

A New Road Safety Strategy for Birmingham

Transport Planning

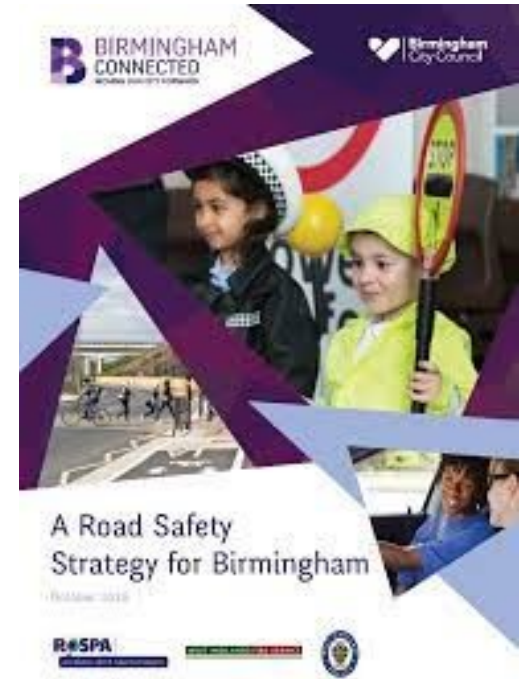


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Background

- The current **Road Safety Strategy for Birmingham** was adopted in October 2016.
- At the time of writing, this aligned with all relevant policies, guidance and best practice.
- This established a **formal prioritisation approach** for the delivery of focussed Local Safety Schemes, to ensure that areas of greatest need were prioritised first for intervention.



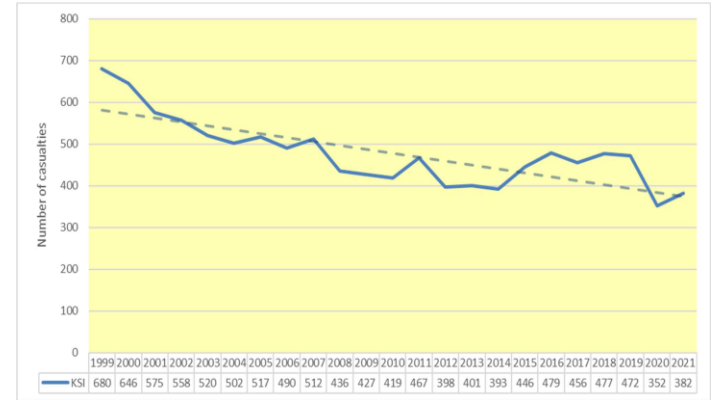
Why refresh the Road Safety Strategy?

- Unfortunately, the Road Safety Strategy is no longer delivering for Birmingham:
 - Progress in reducing Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) across the city has plateaued – **the approach is no longer tackling the problem**;
 - The pace of road safety scheme delivery is too slow and complex;
 - Allocated road safety funding is fragmented, and value for money achieved is not high enough;
 - Lack of alignment with the adopted Birmingham Transport Plan, Regional and National Road Safety policies and best practice.



Progress in reducing Road Traffic Collisions has plateaued

- The gradual decline reported in RTCs (KSI) in Birmingham relies on rapid reductions achieved between 1999 and 2012;
- From 2013 onwards, progress has been largely static (with the notable exception of the pandemic period, when RTCs dramatically declined);
- If we do not radically change our approach, every year we can expect approximately:
 - 25 people to die, and;
 - 400 people to suffer serious (probably life changing) injuries on our roads.
- **This is unacceptable and in most cases, avoidable.**



Pace of road safety scheme delivery is slow and complex

- The current Local Safety Scheme prioritisation criteria encourage focusing interventions on specific ‘problem’ streets;
- ‘Traditional’ road safety scheme delivery approach focuses on vehicles first (i.e. manage vehicle speeds, then cater for other modes as an afterthought) generally by implementing ‘vertical deflection measures’;
- This ‘street-by-street, junction-by-junction’ approach is not achieving results, because it does not deal with the problem (high and ever-growing volumes of vehicular traffic);
- It is also no longer affordable, and could take well over a **century** to treat all suitable roads in the city, assuming current resource availability is maintained.



Allocated funding is fragmented, and value for money is not high enough

- The Local Safety Scheme budget is approximately £500k per annum, and has been for a number of years;
- Meanwhile, infrastructure delivery costs have skyrocketed...
- BUT – Significant opportunities exist to consolidate available funding to achieve much better value.

