration element of Safe Systems.
- **ViDA software** helped to get LAs thinking differently – it was also the most prominent barrier for participating LAs to engage with SRF and principles of Safe Systems. Lessons learned included improvements to ViDA's functionality and greater support to LAs to more efficiently navigate the iterative process of running analysis and agreeing countermeasures that are fit for their local context while also having a high benefit-cost ratio.
- **RSF Engineers** were a critical support, helping LAs with practicalities of bidding process, and refinement of some LAs thinking towards Safe Systems.
- **Safe Systems** as a defining feature of SRF was not immediately obvious for all LAs, though LAs expressed openness to Safe Systems principles and appreciation for its value. Additional features of SRF were seen to undermine the principles of Safe Systems: sustainability of interventions; the prioritisation of engineering solutions over education and enforcement; and the lack of maintenance costs.

Read Chapter 5 for more details.

Safe Systems attitudinal typology and how this supports the roll-out of Safe Systems

- We found noticeable differences in how LAs described their reactions to the SRF during the research, and these differences led us to focus our analysis on whether and how the local context of LAs influences their buy-in and engagement with SRF and Safe Systems. LA leaders expressed different appetites for organisational risk taking, with some being more risk averse, and others looking for opportunities to act in a forward-looking way**.** Some LAs were also more bought into the Safe Systems philosophy, particularly at the level of the engineers and operational staff responsible for delivering the SRF application and interventions. The research suggests there are distinct types

of LA in relation to how they engaged with SRF and the Safe System approach it was advocating. Figure 2 below illustrates the typology.

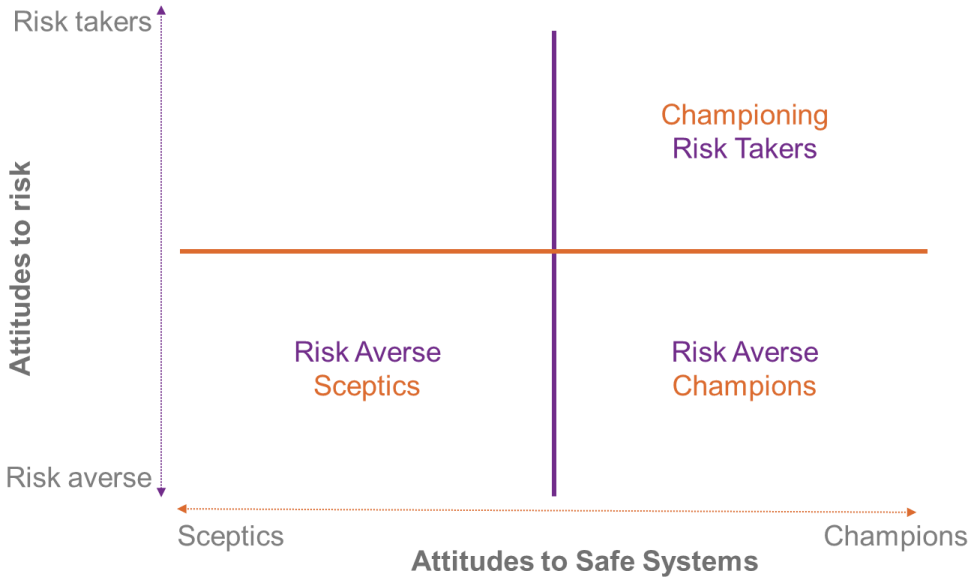

Figure 2 Attitudinal typology

- This **typology highlights** that DfT may need to adapt its approach, depending on which attitudinal segment the LA belongs to. In subsequent funding rounds, it may be worth DfT investing time to identify in which segment an LA belongs. It can then tailor its approach to that LA depending on what the attitudinal "blocks" are on the ground – for instance, do they need to focus more on overcoming local operational scepticism about the distinctiveness and value of Safe Systems? On the other hand, do they need to focus more on promoting local leadership of the benefits of a whole systems approach? It suggests a role for DfT to work with LAs over the longer term if they want to establish Safe Systems more broadly: to embed Safe Systems and encourage LAs to share and adopt best practice with each other, it will be helpful if all LAs sit within the *Championing Risk Takers* quadrant.

See Chapter 6 for more details.

Conclusions

- Overall, this research highlights the range of **responses to Safe Systems principles and the targeted intervention approach of SRF**. Safe Systems principles are understood and broadly accepted by LAs – though not consistently seen as distinctive or necessarily better than traditional approaches. The lack of a shared UK definition and a language of Safe Systems limit the culture change DfT are seeking to achieve via SRF. Targeting roads was accepted in principle – but specific road choices were seen by some LAs as problematic because analysis was seen as based on old data. Road selections did not reflect local priorities enough or take into account the potential reputational challenges that come with an LA being identified as responsible for one of the most dangerous roads in England.
- Many **aspects of SRF's administration worked well** to engage LAs in building a business case. The non-competitive application approach and range of support available to LAs raised awareness amongst LAs of new ways of thinking about road safety, and helped to align LA business cases with the objectives of SRF and Safe Systems principles.
- Discussions with LAs suggest **opportunities for refining features of the administration process** to help participating LAs to get their application right the first time. These include providing greater clarity of application parameters and expectations and improved functionality of ViDA. Specific features of SRF were seen by some LAs to limit the embedding of Safe Systems principles, and

while all may not need addressing it is worth acknowledging how the way SRF was set up presents limitations to the intended culture shift DfT seeks.

- It is important to be **purposeful when best practice case studies are developed**; showing how obstacles can be addressed and positive impact can be realised may support LAs beyond SRF to become more willing to make Safe Systems based road safety decisions. By building a shared understanding of what good Safe Systems interventions looks like in the UK context DfT will help local road safety leaders demonstrate the credibility and value of Safe Systems to their communities. To leverage this approach elsewhere, LAs must full understand and accept the level of funding, time and skills required to engage with and implement Safe Systems principles.

Implications

- Phase 1 findings suggest key **strategic barriers to embedding a Safe Systems** culture in the UK, including LA capacity to engage with Safe Systems, the sustainability of Safe Systems interventions, the focus of SRF on engineering solutions and the political and public acceptance of Safe Systems. Ideas for overcoming these barriers range from types of training and education activities to the development of guidance to support LAs to overcome the barriers most relevant to their local context.

- Overall, LAs found developing their business case for SRF a reasonable process. LAs understood SRF was a new scheme with teething issues and their experiences reveal components of SRF to be maintained, strengthened and replaced to provide a more efficient and effective administration process. **In future rounds**, DfT should recognise LAs are likely to have different attitudes to Safe Systems principles and plan to adapt how it engages LAs in what the fund is trying to achieve, using the attitudinal typology as a tool to achieve this.
- Phase 1 findings indicate that the original **evaluation objectives and research questions** remain relevant for Phase 2. We suggest additions to Phase 2 research questions to better understand how LA perceptions and expectations at Phase 2 (the implementation of their interventions) influence the success of their interventions, and revisions to the programme logic model for Phase 2.

Read Chapter 7 for more details.

3. Introduction

This report provides the Department for Transport (DfT) with Phase 1 findings from the process evaluation of the Safer Roads Fund (SRF). The findings aim to inform the management and implementation of the fund and DfT's approach to Safe Systems in the future. Phase 2 evaluation findings will be summarised in a final report in 2019/20.

This chapter includes the background and policy context to the research, before discussing the approach and methods used in the evaluation.

3.1 Background and policy context

DfT introduced SRF to support road safety in England, and it is part of a wider package of investment into Britain's road network[3]. SRF targets the 50 most dangerous stretches of road in England, as identified through the RSF mapping programme utilised for SRF. It is more than a grant-giving scheme, though; SRF has a number of distinctive features in how it seeks to support road safety, notably:

1. These 50 roads were identified through the Road Safety Foundation's (RSF) analysis of the country's major road network, outside urban cores. This is the 10% of the road network on which 50% of fatalities occur. The risk is calculated by comparing the frequency of road collisions resulting in death or serious injury on every stretch of the road (between 2012 and 2014, and published in November 2016) with how much traffic the road is carrying (i.e. number of KSIs per billion vehicle kilometres). This meant some of the roads included had relatively low *numbers* of KSI collisions, but because overall traffic flow was relatively low, the *rate* of collisions was high. In turn, this meant the SRF targeted roads that might not normally have been identified as road safety priorities.
2. Because the SRF funding is targeted specifically at the 50 highest risk roads sections in England, the funding is made available as a 100% capital grant without the need for a competitive process. Instead, the LAs responsible for these road sections were invited to develop a proposal, proportionate to the scale of the road safety issues on their eligible road sections, for infrastructure interventions to improve road safety on these sections and submit an application for the required funding to DfT.
3. Another key aspiration of the SRF was to go beyond simply focusing on road safety interventions, but rather also to encourage a *culture change* in how LAs addressed road safety. This was embodied in the desire to encourage LAs to adopt a *Safe Systems* approach (see below for fuller discussion) in the 50 identified schemes.
4. Road Safety Foundation supported LAs in their scheme design. Support was via the application of the international Roads Assessment Programme (iRAP) methodological approach to the investigation and treatment of road infrastructure risks, and coaching from RSF Engineers. As part of this, LAs were encouraged to make use of the road safety improvements suggested by the Safer Roads Investment Plans (SRIPs) produced by the Road Safety Foundation's ViDA model, as well as drawing on their own local expertise about the conditions on the road section in question.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-funding-information-pack

Consequently, as well as evaluating DfT's *administration* of the SRF programme, a core focus of this work has been to examine how these specific features of the programme played out in practice. This is discussed more fully in the following chapters.

Safe Systems

As noted, one of DfT's aims for the SRF was to encourage a culture change at Local Authority (LA) level, with the adoption of a Safe Systems approach to road safety. We were therefore keen to explore whether LAs recognised this aspiration, how they viewed this as a framework for road safety interventions, and whether and how this shaped their practice when implementing their SRF interventions on the ground. It is therefore worth briefly outlining what the Safe Systems approach means.

It quickly became apparent as we undertook the scoping work for this project that there is no single common definition for Safe Systems. In Sweden, for example, a central component of Safe Systems is 'Vision Zero[4]', the aim of reducing fatal and life threatening collisions to zero. In contrast, in England, the focus is on collisions and harm reduction, but there is less emphasis on hard quantitative targets[5].

Several principles emerge as common to Safe Systems in most settings. These include the following:

- Safe Systems is a proactive, risk-based approach. In other words, rather than focusing on responding to collisions that have occurred, Safe Systems encourages authorities to identify risk features in the environment (drawing on an evidence base of what constitutes risk) and address these proactively.
- Rather than collision elimination, Safe Systems focus is harm reduction: it recognises people are fallible, so collisions will happen; and fragile, so it aims to reduce the forces people are subjected to in those collisions, to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries.
- Safe Systems is a holistic, whole-systems approach, encouraging authorities to look not just at crash hotspots, but to consider whole stretches of road. Similarly, it encourages authorities to consider interventions from a variety of perspectives, rather than just an engineering approach, sometimes expressed as the five pillars of road safety (see overleaf Figure 3).
- Because of this whole system approach, Safe Systems also encourages greater local collaboration between different organisations and departments who have a part to play in road safety.

[4] http://www.brake.org.uk/facts-resources/15-facts/1484-safe-systems-facts-page

[5] Scotland, Wales and NI all have quantitative targets, and so do some UK Local Highway Authorities

Figure 3 Pillars of Safe Systems

We learned from our scoping stage that many of the specific interventions and practices arising from Safe Systems are not new in the UK road safety context. However, what Safe Systems does is bring these together under one set of principles, advocating these as a culture or way of working that will maximise the long-term impact of road safety interventions. SRF sought to encourage Local Authorities to adopt this approach.

3.2 Evaluation objectives and design overview

DfT commissioned Kantar Public to undertake a process evaluation between 2017 and 2020. The evaluation aimed to better understand how SRF is being administered, and whether and how it is encouraging LAs to adopt Safe Systems principles as they design their interventions.

Specifically, the evaluation aims to:

1. understand how the SRF's stakeholders respond to the principles underpinning the 'Safe Systems' approach to road safety and the SRF's targeted intervention approach; including awareness, uptake and application of these principles.
2. understand what has worked well, and what has worked less well, within the SRF process in order to identify potential improvements for future iterations of the SRF (or similar funding application processes).
3. understand whether and how the Safe Systems principles could inform wider transport investment decision-making at both central and LA levels; and whether lessons can be drawn from the approach that could apply in non-SRF eligible LAs.

To achieve these aims, we designed a two-phase approach:

- **Phase 1 (2017-2018):** Focused on the early stages of implementing SRF, Phase 1 explored what has worked well and less well, from the fund announcement through to the submissions of LA business cases, with the aim of identifying potential improvements for future iterations of SRF.
- **Phase 2 (2019-2020):** Focused on the later stages of SRF, Phase 2 will explore how LAs have implemented their proposed schemes, their monitoring and evaluation, with the aim of understanding whether longer-term experience of the fund has changed perceptions since the outset. Phase 2 will also look to draw conclusions around applying Safe Systems more broadly in the UK.

3.3 Phase 1 methodology

Phase 1 consisted of three main elements:

1. an initial scoping phase involving the review of key relevant documents and interviews with national road safety stakeholders
2. the development of a logic model of the SRF programme to provide a framework for the evaluation
3. the main evaluation stage, involving case studies with LA staff building a business case for SRF funding

3.3.1 Scoping phase

The purpose of the scoping phase was to understand the specific features of the programme and how they were intended to achieve an impact. As well as building our familiarity with SRF, we used the scoping stage to develop the logic model: the record of the programme as envisioned at the start of the evaluation, and as discovered through the evaluation.

