



# SAFER ROADS FOR ALL



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Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley





# CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
National Context	4
Local Context	5
Safe System	6
Vision Zero	7
Safe Behaviour	8
Safe Vehicles	10
Safe Roads	12
Safe Speeds	14
Post-Collision Response	16
Governance	18
Consultation	19



# FOREWORD



Safety on our roads affects us all. As a society we would not accept the number of deaths that occur on our roads in any other walk of life. That is why road safety is a priority in my [Police & Crime Plan](#).

There is already excellent work taking place to improve the safety of our roads. The focus of this strategy is to prioritise the areas that present the greatest risk, with the long term objective of reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured in Thames Valley.

Thames Valley Police's Roads Policing Unit operates as part of the Joint Operations Unit in collaboration with Hampshire Constabulary. I support the fantastic work done by their officers and staff – often one of the most challenging roles in policing. Whilst the police have an important role to play in enforcement, much of the preventative work to save lives needs to be carried out in partnership with local authorities and other agencies who are responsible for ensuring a safe road network.

Through this strategy I am seeking a stronger partnership across all of those agencies; making better use of technology, and sharing data, communications and priorities to make Thames Valley's roads safer for all.

**Matthew Barber**

Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley



# INTRODUCTION

Developing a road safety strategy involves prioritising measures to reduce collisions, injuries, and, crucially, fatalities on the roads. It includes initiatives such as improving infrastructure, enforcing traffic laws, educating the public about safe driving practices, promoting safe practices, and adopting technology to enhance safety. Road safety is about partnership and the success of this strategy will depend on the engagement and collaboration of a variety of agencies. Priority areas will include:

## **A public health approach, education and awareness:**

- Public campaigns to promote safe driving behaviours.
- Road user education.
- Regular updates on traffic laws and regulations.

## **Enforcement and legislation:**

- Engaging in debate and campaigning for appropriate legislation to deal with emerging risk.
- Rigorous enforcement of existing legislation to protect the public and deter unsafe behaviour.
- Enhancing the enforcement capability of the police and other agencies.

## **Infrastructure:**

- Designing safer roads with appropriate junctions, signage, lighting and barriers.
- Implementing traffic calming measures in appropriate locations including roundabouts and pedestrian crossings.
- Ensuring regular maintenance of roads to prevent collisions caused by poor road

conditions.

## **Vehicle safety:**

- Supporting the use of modern vehicles equipped with advanced safety features like airbags, anti-lock braking systems (ABS) and electronic stability control (ESC).
- Implementing strict vehicle safety standards and regular inspections.
- Promoting the development and use of autonomous and connected vehicle technologies.

## **Emergency response and post-collision follow up:**

- Improving emergency response systems to reduce the time taken to reach collision sites.
- Training first responders in providing effective on-site medical care.
- Enhancing hospital readiness to handle road collisions.
- Providing better support for victims.

## **Data use:**

- Ensuring comprehensive systems for collecting, analysing and sharing traffic collision data.
- Using data to identify high-risk areas and the main causes of collisions.

## **Community and stakeholder engagement:**

- Involving communities in road safety initiatives to ensure local needs and perspectives are considered.
- Explaining evidence-based priorities to the public through better communication.
- Partnering with non-governmental organisations, the private sector and other stakeholders to promote road safety.
- Encouraging corporate social responsibility programmes focused on road safety.

By focusing on these priorities, a comprehensive road safety strategy can be put in place to reduce fatalities and enhance overall traffic safety. These priorities are addressed via the five pillars approach defined within this document.



# NATIONAL CONTEXT

In 2021, Great Britain had the fifth lowest rate of road fatalities per million people among European countries with a population over 1 million behind Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland.

Of reported road collisions in Great Britain in 2023, there were:

- 1,645 fatalities - a decline of 4% compared to 2022
- 29,643 killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties - little change compared to 2022
- 132,063 casualties of all severities - a decline of 3% compared to 2022
- 46% of fatalities were car occupants, 25% were pedestrians, 19% were motorcyclists and 5% were pedal cyclists

## **Department for Transport (DfT)**

The Government is progressing a four-year review into roads policing and traffic enforcement. The Department for Transport is looking at this with the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the National Police Chiefs' Council. They aim to identify ways of increasing capability and capacity across a range of agencies. This review will not only highlight where police forces are doing good work; it will show what more can be done to improve road safety. Its focus is on establishing the most effective ways to reduce road risk and harm across the UK. The review will conclude in March 2025.

