

Divisions Affected - All

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 4 February 2026

Road Safety Initiatives in Oxfordshire

Report by the Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

Review the information from the officers' report and use as a basis for further discussion within the Scrutiny session planned.

Executive Summary

2. This paper outlines how Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) promotes and educates for road safety alongside engineering and operational measures, within a Safe System framework. It sets out the strategic context and Vision Zero ambition (zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050, with an interim 50% reduction by 2030) and describes the collaborative delivery model between Highway Maintenance & road safety and Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS).

Background

3. **Legal and strategic context.** OCC has statutory duties to maintain the highway (Highways Act 1980, s.41) and to promote road safety and prevent collisions (Road Traffic Act 1988, s.39). The County's Vision Zero Strategy (approved April 2024) adopts the Safe System approach as the central organising principle for road safety in Oxfordshire and is monitored through LTCP annual reporting to Cabinet.
4. **Network context.** OCC manages over 3,000 miles of road and approximately 1,979 miles of footways/cycleways, with extensive drainage, signage and signal assets. Operational maintenance and inspections integrate safety with priorities shaped by collision data, defects and network use and potential latent demand.

Current Strategy for Road Safety

5. In April 2024, the council adopted its Vision Zero strategy. (Annex1)

6. Vision Zero is a safe system road safety concept that originated in Sweden in the 1990s. Vision Zero focuses on a whole safe system approach. This is rooted in the belief that every traffic death is a result of human failure.
7. By focusing on the safe system approach the aim is to create a comprehensive and holistic approach to making our streets, roads, and roadsides safer. This ensures Vision Zero is not just a technical solution but also encourages a cultural and behavioural shift towards a more human-based, compassionate, and inclusive approach to road safety.
8. The Vision Zero whole system approach encompasses 5 aspects:
 - (a) **Safe Roads and Roadside:** Designing roads and streets that are safe and forgiving, that are self-explaining, with features such as speed calming measures, clear signage, segregation of cyclists and vehicles where possible, and safe crossings. Restrictions and measures are supported with appropriate enforcement.
 - (b) **Safe Vehicles:** Encouraging the use of vehicles with advanced safety features that reduce the risk of collisions, such as automatic emergency braking systems, and lane departure warnings, which provide high levels of protection to vehicle occupants should a collision occur.
 - (c) **Safe Speeds:** Reducing vehicle speeds to levels that are safe for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorcyclists, and motorists.
 - (d) **Safe Users:** Promoting safe behaviour changes by all road users through road safety education, enforcement, and community outreach. Improved road safety for road users also encourages mobility, and sustainable active travel mode shifts.
 - (e) **Post Collision Response:** Ensuring a holistic Post Collision Response that prioritises scene safety and stabilisation, from the initial first aid, all the way through to collision analysis and reviews, learning from investigations, and effective and long-term post collision care.

Activities to Support Road Safety

9. We work collaboratively with Thames Valley Police on the Thames Valley Road Safety Working group, we are members of Road Safety GB, (RSGB) nationally and work closer to home with the SE RSGB group. As an FRS we also working with the National Fire Chiefs Council, (NFCC) and are part of the Road Safety arm within this.
10. We also align with the National Police Chiefs Council, (NPCC), RSGB and NFCC national calendars so we have monthly targeted themes and within this we often join TVP on tasking event such as Drink Drug driving (including morning after), Mobile phone use, Dark nights – be bright be seen and lights on

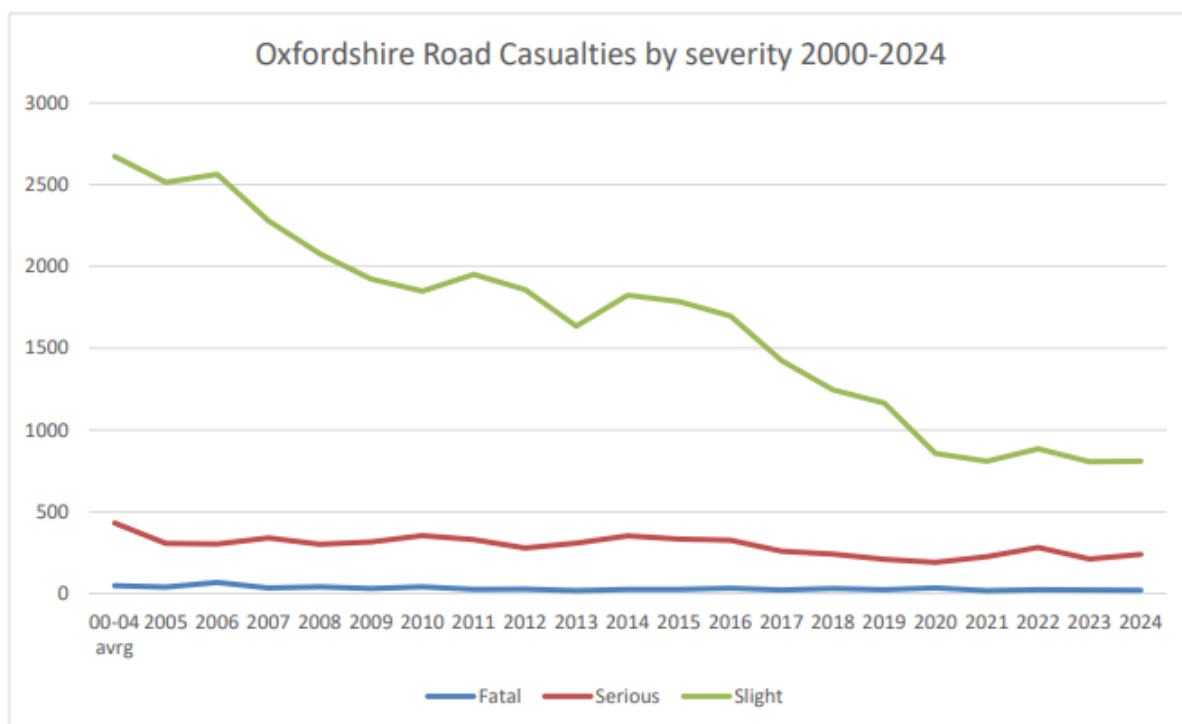
bikes (where we also target illegal eBikes and scooters), Close pass, and safe vehicles.

