



AVZ Briefing: Roads Policing and Vision Zero

September 2023

Key points

- The role of roads policing and traffic law enforcement has been reviewed in five recent Vision Zero road safety strategies/plans – London, Warwickshire, Kent, Essex and Leeds.
- The police play a vital role in reducing road danger. Vision Zero programmes recognise this with police being key partners.
- Speed enforcement dominates, including by cameras and Community Speed Watch.
- Little was said about the enforcement of other key offences (drink/drug, mobile phone and careless driving).
- Operation Snap/journey cam reporting schemes and collision investigation were also included in some of the strategies.
- Collision investigation was mentioned in three of the five strategies.
- There was a lack of information on how the effectiveness of police efforts was to be monitored and evaluated, with few including enforcement related performance indicators.

Action Vision Zero is not alone in thinking the police and traffic law enforcement is essential to with reducing road danger. Road safety strategies, including those based on Vision Zero and Safe Systems approach, expect risk of death and serious injury to be designed out, with road users complying with traffic laws. When that does not happen, enforcement is needed.

Summary of Actions

- Speed enforcement dominated the policing related actions. This included by cameras as well as Community Speed Watch programmes.
- Operation Snap was highlighted in Leeds with an aim to increase submissions by 5% a year. Essex also reference their Extra Eyes programme. No strategy had any specific action on drink/drug driving or even mobile phone use, but these were mentioned with participating in NPCC campaigns.
- Collision investigation was referenced in some of the strategies but not nearly enough, considering the police have the lead.
- In our report below, we have included all the enforcement related actions from the strategies in an appendix, along with the performance indicators specific to enforcement.
- This briefing on Roads Policing and Vision Zero was written for the first meeting of the new Partnership Advisory Group for Roads Policing. This is coordinated by the Police Foundation who published their [Future of Roads Policing](#) report in 2022.

Introduction

Police are key partners in delivering Vision Zero. Most Vision Zero strategies are based on the Safe Systems approach which acknowledges that people make mistakes but also expects them to comply with traffic laws. Traffic law enforcement provides an incentive to comply and the ability to detect and sanction those who do not. This briefing summarises the roads policing and traffic law enforcement actions in five Vision Zero strategies¹.

Table 1: Vision Zero strategies reviewed

	Publication date	Overall Vision Zero target	Action Plan time period	Joint plan/partnership
London	2018/21	No KSI by 2041	2018-2023/24	Yes
Warwickshire	2020	50% KSI by 2030	2020-2030	Yes
Kent	2021	No KLC by 2050	2021-2026	Yes
Essex	2022	No KSI by 2040	2022-2025	Yes
Leeds	2022	No KSI by 2040	2022-2025	Yes

Note: KSI: Killed and Seriously Injured, KLC: Killed and Life Changing injuries

[London Vision Zero Action Plan](#). Launched in July 2018, this was the first major Vision Zero road safety strategy in England and Wales. It has since been updated, with a progress report published in November 2021. Both were joint publications between Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police and the London boroughs.

[Warwickshire's Road Safety Strategy](#). Published in 2020, this presented the vision for the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership, which includes the Warwickshire Police. It did not include a target for eliminating all road deaths and serious injuries but it did have an intermediate target similar to other areas.

[Vision Zero—the Road Safety Strategy for Kent](#). Produced by Kent County Council in 2021, this strategy was said to “*outline a shared approach of the Partnership to meet Vision Zero objectives*”, with the Kent Police one of the five partners in the Kent and Medway Casualty Reduction Partnership.

[Essex's Vision Zero Strategy](#). Produced by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, this strategy reflected how the 11 partner organisations, including Essex Police, would reduce road deaths and serious injuries over the next three years.

[Leeds Vision Zero 2040 Strategy](#)—Launched by both Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police, this strategy complimented the wider Transport Strategy. It included a strategy as well as an action plan for the first three years (2022-2025).