The Department has also announced plans to set up a Road Safety Investigation Branch to identify the underlying causes of road traffic collisions. This will bring roads in line with other modes of transport such as rail, which have long benefited from a collision investigation branch.

## **National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)**

In support of the aims of the NPCC Strategic Plan (2021-2025), the NPCC Roads Policing Strategy provides coordination of this critical area of business for national policing. As part of this approach, Thames Valley Police collaborate with a range of strategic policing partners who share a common goal of making our roads safer, as well as tackling crime and reducing network disruption and economic loss.

The NPCC Roads Policing portfolio provides national, regional and local leadership and direction through working groups that offer advice, best practice and, where appropriate, set national standards on a wide range of roads policing activity from police pursuits to vehicle recovery, national operations and police driver training.

## **Emerging technologies**

Developments relating to motor vehicle and road usage also need to be considered. For example, establishing the impact that electric vehicles will have on road safety. Furthermore, industry changes to vehicle safety may impact death and serious, life-changing injuries.

# LOCAL CONTEXT

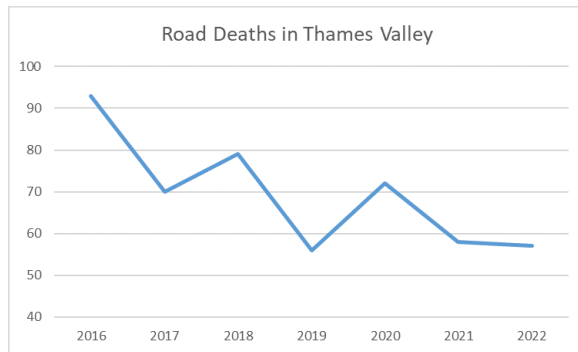


The Thames Valley has a diverse road network, including urban and rural roads and an extensive motorway network. Road safety is, therefore, a key issue for police, local authorities and the community.

Looking across the whole of Thames Valley we see that road deaths have been gradually reducing, although beginning to plateau, notwithstanding a rise during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the number of road deaths remains unacceptable, so it is important that we look at the causes and most effective mitigations.

The numbers killed and seriously injured (KSIs) has remained below pre-pandemic levels across Thames Valley despite a rise in 2022 – the latest full year published by the Department for Transport.

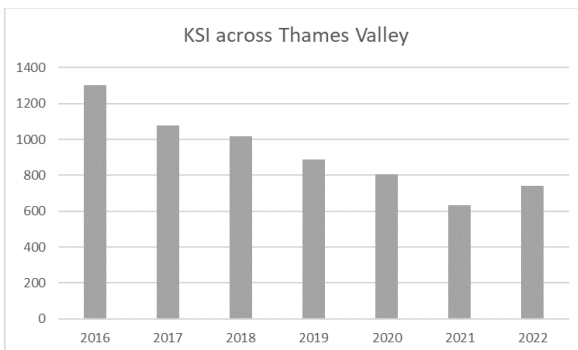
The average for the three years prior to the pandemic was 993 KSI. The average for the three years following (2020 onwards) has been 726. This reduction is welcome, but is still 726 KSI's too many and everything we can reasonably do to keep our roads safe should be done.



In addition to the work with partner agencies, it should be noted that enforcement activity by Thames Valley Police has increased in an effort to tackle what are often known as the “fatal four”; speeding, drink/drugs, distraction and not wearing a seatbelt.

The figures for the year-to-date to December 2023/24 show a significant year-on-year rise in police enforcement activity against the “fatal four”:

- There were 2,012 arrests for impaired driving (drink/drugs) - up 24% on the previous year.
- Enforcement for distraction (mobile phones) was at 1,456 - up 51% on the previous year.
- Officers enforced 2,187 seatbelt offences - up 65% on the previous year.
- Police Officer enforced speeding offences reached 3,356 - up 45% on the previous year.
- All these figures are also higher than enforcement levels in 2021/22.



This is in addition to speeding enforcement of 109,717 offences through fixed and mobile speed cameras for the same period.

It is also important to note that in the period from 2000-2022, 630 people lost their lives on roads in built up areas (roads with speed limits of 30mph or less). During the same period, 1,647 people (more than two and a half times as many) were killed on roads with limits of 40mph or more.



# SAFE SYSTEM



The Safe System Approach emphasises best practice in road safety.

This strategy promotes the application of the Safe System Approach to road safety in the Thames Valley. The Safe System is an approach to road safety management that identifies shared responsibilities in relation to road safety ranging from manufacturers, highways authorities and road users through to design and road engineering.

Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people.

In the Safe System, the five pillars of the road environment work together, as one, to minimise risk.

The Safe System Approach is based on the underlying principles that:

- Human beings make frequent mistakes that lead to road collisions;
- The human body by nature has a limited ability to sustain collision forces with known tolerance to injury thresholds; and
- It is a shared responsibility between stakeholders (road users, road managers, vehicle manufacturers) to take appropriate actions to ensure that road collisions do not lead to serious or fatal injuries.





# VISION ZERO

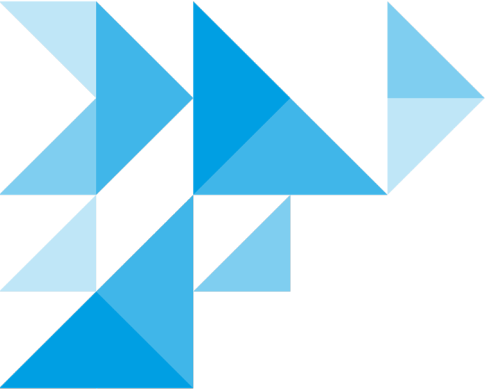
Safe System principles are embedded within Vision Zero.

Vision Zero has a long-goal to end traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by taking a systemic approach to road safety.

It involves an important paradigm shift from trying to prevent all collisions to prioritising the prevention of death and mitigating serious injury in road traffic collisions, a problem which is considered to be largely preventable based on current knowledge. It is backed up by interim quantitative targets to reduce numbers of deaths and serious injuries usually over a 10 year period. In the Safe System, there is also focus on targeting intermediate outcomes that are causally related to death and serious injury e.g. average speeds, seatbelt use, sober driving, the safety quality of roads and vehicles, and the emergency medical response.

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*“Vision Zero has a long-goal to end traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by taking a systemic approach to road safety.”*



# SAFE BEHAVIOUR

## Outcome

**Encourage safe, lawful, responsible driving and behaviour by those who use our roads and create conditions that prioritise their ability to reach their destination unharmed**

As stated within the NPCC Roads Policing Strategy, personal responsibility is the starting point for safer roads. Abiding by the laws of the road, which are designed first and foremost to protect life, reduces the chances of being killed or seriously injured in a collision or causing a fatal or serious collision.

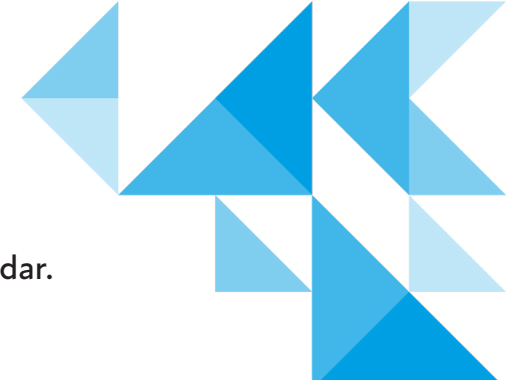
It is evident that the majority of drivers and other road users are careful, considerate and use common sense. Roads engineered with safety in mind, education and occasional reminders are sufficient to ensure that most drivers keep themselves and those around them safe whilst promoting a lifetime of safety. The aim is to build on this. All partners in Thames Valley need to support the Safe System Approach to help enhance the protection for all road users.

We will look at the best ways to share space and to encourage compliance to enhance safety for all. The police, highways authorities and other agencies will need to continue to take part in road safety initiatives and national campaigns, such as the NPCC road safety enforcement calendar, as well as supporting the development of campaigns to address local risks. Throughout, there is a need to clearly communicate our collective actions and the reasons for them and provide a uniform and consistent road safety message. We will need to support early intervention work to prevent people becoming either perpetrators or victims on our roads.

