

Birmingham Road Harm Reduction Strategy

Consultation document: November 2023

Foreword

The majority of people in Birmingham, including me, live on a road or street, Yet the quality of these precious public spaces has been allowed to decline.

Birmingham's streets and public spaces are the amphitheatre of public life. The majority of travel time in the city is spent in these spaces, yet many of our local streets are congested, dirty, unhealthy, and uninviting environments.

We have prioritised the needs of motorised vehicles over the needs of people. Our streets should be well designed, attractive and sustainable places to live.

For too long, we have tolerated ever growing numbers of motorised vehicles and road traffic collisions right across the city.

This strategy marks the end of that approach, and I dedicate it to the memory of all of those who have lost their lives on Birmingham's roads. We will remember you.

This bold plan sets an ambitious change of direction and pace, fully aligned with the Birmingham Transport Plan, Vision Zero, the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and the West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy.

The aim of this strategy is powerful in its simplicity: it is not acceptable that people are seriously injured and killed on our roads and we will act decisively to stop it. This means:

- Removing the majority of motor vehicles from local streets in residential areas;
- Investing in our neighbourhoods, to improve the quality of local, residential streets whilst improving access for all;
- Investing in our arterial route corridors to improve their safety, efficiency, and quality.

At the centre of this exciting change is the globally successful Healthy Streets approach. This ethos prioritises an unrelenting focus on people and their needs. It champions good street design and proactive maintenance. It transforms how people use and engage with these precious public spaces. It will deliver attractive, healthy and functional streets that we can be proud to call home.

I am confident that this bold change of direction is the right one for Birmingham.

Cllr Liz Clements
Cabinet Member for Transport
Birmingham City Council

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Introduction

Towards healthier, safer roads for Birmingham

The Birmingham Road Harm Reduction Strategy has been developed to complement the Birmingham Transport Plan. It sets out a bold approach to transform Birmingham's roads and streets to make them safer, more inclusive, and more attractive.

A bold approach to deliver change

The ambition of this strategy is to end death and serious injury for users of Birmingham's roads in line with the Vision Zero concept, which aspires to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Since 2013, there has been little change to the number of fatal and serious Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in Birmingham, with the notable exception of the pandemic period, when rates declined dramatically, but temporarily, linked to reduced vehicular traffic on the city's roads.

Each year on Birmingham's roads, approximately:

- 25 people are killed
- 400 people suffer serious (often life-changing) injuries.

This is devastating, and unacceptable.

In the same period, there has also been a small but steady increase in the number of collisions in which people receive minor injuries.

The previous Birmingham Road Safety Strategy was adopted in October 2016. Whilst aligned with Vision Zero, its approach did not tackle traffic volume and its impact on road safety.

More specifically, the infrastructure investment methodology to improve road safety followed a more traditional approach, where investment in local safety schemes was prioritised towards areas which had experienced clusters of RTCs.

Typically, these local safety schemes used physical traffic calming measures in the immediate area of those previous RTCs; measures such as chicanes, speed cushions and pedestrian guard railing. The needs of other road users; particularly pedestrians and cyclists, was not sufficiently considered, and they were rarely prioritised above motor vehicles.

Vision Zero is a globally recognised approach to road safety management, based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on our roads.

Regrettably, the previous strategy has not delivered significant progress towards Vision Zero. The number of people killed and seriously injured in RTCs has not been reduced and there is now also an increase in the number of people receiving slight injuries in RTCs.

Road layout is now rarely cited as a contributory factor in police reporting of RTCs, with reasons related to driver behaviour much more common. Poor driver behaviour can include travelling too fast, being distracted, driving while impaired (e.g. by alcohol or drugs) and human error.

If Vision Zero is to be embraced, we must transform our streets, putting pedestrians, cyclists and buses first and actively removing motor vehicles.

This bold approach aligns directly with the vision, aim, objectives and principles of the Birmingham Transport Plan:

- **Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods** – upgrading and improving streets in our local neighbourhoods to ensure they are attractive, inclusive, and safe environments for people walking, cycling and using public transport.
- **Reallocating road space** – consolidating most motor vehicle journeys in Birmingham onto a defined and prioritised Arterial Route Network, whilst removing through trips from residential streets wherever possible.
- **Transforming the city centre** – removing through motor traffic from the city centre, and redesigning public spaces to prioritise public transport, walking and cycling.
- **Managing demand** – proactive management of the kerbside (the part of the road closest to the footway) to release the space needed for safe, healthy streetscapes, whilst improving access to local services and facilities.

Vision Zero and the Safe System Approach

Until 2012, the number of deaths and serious injuries from Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in Birmingham had been falling steadily. Since that time, there has been little change, with the notable exception of the period of lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, when RTCs dramatically and temporarily declined.

Each year in Birmingham, approximately 25 people die and 400 people suffer serious (often life-changing) injuries on our roads.