11. Annex 3 shows a presentation submitted by TVP to help the committee to understand their commitments to road safety.
12. Annex 4 shows the schools education programme and calendar of events planned to be delivered during the year.
13. The capital funding allocation for Vision Zero has since 2022 seen approximately 50 safety schemes being implemented (or awaiting construction) with additional schemes being funded – subject to confirmation of the budget – in 2026/27; this includes completing a comprehensive review of speed limits on the rural A and B road network. Separately approximately 275 20mph limit schemes have been implemented under the Councils' 20mph Transformation Programme.
14. Additionally, Department for Transport funding under their Safer Roads programme has been secured for four routes in Oxford, three of which have been implemented with a fourth now at the stakeholder consultation stage.
15. Improving safety is also a key consideration in County Council transport projects that primarily address other Local Transport and Connectivity Plan objectives and in the same way every opportunity is taken in the design of safety schemes to contribute to the latter, especially in respect of active travel.
16. Similarly, the management of development in partnership with the District Councils is focussed on ensuring that LTCP objectives including safety are met, both in respect of the overall layout of new development and the detailed design of new highway and transport infrastructure being delivered.
17. We are obliged to analyse the data provided on the number of casualties which occur on our network. An annual report is produced and can be found using the link below.
18. Annex 2 contains the OCC Road Traffic Accident Data Summary 2024
19. This Casualty Report provides information on the number of casualties sustained as a result of road traffic collisions on the public highway within Oxfordshire in 2024 (including the M40, A34 and A43 which are managed by National Highways) as collected by Thames Valley Police as part of their national roads safety incident reporting system, referred to as STATS19 data, managed by the Department for Transport (DfT).
20. The road safety casualty data only includes collision data attended by the police where there has been a fatal, serious or slight injury reported, or those casualties reported on-line via the police website. This road safety data is also sometimes referred to as road safety incident data

21. The Council also receives high level road safety injury data from our local NHS A&E services on the number of people they treat for injuries sustained in traffic collisions. This provides a further source of information that is used as part of the Council's road safety work.

Impact of Road Safety Initiatives

22. The graph below shows the number of fatal, serious and slight casualties in Oxfordshire since 2000. This shows that the steady decline in casualties to 2020 has levelled off in recent years.



Graph 1. Oxfordshire – Killed / Serious / Slight casualties 2000 - 2024.

23. It shows casualty reductions over the period from 2000 to 2020, with an increase in slight and serious casualties beginning in 2021 and 2020 respectively. There was a reduction in all forms of travel over the COVID-19 pandemic period, but travel volumes since then are increasing back to pre-pandemic levels.
24. Although there is no hard evidence to fully explain the marked reduction in the number of slight casualties from 2000, there are several factors that may have contributed to it, including improved car and vehicle safety, greater awareness of road safety campaigns such as drink-driving, and improved road infrastructure.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

25. This work supports the Council's Strategic Plan and LTCP objectives to enable safe, healthy, equitable mobility, encourage active travel, and reduce

inequalities in road risk, consistent with the Safe System approach set out on the OCC Vision Zero webpage.

Financial Implications

26. Budgets are managed from those which have been identified and agreed through the annual budget setting process.
27. Road safety and delivery of our ambition is considered through all spend and projects, but in terms of a specific Vision Zero programme, the current budget allocation within the MTFP is, 2025/26 £3.1m and for 26/27 £2.9m (draft)
28. In addition, the county council made a bid for funding to make key safety improvements on Banbury Road and Iffley Road in 2023 and were awarded £1.675m from the Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund to deliver the safety works

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Legal Implications

29. Road safety in relation to maintenance is undertaken in compliance with the council's duty to maintain the highway set out in section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 and to promote road safety and prevent collisions (Road Traffic Act 1988, s.39).
30. There is no change to the policy and as this paper is brought to Scrutiny for awareness, and there are no new proposals.

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Staff Implications

31. Delivery is through existing teams in Highway Maintenance & Road Safety alongside OCC/OFRS Road Safety Education team supported by Communications, Network Management, Public Health and partner agencies (e.g., Thames Valley Police).

Equality & Inclusion Implications

32. Programmes prioritise vulnerable road users (children and young people, older people, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists) and address geographical

disparities in road risk, supporting safer, more inclusive mobility. An overarching assessment was included within the Cabinet report for the adoption of the strategy, and each scheme considers within in its own right as they are developed.

Sustainability Implications

33. Safer roads and lower traffic speeds enable modal shift to walking and cycling, contributing to public health and climate objectives. Engineering measures and education programmes are designed to be long-lasting and scalable across the network. An overarching assessment was included within the Cabinet report for the adoption of the strategy, and each scheme considers within in its own right as they are developed.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annexes:

Annex 1: Vision Zero Strategy

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/VisionZeroStrategyandActionPlan.pdf>

Annex 2: Oxfordshire Casualty Report 2024

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/CasualtyReport2024.pdf>

Annex 3: TVP Joint Operations Unit Road Safety Presentation



TVP Oxford
Committee (002).pdf

Annex 4: Road Safety Education Team calendar of events and Schools Education Programme



CALENDAR
20252026.pdf



OFRS%20Schools%
20education%20Pro

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