

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

23 April 2024

VISION ZERO STRATEGY

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) Approve the Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan ‘Oxfordshire – Safe Roads through Vision Zero to 2030’.

Executive Summary

2. The consultation for the Vision Zero Strategy ‘Oxfordshire – Safe Roads through Vision Zero to 2030’ and supporting action plan commenced on 31 January 2024, and closed on 10 March 2024. The consultation was set up to gather views from both the public and our vision zero and road safety stakeholders and has had a high response rate, with over 5k total visits and over 1.3k engaged respondents. (Consultation data report Annex A).
3. The Vision Zero strategy and action plan sets out how we are aiming to achieve our target of a reduction in collisions to zero 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. It ensures our highway network is safely designed, implemented, and maintained with Vision Zero at the heart of our decision making.
4. The case for change towards Vision Zero is clear. Between 2017 and 2021 128 people were killed on Oxfordshire roads, with 1130 serious injured. This not only has a devastating impact on individuals and families, but also on society and Oxfordshire’s economy. The feedback from the strategy consultation shows Oxfordshire’s residents are very much active participants in our Vision Zero programme delivery.
5. The feedback from the consultation has been reviewed and several requested changes have been made to an updated Vision Zero Strategy (Annex B). A summary of the strategy consultation headlines is provided below, and this report will cover the consultation responses in more detail. Full consultation reports are provided in Annexes A & B.

Vision Zero Strategy consultation headlines:

- Our residents want to ensure we maintain our road network to safe standards, for all road users.
- Our residents want to see our Highway laws being are upheld and enforced to support road safety for all road users across Oxfordshire.
- That road safety education is provided for Oxfordshire's road users and young people, for all modes of transport.
- That a close working partnership with our road partners is maintained and enhanced via Vision Zero, and this includes Thames Valley Police, and our Bus operators and we expand upon our stakeholder groups.
- There was challenge on how Vision Zero will realistically be delivered and how we achieve our Vision Zero targets.
- It is key that our highways and roads are designed, built, and maintained for all road users with road safety at the forefront of our minds.

Introduction

How we engaged

6. We have been engaging across a wide range of both our local and national Vision Zero stakeholders since the Vision Zero Programme was stood up in November 2022. Our stakeholders were invited to attend our Vision Zero Strategy development workshop on 19th July 2023, where the first outline of strategy content was discussed. Over several months, our stakeholders then contributed to the strategy development, sharing their road safety knowledge and expertise, helping shape the draft strategy version that went out to public consultation.
7. To ensure we captured our stakeholders' views, we held a stakeholder consultation alongside our public consultation. Both consultations asked the same questions. The Vision Zero Strategy and supporting Action Plan consultation was held from 31 January to 10 March 2024.
8. Respondents were invited to comment on the strategy and to feedback via an online Let's Talk Oxfordshire survey questionnaire. To ensure that all residents could take part in the consultation, we also offered the option to email responses as well as to request a hard copy of the strategy documents and questions, that could be returned via freepost.
9. To advertise the consultation to our residents and stakeholders, we shared the 'Let Talk Oxfordshire' webpage link via social media posts, which ran daily during the consultation period, and via updates to County Councillor bulletins, as well as the 'Nextdoor', 'Your Oxfordshire' and 'Travel' bulletins platforms, during January, February and March. To ensure that we reached out to all local councillors, links to the webpage were also emailed to our district, town, and

parish councillors and clerks, and the consultation was sent to our Statutory consultees.

10. We received a high level of consultation engagement with 1,256 public, and 85 stakeholder respondents via Let's Talk Oxfordshire. We also received 13 emailed responses, and 1 response by post. (Consultation data report Annex A).

Consultation respondents

11. When responses were submitted via the 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' platform, demographic information was requested. This provides an overview of the demographic information collected to understand who responded to the consultation. This information helps us understand if any groups are under or overrepresented. This information is included in Consultation data report Annex A. Those who emailed back their responses did not provide this level of demographic information.

12. Who responded to the consultation?

Public 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' respondents

Of the 1,256 respondents, 94.8% identified as Oxfordshire residents, with 2.2% being a member of the public living outside Oxfordshire. Representatives of a group or organisation were 0.9%, a parish, town council or county councillors were also 0.9%. Business were 0.3% with 0.9% identifying as other.

Further demographic information can be found in Consultation data report Annex A.

Stakeholder 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' respondents

Of the 85 respondents 46.4% identified as Oxfordshire residents, with 9.5% being a member of the public living outside Oxfordshire. Representatives of a group or organisation were 14.3%, a parish, town council or county councillor's were also 29.8. Business were 0% with 0% identifying as other.

Further demographic information can be found in Consultation data report Annex A.