We propose to adopt the 'Vision Zero' approach to road harm reduction in Birmingham. Vision Zero asserts that everyone should be able to use our roads without risk of death or serious injury.

Put simply, the 'acceptable' number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads is zero.

A 'Safe System' Approach

Safe System is a recognised approach for working towards Vision Zero. The approach is based on four key principles:

- People make mistakes and misbehave. This can lead to collisions.
- The human body has a limited physical ability to tolerate collision forces before harm occurs.
- Responsibility for safety on our roads is shared. Those who design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles and those who provide post-crash care all have a part to play.
- All parts of the system must be strengthened, so that if one part of the system fails, all road users are still protected.

Vision Zero focuses upon deaths and serious injuries, but measures to deliver a Safe System will, over time, have a positive impact on collisions where people receive minor injuries, or where there is damage to property only.

This strategy sets out how we plan to deliver a Safe System in Birmingham, to support our journey towards Vision Zero.

The Five Elements of the Safe System

The Safe System approach is built upon five elements. Together, these elements provide a safety net which accommodates human behaviour, including mistakes and misbehaviour. To give a real-world example, if a pedestrian falls into the road, but motor vehicle speed is 20mph or less, the chances of a collision are drastically reduced, as is the likelihood of death or serious injury.



Figure 1: summary of Safe System approach

Safer People

We will work with partners will act to encourage, educate, and enforce safe behaviours on our road network as set out in the Highway Code. As vehicle drivers have the potential to inflict the greatest harm, the focus will be on a shift away from car use to alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport and on tackling dangerous and illegal driving and parking behaviours including speeding, driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, driving while distracted (such as using a mobile phone) careless driving and not wearing a seatbelt.

Safer Speeds

We are already committed to reduce the speed limit on the majority of main roads in the city to 30mph. We will proactively redesign residential streets to create safe, attractive environments, using the physical environment to limit vehicle speeds to 20mph or slower. This will include actively removing through routes for motor vehicles.

Safer Roads

We will invest to transform local streets, prioritising the health and quality of life of residents over the need to accommodate motor vehicles. On designated arterial routes, we will seek to separate different modes of transport, creating regulated, attractive environments which limit the potential for interaction and collisions.

Safer Vehicles

We will work with partners to encourage, educate and enforce drivers to keep vehicles safe and legal, targeting issues such as un-insured vehicles, driving without a valid MOT, unsafe tyres, heavily tinted windows and altered or filmed registration plates. We will also act alongside partners to lobby Government to promote rollout of technology and innovative design features to improve the safety of vehicles, particularly where this benefits vulnerable road users.

Post-Crash Care

Post Crash Care begins as soon as a collision has happened, where an effective response from emergency and medical services can make the difference between survival and death and can prevent injuries becoming permanent and life-changing. Subsequently, collision and casualty data is used to inform future road safety interventions. Where those involved in the collision and their families are willing, sharing their story with the wider community can help others to understand the potential for harm and lead to behaviour change.

Road Harm Reduction in Birmingham – Evidence

This chapter provides detail about where we source road safety data, and how we will use to prioritise investment in schemes aligned with the Healthy Streets approach, to contribute towards achieving Vision Zero in Birmingham.

Collision data

Most of the Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) data comes from a database of police records, often called STATS19 after the reporting form used by police officers. This database only includes collisions in which someone is injured or loses their life. Currently, there is no consistent, reliable record of damage-only collisions or 'near misses', although work is underway at a regional level to collect and interpret this data in the future.

For each RTC in the police database, a police officer must record the following information:

- The **location** of collision;
- The **circumstances** of the collision (including factors such as weather conditions and highway quality);
- A separate record for each **casualty** (person who was harmed);
- A separate record for each **vehicle** involved;
- ...and up to six '**contributory factors**'.

This data is then compiled and quality-checked by the police, before being shared with Local Authorities and other partners, to inform and influence investment to reduce the risk of future harm.

It should be recognised that, because of the way this data is collected and compiled, it is likely to be variable dependent on the person recording the data. As such, whilst this data provides a valuable resource, conclusions drawn from this data should be treated cautiously.

A reduced version of this database is available to the public at:

www.crashmap.co.uk.

Categorisation of Road Traffic Collisions

Casualties on the police database are classified by their severity:

- **Fatal** – the person receives an injury or injuries resulting in their death within thirty days of the collision.
- **Serious** – the person receives a serious injury or injuries, such as fractures, internal injuries, concussion, severe shock, severe cuts, or other injuries requiring them to stay in hospital.
- **Slight** – the person receives a slight injury or injuries, such as sprains, whiplash, bruises, and slight cuts.

Collisions are categorised by the most severe casualty category. For example, in a collision with three casualties; one fatal, one serious and one slight, the collision would be categorised as fatal.