We reviewed key documents relating to the SRF, and the specific features of the SRF intervention, notably Safe Systems and the ViDA and iRAP tools. Then, we conducted 10 in-depth qualitative interviews (individually and in pairs or small groups) with national stakeholders. The interviews covered these stakeholders perceptions of the scheme, the challenges and opportunities SRF offered, and their views on the Safe System culture change it was seeking to facilitate. We conducted the interviews between October and November 2017. Table 1 summarises the types of stakeholders who took part in the scoping phase.

Scoping phase	
Role	**Participants**
Road safety – Research and strategy	13
Road safety – engineer	6
Road Safety Panel members	2
Total participants	21
Total interviews	11

Table 1 Scoping stage participants

3.3.2 Logic Model phase

A logic model is a tool to help you describe the need you are trying to address (longer-term impacts of SRF), the changes you want to make (short to medium term outcomes of SRF), and what you plan to do (the inputs and activities involved in developing and administering SRF). A logic model is important in evaluations because it visualises what is being evaluated and ensures that the evaluation approach is able to systematically answer the evaluation objectives. The model was developed as a tool to guide the evaluation approach and with the expectation; it would be refined across the evaluation. The logic model was therefore used to ensure the evaluation approach (including topic guides and sample selection) was structured against the key outputs and outcomes originally envisaged for SRF.

Developing the logic model is typically an iterative process, and the model for SRF went through several versions as we built our understanding of the programme through literature review, stakeholder interviews and discussion with DfT. This process culminated in the Logic Model outlined in Figure 4 below. Key features to note included:

- the inputs and activities focus on the defining programme features of SRF – the investment, the input from partners such as RSF, and some of the tools made available
- the outputs focus principally on the road safety plans developed by each Local Authority
- the longer term outcomes and impact focus increasingly on the culture change the DfT is seeking to facilitate through greater adoption of Safe Systems

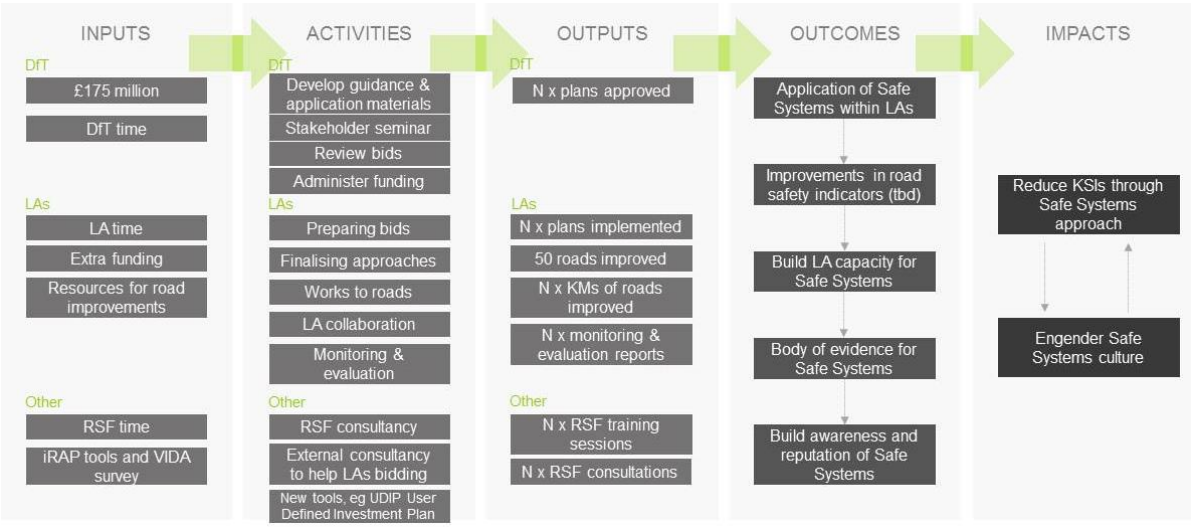

Figure 4 The logic model at the start of the evaluation

In addition to guiding our evaluation approach, the logic model informed the structure of this report, with chapters 4 and 5 focusing on the inputs, activities and outputs of the Logic Model, while chapters 6 and 7 focus more on the outcomes and impacts.

The Logic Model is a record of the programme as envisioned at the start of the evaluation, and as discovered through the evaluation. As a result, the logic model has been revised following Phase 1 of the evaluation. The revised logic model is in Chapter 7.

3.3.3 Main-stage fieldwork phase

For the main-stage fieldwork, we adopted a case study approach. Of the 50 schemes targeted by the SRF, we included 17 Local Authorities in the evaluation. These consisted of:

- 16 LAs who had applied for SRF funding, and
- 1 non-applicant LA, who had declined the opportunity to apply.

Of the 16 applicant authorities, we included a mix of LAs, with quotas on: whether they had bid in round 1 or 2 of the programme; total bid amounts; proposed intervention types; length of road section; location type; and the estimated benefit-cost ratio achieved. We also ensured the authorities we included had a broad geographical spread.

Across the 17 LAs, we spoke with a range of representatives involved with their bid, including the business case manager, Senior Responsible Officers, Engineers, Section 151 Officers, and others. Table 2 summarises the achieved sample for this stage. In total, we conducted 52 in-depth interviews between November and December 2017.

Case studies phase	
Role	**Participants**
Bid manager	16
Senior Responsible Officer	10
Designer	10
Section 151 Officer	9
Other	7
Total participants	52

Table 2 Case studies participants

We interviewed participants' in-person at their work (n=38) and by telephone (n=14) in instances where a face-to-face interview was not convenient for the participant. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants, for subsequent analysis. Researchers used a topic guide agreed with DfT to ensure consistency of topic coverage. The logic model informed the development of the topic guide, and the themes covered included:

- understanding of the SRF
- experiences of the different stages of the application process
- views on specific features of the fund, including the targeted approach and the support and tools offered to LAs
- perceptions and understanding of Safe Systems, and how this informed their SRF bid
- expectations of the longer term impact and sharing of good practice

Topic guides used in this research are included in the Appendix. While this is a large-scale study, the findings are qualitative and thus the research does not seek to quantify or generalise the overall population. Rather, the research reflects a range of attitudes and behaviours that give insight into how SRF is administered and what this means for DfT, and participating and other LAs.

4. Local authority experiences of building a business case for SRF

4.1 Introduction

Local governments are facing increased pressures to maintain existing roads, and to innovate to deliver new road safety interventions in the context of austerity and resource uncertainties. Cuts to core government funding, welfare reforms putting pressures on central budgets and staff with varied road safety expertise and experience of undertaking large-scale projects makes it challenging to engage councils to approach road safety differently. The picture is not the same across all councils and each authority will respond to these challenges in different ways. Across all LAs, more opportunities to respond to local road safety priorities and to achieve longer-term benefits are needed.

It is in this context that we asked staff in selected local authorities about their attitudes to and experiences of building a business case for SRF. This chapter explores what these authorities felt worked well and less well about the practical and operational features of the three stages involved in accessing funding. Chapter 5 discusses in detail LA views and experiences of the five distinguishing features of SRF.

The application stages were:

Pre-application stage: LAs first learned a road in their network was selected for funding from DfT by email. In early 2017, LAs learned more about the aims and some of the key features of SRF from written guidance, a briefing event and a training event for tools and software they were encouraged to use in designing their interventions (iRAP tools and ViDA survey). LAs were also introduced to the UK charity advocating road casualty reduction, the Road Safety Foundation, and its engineers who were available for strategic and practical support throughout the application process.

Application stage: The application timings were April 2017 for Round 1 authorities and September 2017 for Round 2 authorities. LAs approached building their business case in different ways but typically they used the DfT's Q&A guidance, value for money guidance and application template; the input of their RSF Engineer; the iRAP tools and ViDA survey; and local expertise and experience. Some brought in consultants to ensure sufficient capacity and capabilities to meet the requirements of the application.

Appraisal and selection stage: The assessment timings were June/July 2017 for Round 1 authorities and October/November 2017 for Round 2 authorities. Round 1 authorities received their award letters in August 2017 and Round 2 authorities are expected to receive theirs in spring 2018. LAs submitted their application and either received clarification questions about the assumptions, rationale and evidence for their application from DfT, or were told there were no clarifications and the outcome of their submission would come in time. At the time of fieldwork, LAs did not yet have their applications approved.

DfT hoped SRF would be more than a grant giving process. It not only expected SRF to enable LAs to do more to their selected road than would otherwise be the case but also enable LAs to work differently by embracing the principles of Safe Systems in building their business case; and to encourage collaboration

between LA departments to achieve more effective road safety interventions. Section 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 discuss what LAs perceived to have worked well and less well in the pre-application, application and appraisal and selection stages, respectively. Section 4.5 summarises participant suggestions for improving the application process, and section 4.6 concludes the chapter.

4.2 Pre-application stage

There were five elements of the administration of the SRF pre-application stage which LAs thought worked well and less well. LAs liked how SRF gave them the opportunity to design large-scale interventions that otherwise would not have been possible. The approach SRF took to brief LAs on what SRF was about and involved – the briefing event and iRAP tools and ViDA survey training – was seen by LAs to support their understanding more than written guidance alone. While SRF was not seen to encourage much more collaboration within LAs than was already happening, its features helped to encourage collaboration between LAs, and LAs and DfT – something that no other road safety scheme was seen to have done. However, DfT believed the announcement of large investments to select LAs without the need for LAs to tender competitively would be positively received, yet lessons can be learned about how DfT positions those LAs identified as having one of the 50 most dangerous roads in England. Similarly, DfT should consider how it prepares LAs for the resource requirements needed to build a business case to better support LAs to engage with SRF in future rounds of the fund. Expanding on these points, we found the following.

Opportunity to develop significant road safety interventions

SRF provided an opportunity for LAs to design large-scale interventions on sections of their road network, which would not have been possible with their existing road safety and engineering maintenance budgets.

> *"When it was announced, we thought, well, this is something we need to engage with. It's a pot of money that's available that we wouldn't have internally."* (East, Peri-urban and rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

> *"Ultimately this is an extra funding stream . . .. With technology doing all it can to reduce casualties on the roads, it's now up to the authorities to step up."* (South East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

LAs saw the significant investment by DfT as the Department aiming to raise the national profile of road safety and to bring about large-scale improvements across England. At a local level, LAs appreciated the opportunity to highlight to the public they were also doing something constructive about road safety (section 4.3 will discuss how SRF also brought LAs reputational risks).

> *"It's a win for the council to get this funding, as the improvements will be very visible and generate positive publicity for the council. We couldn't have treated this over the proposed three-year period; it would more likely have been over a 10 year period, if we could have done anything."* (South East, Peri-urban and urban road, Single SRF application)

Introducing SRF objectives and features at the briefing event and ViDA training events

The briefing event hosted by DfT and the ViDA training events delivered by RSF engineers were seen as a good starting point for supporting LAs to understand the objectives of SRF. This introduction at an event, rather than through application documentation only, better supported LAs in understanding the key features of SRF. LAs described feeling more motivated and engaged with SRF after the launch event as it outlined the then Transport Minister Andrew Jones's vision[6], provided a forum to discuss the fund and their queries, and was an opportunity for LAs to network amongst one another.

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-allocates-12-billion-roads-funding-to-councils

> *"I think the DfT put this together in order to paint the picture of what they were trying to do. It kind of started to gel then. But it was a couple of months of heartache [before] I must admit!"* (South West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Collaboration between Local Authorities, and DfT and Local Authorities

Some LAs felt the way DfT administered the fund enabled collaboration between central government and LAs as well as between LAs themselves. This struck these authorities as DfT doing something different, based on their experiences of past schemes. LAs who liked working in partnership appreciated this ethos. Though none reported disliking working in partnership, for those who highlighted it, it was seen to instil a sense of community in approaching road safety. This sense of community, as well as the feeling of shared learning and knowledge sharing, was reinforced through the tone of the communications DfT used throughout the process of LAs building a business case.

> *"Normally you just get an application form and told to submit it, you don't get help filling it in or opportunity to ask questions or give feedback. All those things have made it feel like a two-way process."* (South East, Peri-urban and rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Similarly, the briefing events hosted by DfT fostered collaboration, cross-LA working and the sense of feeling part of something bigger than a single authority. The events were in-person, meaning representatives from different LAs met at a single location, hearing views from one another.

> *"[It was a] good opportunity to [foster] cross-LA working because other LAs were there. It felt like something you wanted to be a part of"* (South East, Peri-urban and rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

LAs also reported collaboration in other areas. For some LAs, their selected road covered more than one LA meaning they submitted joint business cases in partnership. LAs described this positively and did not raise concerns. While LAs did not explicitly describe events as crucial in developing joint business cases, they did describe the events as helping to foster collaboration. It seems that if they did not already work together, the events may have helped to develop these relationships, however if they already worked in partnership, it would simply reinforce.

'Top 50 most dangerous roads' label

Councils face constant public and political scrutiny and pressure for a wide range of policies and activities. While SRF offers a welcomed injection of funding for road safety, it also comes with a label that caused concern for participating LAs. Nearly all participating LAs described feeling 'named and shamed' with the announcement they had one or more of the 50 most dangerous roads in England. Knowing their elected officials and communities well, they expected these groups to query why the LA was not doing more to ensure its road network was safe. Without notice from DfT to develop coordinated public relations responses in advance of the announcement of SRF LAs worried about backlash and reputational damage.