Consultation survey

13. The survey questions were set out to capture both quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data can be reviewed in Consultation data report Annex A. The qualitative data provides an opportunity to understand what residents think about the Vision Zero Strategy, and whether they are supportive of its aims. Respondents were free to respond to as many qualitative survey questions as they wished, and they did not have to respond if they did not

want to. As a result, the number of responses varies from question to question. There were 5,276 qualitative data responses.

14. The qualitative responses were reviewed to understand firstly the main overarching theme of the response, and then what the detailed theme of the response was. They were also categorised by the 'tone' of the response, either positive, neutral, or negative.

Main Themes

15. The public consultation question which gathered the most overall quantitative data responses was whether respondents thought we have the right key areas or 'aspects' for Vision Zero to focus on. 1255 of the respondents gave their views on this, with 35.5% saying "yes", 33.7% saying "partly", and 29.9% saying "no". 0.9% responded, "I don't know". There were 718 supporting qualitative responses to this this question, with the main theme being general opposition. In reviewing the responses, it was evident that Vision Zero as a safe system concept, is not familiar to people, and is not understood or known as a holistic approach to road safety. This has evidenced that we need to do more in terms of communication and engagement with Vision Zero.
16. This unfamiliarity with Vision Zero's safe system approach was also evidenced when each of the Let's talk Oxfordshire qualitative responses were reviewed overall, and categorised to understand how respondents feel about the Vision Zero Strategy. The overall top 5 main themes are shown in table 1 below.

| Main Theme | No of respondents | % of total responses |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Opposition | 941 | 17.83% |
| Delivery | 939 | 17.79% |
| Infrastructure | 637 | 12.09% |
| Speed | 438 | 8.3% |
| Support | 398 | 7.55% |

Table 1. Main Themes

17. The 941 main theme responses catalogued as 'Opposition' cover a wide range of concerns, ranging from requests to carry out improved road maintenance to fix potholes, to concerns regarding traffic flow across the network, and negative perceptions of the 20mph and Low Traffic Neighbourhood programmes, where it has been perceived that the Council is limiting residents' mobility. There were also requests for the restriction of various modes of transport such as HGVs, and E-bikes and Scooters. There was very limited feedback on the actual contents of the draft Vision Zero Strategy document, or Vision Zero as a safe system approach itself. When the Strategy was referred to, the detailed themes where the cost of delivery, or the aspects within the Vision Zero Strategy that are not felt to be within the Council's remit, for example post-collision response.
18. The 939 main theme responses regarding Delivery where again, for a wide range of reasons; concerns that it is not possible to deliver Vision Zero, issues

were raised regarding the delivery of other specific schemes and highway infrastructure, and there were requests for delivery of specific schemes and highway infrastructure. The need to balance delivery of Vision Zero with other priorities and demands given the current economic climate was also raised. There was also challenge over the delivery of the Vision Zero action plan, and how achievable the actions are.

19. Highway surfacing improvements and infrastructure implementation requests were the main reasons for the 637 infrastructure responses. There were of requests for road user segregation, junctions, and signage improvements. There was challenge that highway surfacing issues should be improved before Vision Zero is progressed. We will take forward specific infrastructure requests raised via the responses to the relevant services.
20. The 438 responses regarding speed echoed the concerns raised under opposition but were more focused on the perception that the Council is limiting residents' mobility, by setting speed limits. Setting speed restrictions has been perceived by many of the respondents as imposing restrictions on car use generally and not fully understood as a road safety measure that reduces road safety fatalities and serious road injuries. Again, this evidences that further communication and engagement on the road safety benefits of Vision Zero is required.
21. There was support for the Vision Zero strategy, with 398 responses evidencing this. The detailed themes evidenced support for the 20mph and Low Traffic Neighbourhood programmes, and support for embracing a safer system approach to road safety. Support was also given by a wide range of stakeholders, Oxford Pedestrians Association, the British Horse Society, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT), Cyclox, The Road Safety Foundation, The Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils, and Councillors from across a wide range of Oxfordshire's Parish, District and Town Councils.

