



Road Safety Strategy

Driving towards zero 2026-2030

Making West Mercia's roads free from preventable deaths and serious injury



John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia

Summary

This strategy, along with the accompanying delivery plan, aims to demonstrate how West Mercia Police and West Mercia OPCC are working together with partner agencies and our communities to protect people from harm on the roads. We aim to influence road user behaviour through engagement, education and enforcement, exploiting information and technology and working with our partners on innovative approaches to changing attitudes and behaviour.

Underpinning this strategy is the recognition that any death on our roads is unacceptable. 56 people were killed on the roads across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Worcestershire in 2025 and we need a step change in our collective approach to road safety to achieve the significant reductions year on year that are required. At the centre of our approach is the safety and wellbeing of people; acknowledging that human errors are always possible, and road systems should be designed to eliminate human mistakes to avoid fatalities or serious injuries.

There are more than 8,000 miles of road in West Mercia, ranging from motorways to small country lanes. This presents a unique set of challenges which can only be dealt with in collaboration. Eliminating road deaths in West Mercia is a shared responsibility between police, partners and communities. We aim to be proactive rather than reactive and our activities will be based on detailed analysis, evidence-based delivery and being responsive to emerging trends.

This strategy aims to give a clear focus to our work and supports the Police and Crime Commissioner's West Mercia Safer Communities Plan and the NPCC Road Safety Strategy to help reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on our roads. It will ensure consistency of delivery whilst allowing for local flexibility based on area specific need. It will help create a shared understanding of the importance of making our roads safer and the role that every one of us needs to play in achieving it.



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Introduction from Assistant Chief Constable Grant Wills

West Mercia Police is committed to reducing the risk of harm to all who use the roads in our counties, whether for day-to-day life or passing through. Death and serious injuries on the roads are one of the most significant threats facing the residents and visitors of West Mercia.

Our central mission is clear: Making West Mercia's roads free from preventable deaths and serious injury. This bold vision aspires to introduce a locally driven, partnership-focused approach that prioritises saving lives above all else.

In line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Plan, we will work collaboratively with our partner agencies and listen to the concerns of our local communities to help make our roads safer for all. Improving the safety of our roads is a united effort and we remain dedicated to working together to achieve this.

Education and the use of modern communication tools is an important part of this, and we are committed to working with our target groups through a number of programmes to challenge and change behaviour on our roads. It is encouraging that most people using our roads do so in a respectful and considerate way and take on board education that is offered. However, enforcement continues to be one of the most important tools for the police, and for those that still choose to break the law we are committed to bringing them to justice.

Foreword from John Champion Police and Crime Commissioner

Too many people are killed or seriously injured on our roads. That is why road safety, and my commitment to reduce harm, continues to be a priority.

My focus is centred around the three Es – education, enforcement and engineering.

We cannot make a difference if we are working on our own, which is why, as set out within my Police and Crime Plan, I made a commitment to have greater collaborative working with partners to ensure there is a shared focus on improving road safety.

This Road Safety Strategy delivers on that commitment, setting out how we will bring partners together through the formation of strategic partnerships boards to drive the required improvements across the force area.

I have invested in, and supported, a number of initiatives that are focused on education and prevention. It's vitally important that road users of all ages have the skills they need to be able to navigate all conditions. Drivers also need to be reminded of the dangers of the **Fatal Five**, which continue to be contributory factors in killed and seriously injured (KSI) collisions.

I have significantly invested in roads policing to ensure that West Mercia Police is able to effectively target those using the roads unsafely and carry out high-visibility policing, and I have worked with local authorities to address road layouts, street furniture and speeds.

However, the statistics show that there is much more that we need to do together. That is why I remain committed to working with West Mercia Police, communities and partners to continually reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries, to ultimately make our roads safer for everyone.



