

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

17 March 2026

Road Safety

Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
 - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Road Safety at its meeting on 04 February 2026.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Sean Rooney, Head of Service – Highway Maintenance and Road Safety, Andrew Ford, Road Safety Education Team Manager at Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, and Anthony Kirkwood, Team Leader – Vision Zero, for attending to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.
5. The Committee had anticipated that this item would provide an opportunity to scrutinise both the Council and Thames Valley Police and the work they each

do both separately and together. The Committee noted the apologies from the Road Traffic Unit at Thames Valley Police (TVP) that no-one was able to attend but was grateful for the presentation they had provided¹ as well as both a brief statement and a future commitment to attend a meeting of the Committee.

SUMMARY

6. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management emphasised that road safety sits at the heart of all transport policy, with Vision Zero operating as the overarching framework guiding decision-making. He reiterated the central principle that deaths and serious injuries should never be regarded as an inevitable consequence of economic activity or mobility and stressed the Council's ambition to eliminate such harms entirely. He highlighted a range of ongoing initiatives – including the countywide 20mph programme, expansion of School Streets, and delivery of segregated active-travel infrastructure – emphasising that across the network safety must take precedence.
7. The Head of Service for Highway Maintenance and Road Safety underlined the interdependence of maintenance and safety, stressing that both must be managed together within a unified system. He explained that Vision Zero requires cohesive working across engineering, operations, maintenance and engagement teams, and that collaboration is essential to ensure safety objectives are embedded throughout the Council's activity. His evidence emphasised the need for consistent, cross-service strategies and for safety considerations to be systematically integrated into routine inspection, maintenance, and programme planning.
8. The Road Safety Education Team Manager at Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS) described how road safety education now forms part of the service's Prevention team and is structured around the longstanding "three Es": Environment, Education, and Enforcement. He outlined a wide range of programmes successfully delivered to schools and communities, including pedestrian training, cycle training reaching more than 6,000 children annually, behavioural-change work with young drivers, and targeted engagement with motorcyclists. He noted a desire to reach all schools, though instructor capacity remained a constraint. The Director of Environment and Highways added that the publication of the new national Road Safety Strategy provided an opportunity to review and update Oxfordshire's Vision Zero Strategy, strengthen partnership work, and ensure alignment with emerging best practice.
9. Public addresses to the Committee had highlighted network design, freight safety, and resource levels for Vision Zero as issues of concern to the public. During the Committee's discussion with the Cabinet member and the officers, members explored trends in casualty data, noting increases in pedestrian Killed or Seriously Injured incidents (KSIs) and concerns around junction

¹ Published as Annex 3 to the report: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=35248>

safety, potholes and arterial road speeds. The Committee discussed the adequacy of enforcement, especially around 20mph compliance, and welcomed TVP's forthcoming tasking team.

10. Detailed questioning covered Bikeability capacity, structural organisation of road safety education, and the need for stable recruitment models. Members raised issues around signage at School Streets, the importance of locality-level data sharing, and inconsistent post-collision communication.
11. The Committee makes 11 recommendations. These are grouped into four sections: there are four which relate to communication, governance, and data use; three relating to education, training, and behaviour change; three under the heading of targeted safety interventions for high-risk users and locations. The last recommendation relates to the Council's role in shaping wider policy and standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication, Governance, and Data Use

12. The Committee notes that, as part of the Vision Zero strategy, the Council is committed to an 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."² Effective post-collision communication between relevant agencies is essential to ensure timely intelligence reaches highways teams and improves the Council's ability to respond to serious incidents. One member highlighted a case where it was felt that inconsistent reporting from Thames Valley Police prevented prompt action. Strengthening this process will support the safe system approach emphasised in the Vision Zero Strategy.
13. Improved communication would allow earlier intervention on high-risk locations, helping prevent recurrence and aligning with duties under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s.39. It would also support more transparent data-sharing, which members stressed as critical.
14. The Committee considers that improving both post-collision communication and follow-up would enhance public trust and also demonstrate the Council's proactive commitment to learning from serious incidents. Better follow-up will also support stronger partnership working across the system, with TVP, OFRS and NHS partners.
15. The Committee is concerned that declining to adopt this recommendation risks continued delays in safety-critical responses, higher collision risks, and reputational harm where residents perceive that lessons from serious incidents are not being acted upon. The Committee does not consider this to

² <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/road-safety/vision-zero>

be a controversial recommendation but a straightforwardly common sense one. However good the post-collision response might be, it can always be improved.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should work to improve the post-collision responses, especially between the Council and TVP, in regard to communication and follow-up, particularly about serious incidents.

