Specialist Professional and Technical Services Framework
Task Ref: 1-286

Task Title: HD 19/15 Road Safety Audit - Maintain & Develop Road Safety Audit Database

QUARTERLY REPORT
April 2017 to June 2017

To be read in conjunction with Task 286
‘QUARTERLY REPORTING AND FACTSHEETS, GUIDANCE NOTES’

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**Reviewer List**

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**Approvals**

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Appendix A  
Quarterly Factsheet 1st April 2017 to 30th June 2017
1. Introduction

1.1. Quarterly Reporting

This report comprises the quarterly qualitative review of Road Safety Audit (RSA) reports submitted to the Highways England Safer Roads - Design Team (SRDT) inbox at roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk between 1st April 2017 and 30th June 2017 (inclusive).

This review should be read in conjunction with the Quarterly Factsheet - April-June 2017 (Rev. 2) contained in Appendix A of this report; and with the Task 286 ‘Quarterly Reporting and Factsheets, Guidance Notes’.

1.2. Scope

During this quarter, a total of 59 RSAs were submitted, of which 57 purport to be carried out to HD 19/15. From these HD 19/15 RSAs, 23 sample reports were selected as suitable for review. The list below details the numbers of each stage of RSA forming the study sample together with totals submitted for the quarter:

- Stage 1 RSAs: 2 reports of 3 submitted in quarter
- Stage 2 RSAs: 1 report of 1 submitted in quarter
- Combined Stage 1 & 2 RSAs: 8 reports of 30 submitted in quarter
- Stage 3 RSAs: 6 reports of 17 submitted in quarter
- Stage 4 RSAs (12 months): 2 reports of 2 submitted in quarter
- Stage 4 RSAs (36 months): 4 reports of 4 submitted in quarter
- Interim RSAs: No Interim RSAs submitted this quarter

The principal purpose of the quarterly review, together with explanations of the sampling process; measures of HD 19/15 compliance and of the rationale behind the charting used in the corresponding quarterly factsheets are all described in the Guidance Notes.

1.3. Limitations in Historic Comparisons

In order to minimise the effect of discrepancies on data comparisons, the database has been retrospectively updated as far as is practicable. For this purpose, previously entered records were updated, by a previous project, as far back as 1st January 2014. It is only those backdated records that have been used where comparisons are made. It is expected that discrepancies between recent data and those entered previously, and any resulting errors, will lessen as the data record grows.
1.4. RSAs Submitted by Highways England Areas

Figure 1-1 below illustrates all RSAs submitted to the SRDT inbox since 1st January 2014 by each Highways England area.

Figure 1-1  RSA submitted since 1st January 2014 by Highways England Operational Area

![Bar chart showing RSA submission by Highways England area from 1st January 2014 to 30th June 2017.]

Figure 1-2 below illustrates all RSAs submitted to the SRDT inbox during this quarter, 1st April 2017 to 30th June 2017.

Figure 1-2  RSA submitted this quarter (April to June 2017) Highways England Operational Area

![Bar chart showing RSA submission by Highways England area for the quarter of April to June 2017.]
2. Qualitative Review of RSA Reports

This section comprises a qualitative review of RSAs sampled from those recorded in the main database. The sample selection is described under heading 1.2 above. The sampled reports have been used as the principal source for this review but occasionally, reference is made to the database as a whole for context.

As far as is practicable, this quarterly report seeks to feed discussion on:

- Common road safety Problems raised by audit teams with a view to providing information which might be used by the SRDT and others in the industry to identify and inform potential changes to Requirements and Advice Documents (RADs). This comprises a high-level categorisation of the Problems raised;
- Inconsistencies between Problems and Recommendations raised for similar designs elements; and
- Good practice and areas for potential improvement as evident from the sampled RSA reports.

2.1 Common Road Safety Problems

This section comments on the frequency with which road safety Problem types appeared in RSAs within the sample set.

