



AVZ Blog - Vision Zero in Oxford - 14 February 2023

Key points

- Oxfordshire County Council's vision aims for zero road deaths and life changing injuries by 2050, with a 50% reduction by 2030.
- While encouraging, this is less ambitious with a longer end date and narrower focus (life changing injuries rather than serious injuries) than many other places adopting VZ.
- Oxfordshire's interim target (50% decrease by 2030) is similar to other areas but still only includes deaths and life changing injuries.
- Oxfordshire should aim to reduce more than just deaths and life changing injuries. It should reduce serious injuries as well as the perception of danger.
- Oxfordshire County Council's transport plan appreciates the need to reduce motor traffic and lower motor vehicle speeds - not just setting lower speed limits.
- Enforcement, especially with key offences of careless driving and speeding on 20mph roads, is needed to deliver the plan and reduce the risk posed by motor traffic.

How long should it take before no one is killed on Oxford's roads?

This was a key question posed at [Cyclo's Vision Zero](#) conference last month. After hearing from Oskari Kaupinmaki, Helsinki's Cycling Coordinator, how [Helsinki](#) had achieved zero pedestrian and cyclist deaths in 2019, it was no surprise that the audience supported a date sooner than the 2050 adopted by Oxfordshire County Council.

Action Vision Zero also spoke at this event. We offered to follow up with data on the casualty reduction targets and dates adopted by other areas in England and Wales. See table below.

Vision Zero and casualty reduction targets

Area	Publication date	Casualty reduction target
Oxfordshire County Council–Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050	2022	<i>Zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050</i> Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50% by 2030
Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy	2022	No deaths or serious injuries by 2040.
Leeds Safe Roads Vision Zero 2040 Strategy	2022	Ambition is by 2040 no one will be killed or suffer serious injuries on roads in Leeds.
Gloucestershire County Council road safety policy	2022	<i>Zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050.</i> 50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries by 2032 (maximum 139).
Warwickshire Our Strategy to 2030	2022	50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (183 maximum) by 2030.

Area	Publication date	Casualty reduction target
Essex Vision Zero No Road Deaths	2022	Zero deaths and serious injuries by 2040.
		50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (425 maximum) or fewer by 2030.
Scotland Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030	2021	No deaths or serious injuries by 2050.
		50% reduction in deaths by 2030 (from 2014-18 base)
		50% reduction in serious injuries by 2030 (2014-18 base)
		60% reduction in child road deaths by 2030 (2014-18 base)
		60% reduction in child serious injuries by 2030 (2014-18 base)
Cambridgeshire Towards 2030: Making Our Roads Safer for All	2020	<i>The goal is to move towards zero deaths or severe serious injuries in the Partnership area by 2040.</i>
		50% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (234) by 2030.
Kent Vision Zero The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 30 year vision to 2050 Five year strategy 2021-2026	2020	<i>Zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries.</i>
		No more than 23 road deaths by 2030 (50% last five year average)
		No more than 36 road deaths by 2026.
Devon and Cornwall South West Peninsula Road Safety Partnership Casualty Reduction Strategy 2020-2030	2019	50% reduction in road deaths by 2030 (from 2014-18 base)
		50% reduction in serious injuries by 2030 (2014-18 base)
London Vision Zero Action Plan	2018	Zero deaths and serious injuries by 2041.
		Zero deaths in or by a bus by 2030.
		Overall interim target 1. By 2022, a 65% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (from 2005-09 base).
		Overall interim target 2. By 2030, a 70% reduction in deaths and serious injuries (from 2010-14 base).
		Interim target – buses. 70% reduction in deaths in or by a bus by 2022 (2005-09)

Note: Scotland also has several intermediate outcome targets and intermediate measures

Casualty reduction targets

So, are Oxfordshire's casualty reduction targets ambitious enough?

According to the other targets shown above, it is less ambition in two main ways:

1. The date for achieving zero road deaths (or as close to it).
2. Assessing life changing injuries rather than the larger number of serious injuries.

1. Vision Zero end date

The strategy aims for zero road deaths and life changing injuries, or as close as possible, by 2050. It is not the only area to have adopted this as the long-term target. Others include Gloucestershire and Kent.