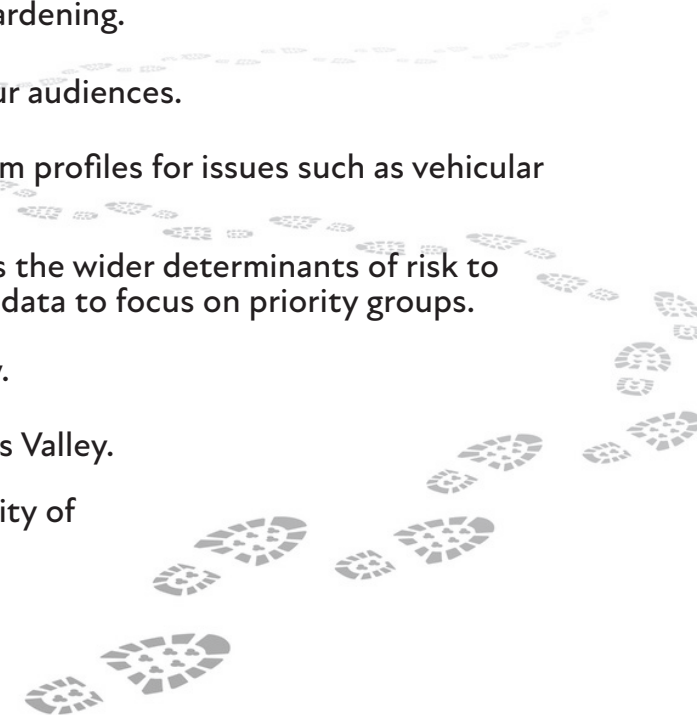
There are some who use our roads in ways that are dangerous, intimidating and criminal. Thames Valley Police must continue to enforce and seek to remove the threat posed by dangerous and illegal activity on our roads, responding to intelligence received through the public, partners and internal mechanisms. Where appropriate, we will look to use prosecution diversion schemes to educate road users and improve driving standards to support the road safety message and prevent repeat offending behaviour. Illegal racing, often connected with large car meets, needs to be tackled through proactive enforcement and intelligence gathering, ensuring that perpetrators are held to account, including after the incidents through the use of camera technology.

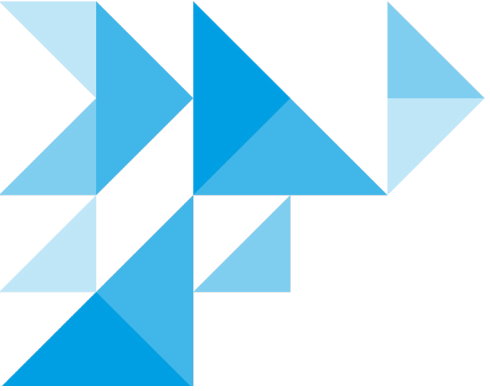
The Fatal Four remain the biggest risks on our roads so enforcement and education must continue to focus on distraction (particularly mobile phone use); tackling drink and drug driving; excess speed; and the use of seatbelts.

## The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...



- ▶ Support joint road safety initiatives and national campaigns, such as the NPCC road safety enforcement calendar.
- ▶ Support the development of campaigns to meet local demand, need and mitigate arising concern.
- ▶ Communicate our actions and the reasons for them to the public and provide a uniform and consistent road safety message.
- ▶ Use prosecution diversion schemes to educate road users and improve driving standards to support the road safety message and prevent repeat offending behaviour.
- ▶ Support innovative projects in crime prevention and rehabilitation.
- ▶ Target and prosecute repeat offenders.
- ▶ Seek to tackle anti-social driving and high-risk behaviours through enforcement and target hardening.
- ▶ Evaluate planned education, training and publicity projects to ensure work is effective with our audiences.
- ▶ Embed processes for partnership tasking, ensuring a data-led approach which includes problem profiles for issues such as vehicular anti-social behaviour including e-bikes and e-scooters.
- ▶ Engage with a wider range of partners as part of a public health approach which acknowledges the wider determinants of risk to embed the principles of behavioural change across our communications and campaigns, using data to focus on priority groups.
- ▶ Support education for young people in schools through the wider schools intervention review.
- ▶ Explore the benefit of expanding the existing Hampshire Older Drivers Forum into the Thames Valley.
- ▶ Promote Operation Snap (public photographic submission of offences) and develop the capacity of Thames Valley Police's Criminal Justice team to process these submissions.
- ▶ Focus activity on tackling the Fatal Four.
- ▶ Where appropriate, seize vehicles to prevent and deter harm.





# SAFE VEHICLES

## Outcome

**Expand the availability of vehicle systems and features that help to prevent crashes and minimise the impact of crashes on both occupants and non-occupants**

The vehicles people use should be roadworthy and properly maintained so we know they are safe for people to use, but the way in which we use our roads is also changing. A significant proportion of road collisions involve vehicles being driven for work purposes, so working with commercial partners and employers towards adopting and ensuring Safe System principles are embedded within their practices is an important aspect of this plan.

