

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

21 June 2022

VISION ZERO

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to

- (a) **Approve the County Council Vision Zero commitment to:** “Eliminate all fatalities and severe injuries on Oxfordshire’s roads and streets, to have a safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility for all. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change”
- (b) **To note the proposed ‘Vision Zero’ programme and governance arrangements being assembled** as set out within this report.
- (c) **To note the drawdown of initial funding of £0.25m** from the Budget Priorities Reserve to develop and start to progress the implementation of Vision Zero. Required for additional resources and delivery of key infrastructure changes at known areas of concern for road users.

Executive Summary

1. This report provides an overview of the proposed approach and scope of Vision Zero for Oxfordshire.
2. The Vision Zero commitment will involve the development of a strategy and action plans to try and reach a target of zero for fatalities and life changing injuries from road traffic collisions by 2050: with an interim target of 25% reduction by 2026 and 50% reduction by 2030 across Oxfordshire.
3. The success of this will not only be determined by what we do, but also how we can work with key partners, such as Thames Valley Police, the Department for Transport, and industry (for legislation changes and technology advancements).

4. The initiative is at an early stage of development and we can benefit from the experiences of Transport for London and other local authorities which have embarked on a similar initiative.

Background

5. Following recent tragic fatalities on Oxfordshire's roads, and the general desire and requirement to improve road safety across Oxfordshire, the County Council is committed to progressing a Vision Zero approach.
6. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. It was first implemented in Sweden in the 1990s and has proved successful across many important European cities. It is currently being actively progressed within the UK in a number of every increasing authorities.
7. The county council has several relevant initiatives being progressed in isolation, for instance 20 mph and school streets programme, along with some gaps which will require new activity to be commenced. As such, it is proposed to bring together a single programme under the umbrella of Vision Zero for maximum impact and improved focus.
8. Improving road safety is now planned to form a key part of the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which encourages walking and cycling in Oxfordshire. The proposal to adopt a Vision Zero approach to road safety was identified during consultation.
9. An initial sum of £0.25m has been identified for the delivery of prioritised Vision Zero initiatives to support vulnerable road users in particular.

Context

10. Within Oxfordshire, although there has been a downward trend in the total number of reported road casualties over the past 10 years, road deaths have remained unchanged, with an average of 25 per year. This reflects the National picture across Great Britain.
11. The national reporting system for road traffic collisions and the resulting casualties defines a wide range of injuries as 'serious' – for example any fracture is included. In recent years an annual average total of 210 serious injuries have been reported.
12. Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act 8 to "take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents". Local authorities also have a duty to manage and maintain their road networks under section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Proposed Vision Zero Vision Statement

13. It is important to have a vision that sets a clear ambition and commits the council to taking a new approach. The proposed vision statement is:

“Eliminate all fatalities and severe injuries on Oxfordshire’s roads and streets, to have a safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility for all. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change”

Proposed Approach and Work Programmes

14. The strategy will bring together a series of workstreams and projects into a single programme. This approach will facilitate the delivery of short, medium, and longer-term initiatives associated with the delivery of regulatory requirements and renewed focus within the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and Oxfordshire County Council Priorities.

15. The focus will be on reducing risks for all road users with a special emphasis on active travel modes given pedestrians, pedal cyclists, and motor cyclists vulnerability to severe injury in the event of a collision, and the deterrent effect of safety concerns to the wider use of these modes. There will also be an emphasis on youth programmes and Road Safety Education for young road users.

16. To support the delivery of Vision Zero’s ambition, a programme approach is being taken, and it is proposed that the initial main workstreams are as outlined below:

1 - Policy (updated LTCP and any supporting documentation)

2 - Speed Management (reviewing speed limits, exploring opportunities with TVP on improved speed management, including average speed cameras)

3 - New Infrastructure (guidance docs, good design practices)

4 - Cycling Safety (initially focusing on Oxford and known junction problem areas, looking at highway improvements, working with haulage companies around cycle safety)

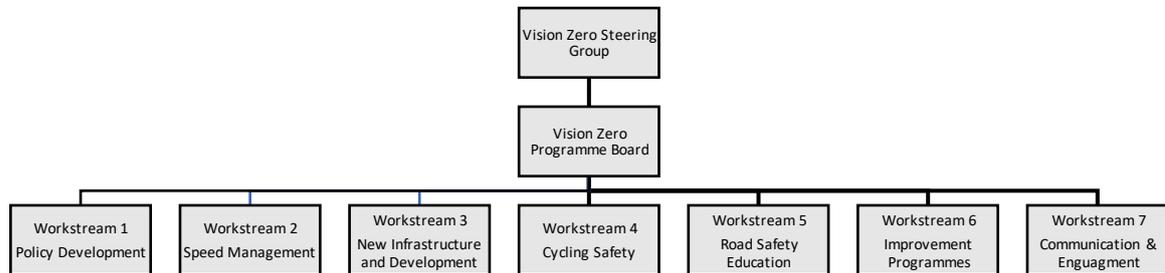
5 - Road Safety Education (reinvigorated publicity, promotion, training, behaviour, youth programmes)

6 - Improvement Programmes (delivery, alignment, and monitoring of programmes such as ‘Road Safety and Accessibility’, ‘20mph’)

7 - Communication & Engagement (publicity, information availability, improvements planned, dedicated webpage, and engagement events including those for young road users)

17. The programme will be overseen by the Corporate Director for Environment and Place and Portfolio holder for Highways Management and led by the Director of Highways and Transport Operations.

