



Report of the Police and Crime Panel

Report title: PCC Road Safety Strategy update

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Purpose of the report: As requested by the Police and Crime Panel

Recommendations: Information only

Executive Summary

This report offers a brief overview of the progress made regarding the PCC's Road Safety Strategy 2024-28. The strategy aims to outline PCC commitments contributing to the Safe System approach, making Thames Valley roads safer through partnership, evidence-led methods, and a focus on education and enforcement.

Background

Great Britain has consistently maintained one of the world's lowest road fatality rates for several years. In 2021, it ranked fifth among European countries with a population over 1 million, following Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland (STATS19, Department for Transport, 2021).

Aligned with the NPCC Strategic Plan (2021-2025), the NPCC Roads Policing Strategy plays a pivotal role in coordinating national policing efforts in this critical area. Concurrently, the government is conducting a four-year review of roads policing and traffic enforcement. Collaborating with the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Department for Transport aims to enhance capability and capacity across various agencies. This comprehensive review not only acknowledges commendable efforts by police forces but also identifies opportunities to further enhance road safety.

Safe System Model

The Safe System is a holistic road safety management approach that our need to travel should not compromise our life and health. Central to the Safe System is the integration of five key pillars within the road environment, working collaboratively to minimise risks. Aligned with Vision Zero principles (Brake, 2022), the five pillars include:

1. Safer people/behaviours
2. Safer vehicles
3. Safer speeds
4. Safer roads



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5. Post-collision response

By addressing these pillars collectively, the Safe System aims to create a comprehensive and effective framework for enhancing road safety.

Vision Zero

Vision Zero represents a transformative approach with the ultimate goal of establishing a road traffic system entirely free from death and serious injury. This paradigm shift moves beyond merely preventing collisions to actively focusing on preventing fatalities and mitigating severe injuries, recognizing the preventability of such incidents with current knowledge. The framework includes interim quantitative targets, typically spanning a 10-year period, to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries.

In the Safe System, Vision Zero places emphasis on targeting intermediate outcomes directly linked to fatalities and serious injuries. These include average speeds, seat belt usage, sobriety while driving, road and vehicle safety quality, and the efficiency of emergency medical system responses.

National and Local Picture

According to the STATS19 annual report for 2022, the national road safety landscape reflects a positive trend:

- 1,760 fatalities in reported road collisions, marking a 4% decrease compared to the year ending June 2019 (pre-pandemic levels).
- 29,804 reported killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties, showing a 6% decrease compared to the year ending June 2019.
- 137,013 reported casualties of all severities, indicating a 12% decrease compared to the year ending June 2019.

Over the past five years, Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Highways England network in Thames Valley have witnessed an average of 64 fatalities and 700 killed or seriously injured cases annually. In 2022, 760 people were killed or seriously injured on Thames Valley roads.

Local authorities within Thames Valley receive comprehensive quarterly updates from Roads Policing. These updates encompass various metrics, including mobile and fixed camera speed enforcement, Community Speedwatch, Fatal 4 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), impaired driving statistics, and year-to-year comparisons. The updates also provide insights into specific operations and activities within each area, along with outcomes from local campaigns.



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What Are We Doing About It and How We Are Responding?

The PCC advocates the adoption of a Safe System approach, aligning with the ultimate goal of preventing any road user from experiencing a fatal or serious injury event. Our strategy revolves around fostering collaboration, flexibility, and resource pooling to achieve efficient and effective outcomes through intelligence-led approaches. Enforcement efforts will be strategically directed towards areas where improvements are most needed, supporting enhanced compliance levels.

We commit to implementing Safe System principles for policing the roads, marking a transformative shift in ambition. This approach allows us to address all aspects of the road transport system collectively, identifying synergies for trauma reduction, safer road and vehicle design, and ensuring speed limits and compliance with road laws are tackled comprehensively.

Recognising the complexity of achieving reductions in the numbers of persons killed and injured, we acknowledge the necessity for heightened levels of effective partnership working. The PCC values existing initiatives and is considering the re-establishment of a Thames Valley-wide multi-agency Strategic Road Safety Partnership.

We emphasise the significance of strong partnerships in achieving common goals. Successful collaboration hinges on how we share information with partners and communities, and reciprocally, how we utilise data to inform decisions. Regarding data sharing, we see an opportunity for greater collaboration and potential cost savings through the establishment of an interactive platform. The PCC is actively exploring this possibility as part of the overarching plan.

Roads Policing

The Joint Operations Unit (JOU) Roads Policing Unit (RPU) comprises over 300 officers across all ranks, supported by police staff colleagues. Their unwavering commitment is to deliver a top-tier service to the public while actively working to further reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the roads. Additionally, the RPU remains dedicated to supporting the policing plans of both Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary and Thames Valley Police.

Emphasising enforcement as a crucial tool for reducing road casualties, the Roads Policing Unit employs a strategic approach - deploying resources in the right place, at the right time, and with the right personnel. Balancing prosecution with educational alternatives and discretion, they collaborate with partner agencies to provide a high-quality Roads Policing service across the Five Counties under the JOU's jurisdiction. The JOU remains responsive to local needs, striving to make roads and communities safer for everyone.

The Roads Policing Unit remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing collisions resulting in road deaths and serious injuries, as well as combating organised crime and



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terrorism through flexible enforcement based on intelligence, professional judgment, and discretion. Officers ensure a visible and technological presence on roads, collaborating with partners to enforce and educate errant drivers, aiming to influence the behaviour of all road users.

A collective focus on threats disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable, such as young drivers, cyclists, motorcyclists, and pedestrians, guides the Roads Policing Unit. Prioritising the 'Fatal 4' offenses - drink and drug driving, non-wearing of seatbelts, excessive speed, and driving while distracted - they rely on independent research, demonstrating the effectiveness and efficiency of this approach.

Efforts to tackle organized crime groups using the roads receive support and encouragement. Intelligence-led patrols and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) persist as key methods to disrupt activities and maintain community safety.

OPCC Road Safety Consultation

The draft OPCC Road Safety Strategy has undergone extensive development through internal and external workshops involving key partnership agencies, county council members, interest groups, and road safety and transportation professionals. Two Road Safety Summits, led by the OPCC, and an online consultation on the draft strategy and its delivery plan have shaped its development.

The December 2022 Road Safety Summit provided professionals in the sector a platform to contribute their insights and influence the shaping and delivery of the OPCC's Road Safety Strategy in the Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Milton Keynes).

The draft OPCC Road Safety Strategy underwent consultation in September 2023, inviting a broad range of partners to provide feedback. Consultees had the opportunity to comment through an online survey and hard copy submissions.

All responses were collated and analysed to inform the thematic report. The OPCC actively considered arising actions and impacts in each area, transparently incorporating its response to each theme. The consultation report is currently under review by SMG, requiring input from both senior and political levels.

Next steps

The draft PCC Road Safety Strategy is set for review and approval by the OPCC Senior Management Group. This process will encompass decisions on resourcing, success measures, monitoring, and the associated delivery plan underpinning the strategy.