When reporting on road safety data, the fatal and serious categories are often combined to highlight the collisions with the greatest human cost. These are referred to as KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured).

National Travel Survey data collected by the Department for Transport suggests that around 48% of injury collisions are not reported to the Police, and so cannot be included in any data analysis.

The design of vehicles has been subject to continuous improvement to enhance their safety for vehicle operators and passengers and those who are involved in a collision with them. Despite this, the numbers of KSI collisions remains largely static in Birmingham, with approximately 25 people losing their lives and 400 people sustaining serious injuries each year.

Contributory (Causal) Factors

Collision data recorded includes up to six contributory factors, chosen by the reporting police officer from a pre-set list. Table 1 lists some of the top contributory factors for collisions recorded between 2019 and 2021 in Birmingham.

Table 1 – Top contributory factors for road traffic collisions in Birmingham (2019-2021)

Contributory factor	Average collisions per year 2019 -21 All Roads
Failed to look properly (pedestrian)	638.0
Careless, 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

This data suggests that:

- The majority of reported collisions in Birmingham are caused by bad, dangerous and/or inattentive driving, although the specific reasons for this are unknown;
- It is now very rare for RTCs to have been caused by poor highway design.
- Pedestrians and cyclists are often blamed for 'not looking', but this is primarily a driver error, as set out clearly in Rules 144 to 147 of the Highway Code¹.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on data records

Lockdowns imposed to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus had a significant impact on both traffic volumes and on the number of reported collisions.

Levels of walking and cycling increased, trips and kilometres travelled by motor vehicles were significantly lower and the number KSI collisions saw a notable reduction. This provided clear evidence in support of the approach set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan, that a reduction in the use of motor vehicles and a switch to alternative modes of transport (especially active travel for shorter trips) has a significant positive effect on road user safety.

Traffic in Birmingham

Data from the Department for Transport's 'Traffic in Great Britain from 1993 to 2021'², indicates that motorised traffic volumes in Birmingham have remained consistently high in recent years, and reached a peak of approximately 3.75 million vehicle miles in 2019.

Traffic volumes are most concentrated on busy A and B-class arterial roads; however, there is some evidence to suggest that there is also a significant and growing proportion of traffic which is routing through residential areas, along streets which are not suitable for high levels of motor vehicles.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/general-rules-techniques-and-advice-for-all-drivers-and-riders-103-to-158>

² Data sourced from: <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/141>

Prioritising investment in road harm reduction

In general, road harm risk for Birmingham's residents is in line with national trends. Despite continued investment in localised engineering measures as well as education, training, and publicity initiatives to reduce the number and severity of crashes, collisions continue to rise in the city, although the number of people killed and seriously injured on Birmingham's roads has plateaued.

Analysis of traffic patterns suggests that the risk of harm to road users increases as vehicular traffic volumes increase. In Birmingham, it should be no surprise to learn that some of the most dangerous roads in the city are the busy arterial routes, East Birmingham, and inner-city areas closest to the city centre. This is particularly concerning, as these areas are also amongst the most densely populated and deprived parts of the city.

Another interesting trend is that areas where demand to park (cars) exceeds available kerbside space are a focus for increased numbers of 'slight' RTCs. Further analysis is required to clarify this phenomenon, but it is very likely that illegal and inappropriate parking (such as on junctions and across pavements) may be forcing people to use the carriageway as pavements and crossings are blocked, significantly increasing their risk of road harm.

Collectively, this evidence suggests that targeted investment to control and reduce vehicular traffic and parking— especially on residential streets – will be essential if we are to deliver Vision Zero in Birmingham, as set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan.

Each year, we will publish an Annual Road Harm Reduction Report. This report will summarise the latest available data and set out where we intend to focus investment to reduce the risk of road harm, based upon evidence.

Logically, areas which experience the greatest levels of road harm will be prioritised for earlier intervention. Also, we will move away from delivering small 'street by street' schemes and instead deliver area-wide major schemes covering much larger parts of the city, to increase the overall impact and value achieved from our investment. This investment programme will be set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan: Delivery Plan.

Safer People, Safer Vehicles and Post-Crash Care – Partnership Working

Birmingham City Council cannot deliver every element of a Safe System. We must work with a wide range of strategic partners and with every single road user in Birmingham to reach Vision Zero.

