

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director – Growth, Environment & Transport

To: David Brazier, Cabinet Member – Highways & Transport

Decision No: 21/00045

Subject: **Vision Zero - The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 - 2026**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary: This paper updates Members on the draft Vision Zero - The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026 which aims to reduce Road Casualties in Kent. The Strategy has been developed following extensive research into national and international best practice and in discussion with partners and stakeholders. It went to a full public consultation between January and March which was very positive, showing 75% - 80% support for the vision, approach, and most of the actions, for which full details can be seen in the Consultation Report.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to formally adopt Vision Zero – The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026 for subsequent development of delivery plans and pilots as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Keeping our roads as safe as they can be and tackling death and injury is a key priority for KCC. We have a statutory duty to promote road safety and to act to reduce the likelihood of road casualties occurring (Section 39, Road Traffic Act 1988). In addition, reducing casualties also serves to prevent long term disability and ill health. Road safety, and the feeling of safety, is one of the main community concerns expressed by Kent’s residents.
- 1.2 The vision for this strategy is to reduce road fatalities in Kent to zero by 2050. We aim to reach this target through a reduction in fatalities measured over five-year periods. Experience across the UK clearly shows the benefits of having a target for road casualties.
- 1.3 The Safe Systems Approach is based on the acceptance that humans make mistakes, and therefore we must design a system that aims to significantly reduce the risk of human error resulting in fatal or life changing injuries.
- 1.4 Safe Systems brings together a set of inter-dependent strands, encompassing safe speed, safe vehicles, safe behaviour, and safe streets.
- 1.5 The achievement of Vision Zero will require collaboration, coordination and cooperation across all KCC departments, with our partners, stakeholders and crucially with our residents and businesses. The five-year strategy is based on proactive, local level

engagement to address our communities' concerns about road safety and incorporates six key elements as outlined below.

- 1.6 We will be proactive in working with Kent's Communities and our approach to local engagement will be through the 'Community CIRCLE' detailed below.

Community Concern - align injury collisions with factors that strengthen the case for intervention, such as concerns about speed, air quality & noise.

Injury reduction priority but feeling safe and quality of life are also important.

Research & pilot - safety camera criteria to include community demand - pilot average speed camera corridor for evaluation.

Common responsibility for safety - road users, local community, highway authority.

Localise campaigns focus on casualty cluster sites.

Engagement with community at cluster sites - discuss solutions together.

- 1.7 Research shows attitudes towards road safety measures such as safety cameras have shifted and are now net supportive. Changing attitudes and behaviours are, however, two different things.
- 1.8 In 2004, the World Health Organisation concluded that "... when used in isolation education, information and publicity generally do not deliver tangible and sustained reductions in deaths and serious injuries."
- 1.9 Research published in the Handbook of Road Safety Measures, by Rune Elvik, shows however that local, personally directed campaigns show by far the biggest effect on road collisions. Publicity and education will therefore be localised as much as possible part of the Community CIRCLE approach. We will work with parish councils and through schools to engage with communities.
- 1.10 The WHO report also confirmed that publicity and education were able to influence behaviour when used in conjunction with legislation and law enforcement. Thus, there will continue to be a focus on combining education with enforcement, engineering, and new regulations such as promoting new vehicle technology and freight vehicle accreditation schemes.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 We will collaborate with partners and KCC departments to seek cost savings from joint working, such as working with the public health team, making travel both feel and be safer, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing obesity rates and working with fleet managers to improve both the safety and emissions of vehicle fleets.
- 2.2 The Department for Transport estimates the cost of dealing with a fatal crash is £2.2m. The cost of injuries can in the long run be even more expensive for local councils as some injuries can require 24-hour care which can cost up to £2000 per week.
- 2.3 The revenue budget for the Casualty Reduction Team for staff and education, training and publicity, transport intelligence, safety camera partnership, safer mobility and road

crossing patrols currently stands at £1,810k pa. This does not include the capital budgets required for engineering works.

- 2.4 There are therefore no direct immediate financial implications for this strategy, as it outlines a new approach which can be tailored to available funding. In the longer term the adoption of this strategy will enable KCC to lever higher levels of funding for safer roads and streets from central government and charities.
- 2.5 The Department for Transport makes it clear that future budgets will be allocated according to building an evidence base and following the Safe Systems Approach, both of which are core to this strategy.