For clarity, this section uses the following terms of reference:

- Problems – indexed text (i.e. ‘Problem A’) detailing road safety concerns in the standard RSA Problem/Recommendation format;
- Issues – individual elements of distinct road safety concern contained within a Problem related to but different in nature to other Issues within that same Problem; and
- Recommendations – remedial Recommendations made by the RSA Team in relation to the Problem (and related Issues) raised.

Where appearing in quoted text, the words “problem”, “issue” and “recommendation” may have been used differently.

The sampled reports detailed a total of 126 road safety Problems covering 137 Issues. These include previously raised Problems not resolved at the time of each of the sample RSAs.

This gives an average of 1.09 Issues per Problem reported which is comparable to 1.03 in the preceding quarterly report (January 2017 to March 2017) with no obvious significance to the slight increase. The Issues per Problem ratio has remained consistent around these levels in recent quarters.

For the purpose of this quarterly report, the high-level categorisation of the Problems and Issues identified within the sample group have been expressed as follows:

- **Parking** [the scheme encourages, or does not sufficiently dissuade, illegal / injudicious parking]
- **Temporary traffic management measures** [absent / alignment / signing / inappropriate / confusing]
- **Carriageway/lane/surface design** [alignment / skid resistance / surfacing (not incl. HFS) / road width / tie-ins / taper lengths / radii]
- **Junction layout** [design / principle / tie-ins / approach speeds / turning speeds / queuing / stacking / restricted movements]
• **Visibility of junction restricted** [by vegetation / street furniture / alignment / infrastructure / buildings]

• **Speed limit** [too high / too low / extents / inappropriate for environment]

• **NMU route/facility signs or signals** [poorly located / inconsistent / absent / obscured / incorrect / inadequate / confusing]

• **Segregation between traffic and NMUs** [inconsistent / absent / inadequate]

• **NMU crossing** [inconspicuous / inconsistent / absent / inadequate / layout / confusing / tactile paving]

• **Visibility to / from and between NMUs restricted** [by vegetation / street furniture / alignment / infrastructure / buildings]

• **NMU slip / trip / fall / obstruction hazard** [poor surface / unprotected drops / street furniture / upstands / service and drain covers]

• **NMU route provision** [inconsistent / inadequate / inappropriate / narrow / confusing / tactile warning surfaces/ access / egress]

• **Unsafe gradients for NMUs** [physically or visual impairment / crossing places / routes / junctions]

• **Carriageway markings** [poorly located / inconspicuous / inconsistent / absent / incorrect / inadequate / confusing]

• **Signs** [poorly located or incorrectly mounted / inconsistent / absent / incorrect sign face / inadequate / confusing]

• **Visibility to signs restricted** [by vegetation / street furniture / alignment / infrastructure / buildings]

• **Sign clutter** [confusing]

• **Carriageway markings** [poorly located / inconspicuous / inconsistent / absent / incorrect / inadequate / confusing]

• **Access for maintenance / service operatives** [poorly located / inconspicuous / absent / unsafe / inadequate / confusing]

• **Road restraint / bridge parapet / kerbs** [inadequate / working width compromised / risk of 'launch']

• **Hazardous roadside** [street furniture / objects not passively safe / embankments / drops]

• **Drainage and related ponding and icing** [NMU crossings / carriageways / footways / cycleways / other]

• **Visibility to / from and between vehicles / traffic restricted** [by vegetation / street furniture / alignment / infrastructure / buildings]

• **Swept paths** [overrunning footways or cycleways / conflicts between vehicles / collision with infrastructure or furniture]

• **Illumination of signs** [inadequate / light levels reduced by obstruction / absence of illumination]

• **Street lighting / poor visibility in darkness** [inadequate / light levels reduced by obstruction / absence of lighting / confusing]

• **Maintenance issues or, defects** [surfaces / metalwork / drainage / vegetation / lighting / construction issues/incomplete works]

The 137 Issues covered in the sampled reports are categorised in Figure 2-1 overleaf which indicates the frequency of occurrence. The categories of these are shortened to fit the figure dimensions and the chart should be read in conjunction with the bullet list above for a fuller description.
Figure 2-1  Road safety issues by number of occurrences

As context for the occurrences of road safety issues given above, Figure 2-2, below, charts the principal highway measures that best describe the scheme type for each RSA report in the sample set.

