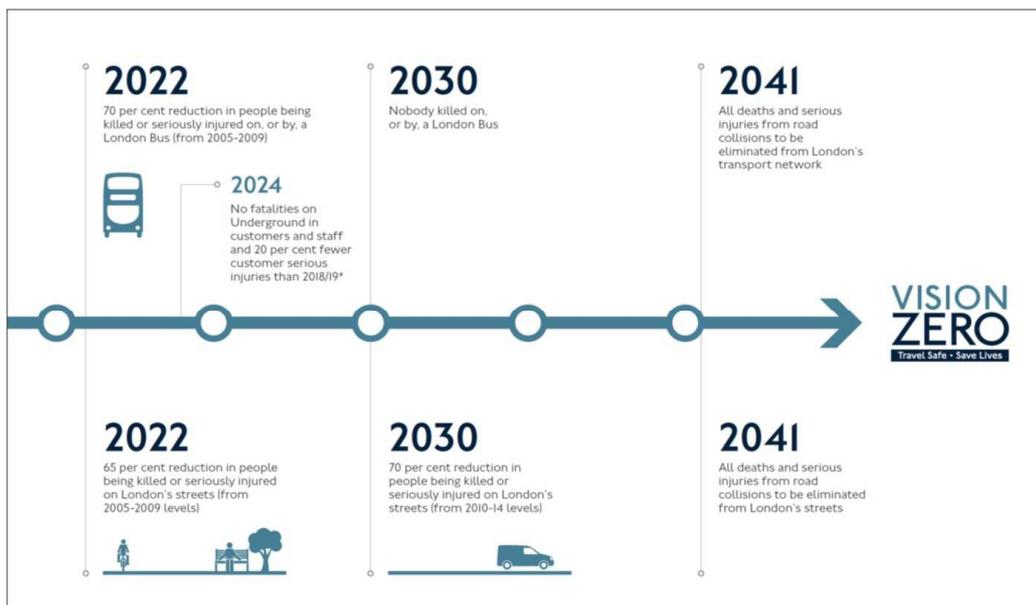




AVZ Blog (November 2021) - London Vision Zero Action Plan Progress Report: good progress but more is still possible



Just published by TfL is their three-year [progress report on the Vision Zero Action Plan](#). The original [plan](#) came out in July 2018 and the new report assesses how much progress has been made and the new actions TfL is committed to to ensure the targets can be achieved. The overall targets remain unchanged from 2018 with a date of 2041 for the elimination of fatal and serious injuries from road collisions from London's transport network.



The analysis in the report is very strong and highlights existing and emerging issues on London's roads such as the increase in driving for work, the need to address inequality, e-scooters and the slow pace of developments in vehicle safety especially for those on the outside rather than inside the vehicle.

The plan is still based around the safe systems approach – safe speeds, safer vehicles, safe streets, safer behaviours and the post-collision response. Good to see though is a greater emphasis on reducing traffic volumes and the benefits that offers in reducing casualties.

London's Vision Zero targets

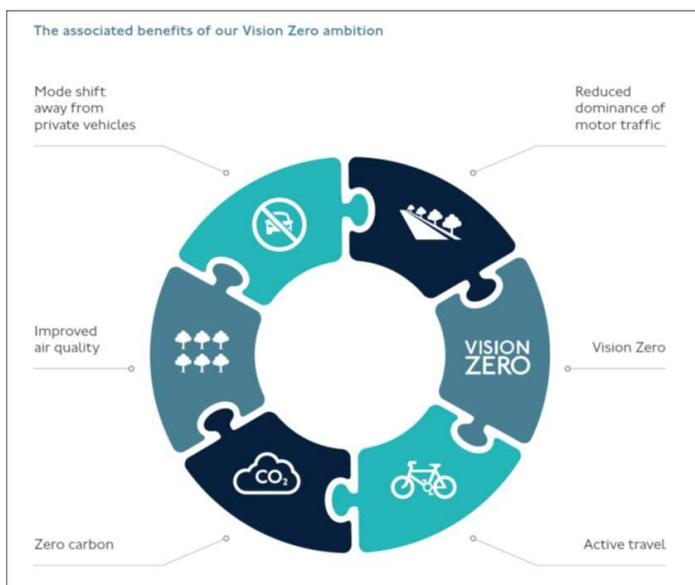
As well as the final 2041 target, there are a number of interim targets, including that, compared to the 2005-09 baseline, by 2022 65% fewer people should be killed or seriously injured on London's roads and that 70% fewer people should be killed or seriously injured in, or by, London buses. By 2019 the number of people killed or seriously injured had fallen by 39% against the 2005-09 baseline. In 2020, under pandemic road conditions, this reduction reached 52%. By the end of 2020, 77% fewer people were killed or seriously injured on, or by, a bus than in 2005-09.