This section provides an explanation of these partners and their roles, responsibilities, policies, and actions that together will deliver the Safe System in Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council

Roles and Responsibilities

Birmingham City Council has several duties in respect of road safety, which include:

- **Section 39 (Part 2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988** requires the council to ‘prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety and may contribute towards the cost of measures for promoting road safety taken by other authorities or bodies’.
- **Section 39 (Part 3) of the Road Traffic Act 1988** (amended by New Roads and Street Works Act 1991) requires that the council must carry out crash studies on roads in their area, and take appropriate measures to prevent collisions, including:
 - Dissemination of information and advice;
 - Practical training to road users;
 - Construction, improvement, maintenance, or repair of roads;
 - Other measures for controlling, protecting, or assisting the movement of traffic on roads.
- **Section 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004** gives the council legal powers to enforce parking, bus lanes and moving traffic contraventions.
- **Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004** requires the council to manage and maintain the road network and reduce traffic congestion and to have regard to road safety when doing these.
- The **Equality Act 2010** requires the council to prevent and address discrimination when providing goods, facilities and services to the public. A right of access applies to the road environment as well as buildings, and needs to be considered as an integral component of providing a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for all people, including those with disabilities.

Policy

The **Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP)** seeks to transform the city's transport system to meet a range of challenges, including tackling climate change, ensuring equity, tackling poor air quality and public health issues, whilst accommodating future growth sustainably.

The BTP has four key principles:

- Reallocating road space.
- Transforming the city centre.
- Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods.
- Managing demand for parking measures.

The urgent need to transform Birmingham's streets is central to the BTP. If we are to transition away from car dependency, walking and cycling must become the first choice for shorter trips and to access public transport. This requires the creation of safe and healthy environments, particularly in local neighbourhoods. Some key policies in support of this principle include:

- Introduction of a 20mph default speed limit for all residential streets (those not designated specifically as Arterial Routes) and local centres.
- Pedestrian crossing improvements programme.
- Removal of footway parking.
- Implementation of further Schools Streets measures across the city to restrict car speed and access, manage parking around school locations, and encourage active travel for pupils.
- A feasibility study for a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) under which employers are charged an annual fee for each workplace parking space they provide, which has the potential to drastically reduce motor vehicles in the city centre.

The BTP Delivery Plan provides an overarching delivery strategy for transport investment in infrastructure and services across the city. The plan will be underpinned by this Road Harm Reduction Strategy and by strategies for:

- **Kerbside Management**, setting out efficient and proactive management of kerbside space on the road network.
- **Network Management**, clarifying how we will proactively manage demand on the road network.
- **Walking & Cycling**, co-ordinating policy and infrastructure investment to transform active travel accessibility.
- **Demand Management**, investing in and encouraging use of sustainable transport as modes of choice to support economic growth.

Actions

We deliver a broad and constantly evolving range of services and infrastructure improvements to support road harm reduction, including:

- **Policy and Legislation Development** - contributing to and acting in response to local, regional, and national policy to improve road user safety, including lobbying for enhanced legislation, improved standards, and other changes to support the advancement of Vision Zero principles.
- **Data Analysis** –conducting analysis of road traffic collision data, using this to inform a prioritised approach to investment in infrastructure and services. This data will be summarised in the Annual Road Harm Reduction Report.
- **Travel Planning and Engagement** - engaging with a wide range of partners to support travel planning activities which reduce motor vehicle use and road harm. In particular:
 - **Schools** – including through interventions such as school travel plans, Bikeability cycle training, and school crossing patrols.
 - **Employers** – including through workplace travel plans.
 - **Community Groups** - including groups associated with characteristics protected under the Equality Act, such as disability.
 - **Road Safety and Active Travel Groups** - including activities to promote and inform road harm reduction across the city for all road users, including underrepresented groups and more vulnerable road users.
 - **Public Transport Operators** - in partnership with Transport for West Midlands, engaging with public transport operators to support initiatives to improve the safety of these vitally important transport modes.
- **Communication Campaigns** –with partners, supporting the delivery of a variety of communication and education campaigns to inform and influence the public on road harm reduction.
- **Infrastructure Investment** – delivering physical changes to the road network through investment in the transport delivery programme (new infrastructure) and planned maintenance (of existing infrastructure). This includes traffic signals and other technologies to manage demand and reduce harm for all road users and to deliver priority for active travel and public transport modes.
- **Development Management** –working with a wide range of developers to support and guide the quality of our fast-growing city.
- **Enforcement** - enforcement of parking restrictions and bus lanes by the council and police plays an essential role in road harm

reduction. In addition to the deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers, CCTV vehicles are increasingly used to enforce parking restrictions, especially around schools. The council has also recently secured powers to use cameras to enforce moving traffic offences and is working with West Midlands Police and other key partners to deploy cameras in appropriate locations as part of future major scheme delivery.

- **Data Reporting** - The Annual Road Harm Reduction Report will provide a summary of actions to reduce road harm each year, analysis of collision and other data and priorities for future investment.

West Midlands Combined Authority and the Regional Road Safety Strategic Group

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) plays a coordinating role vital to delivering road harm reduction across the region.

WMCA has recently published a refreshed **West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy (2023-2030)**, aligned with the **West Midlands Local Transport Plan**.