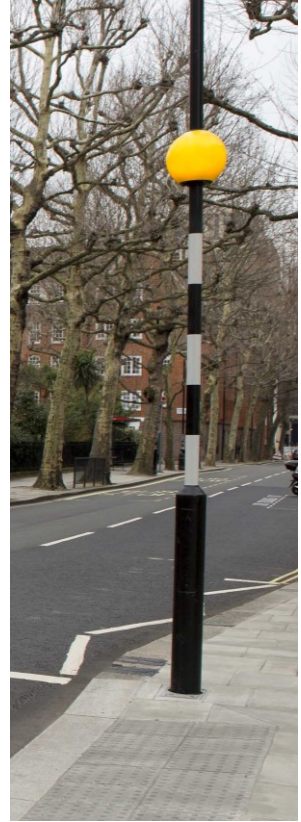


POLICIES, GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE



Vision Zero

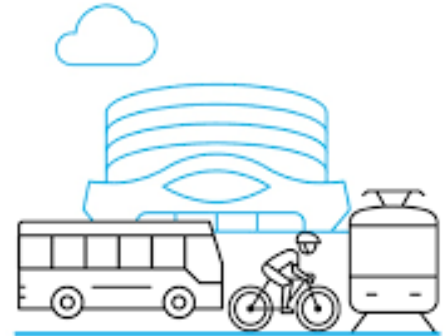
- The Vision Zero strategy emerged in the 1990s in Sweden, **and is referenced in the current RSSB.**
- It aims to eliminate **all** traffic fatalities and severe injuries, whilst increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all. Key principles:
 - **Safe speeds:** Encouraging speeds appropriate to the streets of a busy and populated city (20mph or less on most roads)
 - **Safe streets:** Designing an environment that is forgiving of mistakes, by removing vehicular traffic wherever possible and ensuring safety is embedded within all scheme designs
 - **Safe vehicles:** Reducing risk posed by the most dangerous vehicles (particularly larger and heavier)
 - **Safe behaviours:** Reducing the likelihood of road users making mistakes, or behaving in a way that is risky for themselves and other people through targeted interventions, enforcement, marketing campaigns, education programmes and safety training
 - **Post-collision response:** Developing systematic information sharing and learning, along with improving proportionate justice and care for the victims of road traffic collisions.



Birmingham Transport Plan

- The Birmingham Transport Plan was adopted in 2021;
- It sets out a clear, evidenced approach to transform Birmingham's transport networks, to address the challenges posed by the need to:
 - Tackle Climate Change
 - Ensure Equity
 - Tackle poor Air Quality and Public Health Issues (including road safety)
 - Accommodate Future Growth

BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT PLAN



Birmingham Transport Plan (Continued)

■ PRINCIPLES

- Reallocating road space
 - Transforming the city centre
 - Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods
 - Managing demand through parking measures
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- The BTP commits BCC to significantly reduce vehicular traffic citywide.
 - This is necessary and unavoidable if we are to respond to the range of challenges Birmingham now faces.



Best Practice: Healthy Streets Quality Auditing (Vitruvian Principles)

- In the 1st century BC, the Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius, in his multi-volume work 'De Architectura' originated the idea that all buildings/schemes should have three attributes: *firmitas* (durable), *utilitas* (useful/functional) and *venustas* (attractive/beautiful).
- **Quality Audit** is a systematic review of proposed transport projects, based on Vitruvian Principles. It aims to ensure the delivery of high-quality places which are **functional, durable, attractive and safe**.
- Transport for London has championed this concept and developed it further into the 'Healthy Streets' standard which forms the basis of the Capital's approach to deliver Vision Zero.
- Healthy Streets auditing ensures street design is genuinely inclusive, considering the needs of **all** users, whilst delivering safer roads which put people before traffic.



Best Practice: Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)

- LTNs can be emotive, but they have consistently been proven to deliver results.
- They now form a central delivery component of the 'Healthy Streets' approach across the UK and globally. LTNs:
 - Reduce and remove 'through' vehicular traffic from local road networks;
 - Do not increase traffic volumes on boundary roads;
 - Dramatically reduce the incidence and severity of recorded Road Traffic Collisions;
 - Offer an affordable, high value, effective road safety delivery approach for local areas, particularly in 'inner city' locations.



DATA CONTEXT



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Where are our most dangerous roads and neighbourhoods?

Ward	collisions per year (weighted)
Bordesley & Highgate	65.7
Nechells	38.3
Bordesley Green	37.7
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross	31.7
Alum Rock	30.5
Ladywood	25.8
Tyseley & Hay Mills	25.3
Balsall Heath West	25.0
Soho & Jewellery Quarter	24.5
Garretts Green	20.0

- This data shows average number of road traffic collisions per year, during 2019-2021;
- Unclassified roads only (weighted according to size of ward)
- Densely populated, deprived areas in East Birmingham a particular focus for poor road safety.
- There is a clear correlation between density of busy A and B Class roads, and recorded RTCs.

What are the causes of the majority of Road Traffic Collisions?