Road danger reduction

In addition to reducing road deaths and injuries, enforcement is also key to reducing intimidation from motor vehicles. This deters people choosing to walk and cycle instead of driving. Whereas road safety focuses on road deaths and injuries, road danger reduction considers the wider harm posed by excessive use of motor vehicles and their impact on active travel, air pollution and carbon emissions. Transport strategies, including those adopting Vision Zero, now reference the wider harm from motor vehicles, with road safety strategies expected to complement other strategies, including

¹ Vision Zero strategies have been also published for [Cambridgeshire](#), the [South West Peninsula](#) (Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly), and [Liverpool](#). The enforcement actions were less clearly identified in these publications and so have not been included in this review.

reducing carbon emissions, air pollution, inactivity, etc. The London Vision Zero Action Plan is based on reducing road danger, as is the wider Mayor's Transport Strategy. See below for how the Leeds Vision Zero strategy explains how Vision Zero helps these wider goals.

Leeds Vision Zero 2040 Strategy

Road crashes that result in death or serious injury typically involve motor vehicles. As well as preventing violent deaths and serious injuries, Vision Zero aims to create a road environment and traffic culture where people feel that it's safe to cycle, safe to let their children walk to school, safe to travel in cleaner, greener, healthier ways on roads that are (and feel) free from danger, roads that cherish human life.

Vision Zero will underpin a virtuous circle of more people choosing not to drive in the first place. It will support our Transport Strategy's aim to be a 'city where you don't need a car' and support our efforts to cut harmful carbon emissions as part of our response to the climate emergency.

The strategies are summarised below with regard to:

- Priority offences
- Working with the community
- Collision investigation and justice
- Performance indicators.

This summary does not include the more general actions around transparency and accountability, with Leeds committing to producing an annual report and a dedicated website. Nor was funding addressed although both Essex and Leeds mentioned income from driver retraining courses.

Priority offences

Speeding

Speed enforcement dominates the enforcement actions, as it does with traffic law enforcement in general. All strategies included much about speed enforcement, including in both Safe Speeds and Safe Road User chapters. The Leeds strategy mentioned work being done by the Neighbourhood police team (Operation Amberland).

Drink/drug driving and seat belt offences

None of the strategies included specific actions on drink/drug driving. These offences were referenced, including with the NPCC campaigns. Seatbelt offences were treated similarly. Impairment and seat belt use were also performance indicators in Essex and Warwickshire.

Careless driving

With the addition of careless driving, the "Fatal five" has begun to replace the traditional fatal four (speeding, drink/drug driving, mobile phone, seatbelt). This can be seen in Leeds and Essex. With its focus on reducing harm posed to others, careless driving is a priority for road danger reduction and active travel campaigners.

Working with the community

With limited police resources, community efforts can make a big difference. All the strategies referenced Community Speed/Road Watch. Leeds and Warwickshire included developing community speed information packs. The Leeds strategy also included a section on Operation Snap, including the number of online submissions, which road user type had submitted, and the outcome.

Collision investigation and justice

Police are responsible for investigating criminal liability in collisions. Yet collision investigation was only mentioned in three of the strategies. London had training in scene management and evidence

gathering to police first responders. Warwickshire’s strategy included the consideration of a multi-agency review of fatal incidents whilst Leeds had a review of the approach to collision investigation, in partnership with the Vision Zero Expert Panel, in order to identify and incorporate best practice. As shown below, the Leeds strategy also highlighted the role of Operation SNAP in delivering justice.

Leeds Vision Zero Strategy

Using technology for justice

The Safe Vehicles and Safe Behaviours / People pillars advocate for the introduction of in-vehicle technology such as ‘black box’ devices that record and monitor driving behaviour to reduce the risk and severity of collisions. Operation SNAP also uses video and photographic evidence submitted by members of the public to report driving offences, so that the police establish if an offence has been committed. For victims, this footage or data can be used to assist with determining if a road crime has been committed. The MCET team can obtain this data as part of their investigation and help bring justice.

Performance indicators

What success looked like or how it was to be monitored was not always clear. London has committed to enforcing up to one million speed offences by 2024/25. Leeds committed to increasing Operation SNAP submissions by 5% a year. The Warwickshire and Essex strategies stated the strategic indicators and outcome measures for the enforcement related actions. These are presented in Appendix B.

AVZ comment

This briefing highlights what has been flagged for the police to action in Vision Zero strategies. It does not do justice to all the work done by the police to deliver safer roads. For instance, London has launched a [Vision Zero Enforcement Dashboard](#) as well as a scheme whereby council officers can request and receive speed enforcement at sites of community concern about speeding. In addition, a few police services have roads policing strategies but these appear to be rare, or at least not in the public domain.