



AVZ Blog (Feb 22) [The Future of Roads Policing Report - AVZ response](#)

Key points

New report by The Police Foundation

- Calls for the Home Office to adopt roads policing as a Strategic Policing Requirement.
- Advocates adopting Vision Zero with police aiming for zero road deaths.
- Recommends closer collaboration, including with third sector.

[The Future of Roads Policing](#)

On the 10th February, the Police Foundation launched their report [The Future of Roads Policing](#), funded by DriveTech, a leading provider of National Driver Offender Retraining Schemes (NDORS).

This focus on roads policing was part of the Police Foundation's wider strategic review of policing. Action Vision Zero (AVZ) responded to the Police Foundation's consultation on this which asked about the responsibility for crime prevention as well as about how to increase trust and confidence in the police.

Our response, supported by British Cycling and Cycling UK, called for roads policing to prioritise harm reduction. Resource constraints mean prioritisation is inevitable. We wanted police to focus on tackling those offences which pose harm to others, especially those more vulnerable. This means updating the police priorities from the fatal four (speeding, drink/drug driving, mobile phone and seat belts) and extended to include careless and dangerous driving.

We also called for police to publish road policing strategies with key performance indicators (KPI) to improve transparency and accountability. To help increase confidence in the police, we urged reviews of serious injury collisions involving motor vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists where there was no prosecution to check that the investigations had been thorough. These calls were all in our [2021 Police and Crime Commissioners' Elections Manifesto](#).

The [Future of Roads Policing](#) report summarised the challenge facing roads policing as well as how technology was transforming road travel, with a focus on automated vehicles. It referenced several AVZ publications. This included the inconsistency and wide variation in traffic law enforcement as well as the disproportionate risk imposed on pedestrians and cyclists.

The report ended with a quote from the AA President which included how "*We need more cops in cars. Drivers have a high level of acceptance for speed cameras. Other problems such as drink-driving, tailgating, etc cannot be caught by cameras, so we need police on the roads for this*".

AVZ sees the future of roads policing differently. We want cops on bikes and more road crime reporting by the public. We need more analysts in back offices to process the offences detected by safety cameras, police and citizens.

And as long as drivers continue to have a high level of acceptance for speeding, speed enforcement should continue as a priority for police officers. What should change is where speed enforcement occurs. More should be on 20 and 30 mph roads where speeding threatens and deters people from walking and cycling.

Here is our feedback on the report's recommendations.

Recommendation 1. The Home Office should include roads policing in the Strategic Policing Requirement in order to ensure that roads policing is sustained as a core policing capability throughout the country.

This is great to see. The Police Foundation have joined the calls of others, including [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Roads Policing and Fire Rescue Services](#) and road danger reduction campaigners, for roads policing to be a national priority for police. This recommendation may well be the only one that really matters. If it happened, much should change in terms of priority and commitment to roads policing, including with improving transparency and accountability.

The report also called for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to set out local road safety and roads policing plans for their areas. AVZ strongly endorses this and it is needed. Our [2020 Police and crime plan report](#) showed that while road safety was included in over three-quarters of police and crime plans, often the detail of the proposed actions was minimal.

Recommendation 2. The national roads policing lead should be supported by a dedicated, full-time secretariat, based within the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

This is needed and should happen if the Home Office included roads policing as a Strategic Policing Requirement (see 1 above). The secretariat is expected to "set guidelines and make recommendations for Chief Constables". This means monitoring will be required, including by Police and Crime panels and local campaign groups, as implementation will be on voluntary basis.

Recommendation 3. The government should appoint a Road Safety Commissioner, comparable to the Victims Commissioner, responsible for promoting good practice and partnership working, and holding government departments and police accountable so that lessons are learned, and future road deaths are prevented.

AVZ supports the intentions of this recommendation. Promoting good practice and partnership working are already key activities for us.

But this is asking a lot and way more than what is expected of the Victims Commissioner. We are also uncertain of how it aligns with the other calls for a Road Safety Board or a National Collisions Investigation Branch.

Recommendation 4. The Vision Zero approach should be rolled out nationally.

As the report reminds us, for the past decade the UK Government has failed to set targets for reducing casualties (and the strategies to deliver reductions) and casualties have failed to fall. Those inside motor vehicles have benefitted from improved safety technology while those outside have at best seen casualties remain largely static. The report calls for police to be more ambitious and aim to achieve zero road deaths. Strategic ownership would lie with the Home Office. While we are pleased to see the police supporting Vision Zero, they cannot deliver it alone. Vision Zero needs to be delivered in partnership across many parts of government and in particular with engagement from the Department for Transport. And Vision Zero must be delivered in a way that reduces road danger, with intimidation and motor vehicle usage reduced.

As noted before, we have called for police to focus on harm reduction and offences which pose risk to others. Police should focus on the casualties and intimidation caused by road crime. Other organisations are better placed and resourced to address the road deaths and injuries not involving criminal culpability - these are the casualties the Safe System should be designing out. We need the police to detect and deter non-compliance.

Recommendation 5. The relevant agencies should create an entity which brings together experts from police, government, academia, industry, and the third sector with the aim of anticipating future road dangers, such as caused by changes in technology., and ensuring police and other actors are equipped to deal with them.

AVZ supports the call for increased collaboration. It is good to see the Police Foundation have included the third sector as campaigners/community groups are left out of local authority-based road safety partnerships. The report suggests having a standing committee or policy forum, with the Standing Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) as a possible template.

For the past few years, DfT/Home Office and NPCC have been working together on a joint review of roads policing. This has eight workstreams, including one on technology. This partnership could continue and function as this entity, but should be expanded to include campaigners.

Alternatively, the [Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety](#) (PACTS) could coordinate this entity, at least in the interim, as its working groups - currently focused on road engineering, road user behaviour, vehicle safety, air safety, and rail safety - combine academics, practitioners, private sector and campaigners. They have also undertaken [research into roads policing](#).

But whoever leads on this collaboration should involve the road danger reduction campaigners. This is to ensure roads policing develops in a way consistent with the wider agenda of active travel promotion and transport decarbonisation.

AVZ conclusion

This report adds to the calls for roads policing to be a national priority with an investment in national leadership. It also calls for greater collaboration, including with the third sector and the promotion of good practice. As the 43 police services remain independent, this should help promote but not guarantee increased or consistent enforcement.

Road danger was referenced but its reduction not adopted as a key call. This would have meant more focus on reducing the harm posed to those walking and cycling. This includes such key actions as adopting careless driving as a police priority and monitoring the perception of safety whilst cycling.

AVZ's [Roads Policing Campaign](#) will continue to push for road danger reduction. We will do more to collaborate. We will reach out to all on the report launch webinar and ensure they are aware of our data analysis and [publications](#), including our recent examples of good practice with [reducing road danger](#). We will also publish more data on roads policing officers, motoring offences, sanctions, etc to promote an evidence-based discussion of how the police can help reduce road danger. For more information, contact Amy@ActionVisionZero.org