But there are others who expect to achieve this quicker with 2040/41 end dates. These include: Essex as well as the metropolitan areas of Leeds, Liverpool and London. Perhaps Oxford could choose an earlier date?

2. Life changing injuries not serious injuries

Oxfordshire's target includes reducing life changing injuries. Its [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) does not give a definition for which injuries life changing.

PACTS (Parliamentary Advisory Council Transport Safety) has also adopted a vision of no deaths and life changing injuries. And it has also recently highlighted [how difficult it is to define life changing](#).

So, Oxfordshire has adopted less ambitious, i.e. narrower casualty reduction targets. For AVZ, based on the principle of road danger reduction, this is going in the wrong direction. We call for widening the indicators, including improving the perception of safety, a key indicator for [the Healthy Streets approach](#).

And it is worth mentioning the interim target date of 2030. Oxfordshire is aiming to reduce their deaths and life-changing injuries by 50% by 2030 (we could not find the baseline used for this target). Other areas, including Gloucestershire, Essex, Warwickshire, Scotland, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall are all aiming to halve serious injuries by 2030.

Road danger reduction

AVZ spoke about the need to base Vision Zero on road danger reduction as London has. Reduction of motor vehicle traffic volumes is key.

But credit is due to Oxfordshire County Council and their [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) which calls for net-zero transport system. The [Oxfordshire County Council's vision](#) is laudable: *Our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision is for an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive.*

It will tackle inequality, be better for health, wellbeing and social inclusivity and have zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries. It will also enhance our natural and historic environment and enable the county to be one of the world's leading innovation economies.

Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.

The plan also provides specific targets for achieving this vision.

By 2030 our targets are to:

- Replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire
- Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week
- Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50%.

By 2040 our targets are to:

- Deliver a net-zero transport network
- Replace or remove an additional 1 out of 3 car trips in Oxfordshire.

By 2050 our targets are to:

- Deliver a transport network that contributes to a climate positive future
- Have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries.

[Oxfordshire County Council, 2022](#)

Lower speeds

Oxfordshire's [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) also acknowledges that 20mph speed limits alone are not enough. Along the legal speed limit, actual speeds must also be reduced. Yet, in a response to a FOI by AVZ, Thames Valley Police reported [not sanctioning any 20mph speed limit offences in 2021.](#)

The situation for enforcement used to be similar in London. In the meeting, AVZ spoke of the progress London has made on speed enforcement, especially with 20mph. When the London Vision Zero Action Plan was launched in 2018, at that time Thames Valley Police actually enforced more speed limit offences than the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) – in fact lots more! In 2018, Thames Valley Police enforced over 120,000 speed limit offences; far more than the 92,000 then being enforced by the MPS. At this time too, 20mph enforcement in London was almost exclusively left to Community RoadWatch programmes.

But all that has changed in recent years. Speed enforcement is now a police priority. Action 18 in [London's Vision Zero Action Plan Progress Report](#) aims for **one million speeding offences** to be sanctioned by 2024/25.

And levels of speed enforcement have increased dramatically on roads with 20mph limits in London. A response to a Mayor's Question noted that in London, [between April and August 2022, the MPS enforced 257,589 speeding offences, over 40% of which were in 20mph limits.](#)

Careless driving a police priority?

AVZ also warned of the need for greater detection of careless driving. In 2021, Thames Valley Police reported sanctioning 3,397 seat belt offences. This was 2.6 times higher than the 1,256 careless driving offences detected. Between 2019-2021, seat belt offences rose by 557%, compared to 112% for careless driving. Police resources are limited and AVZ advocates that the priority is enforcement of those offences which pose harm to others.

Going forward

AVZ thanked Cyclox for not just organising this event, but for its wider work campaigning for safer roads. As well as the county council, this work needs to include strong support from police. We know from London that it can take years, with pressure coming from councils/councillors as well as campaigners, to get enforcement focused on reducing road danger, with increased detection of speeding and careless driving. But overall, a good start from Oxfordshire. There is work to do but it is very encouraging to see Vision Zero plans that openly recognise the need to remove danger at source by dramatically reducing the number of motor vehicle trips that are being made, and for lower speeds, not just lower speed limits.