Detailed Themes

22. The "Let's talk Oxfordshire" qualitative responses have also been reviewed to understand the detailed themes raised via the consultation. As explained above responses were reviewed to understand the 'tone' of the response, as this has a bearing on the level of support and understanding of Vision Zero as a safe system. There were responses that did not even mention or refer to Vision Zero or the strategy, and that were just a specific request for an infrastructure improvement. These responses have been categorised as either neutral or negative, and those who expressed support for Vision Zero and the strategy have been categorised as positive.
23. As evidenced by the main themes, delivery was raised as one of the concerns via the detailed themes and, and the tone of the responses was negative. This underlines the challenges we are aware of for delivering Vision Zero, and the

level of communication and engagement required to support its delivery. Please see table 2 for the detailed theme analysis:

| Question | Narrative responses | | | Tone | | |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------|---------|----------|
| | Total no of respondents | Main Theme - No of respondents | Detailed themes | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Q18. Do you think these are the right targets for the Vision Zero Strategy? If not yes, please tell us why you gave that answer. | 773 | Delivery 553 | • Not deliverable | 0 | 56 | 327 |
| | | | • Targets should be sooner | 0 | 125 | 2 |
| | | | • All Other detailed themes combined | 0 | 33 | 10 |
| Q21. Please share your comments on the action plan | 782 | Opposition 321 | • General opposition – (not achievable / concern re: costs / focus on road maintenance) | 0 | 21 | 294 |
| | | | • LTN Opposition | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | • Unrealistic | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Q10. Please share your comments on the 'Safe Roads and Roadside' aspect | 496 | Infrastructure 229 | • Improve Road Maintenance | 0 | 26 | 52 |
| | | | • Need segregation of modes | 4 | 60 | 6 |
| | | | • All Other detailed themes combined | 1 | 61 | 19 |
| Q12. Please share your comments on the safe 'Safe Speeds' aspect | 498 | Speed 218 | • 20mph support | 40 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | • 20mph opposition | 0 | 4 | 27 |
| | | | • All Other detailed themes combined | 34 | 52 | 51 |
| Q6. Do you support the council adopting a Vision Zero Strategy? Please tell us why you gave that answer. | 681 | Delivery 192 | • Not deliverable | 0 | 17 | 120 |
| | | | • All Other detailed themes combined | 0 | 30 | 27 |

Table 2. Detailed theme analysis

Officer response to objections / concerns

24. Thames Valley Police raised no objections to the draft Vision Zero Strategy and underlined their key role in Oxfordshire's road safety. Greater police enforcement of highway law was one of the main consultation themes, as well as requests for greater partnership working with Thames Valley Police to deliver Vision Zero. We will continue to engage with Thames Valley Police to support greater enforcement and take steps to develop the Joint Vision Zero Partnership Board as requested.
25. Go-Ahead Group's Oxford Bus Company provided a helpful and detailed response to the consultation, which outlines their very extensive and rigorous approach to safety, including information on their driver training practices, their safety monitoring via their increased use of data and technology. Their feedback covered several concerns:
 - The rise of 'micro-mobility'; E-bikes and E-scooters which can now travel at higher speeds and are currently unregulated. We have updated the strategy to include supporting the enforcement of E-Bikes and E-scooters where data shows that they pose a road safety risk.
 - The need to work more closely with them regarding Vision Zero, and when reviewing speed limits and future 20mph programme expansions Go-Ahead have requested that they are more involved in the Vision Zero Programme, and we welcome their commitment, and we will engage more fully with them in future.
 - The need for more knowledge and information sharing on their high safety standards, and their new fleet, which will have improved safety technology, especially regarding vulnerable road users.
26. The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), one of our Vision Zero stakeholders, has raised concerns on the County Council using Vision Zero as a safe system approach. Their concerns are that Vision Zero is not a guarantee of road safety,

and that the terminology of 'safe' needs to be replaced with 'safer'. They have concerned that Vision Zero regularly places other priorities such as increasing active travel and improving air quality ahead of the road safety of motorcyclists. They recommend their 'Welcoming Roads'¹ approach as a more pragmatic approach to road safety. They also noted motorcyclists were not included in the road user hierarchy in the draft Strategy document. We very much consider motorcyclist as vulnerable road users and have updated the road user hierarchy in the updated version of the strategy (Annex B). We welcome and appreciate their feedback regarding the Vision Zero safe system approach and will work with them to positively engage with how we can adapt our Vision Zero approach to accommodate motorcyclists fully.

27. The concerns regarding the perception that the County Council is restricting car use, mobility generally or impeding traffic flows, need to be considered in terms of how Vision Zero is perceived, and how highway schemes and infrastructure changes are communicated in future. The consultation feedback has highlighted the need for more communication and engagement generally, and especially regarding Vision Zero and how the safe system works. This can be related to other areas of work where the general communication of our approach to transport and highways needs to improve to enable the public to understand Oxfordshire County Councils aims better.
28. Concerns from different roads users regarding their interaction with other road users and other modes of transport and the need for specific road safety improvements to accommodate vulnerable road users, needs to be carefully considered. The consultation was valuable to understand concerns from the perspective of all road users, and this will be considered in the delivery of Vision Zero.
29. The concerns regarding the achievement of our Vision Zero targets, the programme delivery, its costs and long-term benefits as a road safety approach are noted. Initial funding is available for Vision Zero. There are challenges to achieving our targets, but Vision Zero provides a framework by which to address them. As outlined in the consultation feedback, partnership working is key. We have detailed within the strategy the steps we need to take to improve partnership working and look forward to engaging with our partners more closely.