In general, London is on target for 2022 for reductions of casualties amongst users and occupants of buses and cars but is behind target for pedestrians and people cycling and motorcycling.

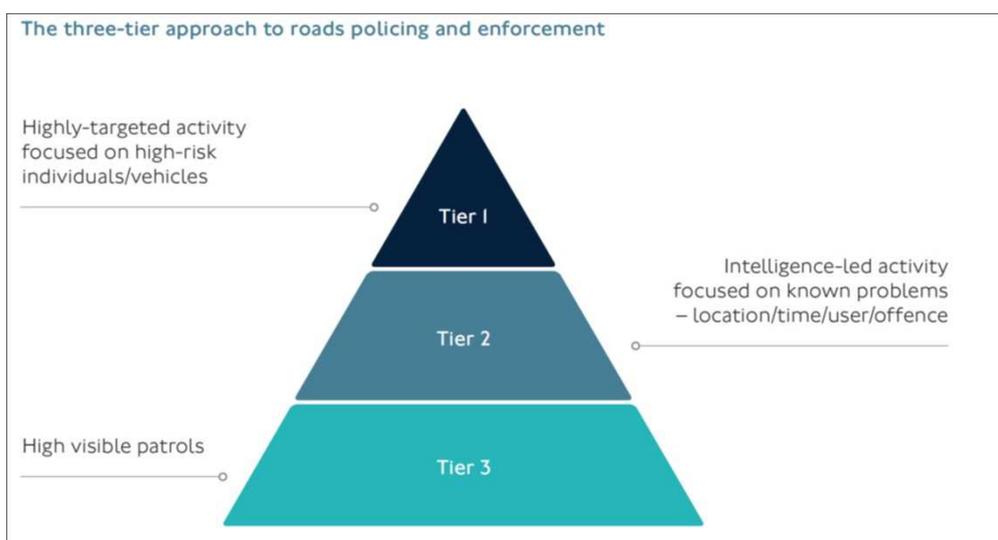
The 2021 Progress Report – new elements

So, what are the key new elements in the report?

- It is good to see (page 6) explicit links between Vision Zero and other policies that will improve the lives of all Londoners and make London a better city to live in. These include improved air quality, the move to zero carbon, reducing the dominance of motor vehicles and creating healthy streets and delivering active travel.