Figure 2-2  Principal highway measures by number of occurrences in sample set
2.2 Good Practice and Areas for Improvement

This section identifies areas of good practice and areas with potential for improvement as evident from the RSAs sampled for the purpose of this quarterly report.

Text and other materials quoted or copied from real RSA reports have been anonymised. Accordingly, all road, scheme and location names and descriptions, together with the names of persons and organisations involved, should be taken as fictional and not associated with any actual scheme, location, organisation or person.

2.2.1 Images to Illustrate Problems Identified

Many of the reports sampled contained photographs or drawing excerpts to illustrate, or provide context to, the Problems raised. This is certainly considered good practice but images should clearly illustrate the Problem raised and could be annotated to clarify the body text. Images which do not clearly illustrate the Problem raised, such as an empty verge showing nothing else but where a sign is proposed for example, should perhaps not be used.

2.2.2 Information Not Provided

Six of the 23 sampled RSA reports reviewed this quarter refer to information not being provided or of elements of design being unclear. Only one gave indication that further information was requested but this is detailed in the annex listing RSA Brief materials and not in the introduction section in accordance with HD 19/15.

2.2.3 Report Introductions

A number of the reports reviewed contain long and sometimes very technical descriptions of the scheme. It is acknowledged that RSA reports are sometimes read by lay-persons or others not involved in the scheme but if the descriptions are too lengthy and technical, it is possible that important information will be easy to miss. Report introductions are intended only to describe the context and process adopted for the RSA report. In most cases, the example text given in the illustrative reports in HD 19/15’s annexes could be taken as a suitable level of detail to include in RSA report introductions.

2.2.4 Thorough Site Visit

One of the reviewed RSAs describes a very thorough site visit, whereby demonstrating good planning and practice. The site visit included visits to bridges, footpaths and adjacent carriageways to view sections of road where stopping a vehicle or walking would have been unsafe on the trunk road being studied. Vehicle-based site visits are often the only practicable and safe way to visit trunk road and motorway schemes and do not generally necessitate lane- or road-closures. However, where achievable, viewing the scheme (or part of a scheme) from an adjacent safe location gives the RSA Team time to reflect on the general nature of the scheme, of traffic flows and of road-user behaviours; an opportunity not comprehensively afforded by being in a moving vehicle.

2.2.5 Site Visit Details

Most of the reports reviewed detail the site visits appropriately but some are vague about who attended the site visit (RSA Teams must attend site together), what times of day the site visit took place and the conditions during the site visit.

Two examples of descriptions which are prevalent in reviewed reports and could perhaps be improved are:

- “A site visit was completed by the audit team during daylight hours and during the hours of darkness”
• “Traffic conditions were considered free flowing”

2.2.6 Combined Stage 1&2 RSAs Potentially Inappropriate

Only three of the eight Combined Stage 1&2 RSAs sampled for review appear to have been carried out on schemes which should have had separate Stage 1 and Stage 2 RSAs. However, a total of 30 Combined Stage 1&2 RSAs were submitted to the SRDT inbox this quarter as compared to only three Stage 1 and one Stage 2 reports. It seems likely that a number of these Combined Stage 1&2 will have been commissioned as a cost and/or programme saving measure, contrary to paragraph 2.28 of HD 19/15.

One of the Combined Stage 1&2 RSA reports contained a statement as follows:

“Not unexpectedly for the current stage of scheme preparation, no detail information has been supplied regarding vertical alignment/contours, drainage, standard construction details of the works or detailed signing/markings beyond the preliminary layout illustration of the abovementioned drawings.”

Project Sponsors must ensure that the Combined Stage 1&2 RSA option is only adopted on schemes of an appropriate scale and that they are not commissioned before completion of a detailed design.

2.2.7 Breakdown of RSA Process on Schemes

One of the Stage 3 RSAs reviewed, details 47 Problems of which 15 are unresolved problems from a preceding Stage 2 RSA (no mention of a Stage 1). A number the new Problems related to signing issues which, it would appear, should have been identified at the previous RSA.