18. The governance will be made up of individual workstream meetings, reporting into a Vision Zero Programme Board (chaired by Director of Highway & Transport Operations) with a Steering Group (chaired by Portfolio Holder for Highways Management) providing overall guidance and holding everyone to account.



Progress update

19. Specific action has been taken following the commitment to Vision Zero in respect of cycle safety (workstream 4). The Oxford Parkway junction has had some temporary layout changes made which are being monitored, and if deemed successful will be made permanent, along with some lining changes to assist cyclists to navigate through the junction. Plans at The Plain are progressing, such as re-aligning the entrance between Cowley and Iffley road. Any changes will initially be temporary and monitored for impact.

20. This work follows a number of very valuable meetings between officers, councillors, local cycling group leads and other stakeholders. Further work by the group is being undertaken to look at other known junctions of concern across Oxfordshire. This is all currently being funded through the Road Safety and Accessible programme.

Proposed Policy Areas of Focus

21. Initial thoughts for specific policy areas for inclusion within the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan and associated documents are:

- **Policy 1 - Reducing speed limits to improve safety**

Inappropriate speed is cited as a factor in collisions resulting in death or serious injury on streets across Oxfordshire. If a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle at 20mph, they are about five times less likely to be killed than if they were hit at 30mph.

- **Policy 2 – Improving junction safety**

Collisions at junctions make up a significant number of all reported incidents and has increased over the past few years. The accidents that are reported as serious tend to involve either a pedestrian or cyclist.

- Policy 3 – Supporting safer behaviour and safer vehicles**
Data shows a number of all collisions are due to a limited number of behaviour types. These behaviours are themselves not associated with any one user group but are associated with individual actions.
- Policy 4 – Improving personal safety and security**
Alongside reporting of reported incidents, perceptions of safety can be a significant barrier, or enabler to wider social mobility and uptake in active travel, particularly amongst vulnerable groups. Through implementing measures to increase active travel movements and increase activity in local communities, it is considered that greater user volumes will give an increased sense of safety in numbers for user groups, particularly cycles and pedestrians so we will prioritise investment in Highway's infrastructure that makes it more likely that people will walk, cycle, or use public transport and deprioritise schemes that make it less likely they will do so.
- Policy 5 - Improving post incident response and learning lessons**
Understanding the causes of collisions is fundamental to learning from them and preventing reoccurrence. Working with both the local police force and other key stakeholders it is important that appropriate remedial action is undertaken where required.

Proposed Policy Targets

22.To support and measure the success of the county councils' policies and interventions, it is proposed to have stepped targets to reach zero fatalities and life changing injuries by 2050. The interim targets are proposed as a 25% reduction by 2026 and a 50% reduction by 2030.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

23.This project aligns with several of the Alliance Priorities namely:

- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network.
- Green spaces.

24.Vision Zero will support help to deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan draft part 1 (main policies) and emerging part 2 (area and corridor strategies).

25.Successfully delivering vision zero will also be an enabler and key to the success of health and active travel initiatives and programmes.

Financial Implications

26.There are financial Implications to delivering Vision Zero, both with regard to resources as well as the cosy of physical infrastructure improvements. The financial

requirements for delivery of the Vision Zero ambition and existing commitments are currently being established. To enable this development and some immediate changes to take place, an initial funding allocation of £0.25m from the Budget Priorities Reserve is proposed to be committed, supplemented initially where appropriate using the road safety and accessibility programme funds. Further funding once the strategy is developed is expected and will be considered through the council's budget setting process.

Comments checked by:
Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
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Legal Implications

27. There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. All Vision Zero schemes that are delivered will be carried in accordance with the relevant powers and, as necessary, will be subject to statutory consultation.

Comments checked by:
Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor, Jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Procurement Implications

28. Vision Zero will mainly use existing county council contracts, such as the use of highway maintenance Milestone contract for the delivery of minor-short term improvements. If the programme does require something outside of existing contracts, then frameworks will initially be considered before open tender.

Comments checked by:
Becky Saunders, Head of Category, Becky.Saunders@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

29. The programme will be developed and delivered using existing staff supplemented with consultancy support as required - covering both general and specialist extra capacity. This additional support will be funded from the proposed budget outlined within this report.

Equality, Inclusion & Sustainability Implications

30. An overarching Equality & Climate Impact Assessment has been completed for the programme. This concludes there are no negative consequences for protected

characteristics, community, wider or climate change impacts as a result of implementing Vision Zero. To confirm any policy, infrastructure, or Traffic Order change etc, will be consulted on individually as required.

Risk Management

31. The Vision Zero initiative and associated programme is to be pursued in itself to help manage risks. There are two main risks regarding the programme; one is the funding to deliver the aspirations of the programme and managing expectations of what will be achievable with the initial funding, and any potential further funding. The second is the sphere of influence, as Vision Zero is a whole system concept and as such will require technology advancements, and input from others to support the safety of vehicles and education/training of users (for all modes/vehicles). A risk register is being developed will be managed through the normal programme management process.

Consultations

32. No consultations have been undertaken to this point. To confirm any policy, infrastructure, or traffic order change etc, will be consulted on individually as required. Engagement with specific interested parties and stakeholder groups have taken place as appropriate.

33. We will approach and actively engage with partners, stakeholders, and community groups as we develop the strategy and associated action plans. The type and level engagement will vary and be tailored as appropriate.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex: None

Background papers: None

Other Documents: ROSPA document (May 2013) - Responsibilities as Highway Authority for Councillors:
local-councillors-guide.pdf (rospa.com)
Oxfordshire County Council road casualty report:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/road-safety/road-casualties>

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