> *"The only problem [with the unexpected press announcement] is parish councils, district councillors see this and it gives them ammunition… to come saying why have you allowed this. I don't recall this [happening with SRF], but it has in the past."* (Yorkshire/Humber, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Anything DfT can do to reduce the likelihood of a public relations challenge that is time intensive and distracts LAs from developing a business case at pace would be valued by the LAs interviewed. DfT may consider providing advice to LAs on how to explain to their stakeholders the rationale for how their road(s) were identified as being eligible for funding. Advice may include highlighting the advantages of being eligible for funding, such as ring-fenced funding for targeted road improvements and the opportunity to use innovative methods. This may include reconsidering the use of the term 'most dangerous roads' in briefings for LAs, and to notify LAs in advance of the funding announcement. This is discussed further in section 4.6.

Resource requirements to develop a business case

LAs typically work to restrictive budgets and challenging timescales with limited personnel to deliver on local road safety priorities. Many of the LAs we spoke to were pragmatic and expected the difficulty to fit SRF work into their existing plans, explaining they "just got on with it". Yet for these and other LAs, stress and confusion about the unknowns of the process ahead characterised their pre-application experience.

> *"It's worth DfT keeping in mind that teams are often already stretched and they then have to fit the bid into their day to day job as well."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

For financially significant business cases, like SRF, there are layers of internal processes, such as senior officer or cabinet member sign off which can add more pressure. To mitigate this, some LAs designed interventions, which amounted to a lower sum of money than the maximum they were eligible for, as it had a "quicker-to-achieve" internal sign-off process.

> *"We did make one decision which was to apply for under one million pounds of funding because it made it easier for us to get it through our council procedures…if we'd applied for more, it would have been a lot more difficult to bid for the money…in the timescales needed to get those permissions"* (South West, Peri-urban roads, Single SRF application)

In order to plan building a strong business case for SRF into their existing schedules LAs need as much notice and clarity about the likely resource requirements for engaging with SRF, or access to funding methods that bypass local procedures.

4.3 Application stage

LAs described seven elements of the administration of the SRF application stage which they thought worked well or could be refined in future iterations. LAs liked the advice and hands-on support of RSF Engineers mitigated the uncertainty of the process for some. They found building a business case for SRF was a massive undertaking for LAs because of its scope, scale and time and resource requirements. The Engineers played a crucial role in helping LAs to navigate the complexity and requirements of different features of the SRF process. DfT's support also helped LAs to build their business case. LAs felt the frequency, tone and content of support from DfT helped them to engage with and progress through the application stage. Bringing in consultants to lead or contribute to the application was necessary for some LAs, that otherwise may not have been able to build a business case at all, or build as strong of a case. There were also features of the application LAs described that made them confused and worried. These include demonstrating a value for money business case, gaining support from local politicians and the community, the potential risk of litigation, and DfT expectations of monitoring and evaluation of interventions. All of these are outlined in more detail below.

Road Safety Foundation engineer coaching

Support and guidance from RSF engineers was optional, and offered at no cost by DfT. It aimed to support LAs to develop their business case and to facilitate engagement with the Safe Systems approach in SRF. While it was not intended to be, some LAs saw a consultancy offer in the way RSF engineer supported them. For LAs who engaged with the RSF engineers it meant their operational and engineering teams had a source of advice for how to use the ViDA software and guidance when they needed troubleshooting. RSF engineers' focus on VIDA helped to solidify LAs Safe Systems thinking in approaching their intervention designs in some LAs. Those LAs who found the coaching helpful described how the RSF engineers made contact early on throughout the process. The fact the engineers were experienced in road safety and 'spoke the same language' as the LA engineers made it easier for them to work together and LAs respected the knowledge and experience the RSF engineers had.

> *""RSF did provide support to us during the bid which was absolutely essential in helping us to understand the ViDA software and approach taken. [The engineer] was a great sounding board*

when helping us to prioritise countermeasures and knew the system very well." (South East, Peri-urban and rural roads, Single SRF application)

There is further information on LAs' experiences of working with RSF engineers outlined in Section 5.5

DfT support

DfT's support continued across the stages. LAs described benefiting from extensive email and phone support from DfT whenever they required clarification. DfT's approach to answering queries felt distinctive to SRF and different from previous funding applications.

> *"During the application process they were very responsive to questions and issues about the software and gaining access and things. It was very quick from that point of view."* (East, Rural road, Single SRF application)

Consultant capacity and capabilities

Not all LAs were able to accommodate the resource and time requirements to build a business case due to the capacity and capabilities of their road engineering and safety teams. Not wanting to miss much needed funding, these few authorities brought in consultants (at their own cost) either to serve as Bid Manager (leading the development of the application) or to lead on the value for money case of the application. Without the use of a consultant, these LAs believed they would not have been able to respond to SRF.

> *"We've had to expend to get the consultant to put the bid together. Spending 35-30k and there is still evaluation to be done. We have to externalise it because we will never have a body to hand in house to do that work."* (South East, Urban and peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Demonstrating a value for money business case

Local public sector bodies are under a general duty to deliver best value with public funds – the extent to which the resources expended can be justified on the basis of what is achieved. As part of their business case, LAs were required to outline the benefit cost ratio (BCR) of each proposed intervention. DfT advised LAs to produce interventions with a BCR score of two or higher (meaning the benefits were twice the value of the cost). LAs understood and accepted the need to present a robust value for money business case given the large value of the investment from central government, however the way in which they needed to go about this was felt to be confusing and time intensive for LAs, causing frustration.

Some LAs found agreeing interventions with a sufficiently high BCR difficult. Described by some as a 'trial and error' process of inputting information into ViDA and seeing how different interventions and local information changed the outputted BCRs of those interventions was time consuming. Achieving the necessary BCR was particularly challenging for roads with low flow. One consequence of targeting quieter roads with high killed and serious injuries (KSI) rates was that because there were only a small number of KSIs to reduce, it was difficult to hit the Benefit Cost Ratio required by the scheme.

> "*Justification [was needed] for absolutely everything rather than an acceptance that, well actually, this is a tried and tested engineering measure, we know that it works so how much is it going to cost to put that in. And it wasn't just a case of 'well, let's design a scheme, let's cost it up and let's submit it.' All the supporting information that was required meant that it was, I think, too onerous."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

DfT communicated the BCR guidance around nine months prior to the first deadline for applications. Iterations were made to the guidance in response to challenges experienced by LAs, and this was shared with all participating LAs. The timing of these later iterations about the calculations for BCR were reported by LAs as coming close to the deadline for submission of business cases, causing stress and uncertainty about whether the criteria may change again.

> *"When we were putting in info to look at UDIPs and our suggestions, and there were some errors in RSF spreadsheet and how it calculates everything so there is a learning process for them."* (South East, Rural and Peri-urban roads, Multiple SRF applications)

While they appreciated SRF was a new process, having clearer, more accurate information as early as possible would have made developing the business case more efficient for LAs.

> *"I have a bit of sympathy with the DfT, they are trying something different, and to be fair they did extend the timeframe that we could do this… I can only acknowledge it could be a bit easier [for all] if they were clearer from day one...that's my major criticism... there is a positive, when they realised there was a problem...they did respond very quickly..."* (South West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Community and leadership buy-in

"Selling" a route-and risk-based approach to local leaders and the community was challenging for LA staff developing the business case. Most engineers we spoke to recognise the value this approach may bring, and felt route-based interventions was a common method of treating locations alongside cluster sites. The strong emphasis SRF places on proactive, route-based interventions was felt by LA staff to worry local stakeholders who expect LAs to prioritise cluster sites and "a more intuitive" approach to road safety.

> *"The political acceptance [of Safe Systems makes it a challenge to implement] …the local community saying [to politicians], we don't want traffic calming outside our houses, we don't like the look of it. Unless there was a sudden sea change of public acceptance you're going to struggle… in the olden days there was a lot more feeling of road collisions as a huge problem, now they're kind of gone…people just want to get to the shops, they don't want to bother with road safety."* (East Midlands, Peri-urban and urban road, Single SRF application)

Community leadership and buy-in is discussed further in Section 6.1 , where the LA attitudinal typology is introduced.

Potential risk of litigation

Related to the need for buy-in, one LA raised the need for a legal test case for prioritising a proactive, risk-based approach. LAs have an obligation to respond to dangers presented on their network. This LA explained a hypothetical scenario that worried them: if an LA managed their highway network from a risk-based approach, crash hotspots could still occur. If a member of the public was injured in a location with known, untreated risks the resident may have a legal case for negligence. For the approach to be adopted in all LAs across England they thought this example would need to be tested judicially. Though, DfT could argue that the Calderdale Council v Gorringe case[7] already set precedent and answers this point.

Monitoring and evaluation of interventions

LAs were aware of and understood the need for monitoring and evaluating their interventions as it was a large investment of public funds. While DfT provided guidance on monitoring and evaluation, no LA referenced this explicitly in the research. LAs track "hard measures" as standard monitoring for this kind of investment. LAs did not generally have specific targets of what they would achieve but they expected to measure crashes, as they do on their networks currently, along with a reduction in speed or journey times or increases in pedestrian and cycle use in cases. When considering cause and effect, one LA noted how it would be difficult to attribute any impact of SRF within their area specifically back to the fund. There was an absence of soft measures related to culture change within LAs.

[7] In Calderdale Council v Gorringe a driver sought damages from the LA after a road accident claiming the road markings were the cause of the accident. The judge ruled that drivers have a responsibility to drive in a safe manner, considering the conditions of the road.

"Overall, through our measures we want to see a reduction in collisions, as well as see an increase in the number of visitors to the town centre. But it's difficult to know what the actual impact of the cause and effect will be." (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

4.4 Appraisal and selection stage

LAs had not learned the outcome of their application at the time of the Phase 1 fieldwork. However, some had received clarification questions from DfT. DfT informed others they had no queries and an outcome would be shared shortly. Broadly, LAs found the appraisal and selection stage to be relatively seamless and described it as working well. Specifically, they liked the clarity and certainty provided by DfT. Although, two features of this stage were key barriers for LA engagement: the clarity of the appraisal criteria and the timings of appraisal and fund awarding.

Clarity and certainty provided by DfT

As was felt in the pre-application and application stages, DfT's supportive and collaborative approach to administering SRF continued through to the appraisal and selection stage. The small number of LAs that received clarification questions saw the tone and content of DfT's communications as helpful.

Throughout the research, it was apparent that anything that removes uncertainty and enables LAs to plan effectively was valued, no matter how big or small. Many LAs especially valued DfT's acknowledgement of receipt of LAs submissions.

Clarity of the appraisal criteria

Understanding of assessment criteria was mixed. Some authorities were confident they understood what DfT were looking for (reduction in KSIs, economic case, used ViDA tool and taken on board its principles, feasibility of implementation, no requests for maintenance funds, demonstrate a commitment to prevention) and attributed this knowledge to DfT guidance, the briefing and RSF engineer input.

"Build the five cases as per the basic application form. The most important thing was to show you had used the ViDA tool and had taken on board the principles. Put in enough detailed information about likely benefits and costs so you have economic analysis right. It was quite clear what you had to do and unlike other bids there was something you could go to with questions." (South East, Peri-urban and rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Other authorities were less certain about the criteria against which DfT evaluated bids.

"I wouldn't say [I am clear on what DfT are assessing on], apart from looking at the original guidance, and the kind of things we're trying to tackle and what we'd like to achieve ..., we knew on the economic side of it what kind of cost benefit ratings they were looking at… I am assuming they will look at all that… the overall objective is to get a ViDA rating of three or above… I am assuming that, but wouldn't know specifically what they are marking it against, no." (North West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Timings of appraisal and fund awarding

LAs expressed concern about being able to spend part of their funding before the end of the financial year; many LAs were unclear about the timings for awarding funds. Had they known the timescales for accessing funding many would have portioned the work out across difference time points.

"We put our bid together with half the spend to happen in this financial year. And we've got to spend it, which puts us in a difficult situation, given we haven't even received the funding yet." (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Unclear timescales for LAs to access funding also presented practical limitations for beginning work on interventions. LAs must complete some roadworks at particular times of year due to traffic volumes or weather. Without definitive timescales from DfT some LAs felt it was “overly optimistic” to expect implementation plans are carried out on time.

4.5 Participant suggestions for improving the application process

This section brings together participant suggestions for how DfT could practically improve aspects of each stage of the application process to support their engagement with SRF.

- Pre-application stage:
  - Introduce Safe Systems and its principles in bid guidance so LAs are aware this is a defining feature of SRF
  - Provide examples of approved business cases to support LAs in the development of theirs. This was not possible for DfT to produce in Round 1 or 2 of SRF however it is something that can be considered in future rounds.
  - Engage with LAs in advance of announcing future funding rounds to give LAs the opportunity to pre-empt any public or political concern about their LA having one or more of England’s most dangerous roads
  - Provide greater clarity on the application timescales and how the money can and cannot be spent to help LAs to plan resource and build in their internal sign-off processes into the business case development timeline e.g. implications if LA does not spend all allocated money, or does so in a different way then approved
  - Consider matched funding to incentivise LAs to fund further interventions beyond the scope of SRF as one LA believed they would be taxed on greater spending outside of SRF, meaning there was less incentive to invest
  - Allocate funding at LA level and allow LAs to choose how and where to spend funds. This relates to the selection of roads discussed further below in Section 5.3
  - Consider whether the use of the term “most dangerous roads in England “ is appropriate given the acknowledged caveats attached to this terminology
- Application stage:
  - Consider running workshops on the calculations underpinning the value for money exercise and flagging scenarios where features of the road may make it particular hard to reach DfT’s threshold (e.g. low flow roads)
  - Improve the functionality of ViDA to support the use of it by more novice individuals
  - Expand the word limits on the application form and add guidance on DfT’s expectations for LAs to prioritise in their responses to mitigate rounds of clarification at the appraisal and selection stage that are due to LAs not having the space to fully evidence their position
  - Where possible pre-fill aspects of the application where details are known e.g. value of investment, about the road and the local context
  - Use SharePoint or a similar tool instead of email to allow for large file sizes to be easily shared
  - Provide greater clarity around what metrics DfT would like prioritised in the monitoring and evaluation of the interventions
  - Consider staggering submission deadlines for LAs with more than one application to have sufficient time to complete all applications
- Appraisal and selection stage:
  - Access to funds earlier than January 2018, and an indication at the start of the bid process when funds are likely to be allocated

4.6 Conclusions

The practical aspects of administering SRF working well are those that help to remove room for interpretation by LAs about what they need to do to meet the requirements of the application the first time with as little burden on LAs as possible. This includes guidance and spaces to learn and share progress (briefing and training events, DfT support and RSF Engineers) and hands-on support to produce an application that meets DfT's expectations (RSF Engineers, consultants, DfT support).

