

Next week on Wednesday it will be one year since Ellen Moilanen was killed at the Parkway junction of the A4165. Two weeks later, on the 21st February 2022, a letter was delivered to Bill Cotton, copied to the council CEO, saying, and I quote; “There are some immediate actions that must be taken: making that stretch of road a 30mph speed limit.” Yet, here we are, nearly one year later; no speed limit reduction and only now a TRO being put forward for consideration by a cabinet member.

12 months! Why does it have to take so?

Is there a better way to do this? Did this TRO really have to be lumped in with the roundabout and the forthcoming urban developments? Could it have been expedited separately?

To me this looks like business as usual at the council. Yet, as highlighted in a report by the council’s own scrutiny committee to the cabinet meeting that approved the Vision Zero policy, and again I quote, “Equally, from both a member and officer side, Vision Zero means doing things differently to how they have been done previously. Longstanding assessments, judgements and processes must all be reconfigured to reflect the shift in approach.” Has this happened yet?

The 1996 TRO regulations require a minimum time of 21 days from publication and notification of proposals for the TRO to be made, and then the traffic signs can be installed. Realistically it will take some time longer; but one year?

Is this what Vision Zero looks like?

If the council is serious about Vision Zero, then the changes in culture and working practices need to happen and they need to happen quickly; experience from other organisations shows that these changes need to be led and driven from the very top of the organisation: by the CEO and the corporate director; to be driven and monitored down through the organisation, constantly and iteratively until the changes are well embedded. Barriers to these changes need to be removed.

So, many congratulations on the commitment to Vision Zero; a bold country-leading commitment. But to quote again from the letter to Bill Cotton: “with this news of yet another cycling fatality, and the historically slow rate of progress – we need you to act faster.”

Finally, active travel organisations such as Cyclox are here to help you. What does the council need from us to make Vision Zero possible?