



AVZ Blog (Mar22) - Leeds Safer Roads Vision Zero Strategy 2040

Live or travel in Leeds? Now is your chance to input into the local road safety strategy. The consultation survey¹ closes on 24th April 2022. Here Action Vision Zero shares our thoughts on the draft strategy and key actions proposed, highlighting the good and where it needs to go further.

In responding to the consultation survey about the strategy, there are six sections and each offers the chance for comments. Do make longer points but we would suggest the following are key:

1. Safe Behaviours and People

- Careless driving should be added to the “fatal four”.

2. Safe Speeds

- Leeds should adopt 20mph as the default speed limit.
- Leeds should have a target for enforcement on lower speed roads (20/30mph limit) as these are the ones most used by people walking and cycling.

3. Safe Roads

- Targets should be set and annual measurement made of length of protected cycle track, controlled parking zones, school streets, Low Traffic Neighbourhood coverage.
- Leeds should develop a programme to identify and tackle dangerous junctions.

4. Safe Vehicles

- Leeds Council should use its procurement contracts to influence the safety of organisations working for the council eg requiring mandatory ISA (speed limiters) on their vehicles.
- Leeds should develop a framework to reduce motor vehicle usage for freight using delivery consolidation, retiming and last-mile sustainable delivery.

5. Post-collision Learning and Care. The strategy should include:

- Committing to training more police officers in collision investigation.
- Determining and applying quality assurance procedures with injury investigations.
- Surveying crash victims as to their satisfaction with the investigation.

Is there anything further you would like to add or see included in the draft Vision Zero strategy?

- Much of the plan is devoted to messaging and “awareness campaigns”. The strategy should rely less on awareness raising and behavioural change and more on substantive actions.
- Leeds Council needs to set interim targets towards the overall 2040 goal of zero fatal and serious road casualties.
- In addition to the overall KPI of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions, other measures should be included such as reduced motor vehicle travel/trips, increased active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling and public transport), and improved perception of safety whilst cycling and walking.
- The Leeds Safe Roads Partnership should also work closer with active travel campaigners.

¹ <https://leedssaferroadsvisionzero.commonplace.is/proposals/have-your-say/step1>

The Leeds Vision Zero Strategy

AVZ supports the use of the Safe Systems approach and the ambition that by 2040 there will be no fatal and serious injuries on roads in Leeds. We also welcome the Transport Strategy's aim for Leeds to be a city where "you don't need a car" We believe, however, that this strategy is not strong enough in terms of its actions compared to, for example, the New York and London Vision Zero strategies to achieve what is an extremely demanding goal.

Key points

- The Leeds proposed strategy to eliminate road deaths and serious injuries is aligned with the council's wider aims and existing strategies on climate emergency and air pollution. This is good to hear.
- But the actions need strengthening and indicators clarified in order to deliver this vision.
- This includes tackling danger at source, rather than the victim focused approach in the draft.

Much of the plan is devoted to messaging and "awareness campaigns" for which there is little evidence of effectiveness unless they are in support of significant substantive actions; the word "encourage" appears 35 times in the document. The strategy should rely less on awareness raising and behavioural change and more on substantive actions.

The 92-page draft strategy² includes an action plan with 74 proposed actions:

Area	No. actions
Journey to Vision Zero	9
Partnerships	8
Data	4
Safe Behaviours and People	14
Safe Speeds	14
Safe Roads	6
Safe Vehicles	9
Post Collision Learning and Care	10
Total	74

Journey to Vision Zero

The strategy states that Vision Zero will help to achieve the wider council aims of/on Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing, and Climate Emergency, and that (page 18):

"Leeds has committed to 'net zero' harmful carbon emissions by 2030. The biggest source of carbon emissions in Leeds is transport, especially cars and other private vehicles. We want to encourage as many people as possible to walk or cycle rather than drive, especially for short journeys, removing cars and reducing road danger."

We acknowledge the reluctance of the Council to not set targets and realise that there will be biennial reviews of progress and a more formal revision of this plan in 2030 but we regret the absence of a clear set of interim targets on the way to the 2040 goal. At least 2 interim targets are needed between now and 2040.

² https://saferroadsleeds.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/vision-zero-first-draft_p4.pdf

Along with the Best Council Plan KPI of the “Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions”, we note that there is an openness to the use of additional measures to be reported annually to Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation. We would propose the following that relate to wider goals around net zero and enabling walking, cycling and using public transport:

- Reduced motor vehicle travel/trips
- Increased active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling and public transport), and
- Improved perception of safety whilst cycling and walking.

