



AVZ blog (September 2021) - Warwickshire consults on new Road Safety Strategy

The [Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership \(WRSP\)](#) is consulting on a [new road safety strategy](#) to 2030. Please do not miss this chance to ensure it reduces road danger. Consultation closes on the 15th September and the response form is short.

Warwickshire Road Safety Strategy (WRSP) –AVZ key points

- The goal should be encouragement of active and sustainable travel, that will lead to casualty reduction – the strategy has it the other way around.
- The WRSP's vision should prioritise creating a safe road environment which will encourage active and sustainable travel in order to eliminate fatal and serious injuries (not vice versa as in the draft strategy).
- The indicator of perception of safety for cycling should be kept (it is on the partnership's [website](#) but not in the draft strategy)
- Careless and Dangerous driving should be priority offences for the police, with investment in processing Operation Snap (more than the current one officer who is also coordinating [56 Community Speed Watch schemes](#))
- Speed enforcement should focus on lower speed roads shared with walkers and cyclists.
- Post Collision Response work area should include quality assurance with investigation, greater transparency with prosecution, and road crash victims surveyed as well as supported.
- Greater transparency is needed on enforcement with timely data provided by local authority level and by speed limit. A suggested list of data requests is shown at the end.
- Danger should be tackled at source with a focus on those posing harm to others (not the traditional casualty group approach). Car drivers will be involved in almost all crashes reported to the police.

Background

Action Vision Zero (AVZ) key concerns are summarised here, along with what we welcome from Warwickshire. Their Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Philip Seccombe, a retired police officer who previously led on roads policing in Warwickshire, has a keen interest in road safety. Warwickshire PCC leads on road safety for the PCCs in the West Midlands region, as well as on Operation Tramline for the country.

WRSP has a target of reducing KSI by 50% by 2030. The draft strategy provided information on casualties.

- Of reported KSI in Warwickshire (2015-2019)
 - There was an annual average of 365 people killed and seriously injured (KSI).
 - Car drivers accounted for 31% and car passengers (16%), motorcyclists 23%, pedestrians (14%), cyclists (10%) (car occupant KSI is same as VRU KSI).
 - 71% occurred on rural roads (AVZ analysis showed 41% reported KSI on 30 mph roads in 2019).

AVZ can provide more detail here on roads policing and enforcement.

In 2020,

- Warwickshire Police has [45 officers allocated to roads policing](#). This was 4.2% of total police in Warwickshire; this is higher than the national average of 3%.
- Warwickshire had the highest rate of [careless drivers being banned at court](#) (14%) and the second highest of speeding drivers being banned (11%), right after Wiltshire where very few speeding drivers are detected. Note that whilst Warwickshire is to be commended for having the high rates of speeding and careless drivers convicted at court to be banned, this are still low rates.
- Motoring offences accounted [for 77% of all proceedings at Magistrates courts](#) in Warwickshire, compared to 54% for England and Wales.
- But there were only [21 prosecutions for dangerous driving in Warwickshire](#), compared to 247 for drink driving and 40 for drug driving. Thus, for every dangerous driver prosecuted, there were over 14 impaired drivers prosecuted. (As discussed later, dangerous driving is not a priority offence for Warwickshire police).

In 2019

- When [officer-detected offences were compared on a per KSI basis](#), Warwickshire Police were below the national average for speeding, but above the national average for careless driving, mobile phone use and uninsured vehicles. Warwickshire Police were not in the top five performing police services for any of these four key offences.

Draft Road Safety strategy

This 56-page document includes much on how the partnership will work. It is structured by five key work areas with high level safety performance indicators and outcome indicators proposed. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) have yet to be defined but are based on those proposed previously by PACTS and expect to be at the national level and be safety related only. Outcome indicators are the activities under local control. At present those proposed in the draft strategy focus on road safety and do not promote active travel or reduced motor vehicle use.

Draft Road Safety Strategy Vision and targets

The draft strategy (pg 8) states that the [WRSP vision](#) is *Using an evidence based Safe System Approach, we will strive to eliminate fatal and serious casualties, thereby creating a safe road environment which will encourage active and sustainable travel.*

We believe this is the wrong way round. Road danger reduction (RDR) campaigners want the focus to be on reducing harm posed to others, i.e. those walking and cycling. This should lead the way on eliminating deaths and serious injuries. Safe Systems and Vision Zero approaches need to be updated to accommodate the larger issues of climate change and public health.

In addition, there is no mention in the strategy of the KPI shown on the WRSP website which states “To increase public confidence in road safety and enforcement on Warwickshire’s roads” as a key objective, with KPIs of

- [A year-on-year reduction of residents’ concern regarding the fatal four](#)
- [A year-on-year increase in residents feeling safer to cycle on Warwickshire’s roads.](#)

The cycling safety perception KPI should be included in the strategy with monitoring of responses by gender and age.