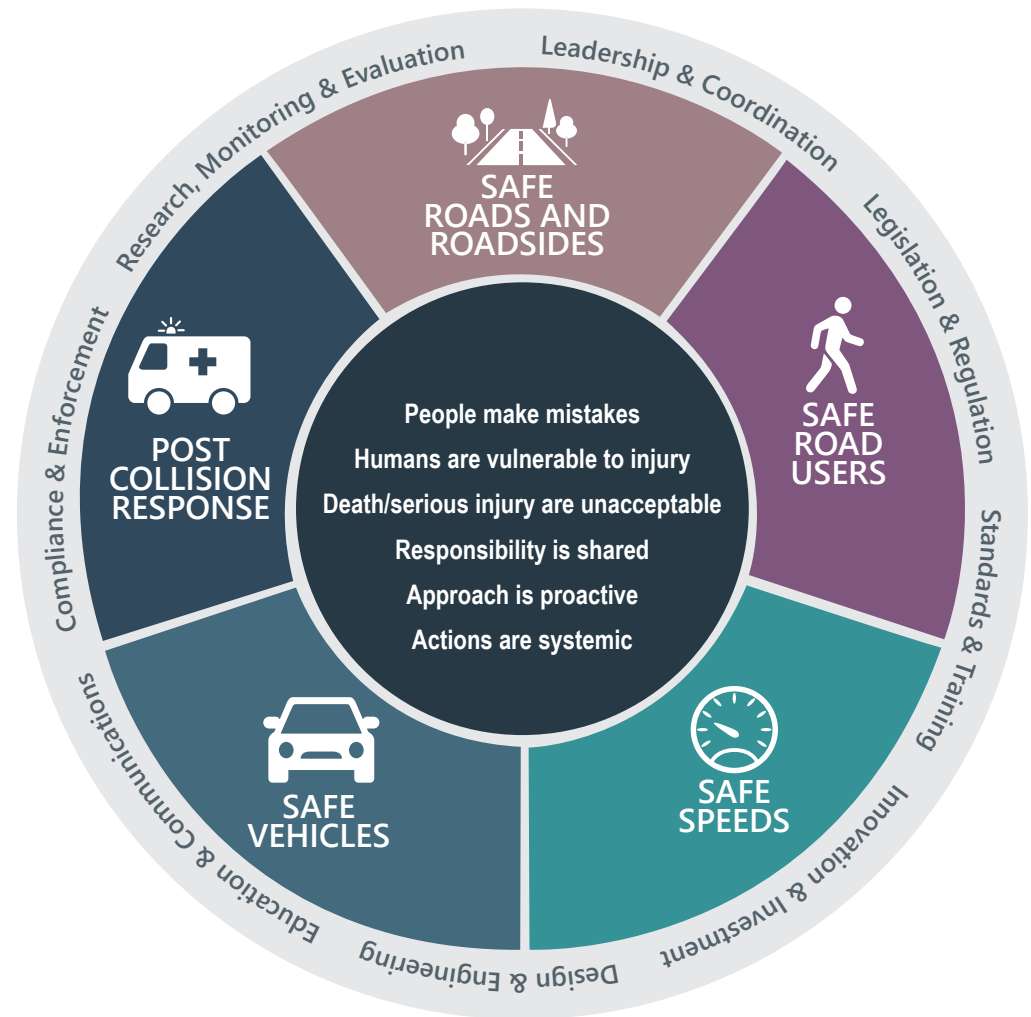
Our core principles for delivery: The Safe System Approach

In delivering this strategy in partnership we will take account of the Safe System framework, developed in Sweden and the Netherlands in the 1980s and recognised worldwide as the most effective way of partners working together to reduce the amount of people being killed and seriously injured on the roads.

Adopting a Safe System starts with accepting the validity of a simple ethical imperative: No human being should be killed or seriously injured as the result of a road collision.

Once this imperative is accepted, it leads to a philosophy where the whole road system is designed to prevent people being killed or seriously injured. There are four principles which are central to a Safe System:

- First, people make mistakes that can lead to road collisions.
- Second, the human body has a known, limited physical ability to tolerate collision forces before harm occurs.
- Third, while individuals have a responsibility to act with care and within road traffic laws, a shared responsibility exists with those who design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles to prevent collisions resulting in serious injury or death and to provide post collision care.
- Fourth, all parts of the system must be strengthened in combination to multiply their effects, and road users are still protected if one part fails.



The safe system requires a new approach to road safety which is a complex issue with no single solution. There is a shared responsibility for road safety in the Safe System, moving away from a focus on just making road users compliant. It continues to be important that road users comply with the rules of the system, but also that the system is forgiving when people make mistakes. Education and enforcement are still important, but they need to be coordinated with safe vehicle and road design, speed choice, and post collision response.