LA experiences of what worked less well point towards opportunities for refining SRF to support LAs to more effectively and efficiently engage with SRF. DfT should not underestimate the challenging nature of the local context and what is needed from LAs to engage with SRF, including managing key local stakeholders' expectations and input, and the time and resources to engage with a grant scheme the scope and scale of SRF.

LAs shared their suggestions for how DfT could practically improve aspects of each stage of the application process to support their engagement with SRF. These range from small but powerful changes to how information is shared between LAs and DfT and the word limits and expectations of application sections, to comparatively larger undertakings such as improving the functionality of ViDA and more clearly mapping out the parameters and assessment criteria for how funding can and cannot be used.

5. Local Authority attitudes to and experiences of the distinctive features of SRF

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 explored the technical and practical aspects of the SRF application process. Throughout it alluded to key features of SRF; SRF has five distinctive features DfT expected would distinguish it from past grant giving schemes. These include:

1. **A non-competitive approach**: DfT invited select LAs to present a business case to access guaranteed funding; LAs did not have to engage in a competitive procurement process.
2. **A targeted roads approach**: DfT selected the 50 stretches of roads that would receive funding and then informed the LAs responsible for these roads of this decision. RSF conducts road safety analysis each year, and DfT used their 2012-2014 analysis published in 2016 in its decisions for which roads are the most dangerous and in scope for funding.[8]
3. **ViDA survey and outputs**: This evidence-based tool sought to enable LAs to take a risk-based approach to road safety by considering a range of countermeasures.
4. **Road Safety Foundation (RSF) engineers**: Engineers from the charity were optional for LAs to access for coaching throughout the application process.
5. **Principles of Safe Systems:** DfT were interested in using SRF as the mechanism for encouraging a culture change within LAs, and nationally, to how LAs think about road safety. It prioritised the Safe Roads and Roadsides pillar of Safe Systems in SRF. This pillar encourages improvements to road networks through targeted engineering measures.

This chapter discusses each of these features that aim to make SRF more than a grant giving process, and to drive forward the culture shift DfT seeks to achieve. We explore LA attitudes to and experiences of each feature, and participant suggestions for improving these features to enable them to engage with SRF, and Safe Systems principles.

5.2 LA responses to the non-competitive approach

SRF took a non-competitive approach to administering funding. DfT set aside funding for specific stretches of roads they identified as the most dangerous in England. They then invited LAs to present a business case to access funding, after DfT assessed their proposal. This approach was different from past competitive tendering schemes LAs were familiar with.

[8] http://roadsafetyfoundation.org/funding-package-gbs-dangerous-road-announced-results-launch/

All LAs understood they were not in competition with other LAs, but the extent to which LAs understood the grant was guaranteed if they presented a robust business case and the BCR score was met, varied. Only a small number of LAs we spoke to retain the view that the money was not guaranteed. They recognised they were not in competition with other LAs, and they thought they were not guaranteed to get the grant for completing the bid.

> *"I saw this as a comprehensive bidding process and given we was invited to bid, it wasn't a guarantee we would get the money."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

LAs understood they were not in competition with other LAs and this model of funding gave two advantages of this approach. Some LAs valued the focus it gave and the ring fencing of funds to protect the investment against political influence, and to expedite activities since the parameters for utilising the funds were explicit. Allocated funds to the area's most in need were assumed to bring about a greater impact than if funds were "fought" over in competitive procurement. Smaller LAs saw an additional advantage: it was fairer for smaller LAs lacking resource to respond to competitive bids.

> *"You've got a system that uses the same baseline data for everybody in the same way. Some councils are clearly more geared up for putting in competitive bids than others and consequently they're the ones that always seem to win in the funding rounds and some of the other authorities that haven't got the necessary resource to do it seem to consistently lose out."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF bids)

In contrast, other LAs felt that this approach was too focussed and did not allow for local flexibility in selecting their own stretches of road to target. While they did not suggest a competitive approach, they did suggest that the ability to make a case for a different stretch of road would encourage engagement with these LAs.

5.3 LA responses to the targeted roads approach

RSF compared the frequency of road collisions resulting in death or serious injury on stretches of road (between 2012 and 2014) with how much traffic the road is carrying (i.e. number of KSIs per billion vehicle kilometres). It then identified the 50 most dangerous roads to be in scope for SRF.

Nearly all LAs questioned whether DfT had selected the right roads to target, initially. These LAs felt the data used to identify roads was out of date (collected in 2012-2014 and published in 2016), and it did not factor in improvements made since the data was collected or timelier local intelligence. One LA shared a drawback of using retrospective collision data (and in particular KSI data): there is not a strong correlation between locations identified through inspections as "high risk" and those locations that have high numbers of life threatening crashes. They wondered: 'could this mean implementing proactive interventions that reduce risk actually creates risk by not addressing cluster site risks'. Only one LA explained how selecting roads based on accidents was counterintuitive to a risk based approach however they acknowledged they would still use KSI data to target roads as they could not think of a better criteria. Once explained at the launch event and reinforced by RSF engineers, LAs could see the logic in the road selection. For example, one LA described the number of hazards along the stretch that could be addressed.

> *"The fact that they were on the list was a surprise but when we looked at it we did see that there was logic behind it, albeit that we perhaps still don't have 100% understanding as to why these routes or particular bits of routes have been selected."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Some LAs would still have prioritised a different stretch, if allowed. There were two main reasons for this relating to the age of the data and the traffic flow. Firstly, LAs commented how in some cases they had already undertaken treatment works to improve their road since 2014. Secondly, LAs also explained how on

roads with lower traffic flow, one serious collision would include it in these calculations, whereas LAs focus on more consistently dangerous roads.

> *"I instantly saw we would be bidding to implement interventions on a road that was already resolved. We don't work with old info in the county, so we get things right first time…three year collision data they use is often two years out of date so there is no relevance to our authority since we are working with current intelligence."* (Yorkshire/Humber, Non-applicant LA, single application)

An unintended consequence of this road selection approach is the undermining of a principle of Safe Systems: collaboration. LAs typically consult with the public when selecting roads for engineering works, and this engagement is reinforced by the collaboration principle of Safe Systems. Without the ability to change the roadwork undertaken on for SRF, some LAs feared any public engagement would run the risk of being "tokenistic".

LAs suggested improvements to support LA understanding and acceptance of the targeted road approach:

- Additional communication on how and why roads were selected at the point of inviting LAs to engage with SRF, and the opportunity for LAs to challenge this selection and make a case for allocation of funding to a different road
- Take an holistic approach to the analysis for road selection, reviewing data across a longer time period (3-5 years) and take into consideration additional local intelligence (e.g. speed, facilities such as schools or shops, local data and priorities)

5.4 LA responses to the use of ViDA

ViDA is the iRAP online software to help reduce risk on roads. It uses road survey data to suggest interventions to reduce risks and thus improve the star rating of a stretch of road. DfT suggested LAs use ViDA to develop their business case, but it was not mandatory. SRF was the first large scale use of ViDA in the UK context, so it was the first time staff in LAs used it, and for many, heard of it.

LAs found features of ViDA supported them to develop their business cases. As an evidence-based tool it added credibility to SRF's approach, and facilitated engagement with local stakeholders. Its assessments look at risk on stretches of road rather than particular spots, helping some LAs to think more broadly about their road network. The tool also suggests a combination of countermeasures for a stretch of road; a defining benefit of ViDA mentioned by LAs was how the process and outputs from ViDA highlighted the opportunities a combination of interventions could bring. This emphasis on the relationship between multiple interventions helped shift them from thinking about road safety interventions as discrete, and in siloes.

> *"I found the SRIPs analysis interesting and thought it was good to see all the new perspectives and breakdown of user groups. We would not necessarily consider the differences for motorcyclists for example, so this was good for that. The visuals were also good for the non-techy people in the team."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

ViDA software helped LAs to think differently – it was also the most prominent barrier for participating LAs to engage with SRF and principles of Safe Systems. ViDA's functionality introduced challenges for LAs, making them feel it was more burdensome to engage with then expected from the briefing event. The teething issues with the software prompted one LA to question whether SRF was a means to "beta test" ViDA in the UK.

All LAs expressed confusion about countermeasure meaning, relevance and acceptability. ViDA was not developed for the UK so it is not surprising LAs flagged issues with understanding what a countermeasure was; LAs described needing to translate what they described as "Americanisms" into locally relevant terminology. Suggested countermeasures were also not always practical in the local context – especially for urban roads – and it was time consuming for LAs to decide which countermeasures were relevant for their

community. Examples included removing vegetation along a rural stretch of road, introducing a crash barrier along a village green, or introducing an off-road cycle route in a busy urban environment.

> *"Things it was coming up with like central barriers were horrific and scary so we took them sort of things out straightaway"* (North West, Rural road, Single SRF application)

All LAs understood, in principle, they could incorporate local knowledge when negotiating which ViDA countermeasures to include in their business case, but this was not always feasible in practice because of the time and financial costs to the LA.

> *"Ultimately, you've got [to] demonstrate the star rating is going to reduce, so we felt a bit stuck about making our own suggestions, as we didn't necessarily have evidence these would reduce the star ratings. We weren't in a position in the council to be able to put the resourcing towards a feasibility study to answer the 'what if'."* (South East, Urban road, Single SRF application)

ViDA reports all possible, and ideal, countermeasures for high-risk locations. Many of these recommendations for change were seen to cost significantly more than budget allocations. For example, adding barriers throughout the stretch of road or removing all trees at the edge of a single carriageway. The cost for these would be considerable and LAs struggled to negotiate the ideal choice with their budgets and local priorities.

Ultimately, LAs felt ViDA had value but that it was not the only, or necessarily best, way to build a business case for SRF.

> *"I think that too much faith has been put into ViDA. It's not a substitute for local knowledge. Both work well in conjunction with each other, and it really can only add value when it is considered as just a tool that becomes more powerful when applying the local knowledge alongside it. Overall it was a useful tool to use, but I do feel in hindsight we could have submitted the bid without using it."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

LAs suggested improvements to support LA's use of ViDA, if used going forward:

- Clearly define each countermeasure and use locally relevant terminology for the UK.
- Where possible, speed up the process of producing and refining ViDA output iterations.
- Provide greater clarity about the local contexts in which countermeasures are likely to be most effective at reducing risk, for example, which countermeasures are more or less appropriate for urban roads.
- Provide direction on what DfT's preferences on specific countermeasures or interventions.
- Allow engineers to input interventions into ViDA to utilise their local knowledge or to be flexible around local needs, for example, excluding unfeasible countermeasures like removing "centuries-old stone walls in a national park".

5.5 LA responses to having access to RSF engineers

As discussed in 4.3 part of the SRF application process, LAs had the opportunity to receive advice and support from RSF engineers who were familiar with the ViDA software and the Safe Systems approach. RSF engineers were a critical support, helping LAs with practicalities of building their business case, and refining some LAs thinking towards Safe Systems

Many LAs expressed relief RSF engineers were on hand to help clarify DfT's expectations and priorities, particularly in relation to the focus on Safe Systems. A reoccurring message from LAs was that engineers were seen as a supportive coach, available and responsive.

> *"The Road Safety Foundation has been there by phone or e-mail if you've got queries or questions and been proactive in pushing out information."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

RSF engineers also brought ViDA expertise and helped LAs with negotiating tensions between suggested countermeasures and local priorities and contexts.

> *"RSF did provide support to us during the bid which was absolutely essential in helping us to understand the ViDA software and approach taken. [The engineer] was a great sounding board when helping us to prioritise countermeasures and knew the system very well."* (South East, Urban road)

An added benefit of the engineers was their ability to share lessons learned and experiences between the LAs they supported, reinforcing a SRF community feeling among LAs. This helped to reinforce the collaboration between LAs we discussed in Chapter 4. It also left LAs feeling valued as they saw their feedback actioned more widely among this community.

A small number of LAs viewed receiving the engineers as mandatory, and they were more likely to view the engineer as an 'enforcer of ViDA'. While they did not resent the support provided by RSF, for them, it related to their negative appraisal of ViDA discussed above in Section 5.4.

LAs suggested one improvement to support LA's acceptance of and engagement with Safe Systems: reinforce the message that engagement with RSF is encouraged but optional and that LAs do not have to follow the engineers' advice.

5.6 LA responses to Safe Systems and its principles

The final defining feature of SRF was the embedding of Safe Systems principles. As described in Chapter 1, SRF aimed to promote the principles of Safe Systems within LAs.

Broadly speaking, LAs understood and accepted Safe Systems principles. Some were confident and clear in what it is and what it is trying to achieve, and others had a good understanding of its principles. Some LAs saw it as an ideal, *in principle*, but were concerned it was not realistic to implement as intended, through SRF, or more widely. The crucial question of whether it is feasible to embed and sustain Safe Systems in LAs was repeated across our LAs. There were also suggestions that features of SRF contradicted or limited the principles of Safe Systems. The meaning of what Safe Systems looks like and means in a UK context is unclear for LAs.