Partnerships

The Leeds Safe Roads Partnership wants to engage more with the public and local communities. This is welcomed. We urge it also to work closer with the active travel campaigners who have much experience in advocating on behalf of those walking and cycling.

These campaign groups should be represented on Vision Zero working groups with a dedicated Enforcement working group established. The community has an increasing role to play in traffic law enforcement with such initiatives as Operation Snap (road traffic crime reporting through video (eg dashcam) footage) and Community SpeedWatch.

Data

Casualty data

Police recorded casualty severity. Police have traditionally recorded road casualty severity as to their best guess. Under DfT’s CRASH system, the severity is determined by the type of injuries reported. This has led to an increase in serious injuries being reported (and an associated decrease in slight injuries).

The strategy uses the police reported road casualty figures but commits to adopting the DfT adjusted casualty figures in the future. At present, DfT estimates there are 1/3 more people seriously injured on Leeds roads than reported by the police.

Contributory factors. The strategy references contributory factors. But these are recorded at the time the collision is reported and thus before any real investigation has been undertaken. Given police are asked to record those factors which they will be willing to testify to in court, these are bound to under-estimate criminal culpability, including speeding. Leeds is urged to record contributory factors at the end of the investigation if they want the most accurate data. There is experience of this in both London and Greater Manchester.

Road crime offence data

West Yorkshire Police are to be commended for responding to public demand and introducing quarterly statistics on Operation Snap submissions. But this quarterly reporting should extend to cover all road traffic crime. The annual publications from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Home Office are not good enough. They do not provide data for Leeds but for the whole of West Yorkshire.

An online dashboard is to be developed. This should include data on road traffic crime in addition to crashes. Data sharing should be enabled by the police with open, transparent and timely production of statistics. This means quarterly statistics on road traffic crime, reported at the local level and by speed limit, if not road.

Safe Behaviours and People - Priority offences

This section starts with a focus on the “fatal four”

- Speeding
- Drink/drug driving
- Mobile phone use, and
- Seat belt.

But does not include **careless driving**. If Leeds is to reduce the harm posed to people walking and cycling, careless driving needs to be a priority for the police. Careless driving covers the general unsafe driving that poses harm to people walking and cycling, including by coming too close to them.

Hierarchy of responsibility

This section also promotes the hierarchy of responsibility amongst road users. This is much appreciated. It highlights the progress made with both Operation Snap and Operation SPARC. Our call for careless driving to be prioritised should be easy to adopt, given the investment in and support for Operation Snap. It was good to hear (page 59) that there had been over 1,200 video submissions from people in Leeds, with police able to take action in almost two-thirds.

Safe Speeds

20mph default

While there is good focus on speeding in the strategy there is insufficient focus on speed limits. The strategy notes the contribution of speeds to casualty numbers; but NB the Metropolitan Police are now saying that for serious and fatal casualties, speed is a factor in 49% of casualties. The maps in the strategy clearly show that the locations of cyclist and pedestrian casualties are heavily weighted to main roads where people and vehicles mix. It is not enough to limit roll-out of 20mph to residential streets or to simply to state that the DfT makes most of the decisions about speed. Leeds City Council is the Highway Authority tasked with setting speed limits.

If Leeds is going to achieve significant reductions in casualties it needs to be able to take advantage of wider use of lower speed limits. Lower speed limits are also the only way to benefit from the introduction of Intelligent Speed Assistance in new models (2022) and vehicles (2024) and the increased compliance with speed limits that that is able to deliver. We know that it has made much progress with introducing 20mph limits in recent years. But the strategy reports that most of the KSI crashes in the last five years were on 30mph roads. It is not reported how many of these roads remain 30mph. It is time for Leeds to move to a default 20mph limit on all roads where people and vehicles mix.

Speed enforcement

There should be a target to increase speed enforcement and to focus on lower speed roads used in particular by those walking and cycling (20/30mph limits). As shown below, up to 2020, there were no 20mph speed limit offences detected by cameras in all of West Yorkshire. It is not known how many occurred in Leeds.

West Yorkshire Speed limit offences

mph	2019		2020	
	Officer	Camera	Officer	Camera
20	190	0	455	0
30	974	117,962	3,330	107,791
40	524	22,153	1,423	19,842
50	374	16,948	827	12,195
60	8	184	17	486
70	640	7,131	1,240	22,844
Total	2,710	164,378	7,292	163,158
% 20 and 30 mph	43%		52%	

Note: excludes variable speed limit offences

Source: [West Yorkshire Police \(2021\)](#)

Safe Roads

This section has the right intentions, stating that (page 72):

“We will reduce the dominance of motor vehicles on our local streets and create roads that are safe for all users

- *design streets that are safe to walk, scoot and cycle*
- *develop a network of safe routes to connect people and places*
- *create road environments that cut risky driving and crash frequency.”*

But we would like to see targets with measurable outputs and outcomes. See the London Healthy Streets Scorecard³ approach which contains key input and output indicators that include rate-based serious and fatal road casualties as well as length of protected cycle track, controlled parking zones, school streets, Low Traffic Neighbourhood coverage, etc.