WMCA also hosts the West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategic Group, whose aim is to co-ordinate and promote safety for all road users in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, through education, training and publicity and the promotion of sustainable travel: public transport, cycling and walking.

The group brings together Local Authorities in the West Midlands and strategic partners including West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service, the Transport Skills Academy (TSA), Public Health – Department of Health and Social Care, National Highways, the Motor Insurer’s Bureau, RoSPA, Road Safety Foundation, Road Peace and representatives of road users.

The group has a number of strategic responsibilities and sub-groups:

Strategic responsibility	Leading group or sub-group
Develop and co-ordinate a programme of interventions to deliver the group’s objectives within the framework of the Regional Road Safety Strategy.	West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategic Group (main group)

The West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy provides the framework for delivery of a Safe System for the region and clarifies the roles of key partners on our shared journey to Vision Zero.

Strategic responsibility	Leading group or sub-group
Promote road safety led initiatives.	
Promote sustainable travel and the active modes of cycling and walking.	
Use data evidence to understand the road safety issues facing the West Midlands Region, including an understanding of where and why collisions occur and to whom.	Data insights sub-group (coordinates and monitors performance against defined road safety targets and Key Performance Indicators, while identifying and assessing a broader dataset to inform future strategic activities)
Monitor road safety and sustainable travel delivery and outcomes.	
Promote/monitor speed management and enforcement activities alongside educational interventions.	Enforcement sub-group (strategic collaboration between West Midlands Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, WMCA and Local Authorities to review evidence-based priorities and policies and develop the regional approach to enforcement)
Seek funding opportunities to enable delivery of a programme of regional road safety initiatives.	Funding and investment subgroup (identifies and initiates opportunities to create a sustainable and dedicated regional road safety delivery budget and to bring additional income into the region to fund enhanced activity)

We recognise that to achieve maximum value through reach and economies of scale, road harm reduction communications, community engagement and educational campaigns are best co-ordinated at a regional level; road safety issues are not defined by invisible Local Authority boundaries.

We will continue to explore opportunities to support WMCA’s work to coordinate, plan and deliver Safe System activity on behalf of Birmingham and other Local Authority partners.

West Midlands Police

West Midlands Police play a fundamental role in the delivery of a Safe System for Birmingham. We work both directly and indirectly (via WMCA) with the police on a regular basis, primarily to support enforcement of the rules of the road.

West Midlands Police are the only Safe System partner with the powers to enforce speeding and dangerous driving in Birmingham. The police also take the primary role in collision reporting, investigating the causes of crashes where victims are killed or seriously injured, and providing support to those directly affected by these tragic and often highly traumatic events.

The **West Midlands Police and Crime Plan** is directly aligned with the National Police Chiefs' Council **Prevention Strategy**. The Plan fully embraces the Vision Zero ethos and includes commitments to partnership working with the other Safe System partners in the region (including Birmingham City Council) to deliver and coordinate enforcement, communication, education, activities relating to road harm reduction.

West Midlands Police carry out a range of enforcement activities across Birmingham and the West Midlands; key areas of traffic enforcement (which directly align with principal contributory factors for RTCs in Birmingham) are:

- Speeding.
- Wearing seatbelts.
- Drinking/drug-taking and driving.
- Use of mobile phones whilst driving.
- Uninsured and unlicensed driving.
- Driving without due care and attention.

In addition, West Midlands Police operates the camera based Average Speed Enforcement system. Together with partner Local Authorities and WMCA, we are proactively working with West Midlands Police to increase the scope and scale of camera-based enforcement across the city's Arterial Road Network, to deliver a consistently safer environment for all.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFRS) plays a leading role in the delivery of a Vision Zero Safe System approach in Birmingham and the West Midlands. As part of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service Plan, the organisation is committed to embracing Vision Zero.

WMFRS attend serious and fatal RTCs, managing incidents, extracting casualties from vehicles, and delivering first aid. The WMFRS deliver comprehensive road harm reduction education and awareness campaigns in partnership with Birmingham City Council. These initiatives target schools, community groups and specific road user groups to provide advice and guidance, with the aim of reducing demand on all public services as a direct cause of road safety issues.

We have entered a formal partnership with WMFRS to procure a set of portable Speed Indication Devices. These devices will be used across the city to monitor locations where speeding is causing concern. The information gathered by these devices will be used to prioritise interventions where the evidence gathered suggests this is needed, together with other Safe System partners.

Safer Roads and Safer Speeds: Introducing the Healthy Streets Approach

Healthy Streets is about designing streets for people, on a human scale and providing the kind of environment where people enjoy spending time. The balance is corrected so motor vehicles are guests on the street and humans are the primary users.

People's experiences of using our streets will determine:

- whether they decide to walk, cycle, and use public transport.
- whether they choose to visit their local centre, or drive to an out-of-town shopping facility.
- whether they feel they need to own a car at all.