Understanding of Safe Systems and its principles

Select LAs understood the principles of Safe Systems and considered it the gold standard of road safety. Safe Systems was described to a greater or lesser extent as involving:

- Whole-route thinking in addition to, rather than, site clustering only
- Proactive intervention planning
- Evidenced-based decision making
- Initiatives to reduce the risk of crashes occurring and the severity of injuries if a crash does occur
- Consideration of multiple interventions
- Collaboration with different contributors to a road safety intervention

For many LAs, Safe Systems as intended was an ideal rather than a feasible approach to road safety. This is discussed further in Section 6.1.

Harmonising Safe Systems and SRF

LAs raised concerns that elements of SRF contradict or undermine the principles of Safe Systems: sustainability of interventions; the perceived prioritisation of engineering solutions over education and

enforcement[9]; the lack of maintenance costs; the use of retrospective crash data to identify stretches of roads (discussed in section 5.3); and the lack of community engagement (discussed in 5.3).

As an engineering-based project, SRF focusses on infrastructure investment, although part of the solutions could involve education and enforcement aspects. LAs were not able to spend funding on maintenance costs, as SRF is a capital grant, meaning there is no ongoing administration or revenue budget to maintain interventions beyond SRF. This posed a serious question of whether and how LAs could maintain the interventions beyond SRF.

> *"Star rating to a 4 or 5 would be ideal but has huge financial implications and I don't know whether we will ever get to a fully risk rated scenario. Revenue budgets are really struggling. Whatever we give our maintenance colleagues they need to be able to maintain it. Barriers and things, how will they afford to maintain these? We need to be thinking about the full lifespan of any intervention put in, not just the time we have funding from the department. Capital input to get high standard roads is great, but then the revenue to maintain that is a challenge. It will be tricky."* (South East, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

While an ideal, for some LAs there was an underlying concern that Safe Systems was not realistic in local contexts due to LA budgets and community pressure. LAs felt it was difficult on a limited road safety budget to prioritise a risk-based approach when there are still crash hotspots.

> *"For us as a council, our hands are tied, it's always going to be KSIs or somewhere we've got a problem...it's the only way we can spread the costs...it's the easiest way to identify problems"* (South West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

> *"In some ways, Safer Systems is still an ideal approach rather than a realistic one, as Local Authorities can't afford to use their own budget to pay for it, they just don't have it available."* (South East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Not all LAs understood that they could include education and enforcement interventions along with the prioritised engineering solutions. Even amongst those who understood, technically, that they could do this, some were more concerned with building a business case that DfT would definitely approve so they focussed on engineering interventions. For other LAs, the focus on engineering solutions was contrary to the holistic, multi-intervention approach of Safe Systems and they wondered whether this parameter would be a barrier to achieving impacts.

> *"Obviously it's capital focussed and a big part of road safety, yes there's engineering solution…but quite often the nature of the collisions in the past, there'd have been an engineering solution but now a lot more of the collisions there's no real engineering solution, it could be driver error, it becomes more challenging to identify where it's best to invest to provide the biggest return by reducing collisions on the network."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

The meaning of Safe Systems in the UK context

Some LAs voiced concerns regarding Safe Systems, which related to the overall set of principles, rather than SRF specific. Their concerns related to a lack of a shared definition of Safe Systems in the UK context, the view that Safe Systems is not distinctive from what LAs already do, and that a reactive approach is still more appropriate in some contexts.

While LAs were able to describe broadly the principles of Safe Systems, there was a lack of a shared common, UK specific definition. In some cases, participants had heard of the principles, but had not heard the Safe Systems name applied, and others had heard of Safe Systems but did not know what it stood for

[9] ViDA software does not recommend enforcement measures, however it does recommend speed limits.

(even if they had described the principles prior). This lack of a shared language and purpose meant it was harder for LAs to commit to engagement with Safe Systems.

> *"I've heard the phrase but I can't say I've given it any depth of thought up to now."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Some LAs did not feel Safe Systems was something new as the approach had been in place for decades. They saw it as a new name for something they had already been doing. In these cases, LAs did not feel they needed to change their approach.

Finally, some LAs recognised the value of a proactive approach but felt that reactive approaches are still most appropriate in some contexts. This was particularly in urban settings where whole networks needed to be considered, not just stretches of road, and in settings where LAs worked with a limited budget.

> *"For us as a council, our hands are tied, it's always going to be KSIs or somewhere we've got a problem...it's the only way we can spread the costs...it's the easiest way to identify problems"* (South West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

LAs suggested improvements to support LA's acceptance of and engagement with Safe Systems:

- Mention Safe Systems and its principles explicitly in the guidance case and application form. Doing so will help LAs understand earlier that Safe Systems should be a defining feature of their business cases.
- Consider developing and communicating a shared definition of what Safe Systems means in the UK, working with road safety experts and LAs to embed it into UK road safety culture.
- Encourage LAs to consider education and enforcement pillars of Safe Systems along with engineering interventions in the business case.

5.7 Conclusions

SRF was different from previous grant giving schemes and this chapter discussed LAs understanding and reactions to its five distinctive features: targeted bidding approach, targeted road selection, ViDA software, RSF Engineers and Safe Systems principles.

The targeted bidding approach was broadly accepted, and LAs recognised its advantages compared to a competitive approach. Some LAs continued to hold the belief that the funding was not guaranteed even if they had met the requirements set out by DfT. There are likely three reasons for this. First, LAs are accustomed to competitive procurement processes and fell into habits. Second, the language used by DfT in the application form suggests competition, for example, 'Bid Manager,' 'bid roads' and 'bid for funding'. Instead, 'selected roads' and 'application manager' could be used. Third, as we saw in Chapter 4, LAs were unclear about the assessment criteria – if they do not spend all the grant is it taken away.

Initial confusion about the analysis of roads and scepticism about the data used to conduct the analysis to select roads undermined some LAs buy-in to the targeted road approach. The use of retrospective crash data to identify stretches of roads was seen as problematic; old data does not capture roadworks that may have been done since, and LAs hold more recent local intelligence that could complement and reinforce data used. The main issue is that the RSF data is always going to be "behind" that held by LAs. In this case, in 2017, providing data to LAs based on 2012-2014, when all of the LAs involved would have had at least 2 years additional data for their network compared to the RSF data. Age of data also has implications for how post-implementation monitoring is carried out. The data period of 2012-2014 is when high risk is identified. This is followed by a period (2014-2018) in which the LA has either already implemented measures or where the collision numbers vary from 2012-2014 due to statistical fluctuation or other external factors. With an

implementation period of 2018-2019 and a monitoring period of 2019- 2022, what time period should this monitoring period be compared with?

This targeting also limits the extent LAs can engage in public consultation, limiting the collaboration element of Safe Systems. One suggestion to overcome these challenges is to introduce a consultation stage with LAs between road identification and agreeing the roads in scope, giving them the opportunity to present justification for a different road to be in scope. Another suggestion is to introduce additional criteria for selecting the roads, such as the rate of collisions coupled with minimum flow rate of the road.

ViDA software helped to get LAs thinking differently – it was also the most prominent barrier for participating LAs to engage with SRF and principles of Safe Systems. Lessons learned included improvements to ViDA's functionality and greater support to LAs to more efficiently navigate the iterative process of running analysis and agreeing countermeasures that are fit for their local context while also having a high benefit-cost ratio.

RSF Engineers were a critical support, helping LAs with practicalities of bidding process, and refinement of some LAs thinking towards Safe Systems.

Safe Systems as a defining feature of SRF was not immediately obvious for all LAs, though LAs expressed openness to Safe Systems principles and appreciation for its value. Additional features of SRF were seen to undermine the principles of Safe Systems: sustainability of interventions; the prioritisation of engineering solutions over education and enforcement; and the lack of maintenance costs.

6. Safe Systems attitudinal typology and how this supports the roll-out of Safe Systems

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed the administration and specific features of SRF; we were also keen to understand whether there were any LA-specific features influencing how SRF was received on the ground. This chapter discusses the variation we found between LAs, and considers the implications for engaging with authorities if DfT scales up SRF.

6.1 How LA attitudes to SRF varied

We found noticeable differences in how LAs described their reactions to the SRF during the research. For instance:

- some LAs focussed more on the risks and challenges the targeted nature of the fund posed for them, whereas others talked more about the opportunities. For example, some LAs highlighted the target road was not a local priority, and that focusing on this road risked negative reaction from the local media, public or authority leadership. In contrast, the attitude in other LAs was *even though* this targeted road was not a local priority, the fund gave them the opportunity to conduct large-scale road safety interventions that they would otherwise be unable to resource.
- some LAs identified risks and challenges around how they would deliver interventions funded through the scheme, and described these as constraining, and limiting their engagement with SRF. In contrast, other LAs talked more about how they would manage and mitigate those risks to enable SRF to have a sustainable long-term impact. A typical example of this was that some authorities noted that any interventions they undertook would generate long-term maintenance costs, which they could not resource, making them question the sustainability of SRF. Other authorities, however, were more optimistic they would be able to find ways to cover these.
- some LAs were very engaged with the Safe Systems concept, talking about how they were already using a similar approach, or how it was encouraging them to think more broadly than they might have done traditionally. Other LAs, by contrast, were more dismissive, saying Safe Systems was not new, or questioning its relevance in their context.

These differences led us to focus our analysis on whether and how the local context of LAs influences their buy-in and engagement with SRF and Safe Systems. Drawing on the issues listed above, we found LA reactions to the SRF varied across two spectrums: organisational attitude to risk taking; and attitudes to the Safe Systems approach (see Figure 5, below).

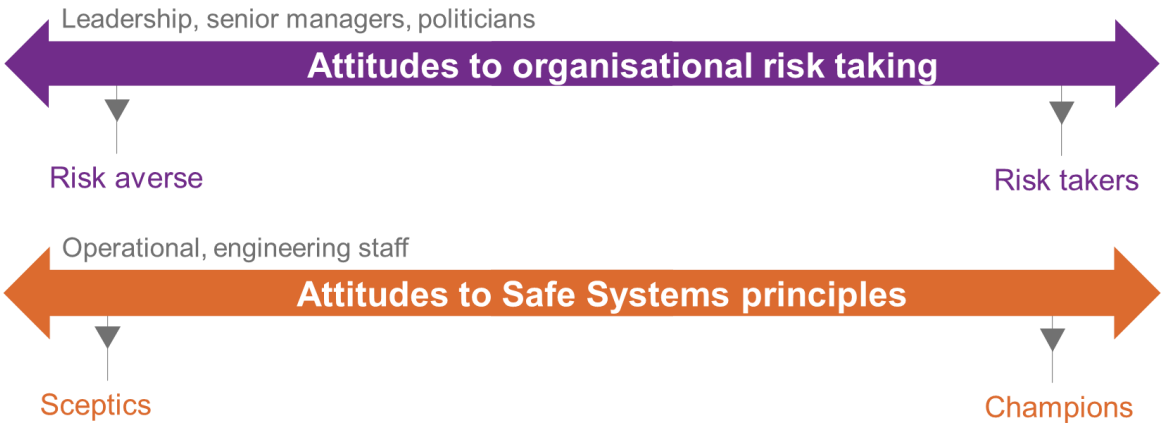

Figure 5 Spectrum of attitudes affecting LA engagement with Safe Systems

Attitudes to organisational risk taking

LA leaders expressed different appetites for organisational risk taking, with some being more risk averse, and others looking for opportunities to act in a forward-looking way.[10]

The more risk averse LAs focused more on the scrutiny they were exposed to, and the need to manage what they saw as the resulting risks. For them, proactive road safety was seen either as a lower priority issue, or as more contentious in their area. In either case, leaders were more focussed on identifiable crash hotspots rather than taking a more risk-based approach. Their rationale for this was that if they ignored the identified hotspots, this could expose them to adverse media or public reaction, or even to legal challenge. In some cases, this risk aversion was amplified by the context of financial constraint – risk taking was not something they felt they could afford. They were also hesitant to open a debate about some of the interventions suggested by ViDA, seeing these as raising expectations that they could not afford and would have to manage.

> *"I can't afford to use a Safer Systems approach; it's not a local priority. All the funds available to us are used for traffic growth, congestion housing growth, other things combined to do with the economy."* (North East, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

In contrast, other LAs were more ready to take risks, expressed as openness towards trying new techniques or approaches in and a willingness to innovate or change their approaches in the light of the guidance and input they received from SRF. Where those authorities already had identifiable crash hot spots, they were nevertheless more willing to advocate the value of moving to a risk-based approach, some of them seeing this as an opportunity to present themselves as leaders in the field.

> *"[SRF] has allowed us to adopt a holistic approach... it's given us a bit more flexibility I have to say. I've been saying for years we have to get a risk-based approach to road safety."* (South West, Peri-urban road, Single SRF application)

Attitudes to Safe Systems

[10] This insight was derived principally from the strategic road safety leads we spoke with. in some cases, we were able to infer that these views also reflected those of senior council leaders and politicians in the authority (although in most cases we did not talk with politicians or senior leaders in those settings

Some LAs were also more bought into the Safe Systems philosophy, particularly at the level of the engineers and operational staff responsible for delivering the SRF application and interventions.

At one end of the spectrum, the attitude reflected scepticism about Safe Systems. Views expressed ranged from Safe Systems simply reflecting good road safety practice and, in itself, was nothing new – to it being an expensive and idealised approach that would not be realistic to roll out more widely given a lack of current and long term funding. These LAs saw SRF as simply a source of funding, rather than fully engaging with the Safe Systems culture change the fund was seeking to promote.

