

# Towards a New Road Safety Strategy for Birmingham

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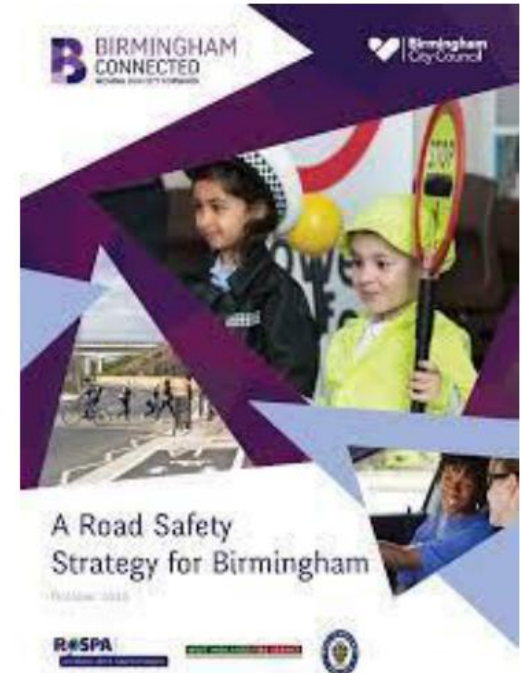


**Making a positive difference** every day to people's lives



# 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.



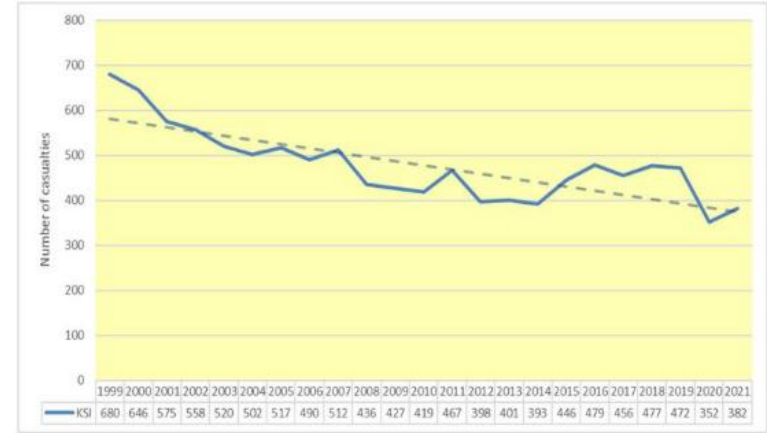
# Why refresh the Road Safety Strategy?

- The Road Safety Strategy needs to be refreshed, to tackle a number of issues:
  - Progress in reducing Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) across the city has plateaued;
  - 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 (Killed and/or Seriously Injured) 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, but temporarily 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 yet, avoidable in most cases.**



# Pace of road safety scheme delivery is slow and complex

- The current Local Safety Scheme prioritisation criteria encourage focusing interventions on specific 'problem' locations;
- '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

- Birmingham City Council delivers a wide variety of different initiatives in local areas across the city, including:
  - Local Safety Schemes;
  - 20mph areas;
  - Local engineering interventions;
  - Modal improvement schemes;
  - School Streets;
  - Maintenance activities;
- The Local Safety Scheme budget set at approximately £500k per annum, yet infrastructure delivery costs have skyrocketed.
- The average Local Safety Scheme now costs over £800,000 to design and deliver – that's less than one scheme a year!





# Where are Birmingham's 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 in Birmingham?

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**. The Highway Code makes clear that it is a driver’s responsibility to anticipate more vulnerable user behaviour, and drive 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.



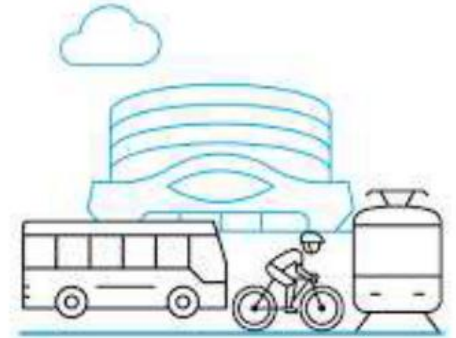
## Policies, Guidance and Best Practice



# 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.



# Vision Zero

- The Vision Zero strategy emerged in the 1990s in Sweden, **and is referenced in the current Road Safety Strategy.**
- 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.



# Best Practice: Healthy Streets Quality Auditing

- **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, developing it into the 'Healthy Streets' Toolkit which forms the basis of the Capital's approach to deliver Vision Zero.
- Healthy Streets quality auditing ensures street design is genuinely inclusive, considering the needs of **all** users, whilst delivering safer roads which put people before traffic.



# A Refreshed Approach to Road Safety in Birmingham

To deliver Vision Zero, 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) treated separately, capitalising on strategic Government funding opportunities to enable delivery;

**Neighbourhood Major Schemes** to treat entire local 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.