16. Members have repeatedly raised concerns about the need to strengthen communication between officers and elected members. Regrettably, that was felt to be necessary on this occasion too. Members highlighted inconsistent communication channels, particularly in relation to FixMyStreet reporting, collision follow-up, and programme decisions that rely on incident data. The Committee considered that clearer and more reliable reporting routes would improve transparency and ensure that members' detailed knowledge of their divisions, and the specific road safety issues within them, is used effectively.
17. The Vision Zero Strategy places strong emphasis on partnership working across all agencies. Officers acknowledged that communication with members could be improved and the Committee calls upon the Council to ensure that meaningful progress is made. The Committee is firmly of the view that improving trust, enabling members to act as informed advocates for their communities, and supporting more locally responsive programme planning is intrinsically beneficial. It is also wholly aligned with the ambitions of Vision Zero.
18. The Committee believes that failure to improve communication risks decisions being taken without adequate local intelligence, missed opportunities to address emerging risks, and growing frustration among members, which could in turn undermine confidence in the Council's road safety programme. The Committee considers this programme far too important for such avoidable shortcomings to continue.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should strengthen communication between officers and members, with clearer reporting routes and updates.

19. The Committee noted that the Casualty Report 2024 identified district-level variations in pedestrian, cyclist and motorcyclist casualties. District-level trends were explored in Committee, but it was recognised that local members were better-placed to drill down into the data.
20. The Committee considered that the Council's Locality meetings (of councillors in a particular area) are well placed to explore this data in detail. Providing regular data to Locality meetings would allow emerging hotspots to be identified more quickly and enable more transparent prioritisation of safety interventions, consistent with the Safe Roads and Safe Users pillars.
21. Referring data to Locality meetings for local analysis would strengthen evidence-led decision-making as well as ensuring that local members are able to share their knowledge and awareness constructively. It could also ensure

that insights from collision patterns inform future capital and maintenance programme planning.

Recommendation 3: That the Council should ensure Vision Zero / road safety data is taken to Locality meetings for more granular analysis.

22. The Committee recognised that the annexes to the report were not newly-produced documents expressly intended for the Committee's attention. However, members noted actions marked as complete or overdue were not consistently recorded in Annex A. The Committee considers that a clear record is necessary for monitoring accountability, governance and delivery. The Committee considers that failure to update records risks confusion about progress, misalignment of resources, and also weakens the opportunity for effective scrutiny.
23. Vision Zero is a long-term programme requiring clear progress tracking. Accurate action status supports annual reporting and Cabinet oversight and therefore improves transparency, ensuring accurate governance and also member confidence.
24. The Committee was grateful that officers recognised the need to update the action plan and therefore calls on the Council to ensure it is done.

Recommendation 4: That the Council should update the Vision Zero Action Plan (Annex 1 and Annex A) so that actions marked as complete or overdue are properly recorded.

Education, Training, and Behaviour Change

25. The Road Safety Education Manager reported that instructor capacity remains under significant pressure. Whilst more than 6,000 children are trained each year, delivery is increasingly constrained by workforce shortages. The Committee was advised that these recruitment challenges reflect a wider national pattern. Members considered that it would be prudent for the Council to investigate the underlying causes of these shortages, since expanding instructor capacity would directly support the ambition to provide universal cycle training.
26. The Committee noted the broad range of education programmes offered in Oxfordshire but expressed concern about the reliance on multiple contracted providers. Members suggested that Cambridgeshire's more stable model, delivered largely through a single organisation rather than several, may offer a helpful comparator for future consideration.
27. The Committee is keen to ensure that the Council does not face persistent gaps in delivery, reduced school participation, or inequitable access across the county. Given that Bikeability funding is increasingly focused on measurable outcomes, the Committee believes that strengthening internal and external capacity is both necessary and desirable.