> *"Is it just structuring more the approach?... It probably is what's been done but gives it a bit more structure and if you're looking at a route as a whole the system readily provides information on the types of issues along the route...."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

Some urban LAs believed that Safe Systems was designed for rural road networks and does not apply in dense urban networks. Although they understood Safe Systems, they would not consider applying its principles within their LA because it was not fit for purpose.

> *"A more area wide approach is needed in [an] urban area. It is about taking into account the entire road network in [our region]. Other sections that may not be as long that have similar types of risk as what was identified on our bid road, why not make sure the same interventions can be applied there as done on the bid road? Introduce the same countermeasures everywhere."* (South East, Peri-urban and urban road, Single SRF application)

Other LAs were more positive about Safe Systems, actively engaging in the support and tool provided by SRF and welcoming the opportunity to approach road safety from a strategic perspective. Although, some of them felt they did not have the resource and capacity to train their engineers or apply Safe Systems more broadly in their work even where they wanted.

> *"Without [support] I think all Local Authorities would probably struggle to pick it up as quickly. Certainly for an authority of our size, we don't have a huge road safety team."* (North West, Rural roads, Multiple SRF applications)

6.2 Developing a typology of LAs

With these two attitudinal spectrums identified, we mapped themed against each other, and mapped our LAs onto the typology. The research suggests there are distinct types of LA in relation to how they engaged with SRF and the Safe System approach it was advocating. Figure 6 (overleaf) illustrates the typology. Note, no LAs fell into the top left quadrant, so there is no label for this section. If LAs had fallen into this category they would be 'Sceptical Risk Takers'.

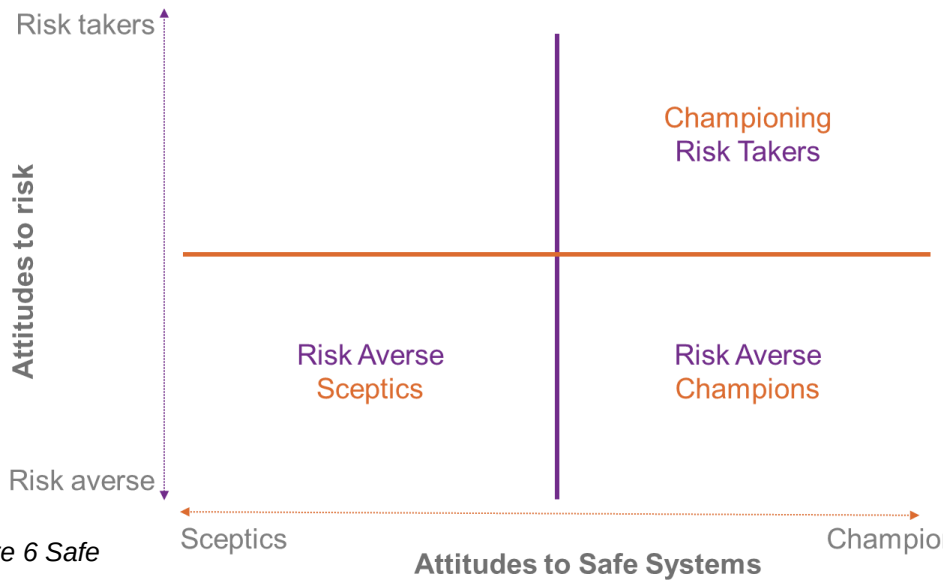

Figure 6 Safe Systems emerging attitudinal typology.

Three particular types of LAs emerged:

1. **Risk Averse Sceptic** LAs are composed of operational staff, who believe a reactive or crash hotspot approach to road safety engineering is best for their region, and senior staff, who are risk averse due to their political or funding contexts.
2. **Risk Averse Champion** LAs are composed of operational staff, which understand the need for Safe Systems but are constrained in applying it by political or other factors, which are at a LA leadership level.
3. **Championing Risk Takers** are LAs where operational staff actively champion the principles of Safe Systems and are supported by their leadership within their LA to apply Safe Systems to their road safety approach.

To identify LAs in the typology we analysed participant interviews looking for themes related to their attitudes to risk and to Safe Systems. If operational staff spoke positively about Safe Systems, and how it could be used more widely, they were placed in the champions quadrants. Conversely, if they were hesitant or sceptical about the value or feasibility of a Safe Systems approach to road safety, they were placed in the sceptic quadrant. When participants discussed their organisational context we analysed their descriptions of risk taking, listening for mention of their political or funding contexts, and the LA leadership approach to risk more generally.

In future, DfT could repeat this exercise to identify where LAs sit upon the typology.

6.3 Using this typology to embed Safer Systems

The value of developing this typology is twofold:

1. It highlights that DfT may need to approach different LAs differently; depending on which attitudinal segment it belongs. In subsequent funding rounds, it may be worth DfT investing time to identify in which segment an LA belongs. It can then tailor its approach to that LA depending on what the attitudinal “blocks” are on the ground – for instance, do they need to focus more on overcoming local operational scepticism about the distinctiveness and value of Safe Systems? On the other hand, do they need to focus more on promoting local leadership of the benefits of a whole systems approach?

2. It suggests a role for DfT to work with LAs over the longer term if they want to establish Safe Systems more broadly: to embed Safe Systems and encourage LAs to share and adopt best practice with each other, it will be helpful if all LAs sit within the *Championing Risk Takers* quadrant. Hence, given that not all authorities are starting in that quadrant, there is therefore potentially a role for DfT which goes beyond simply extending the SRF programme: working with local authorities to encourage them to shift from their existing quadrant into that top right corner

Regarding this second point, in encouraging LAs to shift position, there are two quite different challenges: encouraging LAs to shift from *sceptic* to *champion*, and from *risk averse* to *risk taker*. Each of these shifts requires different input from DfT, discussed below.

From sceptic to champion

To build greater championing of Safer Systems at the local authority level and to challenge the scepticism we identified at an operational level, DfT can take different approaches. These include:

- establish a more consistent UK definition for Safe Systems. At present, there is a tendency for more sceptical Local Authorities to dismiss Safe Systems as offering little new or distinctive. The lack of a consistently used UK definition of Safe Systems reinforces this view. It would be useful to establish such a commonly used definition across LAs, to develop a shared understanding of what Safe Systems is and why it is distinct from more traditional road safety approaches.
- provide Safe Systems training and demonstrate LA opportunities to apply Safe Systems thinking in their road safety planning. Doing so could demonstrate the benefits of Safe Systems and create engagement through knowledge sharing.
- provide evidence of success of Safe Systems interventions. Case studies evidencing the success of Safe Systems interventions in the UK could be used to approach LAs to provide proof of concept, thereby increasing engagement as Safe Systems will be 'tried and tested' in the UK context.
- facilitate networking between LAs in similar contexts, for instance partnering *Championing Risk Takers* with *Risk Averse Sceptics*. By facilitating networking between similar LAs, DfT could encourage Safe Systems mentoring which could foster engagement from a 'peer' perspective rather than solely providing information prescribed from DfT.

From risk averse to risk taker

Supporting the transition from risk aversion to risk taking will involve focusing more on senior leadership and strategic staff in local authorities. This is critical, as while LAs may have engineers who support Safe Systems principles, they need support from their leadership teams to implement a Safe Systems approach beyond SRF. As noted above, the local leadership may well focus on road safety issues at hotspots that get public and media attention, and they will therefore see it as a risk to adopt a method that deprioritises these hotspots in favour of whole-route, risk based interventions. To overcome this, DfT could help local leaders more fully understand the benefits of the Safe Systems approach, so that they are more willing to provide local leadership, even in the face of local objections. This includes:

- provide education to senior management and politicians on the benefits of Safe Systems. There is a gap in knowledge on the benefits of Safe Systems among politicians and strategic leaders in some LAs. By educating them on the benefits of Safe Systems, and why this approach represents a better use of public money, local leadership required may be better able to engage with Safe Systems, even in the face of public objections.
- ensure local leaders get the support of Safe Systems experts to make their case. If credible road safety experts publicly support local leaders, local leaders may find it easier to make the case for complementing an approach that addresses clusters or hotspots with Safe Systems, particularly when faced with public opposition. This should reassure the public that any decision to adopt a Safe

Systems intervention is a technical and evidence-based decision, rather than simply a political one – which in turn should help achieve greater local buy-in. When DfT facilitates the input of road safety experts, these should be to work with the operational teams on the ground and local leadership.

- support a change in conversation, so that Safe Systems comes to be seen as “normal”. There may be scope for DfT to influence the national debate around road safety to build greater public acceptance about the Safe Systems approach. LAs reported that Safe Systems is not publicly acceptable in all cases because they would not be responding to crash hotspots. DfT and its partners have had success in shifting public attitudes through similar long terms campaigns, such as making drink-driving less socially acceptable. Similarly, by helping build greater public buy-in to holistic whole-road interventions in preference to simply addressing hotspots, DfT may help give local leaders greater confidence to advocate the Safe Systems approach.

This evaluation has shown that by segmenting local authorities based on their attitudes to Safe Systems, DfT may be better able to target how it encourages the roll out of Safe Systems beyond select LAs. This includes how DfT engages LAs in any work it does to extend SRF. Beyond SRF, the evaluation identified how DfT can best engage both operational and leadership stakeholders at the LA level to build local level advocacy of the Safe Systems approach.

7. Conclusions and implications

This chapter summarises key findings in relation to the aims of the evaluation and considers the implications of these findings for the implementation of a Safe Systems culture in the UK, for the future delivery of SRF and for Phase 2 of this process evaluation.

7.1 Summary of findings against evaluation objectives

Overall, this research highlights the range of responses to Safe Systems principles and the targeted intervention approach of SRF. Safe Systems principles are understood and broadly accepted by LAs – though not consistently seen as distinctive or necessarily better than traditional approaches. The lack of a shared UK definition and a language of Safe Systems limit the culture change DfT are seeking to achieve via SRF. Targeting roads was accepted in principle – but specific road choices were seen by some LAs as problematic because analysis was seen as based on old data. Road selections did not reflect local priorities enough or take into account the potential reputational challenges that come with an LA being identified as responsible for one of the most dangerous roads in England.

Many aspects of SRF's administration worked well to engage LAs in building a business case. The non-competitive application approach and range of support available to LAs raised awareness amongst LAs of new ways of thinking about road safety, and helped to align LA business cases with the objectives of SRF and Safe Systems principles.

Discussions with LAs suggest opportunities for refining features of the administration process to help participating LAs to get their application right the first time. These include providing greater clarity of application parameters and expectations and improved functionality of ViDA. Specific features of SRF were seen by some LAs to limit the embedding of Safe Systems principles, and while all may not need addressing it is worth acknowledging how the way SRF was set up presents limitations to the intended culture shift DfT seeks.

It is important to be purposeful when best practice case studies are developed; to show how obstacles can be addressed and positive impact can be realised may support LAs beyond SRF to become more willing to make Safe Systems based road safety decisions. By building a shared understanding of what good Safe Systems interventions looks like in the UK context DfT will help local road safety leader demonstrate the credibility and value of Safe Systems to their communities. To leverage this approach elsewhere, LAs must full understand and accept the level of funding, time and skills required to engage with and implement Safe Systems principles.

7.2 Implication of findings for road safety culture in the UK

LAs were familiar with the principles of Safe Systems and there was evidence that some LAs have the appetite to adopt Safe Systems principles, and a sense that this is worth investing in. However, not all saw it as distinct from what they were doing. Given the resistance in some LAs to Safe Systems, DfT should consider how to utilise best practice case studies to break down barriers. For example, DfT could provide best practice guidance on engaging the public with Safe Systems. Similarly, providing evidence of where Safe Systems is working well could provide proof of the value and impact of Safe Systems, for LAs to consider in their own context.

Phase 1 findings suggest key strategic barriers to embedding a Safe Systems culture in the UK, and ideas for overcoming these, summarised in Table 3.

Strategic barriers	Recommendations
Capacity for LAs to engage with Safe Systems	▪ Educate and train on Safe Systems principles, its application in LAs and the practical skills required to apply its principles ▪ Make a stronger case on the distinctions of Safe Systems to existing approaches and its merits for complimenting a collision hotspot approach ▪ Operationalise success stories, quantifying skills, time and cost requirements
Sustainability of Safe Systems interventions	▪ Develop guidance on how to pragmatically select relevant interventions for maintenance ▪ If possible, consider providing LAs access to maintenance funds
Focus of SRF on engineering solutions	▪ Use tools and language to negotiate how to prioritise elements of the Safe Systems model ▪ Encourage LAs to consider all elements of Safe Systems principles; including education and enforcement
Political and public acceptance of Safe Systems	▪ Develop case studies which demonstrate the impact of a Safe Systems approach ▪ Provide guidance to engineering staff on how to bring stakeholders on the journey of a Safe Systems approach to road safety ▪ Consider how best to utilise LAs who are *Championing Risk Takers*, who can advocate on the successes of Safe Systems.

Table 3 Strategic barriers to embedding Safe Systems and recommendations for overcoming these

7.3 Implication of findings for SRF design and application

Overall, LAs found developing their business case for SRF a reasonable process. LAs understood SRF was a new scheme with teething issues and their experiences reveal components of SRF to be maintained, strengthened and replaced to provide a more efficient and effective administration process. In future rounds, DfT should recognise LAs are likely to have different attitudes to Safe Systems principles and plan to adapt how it engaged LAs in what the fund is trying to achieve, using the attitudinal typology as a tool to achieve this.