We will work with our partners to consistently improve the experience of travelling along and spending time on Birmingham's roads and streets.

The Healthy Streets Approach uses ten evidence-based indicators to assess whether a road is safe and attractive to use.

Working towards these indicators when designing, investing, and maintaining our streets will help to create a healthier city, where **all** people are included and can enjoy a good quality of life.

All transport schemes will be subject to a Healthy Streets Quality Audit to ensure that high standards are maintained across all parts of the city. Rather than a box-ticking exercise, this will be considered as an integral part of the design and implementation process.

Healthy Streets is about designing streets on a human scale, where cars are guests and people are the primary users.

The Healthy Streets Indicators



Figure 2: Healthy Streets Approach

- **Everyone feels welcome**
Streets must be welcoming places for everyone to walk, spend time and engage with other people. This is necessary to keep us all healthy through physical activity and social interaction. It is also what makes places vibrant and keeps communities strong. The best test for whether we are getting our streets right is whether the whole community, particularly children, older people and disabled people are enjoying using this space.
- **Easy to cross**
Our streets need to be easy to cross for everyone. This is important because people prefer to be able to get where they want to go directly and quickly so if we make that difficult for them, they will get frustrated and give up. This is called 'severance' and it has real impacts on our health, on our communities and on businesses too. It is not just physical barriers and lack of safe crossing points that cause severance, it is fast-moving traffic too.

- Shade and shelter**
Shade and shelter can come in many forms – trees, awnings, colonnades – and they are needed to ensure that everyone can use the street whatever the weather. In sunny weather we all need protection from the sun, in hot weather certain groups of people struggle to maintain a healthy body temperature, in rain and high winds we all welcome somewhere to shelter. To ensure our streets are inclusive for everyone and welcoming to walk and cycle in no matter the weather, we must pay close attention to shade and shelter.
- Places to stop and rest**
Regular opportunities to stop and rest are essential for some people to be able to use streets on foot or bicycle because they find travelling actively for longer distances a challenge. Seating is therefore essential for creating environments that are inclusive for everyone as well as being important for making streets welcoming places to dwell.
- Not too noisy**
Noise from traffic impacts on our health and wellbeing in many ways, it also makes streets stressful for people living and working on them as well as people walking and cycling on them. Reducing the noise from traffic creates an environment in which people are willing to spend time and interact.
- People choose to walk, cycle, and use public transport**
We all need to build regular activity into our daily routine and the most effective way to do this is to walk or cycle for short trips or as part of longer public transport trips. People will choose to walk and cycle if these are the most attractive options for them. This means making walking and cycling and public transport use more convenient, pleasant, and appealing than private car use.
- People feel safe**
Feeling safe is a basic requirement that can be hard to deliver. Motorised road transport can make people feel unsafe on foot or bicycle, especially if drivers are travelling too fast or not giving them enough space, time, or attention. Managing how people drive so that people can feel safe walking and cycling is vital. People also need to feel safe from antisocial behaviour, unwanted attention, violence, and intimidation. Street lighting and layout, ‘eyes on the street’ from overlooking buildings and other people using the street can all help to contribute to the sense of safety.
- Things to see and do**
Street environments need to be visually appealing to people walking and cycling, they need to provide reasons for people to use them – local shops and services, opportunities to interact with art, nature, other people.

- **People feel relaxed**

The street environment can make us feel anxious – if it is dirty and noisy, if it feels unsafe, if we do not have enough space if we are unsure where to go or we cannot easily get to where we want to. All these factors are important for making our streets welcoming and attractive to walk, cycle and spend time in.

- **Clean Air**

Air quality has an impact on the health of every person, but it particularly impacts on some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community – children and people who already have health problems. Reducing air pollution benefits us all and helps to reduce unfair health inequalities.

Delivering Healthy Streets in Birmingham

The Birmingham Transport Plan Delivery Plan will be published in 2024. This plan has been developed with the Healthy Streets Approach at its heart and will set out a coordinated investment approach for transport infrastructure and services in Birmingham.

We will no longer fund and deliver schemes for single transport modes, as has been done in the past, but will take a more strategic view of the complete function of our neighbourhoods, corridors and local centres.

We will deliver Healthy Streets in Birmingham through a rolling programme of major schemes. These major schemes will focus on neighbourhoods (networks of local residential streets), local centres (areas with shops and local amenities) and corridors (strategic routes with higher volumes of trips). Notably different approaches to each will recognise the different needs and characteristics of these road types.

A Partnership Approach

The council cannot deliver the Healthy Streets Approach alone. It will require continued work with partners across the public, private and community sectors, many of whom are already working hard to deliver against the Healthy Streets indicators.