There are regulations that drivers, owners and enterprises need to adhere to in order to operate commercial vehicles. Thames Valley Police has a dedicated Commercial Vehicle Unit that works alongside the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to ensure compliance and road worthiness and, ultimately, reduce the danger and risk to life.

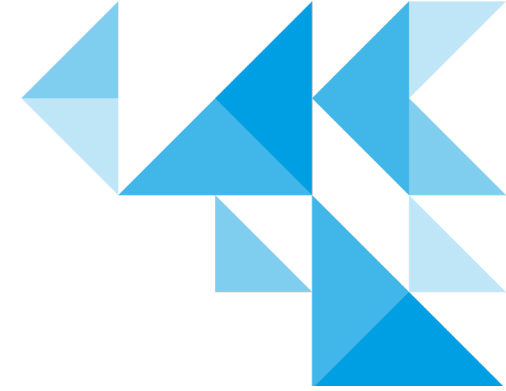
Public sector partners in Thames Valley operate and manage large fleets of vehicles which should be maintained to the same high standards expected of any member of the public.

Through the collision investigation process, causations and safety flaws that can be attributed to vehicle design are escalated to the Government and manufacturers to respond to with the collective mission of preventing further risk to life by creating efficient transport that is safe, reliable and accessible for everyone. There is a role for the Police & Crime Commissioner, along with other partners, to lobby for changes to legislation and regulation that will bring proportionate benefits to public safety.

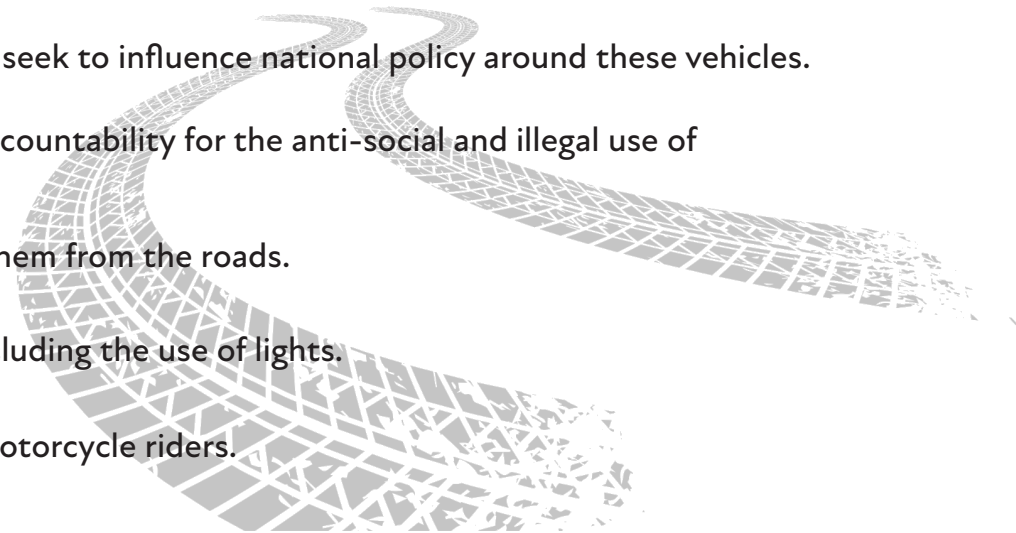
The police will continue to enforce standards of road worthiness on cars and motorcycles. Efforts should continue to ensure that cyclists ride with appropriate safety equipment such as lights, focusing on education and enforcement.

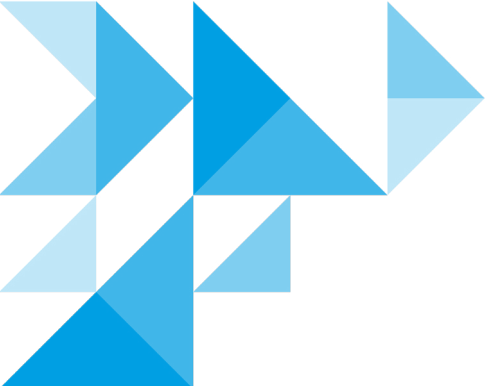
The use of electric scooters and electric bikes is growing rapidly. Whilst offering cheap and convenient transport, they can also be used dangerously and criminally and cause genuine concern amongst other road users. Thames Valley Police will need to enhance current efforts to take enforcement action against the dangerous use of these vehicles. There also remains an urgent need to change the existing legislation which causes confusion at best and creates additional risk by making it too easy to modify these vehicles, allowing them to operate at dangerous speeds. Many of these vehicles are used by delivery riders, and there should be increased engagement with delivery companies to ensure they enforce responsible riding amongst their workforce.