One of the Problems lists seven Issues relating to insufficient provision (tactile paving, NMU signing etc.). There is no indication that these Issues were mentioned in the Stage 2 RSA suggesting that details of such provisions had not been provided to the preceding RSA Team and, presumably, not requested.

The Stage 3 RSA report recommends some major amendments which are perhaps unlikely to be feasible in the post-construction period. These appear to include the reinstatement of the pre-scheme situation at one location.

For this number and type of Problems to be identified at, or carried forward as unresolved to a Stage 3 RSA suggests breakdowns in the RSA and post-RSA processes.

2.2.8 RSAs Not a Technical Design Check

One RSA report reviewed describes the scheme proposal as to “refresh” an existing provision. This partly consisted of adding red-infill to existing hatch-markings but the existing layout did not conform with standard and it is evident that the scheme missed the opportunity to improve the layout in that regard. However, the Problem identified did not describe how the scheme would exacerbate the existing risk (it possibly wouldn’t) and the recommendation simply states:

“Provide layout that complies with TSRGD”

This appears to be in conflict with paragraph 2.18 of HD 19/15 which states “Road Safety Audit is not a technical check that the design conforms to Standards and/or best practice guidance.”

2.2.9 Detailed Descriptions in Problem Summaries

A Stage 1 RSA report within the sample set identifies the type of collision or incident considered likely to occur in considerable detail within the Problem summary line. Whilst inclusion of such detail is a requirement, it might be better practice to include it in the ‘body text’ of the Problem to give it its full context and to keep the summaries succinct and clear.
2.2.10 Disproportionate Recommendations

A number of RSAs reviewed make apparently disproportionate recommendations. One Combined Stage 1&2 RSA identified two Issues regarding the width provided for a proposed shared-use facility (pedestrians and cyclists). The Recommendations made were to “Provide a facility of a suitable width for the anticipated level and type of users” and “widening the facility with the agreement of [the Public House] owners”.

From the photos and drawings contained with the RSA report, these recommendations would appear to have substantial impacts on the carriageway width or would require significant land take and/or engineering works at the rear of the footway. In the context of the scheme described, it seems that these recommendations are not likely to be feasible and so might invite Exception.

2.2.11 Unrealistic or Poorly Focussed Problem Descriptions

RSA Teams should seek to be realistic in their descriptions of Problems and should include all key risks. One of the reviewed sample reports contained a Problem which described concern about narrow footway/cycleway and which included the following wording:

“Failure to provide a facility of suitable width may lead to pedestrian/cyclist head on conflicts as they attempt to negotiate the route, possibly leading to serious injuries”

This was the only collision risk described and, whilst collisions between cyclists and pedestrians can have serious consequences, the RSA Team should also have mentioned the more likely risk of pedestrians or cyclists leaving the footway/cycleway into the path of vehicular traffic to avoid such conflict.

2.2.12 Stage 3 RSA Containing Designer’s Responses

One of the Stage 3 RSAs reviewed includes Designer’s Responses to the Stage 3 Problems raised by the report.

Inclusion of the Designer’s Responses to the Problems raised by that same RSA report does not comply with the post-RSA procedure set out in HD 19/15 and is best avoided. If included, the signed RSA Team Statement might be taken to imply endorsement of the responses.

Most of the said Designer’s Responses to the Stage 3 RSA report Problems seem to factually disagree with the RSA findings. For example, the following simple response or similar is repeated throughout the report:

“This work was carried out as part of the scheme”

This could suggest that RSA Team were mistaken about the completeness of certain measures in which case this should have been picked up whilst the RSA report was in draft and the Problem removed from the final report.

2.2.13 Currency of RSA Responses

RSA Teams occasionally include ‘Designer’s Responses’ and RSA Team counter-responses as part of their review of previously raised Problems. This practice is not to be encouraged but from the reviews of sampled RSA reports, it has revealed that Designer’s Responses are understandably written soon after the production of the RSA report and, in most cases where cited against unresolved problems, do not seem to reflect the design (or constructed scheme) being audited.