This approach provides the framework for all key agencies to assess strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches and identify next steps in improvement based around the following five pillars of action:



Safe road users

At the forefront of improving road safety across our three counties is the need to change attitudes and in turn improve behaviour. Using tried and tested behavioural change models and new innovative methods, we will ensure there are robust and targeted education, training and publicity programmes in place to improve the way that people use our roads. Some of these programmes will be directed through analysis towards specific road users, geographical locations and/or at key times of the year in line with identified risk.

A visible presence on our road network has a significant impact on road user behaviour and contributes towards reassurance within our communities. Informed by intelligence and supported by technology, we are committed to providing effective enforcement on our roads to offer the best protection to our communities. Everyone should have the opportunity to use our roads safely and everyone has their part to play.

We will ensure we work with our local communities and partners to make our roads safe for all and address the key priorities identified in the Local Policing Charter.

Collectively we can identify the challenges and risks impacting on road safety from a road user perspective and work together to find the solutions to them.



Safer roads will be supported by a road safety engagement and campaigns plan to coordinate police led road safety engagement and campaigns across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. This will provide a framework of what will be achieved and aspirations to be developed.

Safe vehicles

Safe vehicles play an important role in reducing fatalities and serious injuries. We will continue to support national enforcement operations around vehicle safety, such as national tyre safety month, as well as proactively delivering local enforcement operations such as targeting unlawful commercial vehicle use. Assessing roadworthiness of vehicles and taking unsafe vehicles off the road is an essential part of road safety.

Vehicle technology has a huge role to play in keeping road users safe and we have seen some major changes in this. In-built vehicle technology, such as speed limitations, use of seatbelts, automatic breaking, lane assist, and detection of excess alcohol are just some ways the vehicle industry can assist with traditional enforcement and campaigning. Our aim is to work with partners, including the business community, to help develop and focus efforts on projects which deliver safer vehicles.



Technological advancement within the automotive industry is fast-paced . We will stay up to date with new technology and develop ongoing good working relationships with the Crown Prosecution Service and other police forces at national forums. This will ensure we are current with new legislation to help reduce the amount of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

Safe speeds

Excess and inappropriate speed are one of the major causes of collisions on our roads. On average five people are killed in the UK every day with many more suffering from life changing injuries, with speed being a contributory factor in a significant number of these.

We have an established speed enforcement programme incorporating casualty reduction and community concern which we will seek to continually develop. We will continue to use local data and intelligence and where speed is identified as an issue, we will ensure the most appropriate solution is sought to address it. Whilst this may include enforcement via fixed or mobile cameras, officer led enforcement or community intervention, these should complement a longer term, problem solving approach with partners to address the issue.

We will work with our communities and support grassroots action through our Community Speed Watch scheme, and we will embrace new innovations and adopt new technology where possible.



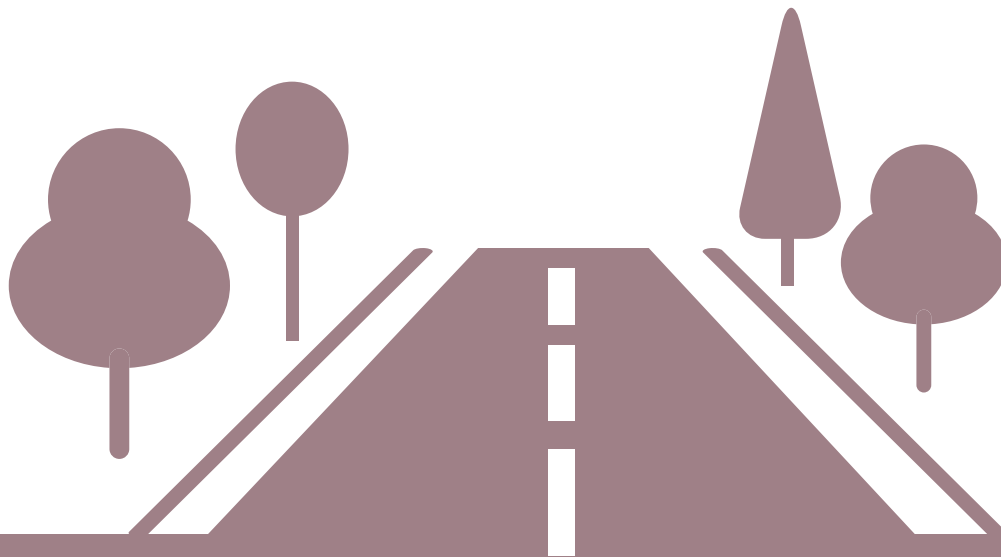
We will seek new opportunities, such as average speed systems and the use of artificial intelligence to identify areas across the three counties where this can be utilised to maximum effect.