28. Launching a successful recruitment campaign would help to support safer cycling outcomes, contribute to the Safe Users element of Vision Zero, and reinforce long-term behaviour change among young people. It would also provide a more resilient basis for programme delivery. The Committee further considers that, given the strong enthusiasm for cycling across many parts of Oxfordshire and the Council's commitment to high-quality cycling infrastructure, it is quite possible that a number of voluntary groups would be willing to support such a campaign.

Recommendation 5: That the Council should launch a campaign to recruit more Bikeability instructors and, also, investigate the underlying limiting factors.

29. Members heard that, despite extensive educational work, marketing and communication continue to pose a major barrier to reaching the public effectively. Officers explained that they would welcome a clearer and more accessible website dedicated specifically to road safety, rather than relying on pages within the general Council website. This, together with improved publicity materials, would provide stronger support for behaviour-change campaigns.
30. Communication is a central element of both the Safe Users and Safe Speeds pillars within the Vision Zero strategy. Strengthened website content would assist the monthly themed campaigns delivered with TVP and OFRS, and would ensure that residents can easily access guidance on cycling, pedestrian safety, and post-collision support.
31. The Committee is concerned that a sub-optimal website risks ongoing fragmentation of information, reduced public engagement with safety advice, and weaker behaviour-change outcomes that are essential to achieving Vision Zero objectives. It therefore calls on the Council to improve the road safety website and to allocate the necessary resources to do so. The Committee believes that these improvements would strengthen public awareness, support higher compliance with speed limits, and enhance the visibility of safety campaigns. They would also provide a central and trusted source of information for schools, partners and the wider public.

Recommendation 6: That the Council should improve the road safety website and marketing, ensuring clearer public information and better visibility of safety campaigns.

32. Members, and residents generally, are acutely aware that schools are critical partners in shaping long-term behaviour change. Officers outlined a number of successful programmes, including the Footsteps pedestrian training scheme and OFRS's wider road safety education offer, which already engage closely with school communities.
33. The Committee considered that it would be helpful were the Council to encourage schools to designate an internal road safety lead. Such a role

would strengthen coordination between the Council and individual schools, as well as between schools within local areas. Members were of the view that road safety leads would complement existing Bikeability provision and support emerging work to promote a more visible and embedded safety culture across school communities.

34. The Committee further believed that establishing road safety leads would help embed Vision Zero principles from an early age, ensuring consistent messaging and enabling more effective collaboration with Council teams. This is why it believes the Council should encourage schools to identify and empower designated leads, supporting them to champion the importance of road safety within their settings.

Recommendation 7: That the Council should encourage primary schools to have local leads for road safety.

Targeted Safety Interventions for High-Risk Users and Locations

35. The Committee noted that pedestrian casualties rose by 42% in 2024, with 83% occurring at speeds ≤ 30 mph, demonstrating the vulnerability of pedestrians even at lower speeds. District data in Annex 2 showed notable concentrations in the Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council areas.
36. Members raised concerns about junction safety, turning movements, and inadequate crossings. The Committee considered that a targeted programme would support Safe Roads interventions and improve protection for the most vulnerable road users.
37. The Council's commitments under the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) to improve active travel safety are such that it necessary to strengthen the strategic focus on high-harm user groups. The transport user hierarchy means that pedestrians are at the top according to the Highway Code but it also the case that, under the LTCP, walking will be considered foremost. Not having a specific pedestrian safety programme could risk preventable injuries continuing which would, in turn, undermine public confidence. It would also weaken progress towards Vision Zero's 2030 reduction targets.
38. The Committee recognises that such a campaign would require resource to be dedicated to it but believes that to be necessary.

Recommendation 8: That the Council should develop a specific pedestrian safety programme, focussed on areas with high numbers of fatal and serious pedestrian casualties.