DfT Road Safety Statement 2019

“We... encourage use of the safe systems approach. Future investment in vehicle technology, in infrastructure, and in our evidence-base are all part of the building blocks of future success.”

3. The Policy Framework for Vision Zero

- 3.1 This strategy reflects key relevant themes in the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2016-2021 ‘Growth without gridlock’. Traffic collisions cause congestion and smooth flowing traffic at a regular speed limit is safer, produces less emissions and reduces congestion. The Active Travel Strategy (2013) and whole systems approach to reducing obesity, would be supported by safer roads and streets, as local and national surveys show that fear of road danger is one of the principal barriers to more walking and cycling.

4. The Strategy

- 4.1 The proposed Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy is presented at **Appendix 1**. In summary the strategy will be:

Proactive

We will engage locally with communities to listen to their road safety concerns and while quantifiable data on safety will be required, we will take local community concerns on board to strengthen the case for intervention.

Data Led:

We will use existing data sources such as statistics on collisions, speed and traffic volumes. We will use advanced traffic analytics to identify roads in Kent where re-engineering is needed most urgently.

Coordinated:

A key success factor will be the coordination of education, engineering and enforcement resources from KCC and partners.

Promoted:

We will raise public awareness of our Vision Zero objectives and safety advice, along with enforcement campaigns to make offenders aware that they face a real risk of being caught.

Collaborative:

We will work with partners and stakeholders across Kent to achieve Vision Zero. This will include working with Highway England's Driving for Better Business (DfBB) programme to promote safer, cleaner vehicles to fleet managers throughout Kent.

Based on Real Time Evaluation:

Evaluation is at the heart of the Safe Systems approach. We will use technologies such as pneumatic loops, cameras and algorithms to record the impact of interventions.

- 4.2 By adopting this approach, we will produce an evidence base for further actions based on an improved understanding of road safety techniques and strategies that work in different areas, and which can be shared countywide and nationally. This will help to raise awareness of our road safety aims and build relationships with local communities.

5. The Consultation

- 5.1 The formal consultation ran from Tuesday 26th January to Tuesday 16th March 2021. We held four stakeholder workshops with over 200 participants. We had over 760 complete consultation responses which showed very strong support for the vision, approach, and proposed actions.
- 5.2 A Consultation report summarising the results of the public consultation is submitted alongside this report.
- 5.3 The EQIA is attached in Appendix 3 and was also consulted on as part of this process.
- 5.4 While the overall feedback has been very supportive, many organisations and individuals took the time to provide very detailed commentary, and amendments have therefore been made to the final draft report. These include:
 - Rewording some of the actions for clarification.
 - Strengthening of the ambition for reduction in level of serious injuries.
 - Adoption of the 'UN decade of action on road safety' target of a 50% reduction in fatalities by 2030 – supplementing the vision for zero deaths by 2050.
 - Inclusion of the assessment of alternative accreditation schemes for the safety of heavy goods vehicles such as but not exclusively FORS, DVSA Earned Recognition and ISO39001.
 - Assess the potential expansion of the listed key performance indicators.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Reducing death and injury on Kent's roads is a continuing priority, and the concern of not feeling safe is a frequent community concern expressed to Kent County Council as

the Local Highway Authority. As technology advances, road safety is the responsibility not only for the Highway Authority, but for a wide variety of stakeholders including schools, workplaces, fleet operators, visitor attractions, town and district councils, the blue light services, hospitals, the NHS, and every road user in Kent. We aim to engage locally to deliver the safer roads and streets, safer speeds, safer vehicles, and better behaviour that Kent's communities deserve. This draft strategy is the first step on that journey.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to formally adopt Vision Zero – The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026 for subsequent development of delivery plans and pilots as shown at Appendix A.

8. Background Documents

- Appendix A – Record of Decision
- Appendix 1 – Full Strategy Document
- Appendix 2 – Consultation Report and appendices:
 - Report:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s104096/FVisionZeroConsultationReport.pdf>
 - Appendices:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s104101/GVisionZeroConsultationReportAppendices.pdf>
- Appendix 3 – EQIA:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s104098/HVisionZeroStrategyEqIA.pdf>
- Appendix 4 – Data Pack:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s104099/IVisionZeroforKentdatapackFINA.L.pdf>

9. Contact details

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