What the draft strategy has kept is the focus on the fatal four (speeding, drink/drug driving, mobile phone use and seatbelts). There is no mention of careless or dangerous driving. This is despite the [current police and crime plan](#) (pg 11) highlighting how the public have told the PCC that they wanted “*improved roads policing with a focus on poor and dangerous driving and speeding*”.

So our key calls include

- Adopt the wider RDR perspective that includes active travel and supports the decarbonisation of transport.
- Retain perception of safety whilst cycling as a KPI and monitor by gender
- Include Careless and Dangerous driving as priority offences for police.
- Tackle danger at source and analyse collision data by vehicles involved

Safe Road Users

On page 33, the [draft strategy](#) states that the Road Safety Unit has “*a specialised member of staff who reviews the Operation Snap submissions and coordinates the Community Speed Watch groups.*” That is the only mention of Operation Snap in the draft strategy. It is good that Warwickshire Police participates in Operation Snap and have committed to providing feedback to those submitting videos. But promotion and proper resourcing of Operation Snap is essential if detection of careless and dangerous drivers is to increase.

Safe vehicles

This section focuses on occupant safety with no mention of speed compliance being designed in. Safe vehicles should include partner organisations working to reduce their own use of motor vehicle trips and ensure any that are made comply with speed limits and are equipped with dash cams to help detect unsafe driving.

Safe Speeds

The strategy proposes to monitor speed enforcement but there are no actions to increase speed enforcement. Nor does it report the extent of speed enforcement on lower speed roads. In July 2021, the WRSP reported [56 Community Speed Watch groups operating](#). The WRSP has acknowledged that lower speeds are key to helping cyclists and walkers feel safe.

Post Collision Response

This strategy refers to both post collision response and post response care. These are not the same. Post collision response is wider and covers collision investigation, criminal and civil justice, as well as victim support and medical care. The first Global Plan for Road Safety had a pillar dedicated to Post collision response, as the second is expected to when it is launched next month.

Collision investigation and prosecution

Ensuring collisions are thoroughly investigated and offending detected and sanctioned are key calls for active travel campaigners and victims. The draft strategy does mention a fatal incident review saying “*consider a multi-agency review of all fatal incidents on the network to identify any lessons to be learned*”.

Most serious injury collisions do not benefit from a forensic collision investigator and can be investigated by an officer with minimal training.

The strategy should commit to reporting collision investigation outcomes as it does with other investigations. This would allow partners to know how many crashes are thought due to non-compliance.

Crash victim support

The draft strategy mentions an independent advocate to support families and third parties involved in fatal collisions. AVZ has called for crash victims to be surveyed on their level of satisfaction with the investigation and how well they have been kept informed. This already happens with other crime victims.

Our key calls for this work area include

- Publish the collision investigation policy (see Merseyside Police's)
- Ensure serious injury collisions are investigated by trained roads policing officers
- Report how and percent of serious injury investigations quality assured
- Review the reasons for no further action (no prosecution)
- Survey the level of satisfaction with crash victims of the collision investigation, information and support received

Transparency and accountability

Great that the WRSP is consulting over their strategy and its KPIs. We trust progress on the KPIs will be regularly and publicly reported. But we also need transparency with faster and better sharing of data. For instance, the draft strategy mentions cyclist casualties in Warwick whilst pedestrian injuries are more in Nuneaton. These communities should be able to know what the police are doing to protect those walking and cycling in their area.

Below is a list begun for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Offence related

1. Motoring offences by local authority and by speed limit (speeding offences) in a timely manner, i.e. quarterly updates no more than a few months old
2. % total officer detected offences which were on priority offences (these should include careless driving).
3. Number of extreme speeders (which can be compared to the number banned at court)
4. Op Snap—number of videos submitted and actions resulting
5. Close pass operations and outcomes
6. Arrest data for dangerous driving, drink/drug driving and other offences
7. Community Speed Watch—schemes, events and vehicles detected, etc
8. Investigation outcomes—how many resulted in a prosecution and how this varies by road user type involved
9. Fatal and serious injury fail to stop collision outcomes—how they were resolved with driver identified, culpability determined, criminal justice outcome, etc.
10. Revenue raised by uninsured vehicle confiscation

Surveys

11. Level of satisfaction surveys of crash victims
12. Perception of safety of people cycling and walking

Working with the community

And whilst working groups have been established on each of the areas, it is not clear if these include local campaigners or if membership is restricted to those paid to attend. We urge that WRSP continue to consult with local campaigners and include them on their working groups. RDR campaigners, including AVZ, can help develop outcome indicators that promote active travel and reduce motor vehicle use.

Contact AVZ Amy@ActionVisonZero.org for more information on the above. AVZ has Home Office data on speed enforcement in Warwickshire for 2019 they can share.