Further actions

30. Following the review of the consultation responses, several requested changes have been made to the Strategy document, to ensure it is understood better, and has accommodated specific requests. The updated version is in Annex C.
31. As mentioned above, where specific concerns or issues regarding highway infrastructure have been raised, we will engage with services to address them where applicable. The County Council has a comprehensive roads and

¹ [MAG launches Welcoming Roads – a new vision for road safety. \(mag-uk.org\)](https://www.mag-uk.org)

highway maintenance programme ², and the Highway Asset Management Plan supports the ambitions with the Vision Zero Strategy in terms of investment priorities.

32. There will be a review of how we can better communicate the Vision Zero safe system approach, and road safety improvements generally.
33. We will engage with our stakeholders to strengthen our Partnership working and look to developing and setting up a Vision Zero Partnership board to support the delivery of Vision Zero in future.
34. The Vision Zero action plan detailed the actions on Vision Zero delivery; this will be monitored by and reported into the Vision Zero Steering Group. Our key performance indicators will be reported on for the ongoing analysis of how successfully Vision Zero is delivered, and our overall targets will be reviewed in terms of bring the 2050 target forward to 2030 for our urban areas.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

35. The Vision Zero Strategy aligns with several of the County Council's 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.
36. Vision Zero will support and help to deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.
37. Successfully delivering Vision Zero will also be an enabler and key to the success of health and active travel initiatives and programmes.

Financial Implications

38. The approved Vision Zero Outline Business Case has a capital programme funding envelope of £4m which is profiled to be delivered by 2025/26. The programme will aim to deliver holistic and cost-effective road safety improvements by ensuring schemes are aligned with other highway maintenance, major infrastructure, and active travel programmes. In addition, there is an existing revenue allocation of £0.25m from the Budget Priorities Reserve.
39. There are no direct financial Implications to adopting the Vision Zero strategy and action plan. In order to deliver the targets, set out with the documents investment in infrastructure and other initiatives will be required. This will come from a variety of sources – such as; grants, developer funding, council funding.

² [Roads and highways maintenance in Oxfordshire | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

40. Any further funding, if the strategy is approved, will be considered through the council's budget setting process.

Comments checked by:

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And

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Legal Implications

41. Under the general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with the council's duties under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and in its role as highway authority under the Highways Act 1980 and as traffic authority under the Traffic Management Act 2004 the council has powers to provide safer roads and the Council is exercising these powers by way of the Vision Zero Strategy.
42. All Vision Zero schemes that are delivered are to be carried in accordance with the relevant powers and, as necessary, are to be subject to statutory consultation.

Comments checked by:

Karen Jordan, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader,
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Procurement

43. Vision Zero will mainly use existing county council contracts, such as the use of Milestone's highway maintenance contract for the delivery of minor-short term improvements. If delivery of the strategy does require something outside of existing contracts, this will be sourced through a compliant appropriate procurement route to market.

Comments checked by:

Melissa Sage, Head of Procurement Contract Management,
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Staff Implications

44. The commitment to Vision Zero has been progressed, developed and delivered using existing staff supplemented with consultancy support as required - covering both general and specialist extra capacity. Staffing and any necessary additional consultancy support will be funded from the vision zero budgets outlined within this report as appropriate.

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Implications

44. The Vision Zero Strategy supports the Council's LTCP Vision, key outcomes, and it focuses on our priorities of prioritising Active Travel and Public Transport and achieving the Council's Vision Zero target of zero road safety fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

45. An overarching Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the programme. This concludes there are no negative consequences for protected characteristics, or wider community 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.

Sustainability Implications

46. An overarching Climate Impact Assessment has been completed for the Vision Zero programme. This concludes there are no negative consequences or climate change impacts as a result of implementing Vision Zero. Delivery of Vision Zero will contribute towards delivery of reduced transport emissions by helping to improve road safety and supporting the uptake of active travel. To confirm any policy, infrastructure, or Traffic Order change etc, will be consulted on individually as required.

Risk Management

47. There are three main risks regarding delivery of Vision Zero; 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). The third is reputational risk for the County Council if we fail to achieve the targets set. A risk register is being developed will be managed through the normal programme management process.

Bill Cotton

Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annexes:

Annex A – Let's Talk Quantitative Consultation Report

Annex B – Let's talk Qualitative Consultation report

Annex C - Updated Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: [Approval of Vision Zero commitment by Cabinet – June 2022](#)
[Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee – February 2024](#)

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