## The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...



- ▶ Ensure the road worthiness of vehicles through appropriate inspection, in particular commercial vehicles.
- ▶ Take action against unsafe and uninsured vehicles, including seizure.
- ▶ Through the collision investigation process, seek to identify causations that can be attributed to vehicle design and ensure these are escalated to the Department for Transport and manufacturers.
- ▶ Work together to understand the risk and benefits posed by the growth in electric vehicles on our roads.
- ▶ Manage the public sector fleet within Thames Valley to make the best use of technology and continually strive to reduce risk in our own vehicles.
- ▶ Seek to influence national policy on vehicle safety regulations particularly in the area of emerging technology.
- ▶ Increase communications regarding vehicle standards and deliver increased enforcement through community awareness events and partnership working.
- ▶ Increase enforcement and education against the illegal use of e-scooters and e-bikes.
- ▶ Work collectively to tackle the modification of e-scooters and e-bikes and seek to influence national policy around these vehicles.
- ▶ Engage with delivery companies and other employers to bring increased accountability for the anti-social and illegal use of some e-scooters and e-bikes.
- ▶ Seek to target vehicles used in wider instances of criminality and remove them from the roads.
- ▶ Encourage safer cycling through enforcement and education campaigns including the use of lights.
- ▶ Ensure that road safety education includes the disproportionate risks to motorcycle riders.





# SAFE ROADS

## Outcome

**Inform and influence safe roadway environments to mitigate human mistakes and account for injury tolerances to encourage safer behaviours**

Local authorities and National Highways hold responsibility for the design and maintenance of the road network and **thus play** a vital role in ensuring road safety. The police can help to shape this work through providing data, understanding the causes of collisions and helping to inform decision making to reduce risk.

A significant amount of data is already shared and published, but partners should review how we currently capture data on road safety, who this information is shared with and for what purpose. The geography of the Thames Valley means a complex mix of partners and this mapping will help influence future activity and strengthen collaborative and innovative partnership working with the aim of creating safer roads.

The Police & Crime Commissioner will publish an annual road safety report setting out the latest available information about the volumes, causes and nature of collisions in the Thames Valley.

Whilst the safe design of new roads is vital, engineering solutions may be the most effective way of dealing with current collision hotspots. Partners should work together to prioritise investment in areas that will save lives; whilst ensuring well maintained roads will improve safety for all road users.

## The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...

- ▶ Help shape a Safe System model by sharing data across partners to help inform decisions and provide evidence for areas of risk.
- ▶ Recognise the critical importance of good road maintenance in reducing risk and saving lives including the importance of signing and lining, vegetation and street lighting.
- ▶ Consider the appropriate use of enforcement cameras to deal with issues such as red light compliance.
- ▶ Contribute to and influence national dialogue around innovative road designs promoting safety.
- ▶ Standardise the approach to moving traffic offence enforcement powers across the region.
- ▶ Encourage segregated cycle infrastructure to better protect cyclists from motor vehicles.
- ▶ Consider the role of parking enforcement and road design in reducing dangerous and anti-social parking, including the impact of planning policy for new homes.





# SAFE SPEEDS

## Outcome

**Promote safe speeds in all roadway environments through context-appropriate speed limit setting, education and enforcement**

Exceeding the speed limit features amongst the top five contributory factors for collisions. Speeding and/or dangerous driving was also the number one concern in the latest Police & Crime Commissioner's Local Crime Survey.

Appropriate speed is at the heart of the Safe System approach. Our collective objective should be to create a network where fewer faults occur, and to ensure that those instances where they do will not lead to a serious injury or death. We should seek compliance with speed limits through consent, education and engagement and ultimately enforcement.

The setting of speed limits is the responsibility of local authorities, but whilst enforcement is primarily the responsibility of the police, road design and close community engagement can help secure compliance with those limits. Speeds should be set in line with Department for Transport guidance to ensure consistency and predictability for road users.

Excessive speed is often linked to the most serious injuries, and a deterrent effect is required to tackle habitual speeders. Public engagement, along with targeted education, will help to improve awareness of the risks of excessive speed. The Police will continue to enforce safe speeds, focussing inevitably limited resources to high risk routes and 'hotspot' locations. In addition to considering investment opportunities in the replacement or expansion of the current mobile and fixed speed camera network, there may be opportunities for joint investment with other agencies for the provision of other technologies such as average speed cameras.