The purpose of the RSA Response Report is principally to assist the Project Sponsor in deciding whether or not Exceptions are required. Whilst they might indicate potential future changes to the design, future RSA Teams should not rely on these responses to be accurate or current when the scheme arrives with them for a subsequent RSA. Full details of any changes in design should be provided within the RSA Briefs for subsequent RSAs.
2.2.14 Exceptions

One of the Stage 3 RSAs reviewed describes the review of a previous Problem as follows:

"[Problem X] was refuted by the designer and approved in the Exception Report. Within the Audit Response Report, the designer suggested that the adjacent lay-by be extended by adjustment of the road markings. This adjustment had not been implemented at the time of the Stage 3 RSA site visit. The road markings should be adjusted as suggested by the designer in order to close out this issue.

The remainder of the issues raised in the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit Report are considered to have been satisfactorily resolved, either by the element of the scheme being redesigned, as a result of clarification given by the provision of further information, or by an approved Exception Report."

This text suggests a divergence from HD 19/15 with regards to the post-RSA process and might have more appropriately stated that a related Exception had been signed but that the mitigating measure had not been implemented. This should then have been carried forward to the Problem/Recommendation section as an unresolved Problem.

2.2.15 Detailing Supplied Information

Most of the reviewed reports contain annexes listing information provided for the purpose of the RSA as inferred by the illustrative Stage 2 RSA report in Annex F of HD 19/15.

Ideally, the RSA Brief form should contain a list of the drawings and supporting information provided. The Project Sponsor, when approving that RSA Brief, is also approving that list of materials to be issued to the RSA Team and so the RSA Team should check that the materials provided match that list and any missing information should be requested. The annex or appendix should reflect that list faithfully.

However, some of these lists are lengthy and contain drawings which might not be pertinent to the RSA such as sub-surface cabling proposals or structural detail for example.

In such cases, it might be useful for RSA Teams to hold a discussion with the Project Sponsor and Designer to ascertain the usefulness of the materials provided. A brief summary of any materials subsequently withdrawn from the ‘brief package’ might be included in the annex or introduction as appropriate.

One of the reviewed RSA reports includes “Copy-correspondence, various e-mails” in its RSA Brief list. Notwithstanding the fact that email correspondence might not be particularly informative on some occasions, this description provides no information regarding the content of the emails.

2.2.16 Unclear Wording

It is evident in a number of the reviewed reports that readability checks and reviews have apparently not been as rigorous as they should have been. Ambiguities include (but are not necessarily restricted to):

- Poorly worded phrasing used to describe a Problem or Recommendation (e.g. “Works raised to make a shallower entry/exit at [the access]”);
- Use of pronouns (e.g. “it”) when it is not clear which noun in a list of nouns the pronoun is referring to;
- Non-specific collision types referred to (e.g. “This risks collision by vehicles on the [A1234]”);
- Repetition of text; and
- Text from a previous RSA (either the same scheme or a different one) not removed or amended as appropriate.
2.2.17 Confusion Regarding RSA Stage

One of the sampled RSAs purported to be a Stage 1 RSA but the Annex detailing the contents of the RSA Brief stated the brief to be for a "Stage 1/2" [sic]. This might be a simple typographical error or a failure to correct text from another RSA used as a template.

The main body of the report refers only to it being a Stage 1 RSA but the level of detail suggested by the list of documents and drawings, appears to be commensurate with that might be expected for a Stage 2 RSA or Combined Stage 1&2 RSA.

The RSA stage should, of course, be clearly stated in the RSA Brief. If it is decided, through discussion with the Project Sponsor for instance, that a different stage of RSA is required, then the Project Sponsor should update the RSA Brief accordingly.

2.2.18 Stage 4 RSA Site Visit Deliberations

A number of Stage 4 RSAs reviewed, detail that a site visit was carried out despite no increase in collision numbers or severity and no evidence of unexpected trends or characteristics.

2.2.19 Pre-opening Collision Data

All six of the Stage 4 RSA reports submitted to the SRDT inbox this quarter (all from the same provider) include consideration of collisions during construction periods. This may skew the collision analysis due to potential changes in traffic speeds, flows and queues, temporary traffic management and various methods of control for examples.