We will continue to work with the local ward councillors, developers and landowners and businesses to provide tools, training, support and guidance. This will help these partners to embed the Healthy Streets Approach in schemes, policies and plans, new developments, and regeneration schemes. Vital to the success of Healthy Streets will be our continuing work with West Midlands Police who provide on-street law enforcement.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the public and private realm. Businesses benefit directly from the economic improvements that the Healthy Streets Approach will deliver, through enhanced footfall, and the public realm benefits from the investment and enhanced care that businesses invest into the streetscape. We will continue to work with our business communities to apply Healthy Streets in Birmingham, whilst managing the impacts of essential freight movements on our streets.

Arterial Routes

Vision

Arterial Routes (both radial and orbital) are designated as A-class roads and accommodate the busiest traffic flows in Birmingham. The city's Arterial Route Network will be specified in the Birmingham Network Management Plan.

The strategic primary purpose of Arterial Routes is to enable and support the mass movement of people and goods efficiently around the city. This strategic purpose is underpinned by Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act (2004).

Most Arterial Routes in the city are currently designated as 30mph roads. Over the life of this Road Harm Reduction Strategy, remaining urban arterial routes with speed limits currently set at 40mph will be reduced to 30mph, to ensure consistency across the city.

Highway Design Standards

Typically, designated Arterial Routes carry significant volumes of motor vehicles. Most of these routes have been retrofitted over time to accommodate high and increased traffic volumes as safely as possible, with additional provision made to accommodate larger and heavier vehicles. In particular, the separation of transport modes to minimise the risk of conflict and harm will be pursued, as well as the multi-stage Road Safety Audit process. Although this is a high-cost approach to deliver, it is appropriate for routes where some motor vehicle traffic will need to be tolerated.

Healthy Streets Quality Audit

All improvement schemes on Arterial Routes will include a mandatory Healthy Streets Quality Audit, to ensure that schemes actively enhance the quality of the streetscape for the benefit of all users, in recognition of the multifunctional nature of these important routes.

Modal Prioritisation

In alignment with the strategic primary purpose of Arterial Routes, public transport (for mass movement of people) and necessary freight movements (for mass movement of goods) will be prioritised over other modes of transport. Wherever possible and appropriate, segregated bus lanes and other bus priority measures will be provided to protect this vitally important mode from the effects of traffic congestion.

Signal-controlled crossings will continue to be provided, as these will remain necessary to ensure the safety of all users.

Fully separated active travel routes will be considered along arterial routes where there is sufficient available highway space to provide facilities (taking guidance from Local Transport Note 1/20). Although people cycling are permitted to use general traffic lanes, their safety can be compromised and alternative appropriate active travel routes are preferable. Where there is insufficient space for facilities on Arterial Routes, strategic active travel routes will be

provided using parallel alternative routes.

Reallocation of Surplus Highway Capacity

Once the core functions of Arterial Routes have been met, surplus highway capacity will be repurposed for alternative uses for example, the provision of green infrastructure such as trees and grass. This will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change, enhance safety for all users and will reduce ongoing highway maintenance costs.

Kerbside Management

The provision of parking and loading will be tolerated on Arterial Routes, but only as long as this does not interfere with the primary strategic purpose of these routes, namely the mass movement of people and goods. Parking on footways, cycle lanes and bus lanes (during their hours of operation) will not be tolerated, as the impact on road safety and service reliability is often considerable.

Enforcement

Camera enforcement may be used on Arterial Routes where this will address evidenced concerns relating to poor compliance with the rules of the road.

Powers to enforce speeding are exclusively held by the police. Moving traffic offences (such as banned right turns) and parking offences can be enforced by both the police and Birmingham City Council.

We will work in partnership with the police to deliver strategic enforcement with the principles for our part in this to be set out as part of the Network Management Strategy.

Engagement

The council will engage with local councillors, key stakeholders and members of the public during the development and delivery of Arterial Route schemes, including informal and statutory consultation exercises.

Neighbourhood and Centres Major Schemes

Vision

Local streets are places where people live, communities connect and interact. They are particularly important to children as places to exercise and play, to older people at risk of isolation and loneliness, to people with disabilities and health conditions, and to those living on lower incomes. The experiences that people have on Birmingham's local streets has a defining influence on their quality of life, and affects their health, well-being, safety, and access to opportunities.

The primary strategic purpose of local streets is to be places where people live and interact. To achieve this, our local streets must provide high-quality environments with enough space for social interaction, walking, cycling and public transport use enhanced with seating, shade, and green infrastructure.

Design Standards

Whilst many of our streets have been retrofitted over time to accommodate ever increasing traffic volumes, most are fundamentally unsuited to being used in this way. This is evidenced by growing concerns across the city about traffic levels, dangerous and inconsiderate driving, and behaviours such as speeding and pavement parking. Unsurprisingly, this has led to corresponding calls for more enforcement and traffic calming schemes.

In future, new transport schemes on local streets will be designed to put the needs of people walking,

wheeling, cycling and accessing public transport above provision for private motor vehicles.