39. The Committee notes that speeding remains one of the "Fatal 5" causes of collisions. The Committee noted that TVP's presentation contained within the papers for the meeting showed significant enforcement activity but, at the same time, growing road policing demand. Members heard that compliance with 20mph limits varied and further enforcement is needed.

40. The Committee highlights that TVP's presentation at Annex 3 outlined emerging technologies including new camera types and a forthcoming agile tasking team. The Committee is of the view that collaboration with TVP would help to ensure that enforcement aligned with local risk. The Committee recognises that TVP taking enforcement action cannot be dictated by either the Committee's recommendations or by the Council's requests.
41. However, the Committee is of the view that it is imperative that the Council seeks to use its leverage to work with TVP to encourage greater enforcement, including the use of more speed cameras. This would, the Committee posits, contribute to improving compliance, reducing collision severity, supporting Safe Speeds outcomes (particularly on the A and B roads highlighted in the casualty data before the Committee), increasing deterrence, and better outcomes from recent policy investments in 20mph rollouts.

Recommendation 9: That the Council should work with Thames Valley Police to encourage the increase of enforcement, including use of more speed cameras.

42. Members highlighted that there had been delays in updating Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to reflect newly implemented 20mph speed limits. Officers confirmed that approximately fifty units were still awaiting conversion, and the Committee considered that reviewing the deployment, condition and accuracy of these signs would help to ensure consistency across the network. Such a review was viewed as an important means of improving compliance with the new limits and maximising the effectiveness of the recent 20mph transformation programme.
43. The Committee also recognised that well-placed VAS units can support behavioural change, particularly in locations where enforcement resources may be limited. One 2024 study³, for example, found that VAS installations at 20 mph sites produced statistically significant reductions in vehicle speeds, even without enforcement presence. Accepting this recommendation would therefore ensure the Council makes the best possible use of its existing assets, both reinforcing the visibility of speed limits and also promoting safer driving behaviour. These, in turn, would contribute to safer streets and strengthen public confidence in the Council's approach to speed management.
44. By contrast, failing to undertake such a review would risk continued inconsistency in signage across the network. This could result in reduced compliance with newly introduced limits, weaken the behavioural impacts expected from the 20mph programme, and undermine the significant investment already made. Inconsistencies in the display and functioning of VAS units also risk generating public dissatisfaction or confusion, diminishing the perceived credibility of the wider Vision Zero programme.

³ Olowosegun, A.; Fountas, G.; Davis, A. Effective Trigger Speeds for Vehicle Activated Signs on 20 mph Roads in Rural Areas. *Safety* 2024, 10, 25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/safety10010025>

Recommendation 10: That the Council should review the use and deployment of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to assess effectiveness and improve the process.

Strategic and National-Level Influence

45. Freight movement is essential to the economy, but the fact that it is often transported by Heavy Goods Vehicles means that large and potentially dangerous vehicles routinely travel through local communities. Members highlighted the importance of the Direct Vision Standard, the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) and the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) framework, noting the safety benefits each can deliver. Officers confirmed that work is already underway locally, particularly through the Council's Freight and Logistics Strategy, but also noted that national type approval is ultimately required to achieve the greatest impact.
46. Given the role of freight in serious collisions, including those involving vulnerable road users, the Committee believes that national standards would deliver significant safety benefits. The Committee recognises that the Council cannot itself create or enforce HGV safety regulations on a wider basis. However, it can advocate for them to national politicians, policy leads and other key stakeholders. The Committee considers that such advocacy has the potential to bring real benefits and should therefore be undertaken.
47. The Committee is clear that no one wishes to see slow progress on freight safety. Successfully advocating for improved HGV safety standards would not only support local safety efforts but would also reinforce the Council's position as a national leader in this area. If the Council has an opportunity to help influence national policy, the Committee believes that it should take that opportunity.

Recommendation 11: That the Council should advocate nationally for improved HGV safety standards (e.g., type-approval requirements).

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

48. The Committee does not anticipate revisiting this topic again during this municipal year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

49. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.'

50. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney
Scrutiny Officer
richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2026