Safe roads and roadsides

We have a varied road network across our three counties, ranging from motorways carrying huge volumes of traffic right through to our extensive rural road network linking our towns, villages and hamlets.

With our partners, through the sharing and understanding of data, we will identify and prioritise areas of greatest risk on our road network. We will work together to implement targeted interventions that tackle the root causes and reduces the risk. Whether there be a need to redesign the road layout, strengthen pedestrian safety measures or some other solution, we will collectively agree on a lead agency, and work with them to implement the most appropriate interventions. Most importantly, as a partnership we will oversee the progress, delivery and evaluation of solutions until the risk is sufficiently reduced. All activities will be complemented by an effective, dynamic engagement strategy.

Our mission is to ensure all partners can collectively identify issues and that we work together to find the solution, recognising no single agency will have all the right resources or capacity to deal. Shared responsibility through the Safe System approach should underpin all the work we undertake.



Post collision response

Post-collision response is an integral part of the Safe System, with survivability and the impact of a collision on a person's future way of life linked to the physical and psychological support received in the aftermath of a collision. Likewise, any incident on the road network can also have a significant impact on other road users, families, the community and the wider economy. Our mission is to work collectively with other emergency services to ensure a fast and efficient emergency response is in place if a collision occurs and that our road network is operating effectively as soon as possible.

We will ensure we have all the resources available to provide a professional service following collisions that happen on our roads. This includes having trained investigators to deliver an excellent quality as standard and victims and witnesses receiving the support that they need. We will also engage with the community, so our activities are understood and the harm caused by road safety issues recognised as a priority for all.



Ensuring timely support is in place for those affected by serious and fatal collisions on our roads is one of our key priorities. We will ensure that we have resources across the partnership to deliver an excellent service to those that need it.

High risk behaviours

It is commonly known, and highlighted within the NPCC Road Safety Strategy that the following are the main behaviours/contributory factors or determinants of severity of injury which feature strongly in fatal and serious injury collisions:

- Inappropriate or excess speed
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Driver distractions including mobile devices such as phones, sat navs and tablets
- Driving under the influence of drink and drugs
- Careless and inconsiderate driving

These factors are commonly referred to as **The Fatal Five**.

Other factors

People who break the rules of the road, such as driving without tax, insurance or a driving licence, are likely to be the same people who are involved in other criminal activity, with some having links to serious and organised crime. There is also evidence to support that these same people are at a higher risk of being involved in a collision.

West Mercia Police will use all available information and technology to target and deal appropriately with those who are known or seen to be breaking the rules of the road which will in turn help to reduce the risks on the road.

The force will take primary responsibility for targeting high risk individuals through robust enforcement and diversion into driver education programmes where appropriate.



Strategic objectives

Below are the key strategic objectives that will support the force and OPCC to achieve this strategy and vision:

Eliminate fatalities and reduce serious injuries

- Prioritise high risk corridors as well as specific locations.
- Enable and drive targeted speed management and traffic calming measures.
- Using real time data and predictive analysis to target interventions effectively.

Enhance collaboration, leading across the system

- Recognising that road safety is a collective effort across emergency services, local authorities, elected representatives, communities and private sector partners.
- In partnership with other agencies, establish two geographically aligned strategic road safety leadership boards.
- Create multi agency road safety task forces to coordinate efforts and deliver interventions.
- Incentivise local councils, health services and private sector partners to invest in road safety improvements.

Leverage technology and innovation.

- Utilise predictive analysis for high risk area identification.
- Encourage the adoption of vehicle telematics, enhanced skills and safe driving technology in commercial settings.
- Exploit the latest advances in technology.



Engage and educate communities

- Launch, deliver and continuously evaluate education campaigns and courses which demonstrably improves behaviour and reduces the risk that person poses on the road.
- Empower community groups to lead and shape road safety initiatives which are shown to deliver safer roads.
- Introduce consistent and comprehensive commentary and rationale for enforcement activity.
- Enhance public confidence in the force's approach and commitment to reducing harm on the roads.

Strengthen enforcement strategically

- Develop an enforcement posture, with explicit support of communities and partners, which assists in changing road users' behaviours and attitudes.
- Deploy data informed enforcement tactics focused on high risk behaviours.
- Collaborate internally across policing to ensure consistent and well communicated contributions in reducing KSIs.