Healthy Streets Quality Audit

All local streets within the scope of designated Neighbourhood and Centres Major Schemes will be subject to a mandatory Healthy Streets Quality Audit to ensure that improvement schemes actively enhance the quality of the streetscape for the benefit of all users in direct alignment with the Healthy Streets Approach.

Reallocation of Highway Capacity

Streets will be narrowed to the minimum required width, with surplus highway capacity reallocated towards more productive uses such as wider pavements, enhanced crossing facilities, tree planting and green infrastructure.

Modal Prioritisation

The main function of local streets is as places where people live. In recognition of this, motor vehicles (with the key exception of public transport) will be actively de-prioritised, with measures installed to remove them wherever possible.

Kerbside Management

Whilst residential parking will continue to be permitted where possible and appropriate, highway space currently allocated for parking will be gradually reallocated to more productive uses.

In areas of high demand, parking controls will be implemented to

define where parking will be accommodated to ensure equitable allocation of this valuable resource, and to actively discourage and prevent pavement parking.

Enforcement

Neighbourhood and Local Centre Major Schemes will be designed to create environments in local streets where it is not physically possible to drive at speeds above 20mph. This will actively encourage safe driving behaviour and remove the need for active enforcement.

Streetscape design principles will be closely aligned with Healthy Streets indicators. For example, traditional physical traffic calming (such as road humps and speed cushions) will be minimised, as these measures do not contribute positively towards Healthy Streets environments.

With numbers of motor vehicles drastically reduced, traffic signals and other technology-based traffic control measures will be proactively removed from local streets, and replaced with alternative road designs which prioritise active travel and public transport.

Exceptionally, camera-enforced bus gates may be provided in Neighbourhood Major Scheme areas, to prioritise bus service access and protect streets from use by general vehicular traffic.

Engagement

The council will undertake early engagement with the local community, prior to developing Neighbourhood and Centres Major Schemes, asking people what they would like to see on their local streets, and will continue these informal conversations as the scheme plans emerge.

The council will also undertake more traditional engagement with local councillors, key stakeholders and members of the public during the development and delivery of schemes, including informal and statutory consultation exercises.

The Healthy Streets Fund

Introduction

As Birmingham covers a large geographical area, full delivery of Neighbourhood Major Schemes across the city is expected to take several years.

Healthy Streets Funding will be made available to bring forward smaller, innovative schemes which are compliant with the Healthy Streets Approach and its ten indicators. This will ensure alignment with the principles of Vision Zero, the Birmingham Transport Plan and the West Midlands Local Transport Plan.

Healthy Streets Funding will be allocated by ward, with eligible two-member wards receiving twice as much as single member wards.

Principles

Projects delivered or supported through the Healthy Streets Fund should be aligned with the Healthy Streets Approach and its ten indicators. Submissions to the Fund should particularly prioritise:

- **Active travel** –measures must be designed to align with the policy approaches set out for Arterial Routes and Neighbourhood and Local Centres major schemes.
- **Reduction and removal of vehicular traffic from local streets** - local streets should be for people, with motor vehicles being the guest in these spaces. Through traffic should be deterred and redirected to defined arterial routes.

- **Overall reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled** - designs should enable people to make trips without a private motor vehicle; using active travel for local trips and public transport to travel further.

In addition, schemes should aim to enhance an area: the design should be robust and durable (vandalism-resistant), functional, and beautiful. Examples may include creative incorporation of trees or planting, public art, and public amenities such as benches, as all these measures can contribute towards environments which are cleaner, more comfortable, and more inviting for people to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Engagement

It is expected that ideas for Healthy Streets schemes will have originated within the local community, for example as requests to local Councillors or officers. Councillors will play an active role, representing their constituents while the schemes are developed and will support engagement on project development and delivery.

Levels of further public engagement and consultation will be determined by the nature of the scheme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evidence from delivering the Healthy Streets approach in other cities shows that we will need to take a pragmatic view towards monitoring and evaluation. This is to ensure that we recognise the positive changes that Healthy Streets will bring for Birmingham, which extend well beyond reducing road harm alone.

As more and more of our streets benefit from investment in alignment with the Healthy Streets approach, we can expect more and more people to consider walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport to get around, instead of using cars.

As the number of people using and enjoy our streets gradually increases, this may also result in a temporary increase in RTCs in the shorter term (particularly 'slight' injuries) whilst users adjust and adapt to changing travel conditions. Despite this, we can expect to see the number of people killed and seriously injured on Birmingham's roads reduce significantly over time, as the delivery of the Healthy Streets approach as part of the Birmingham Transport Plan gathers pace.

We will use the Road Harm Reduction Annual Report to communicate our progress in delivering Vision Zero in Birmingham, including areas where specific focus may be required to deliver healthier, safer and more attractive streets for everyone in Birmingham.