Many collisions occur at junctions and making these safer should be a priority. We would like to see Leeds developing a dangerous junctions programme, as Transport for London has done in London.

Safe Vehicles

This section encourages the use of safe vehicles to reduce the likelihood of a crash and to reduce the severity of any not avoided. But it could also be reminding drivers, businesses and operators that the safest vehicle is a stationary one with short car trips discouraged.

Leading by example

This was a strong section stating (page 81):

“The Leeds Safer Roads Partnership will lead by example and ensure that our own vehicles (eg minibuses, fleet and so on) have the highest standards of safety features. Leeds City Council, for

³ <https://www.healthystreetsscorecard.london/>

example, increasingly uses tools such as telematics and dashcams for its own vehicles. We may be able to support research and development in this area.”

In vehicle technology

The aim to introduce in-vehicle technology is good but should be a stronger feature of the strategy. As well as the fleet of 1,300 vehicles that the council operates there are also opportunities, through procurement contracts, to influence the safety of vehicles of contractors undertaking work for the council as well as other vehicles that can control such as car share vehicles operating in the authority area. Trials for mandatory ISA on London buses show a 97-99% compliance with 20mph limits. Mandatory ISA such as systems offered by Sturdy should be required.

Sustainable Freight

Missing is a plan to reduce danger by removing motor vehicle journeys by developing a sustainable freight framework. In a recent PACTS report⁴, it was identified that “...vans and light goods vehicles, have the highest rate of deaths of other road users of any mode of transport on our roads”. Leeds should develop a framework to reduce motor vehicle usage for freight using delivery consolidation, retiming and last-mile sustainable delivery, for example with (e-)cargo bikes.

We hope that Leeds can learn from the lessons in London on lorry and bus safety, as much has been invested in designing out danger.

Post Collision learning and care for victims

With 10 actions, the strategy includes much focus on this section, including supporting and advocating for victims.

Collision investigation

Ensuring thorough collision investigation is a key way of supporting victims. This is needed for criminal offending to be detected, civil compensation to be claimed and road safety interventions to be accurately identified. Thorough investigations also demonstrate that the loss of life (including quality of life amongst the injured) is not acceptable and merits full examinations.

As in our Police and Crime Manifesto⁵, AVZ urges the strategy to include:

- committing to training more police officers in collision investigation
- determining and applying quality assurance procedures with injury investigations
- surveying crash victims as to their level of satisfaction with the investigation and how they were kept informed.

And we welcome the inclusion of the problem of “Hit and Run” p44-45. This is the first time we have seen this crime included in a road safety strategy. AVZ is campaigning with RoadPeace West Midlands for drivers to be held accountable for [failing to remain](#) at the scene of a fatal or serious injury collision. We urge Leeds to demonstrate best practice and report the outcome of these crashes. We have yet to find a police service that reports this.

Next steps Want to learn more?

The Leeds Safer Roads Partnership is holding a webinar on Friday 24th March 1200-1300 where the strategy will be presented. Register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/leeds-safer-roads-vision-zero-2040-strategy-webinar-tickets-288565375807>

⁴ <https://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PACTS-What-kills-most-on-the-roads-Report-12.0.pdf>

⁵ <https://actionvisionzero.org/police-crime-commissioner-elections-may-2021/>

Please do take 10 minutes and respond to this consultation:

<https://leedssaferroadsvisionzero.commonplace.is/proposals/have-your-say/step1>

For more information about AVZ's calls, contact Jeremy@ActionVisionZero.org and Amy@ActionVisionZero.org

Note: This blog builds on last year's West Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority manifesto⁶ and Police and Crime manifesto⁷, produced in conjunction with active travel and organisations dedicated to road danger reduction. This included Action for Yorkshire Transport, Cycling UK, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum, Leeds Living Streets, RoadPeace, Sustrans and 20's Plenty for Us.

⁶ <https://www.cyclinguk.org/sites/default/files/document/2021/04/visionzeromanifesto-westyorkshiremayorelections2021v.3-23apr21.pdf>

⁷ <https://actionvisionzero.org/police-crime-commissioner-elections-may-2021/>