7.4 Implication of findings for Phase 2 of the evaluation

Chapter 1 summarised our development of a logic model to support the evaluation. The insights from Phase 1 highlight opportunities for updating the model to better reflect the key components of SRF and the assumptions underpinning its implementation and success. Figure 7 illustrates the revised logic model and its assumptions that we will build upon in Phase 2.

In summary, the changes to the logic model include:

- ‘LA funding’ replaced ‘Extra funding’ in ‘inputs’
- Addition of ‘focus on Safe Systems principles’ in Inputs
- ‘Launch event’ replaces ‘stakeholder seminar’ in Activities
- Addition of ‘ViDA software used’ in Activities
- Addition of ‘Preparing bids with RSF’ in Activities
- Addition of ‘Targeted bidding’ in Activities
- Removal of ‘Police enforcement’ in Activities
- Addition of ‘Knowledge sharing’ in Outputs
- Addition of ‘Design refinement/testing’ in Outputs
- Move of ’50 roads improved’ from Outputs to Outcomes

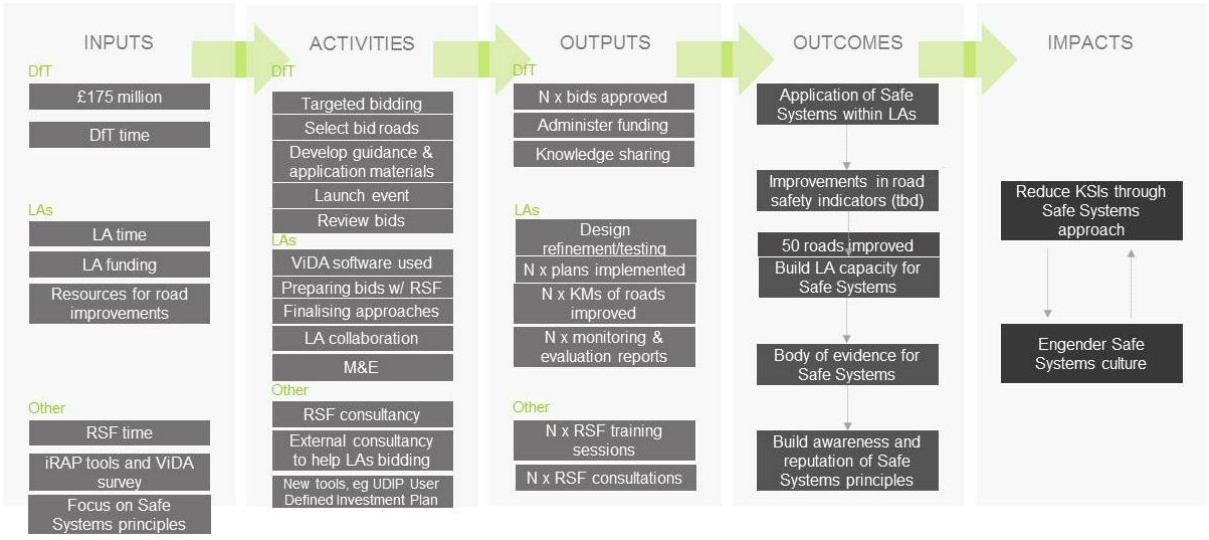

Figure 7 Revised logic model following Phase 1

Findings from Phase 1 indicate that the original evaluation objectives and research questions remain relevant for Phase 1. We suggest the following additions to Phase 2 research questions to better understand how LA perceptions and expectations at Phase 2 (the implementation of their interventions) influence the success of their interventions:

- Explore public/political influence on the effective implementation of SRF
- Explore ways in which LAs have overcome the challenge of financial sustainability of interventions
- Explore how LAs have mitigated the challenges identified in Phase 1, in particular public engagement, reputational pressures and local priorities
- Explore how LAs might be able to review their organisational capacity to apply a Safe Systems approach to road safety

The methodology for Phase 2 remains appropriate to robustly answer the evaluation objectives. Given LA appetite for knowledge sharing and the need to build up an engaging and accessible evidence base for Safe Systems in the UK, we propose the addition of voxpops or video ethnography at Phase 2.[11]

[11] This would depend on additional resource or adjustments to planned activities to reallocate existing resources.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Logic Model at the start of the evaluation and revised Logic Model

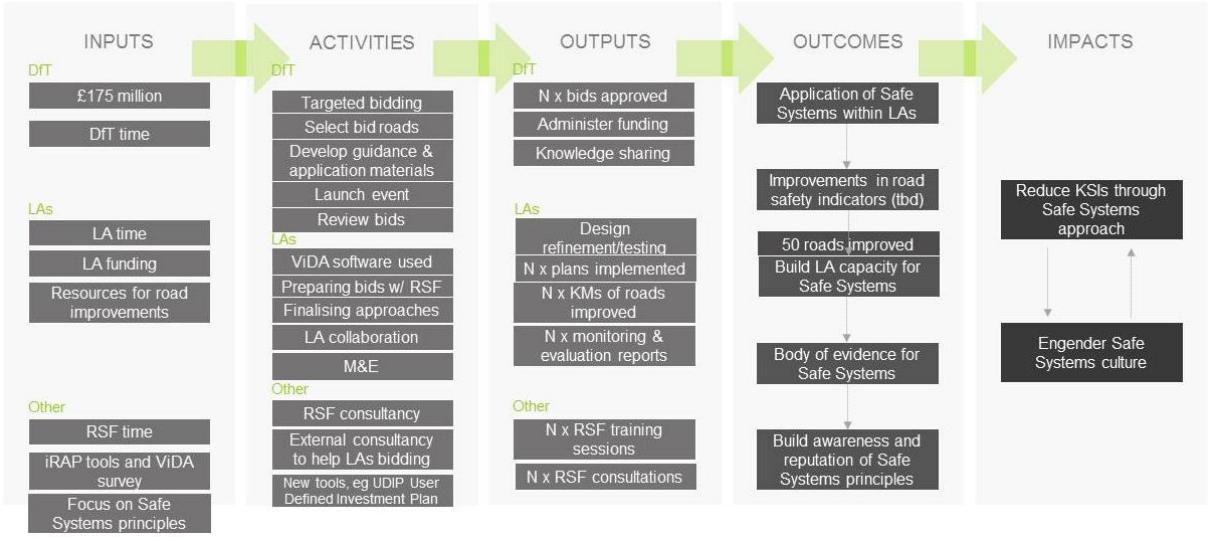

Figure 8 Logic model at the start of the evaluation

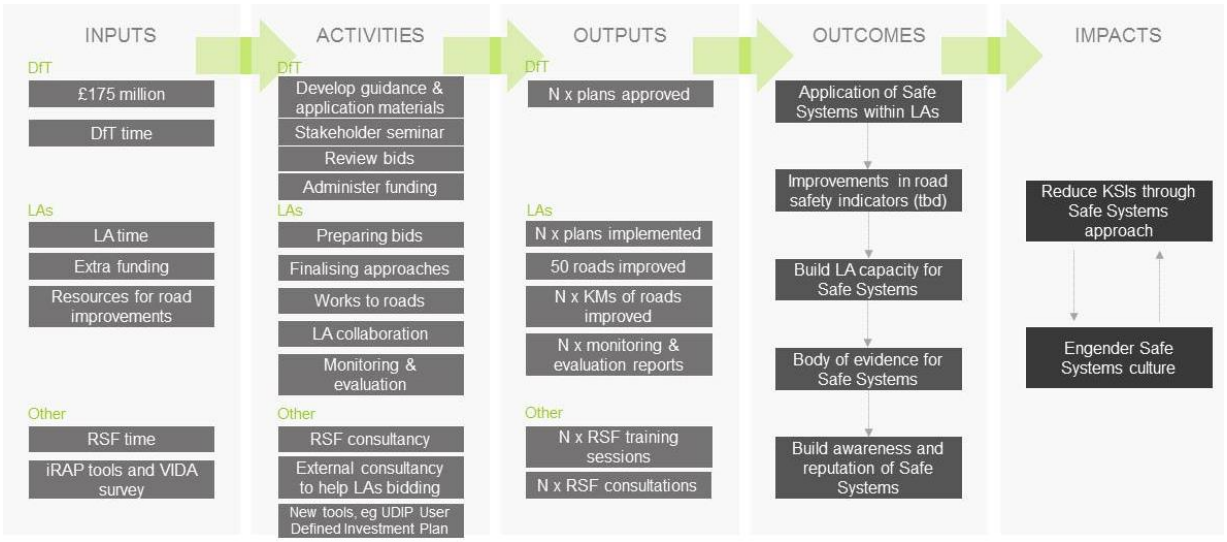

Figure 9 Revised logic model following Phase 1

9.2 Appendix A – Assumptions at the start of the evaluation and revised assumptions

Figure 10 Assumptions at the start of the evaluation

Figure 11 Revised assumptions following Phase 1

9.3 Appendix C – Phase 1 Scoping Topic Guide

DfT Safer Roads Fund Process Evaluation
Phase 1 Stakeholder interviews

About participant

- Tell me a little about your role and organisation role
- And role in relation to SRF

Views of SRF

- Understanding of SRF, including what are the SRF aims and mechanisms to achieve these
    - Explore – is it seen just as a funding stream; or is it recognised that SRF is also trying to encourage a particular approach (i.e. safe systems)
- Looking at how the SRF programme is being run
    - what works well/what works less well/needs improving
    - is there anything they are doing you see as particularly new or innovative
- Where will it have the greatest impact?
    - We want to know if they spontaneously say it will improve things nationally (i.e. beyond the 50 roads they are targeting).
    - If they do not spontaneously mention national level benefits, ask if they think the benefits will be rolled out nationally, and how?

Views of Safe Systems

- DfT see the SRF as encouraging the adoption of the Safe System approach to improving road safety. Are you aware of Safe Systems?
- What does Safe Systems mean to you – how is it different or distinct to traditional road safety approaches?
- What are the specific principles and practices that you would expect to see in a scheme adopting the Safe System approach. ***(XXX NB – this is important as it will help us define our coding frame for the case studies)***
- How is Safe Systems seen nationally?
  Explore around this. We are trying to find out whether this is an orthodoxy that is widely accepted or something new-fangled; whether it is very different to traditional approaches or just an adaption (evolution or revolution?). Whether there is wide spread buy in or whether there is resistance/push back

How the SRF scheme is viewed by LAs

- Do they recognise the culture change aspects of the SRF, or simply see it as an addition road safety funding source?
- To what extent to they see it encouraging new/different behaviours/approaches/ interventions compared with how they have traditionally delivered road safety improvements?
- Degree of local “buy in” to the Safe Systems concept – do they see it as the right way forward, and a positive extension to traditional practice?
- What facilitates buy in, what are the barriers?
- How do they engage with the advisory input from engineers?

Final comments, thanks and close

- Anything else we should know or think about in the evaluation

9.4 Appendix D – Phase 1 Case Study Topic Guides

DfT Safer Roads Fund Process Evaluation

Applicant Local Authorities Case Study Topic guide – V3

Research background and objectives

The project is a two-phase process evaluation with 3 overarching aims:

1. To understand how the SRF's stakeholders respond to the principles underpinning the 'Safe Systems' approach to road safety and the SRF's targeted intervention approach; including awareness, uptake and application of these principles.
2. To understand what has worked well, and what has worked less well, within the SRF process in order to identify potential improvements for future iterations of the SRF (or similar funding application processes).
3. To understand whether and how the Safe Systems principles could inform wider transport investment decision-making at both central and LA levels; and whether lessons can be drawn from this approach that could apply in non-SRF eligible LAs.

This guide is for use in Phase 1. Phase 1 focusses on the SRF bidding process (pre-application, application and appraisal/selection) and specifically aims to understand how LAs undertaking SRF projects have responded to the announcement of SRF and prepared their applications; and their experiences of doing so.

In particular, *we need to explore whether the LAs see the SRF as more than just a funding stream: do they recognize that it is encouraging a Safer Systems approach – i.e. using tools to understand risks on stretches of road and address them more holistically and proactively. We also need to explore how they are responding to this in terms of evolving the thinking and practice.* Phase 2 focusses on intervention delivery.

The way in which this guide will be used by researchers

This guide is intended to be used with a variety of individuals with a range of experiences and views. As such, it does not contain pre-set questions as in a research survey, but rather lists the key topics and themes and sub-themes to be explored. The moderator will use these themes to guide the conversation. Whether a 1-1, paired or group discussion, the key areas for discussion are the same. The guide does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as these are part of the researchers' professional repertoire and because participants' contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes may vary slightly between interviews, depending on participants' experiences, views and priorities - but the key topics for discussion are the same. The subject matter for this research is a potentially sensitive and political issue which could make some participants feel vulnerable or uncomfortable, depending on their previous and current experiences and positions of seniority. Therefore the guide will be used sensitively. Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants' situations and perspectives as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of the participants.

This guide is for flexible use individuals working for LAs who have submitted SRF proposals: Bid Managers, Senior Responsible Owners, Section 151 Officers and a member of staff responsible for designing the scheme. Signposting is used throughout to indicate which themes/prompts to use with particular participants.

Bid Manager Interviews – 60 minutes & face-to-face. All other interviews – 30 minutes & face-to-face where possible, or teledepth. Topic guide content is to be captured across your case study – you will not have time to cover all sections with all participants.