Primary listed causation factor	Average collisions per year 2019 -2021 – All Roads
Failed to look properly (pedestrian)	638.0
Careless or Reckless or In a hurry	210.3
Poor turn or manoeuvre	162.3
Exceeding speed limit	126.7
Failed to judge other persons path or speed	118.7
Failed to look properly (driver)	108.7
Aggressive driving	106.0
Slippery road (due to weather)	88.3
Disobeyed Give Way or Stop sign or markings	87.7
Impaired by alcohol	72.3

- The majority of road traffic collisions are caused by bad and/or inattentive driving;
- It is now very rare for collisions to be caused by poor road design;
- Pedestrians and cyclists are often blamed for ‘not looking’, but this is primarily a **driver error** for failing to anticipate more vulnerable user behaviour, and driving to the conditions;
- Since our ability to influence driver behaviour is limited, decreasing and removing vehicular traffic from local areas is **necessary** to reduce the incidence and severity of road traffic collisions.

TOWARDS A REFRESHED APPROACH TO ROAD SAFETY IN BIRMINGHAM



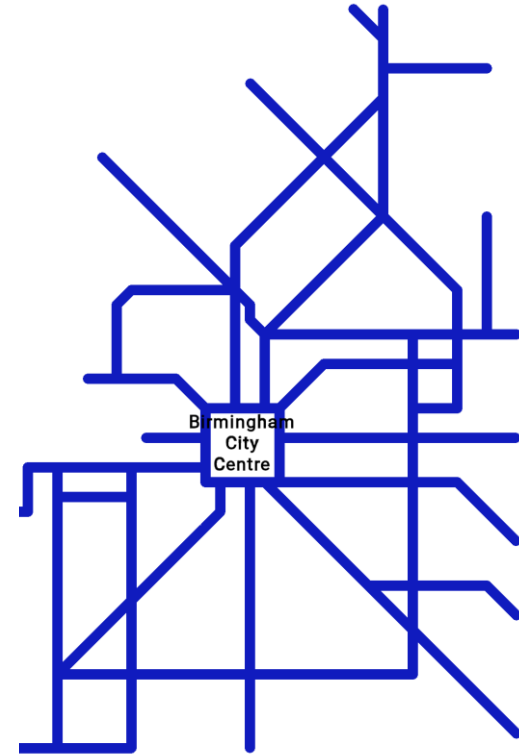
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A Refreshed Approach to Road Safety in Birmingham

- To deliver Vision Zero in Birmingham, we need to take a bold, ambitious approach to reduce **vehicular traffic volumes**, particularly in local neighbourhoods.
- To achieve this – and quickly - it is proposed to end the current Local Safety Scheme prioritisation process, and replace it with a bilateral approach to delivering improved road safety in Birmingham:
 - **Arterial Routes** (predominantly A-Class roads) will be treated separately, with a opportunistic funding and delivery approach;
 - **Neighbourhood Major Schemes** will treat entire networks of B, C and U Class Roads, bounded by A-Class roads as a programme of major schemes to achieve economies of scale and speed.

Arterial Routes

- Birmingham's network of A-class roads performs a vital strategic function by:
 - Enabling the movement of goods and services
 - Enabling the mass transit of people (priority bus routes)
- Traffic movement along these corridors must be maintained to preserve the socio-economic health of the city;
- Closing off 'rat runs' and focussing traffic on strategic (A-Class) roads can provide opportunities to improve control and network reliability;
- Arterial route infrastructure is expensive, because it needs to be designed to higher standards to ensure it is sufficiently durable to withstand heavy traffic flows.



Arterial Routes (Continued)

- Funding for corridor improvements secured via major schemes channels such as CRSTS. Arterial route funding secured opportunistically, taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.
 - Arterial Route investment packages should include:
 - Corridor-length Healthy Streets auditing to identify quality improvements;
 - Full modal separation wherever there is space to do so;
 - If space is constrained, interventions should specifically focus on protecting safety of more vulnerable users;
 - On-street parking should not be provided unless there is sufficient space to accommodate it once all other user needs have been catered for. The socio-economic health of the city is far more important!
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Neighbourhood Major Schemes

- Birmingham City Council currently delivers a wide variety of different initiatives in local areas, including:
 - Local Safety Schemes;
 - 20mph Areas;
 - Local Engineering Interventions;
 - Active travel access improvement schemes;
 - School Streets;
 - Maintenance activities;
 - Tree planting schemes.
- To achieve best value, it is proposed approach to consolidate these initiatives to create a single coordinated programme of Neighbourhood Major Schemes...



Neighbourhood Major Schemes (Continued)

- Neighbourhood Major Schemes should involve:
 - Area-wide 'Healthy Street' quality auditing process, to identify issues; followed by
 - Options assessment, then;
 - Direct engagement with local residents
- ...to ensure proposed schemes are tailored to local needs;
- Aim to remove as much vehicular traffic as possible whilst improving local roads to make them more attractive, durable, safe and (multi) functional for **all** users: **an equitable streetscape**.
- Neighbourhood Major Schemes delivery prioritised according to area-wide recorded RTC severity, with the most dangerous local areas treated first.
- **However**, there may be opportunities to bring forward major schemes in lower priority areas more quickly, if additional funding and resources can be secured from external sources.