2.2.20 Stage 4 RSA Report Timescales

Stage 4 RSA reports do not require RSA Team signatures but some suppliers require signatures to certify the drafting, approval and issue dates. All but one of the Stage 4 RSAs reviewed this quarter indicate a period of four months between the supplier's internal 'Approval' of the report and 'Issue' to Highways England Project Sponsor. It is not clear why it took so long to issue the internally approved report but given the delay, the currency of the collision data might be questioned.

More concerning is that five out of the six Stage 4 reports submitted indicate the same site visit date some 13 months before each report was drafted. It is possible that this is symptomatic of an earlier report being used as a template and the text not updated. However, the fact that four of the reports indicate different times of day suggests that the site visits for these five RSAs might actually have been carried out on the same day.

Furthermore, all of the reports indicate Project Sponsor 'Acceptance' of the RSA before the 'Issued' date but it is possible that 'Acceptance' indicates approval of the draft and 'Issued' applies only to the final report. Nevertheless, the timescales of these Stage 4 RSA reports raise questions about the process adopted.

2.2.21 Significance of Changes in Collision Populations

A number of the submitted Stage 4 RSAs cite percentage changes when very low collision numbers are involved. Some, but not all, of these caveat the findings by saying that the low data populations might give misleading results but a large proportion even compare such percentages with national data where thousands of collisions are involved. Stage 4 RSA Teams should seek to more clearly detail the significance of findings where data populations are low.

The illustrative Stage 4 RSA report in Annex H suggests that COBA might be the comparison data of choice but there may be more useful comparison data available and further comment on this is made under paragraph 2.2.22 below.
2.2.22 Collision Data Comparisons

One of the Stage 4 (36 month) RSA reports on a roundabout improvement scheme makes a comparison between the recorded collision frequency with those described in Table 2/1 of TD 16/07. This can, for roundabout schemes, be good practice given that COBA has some limitations and that obtaining traffic flows on roundabout approaches can be problematic. That said, consideration should be given to the fact that TD 16/07 uses collision data from between 1999 and 2003 in Table 2/1 which may not provide the best comparison.

2.2.23 Problem Location References

The illustrative Stage 2 RSA report in Annex F of HD 19/15 uses paragraph numbering to index Problems, and letters to indicate Problem locations. In some cases, particularly where locations and Problems, there are other options which could be adopted to suit as appropriate. These include (but are not necessarily restricted to):

- Problem numbers or letters and no location reference (i.e. Problem 1 or Problem A). This is perhaps best suited to situations where Problems are straight forward and distinctly located.
- Problem numbers or letters with issue indexes such as (i), (ii) etc. for example. This would allow for single Problems to list Individual issues, maybe at slightly different locations.
- The combination of a Problem reference with a Location reference (e.g. Problem 1, Location A) is particularly useful if there are multiple Problems at a single location.

If Issues or locations under a particular Problem are numerous, it might be better to list as a Problem generally located throughout the scheme.

Previous quarterly reports have commented that the use of previously attributed Problem indexes in a subsequent report might be confusing. In such cases, it would be good practice to refer not just to the index reference but also to the report in which it was first raised (e.g. Problem 1 [January 2017 RSA 1]).

For clarity, each RSA report should be consistent with regard to the adopted approach and, if practicable, subsequent RSAs should follow the same convention.
**Basic Information**

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**RSAs By Highways England Area - This Quarter**

![Graph showing Highways England Area distribution]

**RSAs By Scale of Scheme - This Quarter**

![Graph showing Scale of Scheme distribution]

**RSAs By Scheme Type - This Quarter**

![Graph showing Scheme Type distribution]
Quarterly Factsheet - 1st April 2017 - 30th June 2017 (Rev. 2)

RSAs by Compliances - This Quarter - Refers to all RSA Stages unless indicated (see key)

- Inclusion of Certificate of Competency details is not mandatory

Road Safety Audit Database

Charts marked by this symbol exclude data for Stage 4 RSAs as those compliances are not directly comparable.