Governance framework

To ensure effective delivery of the strategy, a multi-tiered governance approach will be required.

Internal governance

Force tasking

- To be considered for resource allocation and accountability as appropriate as one of the priorities within the force Control Strategy.

West Mercia Road Safety Operational Group

- Membership to include Head of Operations, Strategic Road Safety Manager, relevant Chief Inspectors from Local Policing and Operations' representatives including most appropriate analytical support.
- Responsible for coordinating, overseeing delivery, ownership and accountability against force road safety KPIs and priorities.

Force Delivery Group

- Senior leads to be held to account for delivery against force road safety KPIs.

Local Delivery Group

- Road safety performance to be included as an area of scrutiny and accountability of local policing by Chief Superintendent Head of Local Policing.

External governance

It is acknowledged that the external governance structures will need to be developed collectively with partners. The below is an initial suggested structure, that would align well with the new force policing model, which will be shared with partners for discussion, consideration and further collective development.

Two Road Safety Partnership Strategic Boards (Herefordshire & Worcestershire; Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin)

- Responsible for setting and monitoring agreed KPIs, approving policies and overseeing cross agency delivery and accountability.

Thematic working groups

- Focus on those key road safety areas, as agreed by the Strategic Board, in line with the Safe System approach.

Four Road Safety Partnership Operational Boards (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire)

- Responsible for coordinating and overseeing local delivery of agreed KPIs as well as identifying and delivering against other localised road safety priorities.

Local road safety forums

- Engage local communities directly in identifying and delivering against road safety priorities, deliver bespoke feedback and promote community centred initiatives in line with the Local Policing Charter.

Implementing the strategy

This strategy will be supported by a detailed annual delivery plan which sets out key activities to address the strategic objectives and some clear aspirations for delivery over the next five years.

It is recognised that the plan will need to evolve and develop as appropriate in line with the development of a future multi agency road safety strategy.

Year 1 : Foundation and engagement

- Agree road safety as a force priority
- Establish partner agency support and buy in to road safety being a collective priority
- Co-develop with partners and implement Road Safety Partnership Strategic Boards and Operational Boards
- Implement force internal road safety governance structures
- Deliver the actions within the Road Safety Delivery Plan

Year 2 : Evaluation, expansion and innovation

- Evaluation of effectiveness of delivery against agreed KPIs and Delivery Plan
- Development and agreement of a Partnership Road Safety Strategy
- Review and refresh of force Delivery Plan in line with learnings from Year 1 and the Partnership Road Safety Strategy

Years 3, 4 and 5 will require a review and refresh of the Delivery Plan based on learning and findings from evaluations, emerging trends, progress against KPIs and national best practice.





Measuring success

There will be a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) identified for overview at each of the relevant governance meetings. The high level strategic KPIs to be measured against delivery of this strategy are the following:

- Reduction in number of road fatalities
- Reduction in number of serious injuries
- Increased enforcement activities to deny criminals and the antisocial use of vehicles on our roads
- Increase in engagement metrics and delivery against local priorities that are of most concern to our communities
- Increase in public confidence in our delivery of road safety
- Increase in evaluated behavioural change programmes

Commissioning funds from the OPCC

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will play a crucial role in enabling the delivery of this strategy through targeted commissioning funds.

These funds will be used to:

- **Support community centred initiatives:** enable grassroots programmes focused on education, behavioural change and skills improvement.
- **Fund innovative pilots:** support new projects which meet the central mission of making West Mercia's roads free from preventable deaths and serious injury.
- **Enhance enforcement capabilities:** provide resources for mobile speed cameras, ANPR systems and data-driven policing.
- **Drive public awareness campaigns:** invest in wide reaching campaigns addressing key risk factors such as the **Fatal Five**, with a focus on changing behaviour





Conclusion

This strategy represents a step change move towards a holistic, partnership driven approach to road safety in West Mercia. By aligning stakeholders, defining a unified vision, strategically deploying OPCC commissioning funds and following a clear delivery plan we can create a safer road network for all and ultimately, achieve our goal of eliminating preventable road deaths.

We will constantly evaluate our work, our operations and processes to continually develop the service that we provide to our public.

We will be accountable and transparent in our approach to road safety and our delivery against the identified key performance indicators.