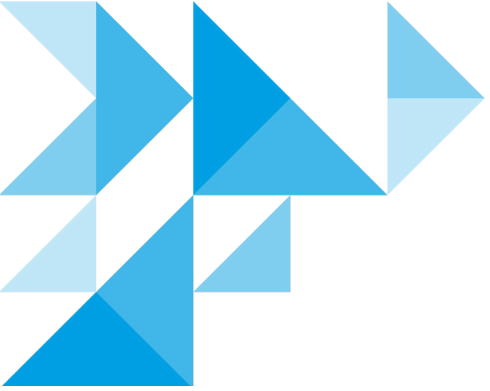
Community Speedwatch is an important part of the landscape when it comes to delivering safe speeds. This scheme involves volunteers in education and awareness raising within their local communities, vastly increasing the number of locations that can be targeted. The data gathered from Community Speedwatch can also be used to monitor traffic speed and support the case for further enforcement or investment if required. The PCC will look to enhance the CSW initiative, empowering and educating the public, informing policing activity and ultimately reducing speeding within communities.



## The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...

- ▶ Work together to share information and respond to intelligence passed to us so that collisions and casualties can be reduced.
- ▶ Enhance the Community Speedwatch initiative, identifying dangerous drivers and enabling police intervention.
- ▶ Enforce safe speeds especially those on high harm routes and hotspot locations.
- ▶ Enforce speed limits through the use of mobile/fixed speed cameras, regularly reviewing the evidence base for their presence and the need for investment in new enforcement locations.
- ▶ Encourage compliance with speed limits through consistent application of Department for Transport guidance and clear communication with the public.
- ▶ Consider joint investment in average speed technology.
- ▶ Develop a data-led behaviour change campaign tackling unsafe speeds on the road network.
- ▶ Seek to develop the capacity of Thames Valley Police's Criminal Justice team to process prosecutions and support enforcement activity. Consider resourcing and the easier submission of third-party footage to better deal with issues including close-passing of cyclists.





# POST-COLLISION RESPONSE

## Outcome

**Enhance the survivability of collisions through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices**

Getting to a collision quickly can be the difference between life and death. Thames Valley Police will continue to work with National Highways and the other emergency services to enable and support a rapid collision response. In addition to the critical initial response in the effort to save lives, this must be underpinned by exceptional collision investigation. This will enable all partners to learn from collisions and share information in order to try and prevent future tragedies. On the journey, we must also ensure that victims, for whom the system has failed, are appropriately supported.

From April-June 2024 alone, Thames Valley Police attended and responded to 1,855 Road Traffic Collisions. The police will work collaboratively with partners in seeking to prevent secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices. When a fatality or serious injury occurs, there are protocols in place to review contributory factors and causations, through the work of Thames Valley Police's specialist Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) and Forensic Collision Investigation Unit (FCIU).

It is paramount that road deaths in Thames Valley are not regarded as a number but as a personal tragedy. Thames Valley Police will continue to provide suitably trained Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) to support families, ensuring that our processes are explained and understood so that victims are supported and guided through the investigative and judicial processes. Every road death and serious injury is a failure of our road system, so it is only right that victims receive support that meets their needs.

Thames Valley will continue to hold their annual Road Death Memorial Service to remember those who have sadly lost their lives on our roads. We will do everything possible to ensure these failures help inform a safer future.

Thames Valley Police will seek to bring justice to those who recklessly and dangerously risk the lives of others on our roads. Communicating this enforcement action and outcomes at court will help to ensure public confidence.

## The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...



- ▶ Support the wider training of first responders in providing on-site emergency care.
- ▶ Ensure the best possible response to incidents by the emergency services in order to maximise the chances of saving lives.
- ▶ Effectively and appropriately deal with road traffic offenders through the custody and court processes.
- ▶ Liaise with victims and families following serious incidents to support them through the investigative and judicial processes.
- ▶ Evaluate the accessibility and awareness of victim support services for those affected by collisions and consider enhancing existing victims' services.
- ▶ Clearly communicate enforcement action and criminal justice outcomes to ensure public confidence.
- ▶ Work collectively to enable the effective management of serious incidents so that investigations can be conducted expeditiously and impacts to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) are minimised.
- ▶ Identify gaps in our evidence base on the causes of road traffic collisions and road danger in Thames Valley, including behavioural factors and the wider determinants of risk.
- ▶ Develop our knowledge of how we can implement a public health approach tackling the wider determinants of risk and engage a broad range of partners who can help to deliver a whole-system response.