SRF	Safer Roads Fund	**SRIPs**	Safer Roads Investment Plans
RSF	Road Safety Foundation	**EuroRAP**	European Road Assessment Programme
iRAP	International Roads Assessment Programme	**ViDA**	the iRAP online **road safety** software platform

Introduction (2 mins)

- **Thanks & introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar Public
- **Introduce research and purpose of the interview** – Research commissioned by DfT to learn more about whether and how their approach to the SRF is working, and any lessons learned for improving the delivery of the fund.
- **Reassurances** - No right or wrong answers; - simply asking for people's views and opinions; voluntary participation, research is confidential and anonymous. DfT knows which LAs are taking part in this research, but we aim to keep individual contributions anonymous - your name will not appear in the report and quotes will be anonymised
- Reminder about **audio recording –** the interview will be recorded so that researchers do not have to make notes during the interview and can listen back when analysing the data.
- **Length**: 60 minutes / 30 minutes
- Any **questions**?
- **Start recording** – acknowledge participant consent for being recorded when recorder on

Background and context (5-10 mins)

- Participant **introduction**
    - Name, title
    - General responsibilities, incl. any secondary roles held
    - Length of time in role
    - Role in relation to the SRF bid

- About their **road(s) and intervention(s)**, including:
    - Where are they in the SRF bidding process
    - Overview of the risks the particular road(s) poses
    - Severity of road safety risk and length of time it has been risky
    - Type of intervention(s)
    - Aim of their intervention(s) to respond to road safety risk
    - KPIs/success measures intended to use
        - Hard measures (reduction of collisions, KSIs)
        - Soft measures (collaboration, changes in ways of working)
        - Intermediate measures (reduction in speed, greater compliance)

Researcher note: Section light touch – aim is to get key descriptive points about their intervention. Listen out for how much emphasis is placed on soft measures (i.e. changing the way of working)

Safer Roads Fund overview (5 – 10 mins)

- Explore **overall understanding** of the Safer Roads Fund, and **source** of understanding. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Purpose of fund
    - Whether participant views fund as a means to access money only or trying to do more than that?
        - If more than that, what?
    - Opportunities of fund for LAs – what is allows/enables LAs to do
    - Limitations of fund for LAs – what is can't/wont do

- Explore overall **understanding of what the SRF bid required** for securing funding. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Specifics they believe SRF expected from bids to qualify for funding

Researcher note: Listen for spontaneous mention of SRF trying to encourage a Safe Systems approach, including whether a more evidence based, risk based approach (using ViDA tools) to determine risks on stretches of road and appropriate counter measures, and a more systematic ways of assessing the return on investment (Benefit-Cost Ratio) are mentioned. Do not mention these explicitly.

Bidding experience (10 - 20 mins)

For use with Bid Managers only:

- Explore **pre-application experience**. Spontaneous, then prompt:
    - How and when approached to apply
    - Clarity of programme and application requirements
        - Whether understood the application process from the start
        - Whether aware of the tools available to them to use
        - Whether aware of the information requirements
    - How SRF approach perceived by the local authority
    - Whether expectations of SFR required LA to think/act differently (e.g. perceived to ask them to continue doing what they were already doing?)

For use with all:

- DFT targeted/earmarked the investment for a particular road in the Authority's area (as opposed to allocation of a grant using a funding formula, or a wholly competitive fund that authorities could bid for whatever road they chose). Explore **views on this targeted approach:**
- Whether the road prioritized by DFT reflects LA view of what the local priority would have been
    - If not,
        - Why not - was the fact that DfT was using old data from 2012/14 an issue?
        - What different criteria would they use to select the road?
- DfT used KSI rates to select roads. Explore views on the appropriateness of this measure

- Explore any **support accessed** during application process. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Source of support – attendance at launch event; ViDA training sessions and 1:1 support; DfT communications; Internal within LA; Consultant/advisor; DfT general, RSF Engineer, other RSF input
    - Support type – advisory, drafting bid sections, demonstrating tools
    - Views of usefulness of support accessed
    - Whether would have benefited from any additional support - suggestions

- If participant received input from the **Road Safety Foundation (RSF)**, explore experience of this. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Which RSF inputs did they make use of
        - Input/advice/guidance from RSF Engineer
        - Surveys and coding of the target road
        - Analytical input
        - Application and development of the ViDA tool
    - Which RSF input was most / least useful
    - How did the RSF input help to shape/influence bid – and major changes made?
      Researcher note: Particularly listen for any principles related to Safe Systems approach
    - Suggestions for improving value of RSF input on LA bids

- What **tools or guidance were used to develop and refine the application**. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - DfT Guidance and Q&A documents
    - Ad hoc queries / correspondence with DfT
    - Stakeholder involvement
    - Resources/data used to design and cost intervention
    - Use of EuroRAP protocols
    - Use of ViDA outputs
    - Use of SRIPs
    - User Defined Investment Plan UDIP tool
    - Economic Case Guidance and tools from DfT
    - Use of any other guidance

- Which inputs **most/least useful** in shaping the bid
- Which inputs viewed as mandatory vs. optional

- If they worked in **collaboration with another LA**, briefly explore their experience of working together. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Extent/type of collaboration
    - Factors supporting/challenging bid completion
    - Lessons learned in partnering on the bid

- Briefly explore **overall experience of completing an SRF Bid.** Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Ease/difficulty
    - Time taken to complete
    - Challenges
    - Suggestions for improving the application process

For use with Bid Manager only:

- Explore experience **post-application**
    - Appraisal and selection
        - What criteria did DfT use to assess the bid? – what were they particularly looking for
        - How do you think DfT were particularly encouraging you to shape/refine your bid?
        - How easy was it to come to a shared view about the way forward for your scheme?
        - What were the sticking points?

For use with all:

- Expected **challenges and facilitators** toward effective **implementation of intervention**

- Explore expected/actual **impact of SRF** for their LA. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Whether/what **monitoring and evaluation processes** established to measure impact
    - Whether/what **the fund has allowed** their LA to do that they wouldn't otherwise be able to do
    - Whether/how fund has affected **the scale of intervention** on the road – does it allow more activity than in its absence?
    - Whether/how the fund has affected the **scope of intervention** on the road – does it allow different types of intervention than in its absence?
    - Whether the fund has encouraged greater collaboration with other local agencies (e.g. police on speed cameras)

- Whether/what specific goals and targets have been set for scheme and over what time scales
  Researcher note: Listen for things like increasing star rating of the whole road; reducing casualties

- And what *interim* measures and performance indicators are monitored, to ensure scheme is on track
  Researcher note: Listen for what combination of hard measures (egg speed reductions) and softer measures (about ways of working, collaborating, etc)

Safe Systems (5 - 10 mins)

Researcher note: Participant will probably have mentioned Safe Systems by now. If not, use the accompanying showcard to explain Safe Systems.

Explain DfT wants the SRF to encourage greater adoption of a Safe Systems approach.

- Explore **extent of awareness** of DfT's expectations
- Understanding of **what 'Safe Systems' means** – defining principles, goals, approaches

- Overall opinion of the **Safe Systems** approach
- Explore views on the extent to which **Safe Systems differs from how road safety** was managed 10 years ago

- How, if at all, did **Safe Systems** principles guide approach to the application
    - Whether focused on any pillars beyond "Safe Roads and Roadsides"
    - Whether SS influenced the selection of tools and guidance
    - Whether SS influenced the choice of interventions
    - Extent to which "Safe Systems" features in their proposal
        - At what point did SS start to feature in their approach

- Whether/what **changes they'd made to their proposal**, in hindsight

Developing and sharing good practice (5 mins)

- What, if anything, has been particularly distinctive/different about the approach that the SRF has encouraged LA to adopt
  Researcher note: Listen particularly for: making decisions based on rich data from tools like ViDA; being more evidence-based and forward-looking when analysing of risks associated with roads; having more certainty when deciding on interventions (because tools indicate what impact they will have, and give a measure of benefit cost ratio). Also listen for any refs to adopting a Safe Systems approach.

- Whether experience of the SRF application and funding process expected to affect how LA work in future – do they see it changing the culture and practice of the team, or the wider LA?

- Lessons learned for working across the LA

- Whether particular principles from application that could be transferred to other projects
  Researcher note: Listen for evidence of Safe Systems approaches and use of the tools

- Whether SS could it be used for other types of road (e.g. urban roads)
    - Whether SS features would need adapting to allow – if so, what and why

- Whether rolling out aspects of SS approach to other roads under participants management
    - Facilitators/barriers to roll out in their LA

  Researcher note: If they say "money", explore the blocks arising from current levels of funding. Also look for other things that would facilitate them using the approach (eg different tools, other support, etc)

- **Expectations of the impact** of SRF, beyond their LA – benefits/limitations of roll out to all LAs?

- Understanding/expectations of how **good practice and learning** from the SRF will be communicated
    - If they have a good understanding, explore the extent to which this influenced their proposal

Final comments, thanks and close (2 mins)

- What is the **main suggestion** they have for improving the SRF application process
- If they were to apply again, what would they **do differently**
- Any **final comments** or questions
- Reminder of **confidentiality**

Thank and close

9.5 Appendix E – Phase 1 Case Study Showcard

Safe Systems is an approach to road safety management. It takes human fallibility and vulnerability into account, and encourages a proactive approach to road safety. In the context of the Safer Roads Fund, it means taking a risk-based assessment approach and making improvements through proactive, route-based and targeted engineering measures, rather than reacting after a series of incidents have taken place at a particular location.

The goal of the *Safe Roads & Roadsides* pillar of Safe Systems (the focus of the SRF) is to ensure that human mistakes do not lead to a crash; or, if a crash does occur, it is sufficiently controlled to not cause a death or a life-changing injury.

9.6 Appendix F – Phase 1 Case Study Non-applicant Topic Guide

DfT Safer Roads Fund Process Evaluation

NON Applicant Local Authorities Case Study Topic guide – V1

Research background and objectives

The project is a two-phase process evaluation with 3 overarching aims:

4. To understand how the SRF's stakeholders respond to the principles underpinning the 'Safe Systems' approach to road safety and the SRF's targeted intervention approach; including awareness, uptake and application of these principles.
5. To understand what has worked well, and what has worked less well, within the SRF process in order to identify potential improvements for future iterations of the SRF (or similar funding application processes).
6. To understand whether and how the Safe Systems principles could inform wider transport investment decision-making at both central and LA levels; and whether lessons can be drawn from this approach that could apply in non-SRF eligible LAs.

This guide is for use in Phase 1. Phase 1 focusses on the SRF bidding process (pre-application, application and appraisal/selection) and specifically aims to understand how LAs undertaking SRF projects have responded to the announcement of SRF and prepared their applications; and their experiences of doing so.

In particular, *we need to explore whether the LAs see the SRF as more than just a funding stream: do they recognize that it is encouraging a Safer Systems approach – ie using tools to understand risks on stretches of road and address them more holistically and proactively. We also need to explore how they are responding to this in terms of evolving the thinking and practice.* Phase 2 focusses on intervention delivery.

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RSF	Road Safety Foundation	**EuroRAP**	European Road Assessment Programme
iRAP	International Roads Assessment Programme	**ViDA**	the iRAP online **road safety** software platform

Introduction (2 mins)

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- **Introduce research and purpose of the interview** – Research commissioned by DfT to learn more about whether and how their approach to the SRF is working, and any lessons learned for improving the delivery of the fund.
- **Reassurances** - No right or wrong answers; - simply asking for people's views and opinions; voluntary participation, research is confidential and anonymous. DfT knows which LAs are taking part in this research, but we aim to keep individual contributions anonymous - your name will not appear in the report and quotes will be anonymised
- Reminder about **audio recording –** the interview will be recorded so that researchers do not have to make notes during the interview and can listen back when analysing the data.
- **Length**: 60 minutes / 30 minutes
- Any **questions**?
- **Start recording** – acknowledge participant consent for being recorded when recorder on

Background and context (5-10 mins)

- Participant **introduction**
    - Name, title
    - General responsibilities, incl. any secondary roles held
    - Length of time in role
    - Role in relation to the SRF bid

- About their **road(s) and intervention(s)**, including:
    - Overview of the risks the particular road(s) poses
    - Severity of road safety risk and length of time it has been risky
    - Type of intervention(s)

Safer Roads Fund overview (5 – 10 mins)

- Explore **overall understanding** of the Safer Roads Fund, and **source** of understanding. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Purpose of fund
    - Whether participant views fund as a means to access money only or trying to do more than that?
        - If more than that, what?
    - Opportunities of fund for LAs – what is allows/enables LAs to do
    - Limitations of fund for LAs – what is can't/wont do

- Explore overall **understanding of what the SRF bid required** for securing funding. Spontaneous, then prompt for:
    - Specifics they believe SRF expected from bids to qualify for funding

Researcher note: Listen for spontaneous mention of SRF trying to encourage a Safe Systems approach, including whether a more evidence based, risk based approach (using ViDA tools) to determine risks on stretches of road and appropriate counter measures, and a more systematic ways of assessing the return on investment (Benefit-Cost Ratio) are mentioned. Do not mention these explicitly.

Bidding experience (10 - 20 mins)

- Reasons they didn't bid – LA vs their own
- Context of when they decided not to bid – what was going on at the time, who was involved
- What would have needed to change for them to have bid

Safe Systems (5 - 10 mins)

Explain DfT wants the SRF to encourage greater adoption of a Safe Systems approach.

- Explore **extent of awareness** of DfT's expectations
- Understanding of **what 'Safe Systems' means** – defining principles, goals, approaches

- Overall opinion of the **Safe Systems** approach
- Explore views on the extent to which **Safe Systems differs from how road safety** was managed 10 years ago

Developing and sharing good practice (5 mins)

- **Expectations of the impact** of SRF, beyond their LA – benefits/limitations of roll out to all LAs?

- Understanding/expectations of how **good practice and learning** from the SRF will be communicated
    - If they have a good understanding, explore the extent to which this influenced their proposal

Final comments, thanks and close (2 mins)

- What is the **main suggestion** they have for improving the SRF application process
- If they were to apply again, what would they **do differently**
- Any **final comments** or questions
- Reminder of **confidentiality**
- **Thank and close**