- The recognition (page 12) of the vehicles that cause the greatest harm and the importance of reducing risk from goods vehicles, motorcycles and of course cars.
- Features on cities already achieving Vision Zero. The efforts of Oslo and Helsinki are highlighted (page 19) along with the steps they have taken - reducing the number of cars driving in the city, lowering speeds, reducing parking, implementing cycle lanes, pedestrian infrastructure and closing roads to motor traffic.
- The continued strong focus on speed is welcome with far more 20mph limits planned for those parts of the TfL Red Route network where people and vehicles mix in town centres and high streets. TfL is also leading the way with its calls to the UK government for a default 20mph limit in residential streets. With Wales and Scotland planning 20mph defaults and 20mph limits now the norm in many cities and towns across the UK, there is now great pressure on government for the default speed limit to move from 30mph to 20mph.
- Protected cycle lanes are fundamental to enabling more people to cycle and the report (page 29) highlights the impact that the expansion of London's cycling network has had. Although casualty rates for cycling have declined, the absolute numbers of fatal and serious injuries remain above the 2005-09 baseline. Continuing to grow a London-wide network of protected cycle routes coupled with safe neighbourhood streets are key to reducing the numbers of cycling injuries.
- The highest risks on London's roads are faced by motorcyclists compared to other transport modes. The report makes clear not only the dangers that riders themselves face but also the danger they pose to others (page 12).
- The report underscores the significance of deprivation (page 10) with Black people 2.3 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on London's roads than White people. Children aged from four to 15 living in deprived areas are three times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than those children from the least deprived areas. The progress report is explicit in its need to tackle these inequalities.
- Highlighting the importance of the partnership between TfL and the Metropolitan Police (page 40 onwards) and the ambition to increase levels of enforcement across the city a) with new safety cameras, b) through an uplift in speed enforcement from the current figure of 280,000 offences per year to up to 1 million and c) with an enhanced role for PCSOs. The three-tier approach to policing and enforcement has been crucial to this work and the plan is for this to continue.



- The potential of reducing casualties through restrictions on through traffic. The report focuses on the impact on casualties of the introduction of more than 100 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in London in the past 18 months (page 30). [Research](#) found that road traffic injuries halve (compared with the rest of London) with no change in the number of injuries on boundary roads. In the past, London has struggled to reduce the number of pedestrian casualties and the study found that there was a particularly steep decline, both in absolute and relative injury risk, for people walking, with an 85% reduction in absolute injuries.
- The success to date of the Bus Safety Standard (page 35), which is linked to 77% fewer people killed or seriously injured on, or by, a bus than during the 2005-09 baseline.
- Reducing casualties which involve heavy goods vehicles (page 34). Two elements particularly stand out; firstly, the development of the direct vision standard which aims to increase the driver's direct field of vision from their cab and secondly the continuing work of the London Freight Enforcement Partnership, which undertakes targeted checks on dangerously non-compliant vehicles and drivers in London.
- London has led the way with its partnership working (page 50 onwards), and in particular the creation of the Vision Zero Reference Group, which brings together organisations across the public and private sector to help shape Vision Zero policy development and delivery. In addition, there is TfL's work with the London boroughs themselves and, in many cases, it is the boroughs that originally led the way in areas such as default 20mph speed limits, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and creating Healthy Streets.
- The fatal files research where TfL has undertaken independent reviews of more than 100 fatalities in order to understand the root causes of fatalities in London and help TfL design and refine interventions.
- In 2021, TfL launched the [Vision Zero Dashboard](#) enabling organisations and members of the public to more easily access and interpret London's collision data.

Opportunities

All in all, therefore, there has been a great deal of progress over the last three years and systems are in place and actions are proposed that can drive down casualties still further. **But** there are some areas where the progress report could have gone further and there are opportunities for policy to be strengthened during this next phase of the Vision Zero Action Plan in London. These include:

- Reducing traffic volumes. Yes, it is politically difficult but London needs to introduce Smart Road User Charging; as we have seen from the pandemic and backed up by [research](#)) reducing traffic can reduce the numbers of casualties. As well as the Safe Systems approach, Vision Zero needs traffic reduction as one of its core pillars. It is time for road pricing across London, along with other measures that decrease motor vehicle use. It is not enough just to promote safer vehicles – transport policies should also actively deter the use of motor vehicles, especially shorter car trips.
- More attention is needed around safe vehicles and especially working vehicles across London; as we have seen, TfL's research shows that they are the source of so many of the casualties on our roads. It is good that TfL is introducing mandatory ISA on its buses but more can be done to guide the boroughs to require ISA and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) on their own vehicles (eg refuse lorries) and those of the organisations they work with (eg for housing repairs). It is time for a standard for working vehicles in London. With its Direct Vision Standards, London is setting the tone across Europe for HGV cab design; let's move that on further and reduce the danger that all working vehicles can cause across the city.