# GOVERNANCE

Whilst there is already close collaboration between agencies at a tactical level, there is a clear need for improvements to the governance structures to ensure strategic accountability. Changes have already been made to enhance arrangements between Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner through the creation of the internal Roads Strategy Meeting which allows greater oversight and co-ordination of investment decisions, whilst performance of operational policing is scrutinised by the Joint Collaboration Governance Board and through regular Liaison Meetings with the Chief Constable.

This strategy proposes a new Thames Valley-wide strategic group to bring together elected members and lead officers from highways authorities, National Highways and the emergency services. This group would establish a terms of reference to oversee the delivery of the Safe System Approach across Thames Valley with greater tactical coordination over areas such as communications.

The effectiveness of this group will rely on the active participation of all partners with the shared goal of saving lives on our roads.

## **The PCC, Thames Valley Police, National Highways, local Highways Authorities and other agencies should...**

- ▶ Commit to establishing a Thames Valley Strategic Road Safety Partnership in order to deliver the objectives set out in this strategy and ensure clear governance



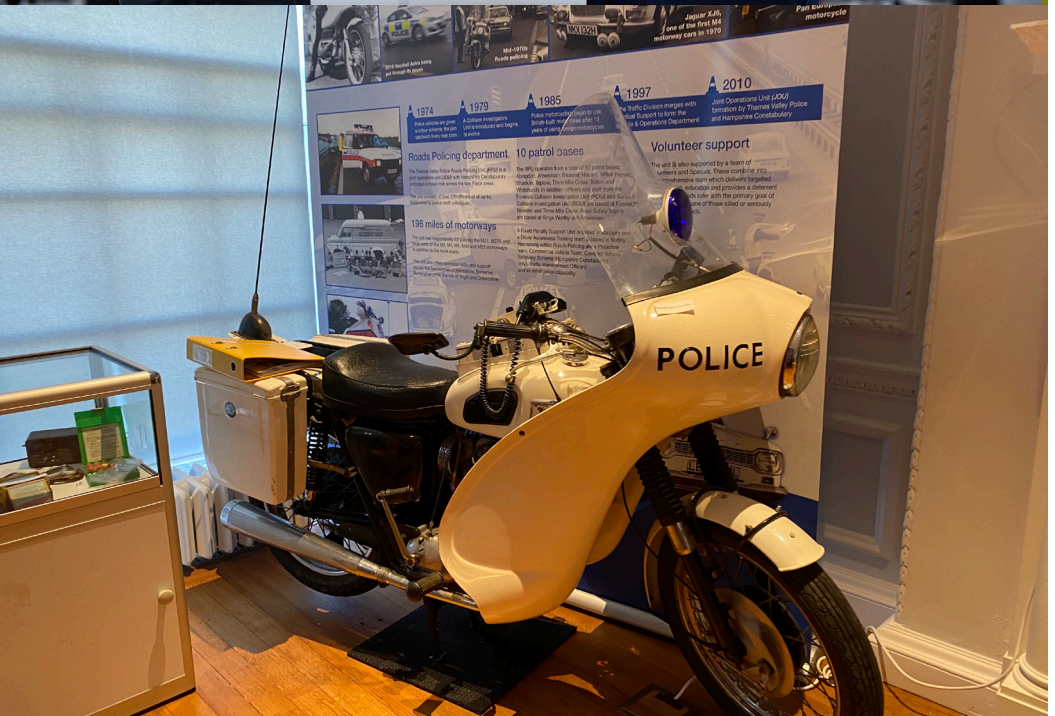
# CONSULTATION

This strategy was developed through internal and external workshops with highway authorities, councillors, key stakeholders, interest groups, and road safety and transportation professionals.

The development of a Road Safety Strategy is a key component of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and demands on-going engagement with key stakeholders, including local authorities and the Highways Agency.

Whilst the Police & Crime Commissioner can hold the Chief Constable to account for the elements of this strategy that are the responsibility of Thames Valley Police, many areas of work require action from other partners. This strategy cannot be a top-down directive to those partners, nor does it seek to be. Each of these bodies will have their own strategies. This document is intended to create a framework through which all of the relevant agencies can come together to support the shared objective of creating safer roads for all.

Each of the partners is invited to sign up to adopt this strategy as part of their own work and as part of their commitment to working together for the benefit of residents across Thames Valley.







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