

## **BWA input to Transport Committee Task and Finish Group on road safety strategy**

### **Introduction**

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) welcomes the opportunity to submit its contribution to the Group's review of road safety strategy from a pedestrian's point of view.

BWA is a consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment. We want to create an environment for pedestrians that is welcoming, safe, convenient and inclusive. We use 'walking' and 'pedestrian' to include all people moving at walking speed, including those who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters or other aids to movement.

To quote RoSPA, pedestrians face specific road safety problems:

- Vulnerability – pedestrians lack physical protection, and sub-groups such as older pedestrians may be especially frail;
- Conspicuity – pedestrians are small compared to vehicles;
- Effort – pedestrians are self-propelled and the effort associated with making a detour results in direct desire lines; and,
- Distraction – pedestrians are often also engaged in other activities.

<https://www.rospa.com/siteassets/images/road-safety/road-safety-projects/road-safety-observatory/pedestrians-adult-pedestrians.pdf> page 3

We have drawn on various policies and guidance, which we list. We have also spoken with Action Vision Zero, who pointed us to some useful sources. They would be happy to address the Group.

We start with BWA's priorities for the Strategy, then consider how they align with the 'Safe systems approach'.

### **BWA's priorities for the Strategy**

What we see as critical issues for pedestrians in Bristol

- excessive vehicle speed
- insufficient formal crossings
- footway obstructions (forcing pedestrians into the road)

What we see as priorities for action

- adopt a design approach that follows the [ATE guidance on critical safety issues](#)
- introduce traffic calming measures in all road schemes (i.e. speed reduction by design)
- control footway obstructions including pavement parking

### **Learning from Oslo**

Oslo has been successful in reducing pedestrian casualty rates (see later). The actions taken by Oslo include:

- reduced pedestrian crossing distances to 8 metres
- targeted areas with high pedestrian and bicycle collisions
- build-outs where parked cars or turning lanes obstruct sight lines
- informal or formal zebras at all pedestrian crossings
- tight kerb radii
- wide footways

### **Other points that the strategy should address**

- It is important that the strategy includes a plan of implementable actions, not too long a list of actions with an emphasis on what is deliverable.
- The strategy should take account of the different issues for city centres, town centres and neighbourhoods.
- There should be a recognition of the value of place as well as movement. People-friendly streets and spaces add to the quality of life.
- In theory, transport policy adopts a user hierarchy that considers the needs of people on foot first. In practice, other modes are often prioritised, leading to a street design that is less optimal for pedestrian safety or comfort.
- A safety-driven design at a particular location may restrict a pedestrian's options, or not be on a desire line. More confident pedestrians will tend to take the shortest route.
- More generally, a safety-driven road measure may conflict with other policy objectives. The strategy should consider whether this is the case, and recognise the tension.
- The strategy should avoid conflating the needs of walking and cycling. A street design can be safe for cycling but not safe for walking.
- The strategy should consider different users: older people, children, disabled people, women, night-time.

## The 'Safe systems approach'

### Contents

1. Evidence
2. Safe systems approach - objectives
3. What is possible – Oslo example
4. Possible measures in Bristol by objective
  - 4.1 Safer streets
  - 4.2 Safer speeds
  - 4.3 Safer road use

### 1. Evidence

#### Bristol statistics (2024)

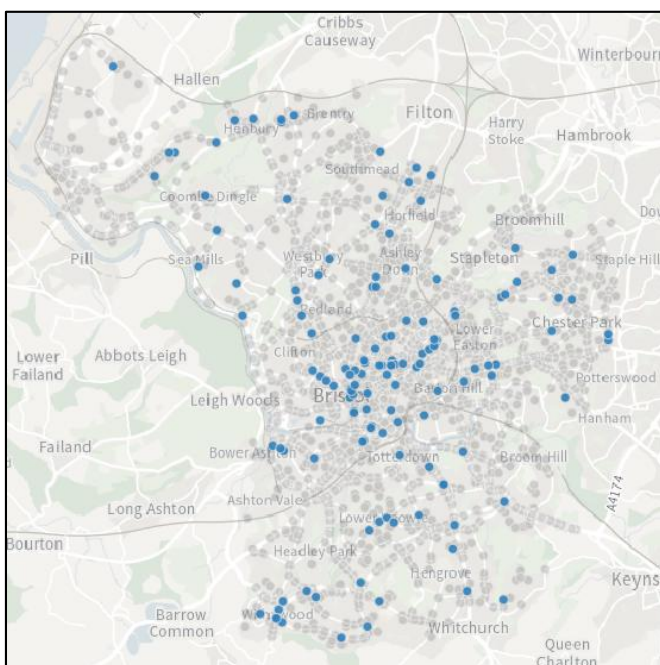
Statistics relating to pedestrians include:

- 174 pedestrian casualties - including 24 children, 32 elderly
- pedestrians made up 27% of all the KSI casualties
- 96% of the pedestrian casualties were involved in a collision with a motorised vehicle (predominantly a passenger car)
- historically, over half of collisions involving pedestrians occur within a 2.5km radius of the city centre

#### Bristol statistics by location (2020-24)

Using the Bristol Open Data site, and limiting the data to those collisions involving pedestrians, it is possible to see:

- there were 792 collisions involving pedestrians in the 5-year period 2020-2024
- of these, 11 were fatal, 140 were serious, 153 involved a child, 121 involved an elderly person

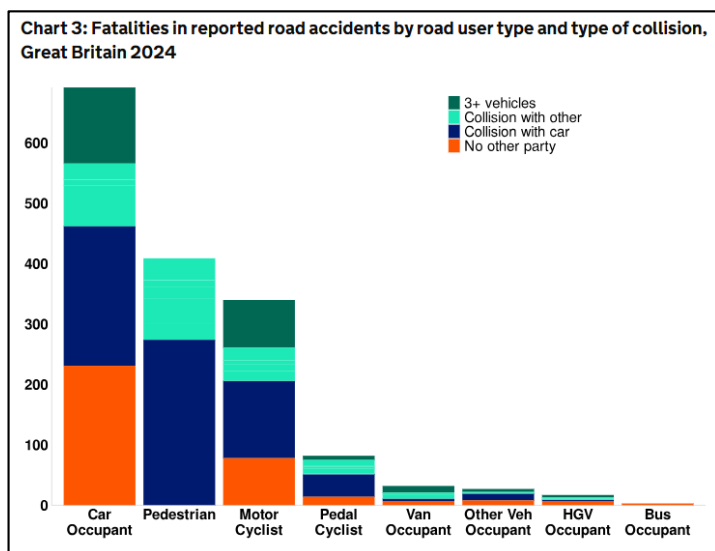


The distribution of fatal collisions shows all except one occurred on main through routes outside the city centre. These are places where the speed limit is likely to be 30mph or higher, but where reducing the limit to 20mph might be difficult.

The distribution of serious collisions (see map below) is more varied, but still there are many outside the city centre.

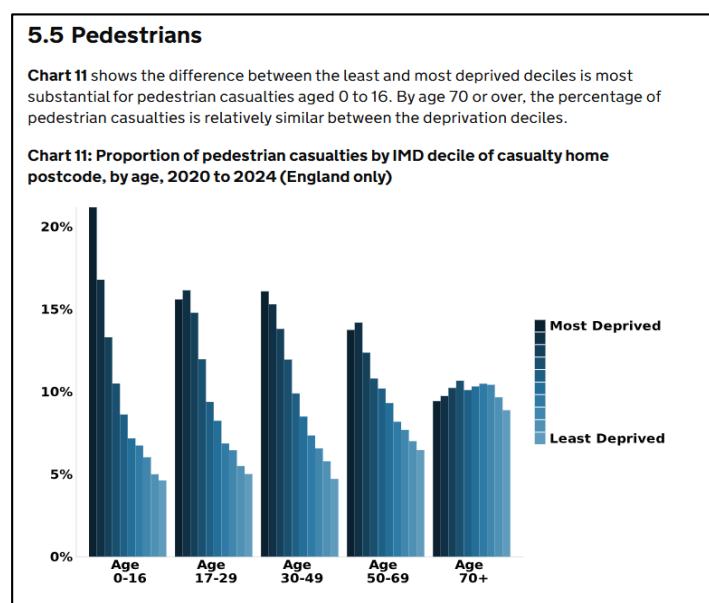
<https://opendata.bristol.gov.uk/datasets/traffic-collisions/explore>

## National statistics (DfT, 2024)



This chart illustrates the vulnerability of pedestrians.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-road-user-risk-2024/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-road-user-risk-2024-data>



This chart shows that pedestrians in more deprived areas experience a greater risk of becoming a casualty.

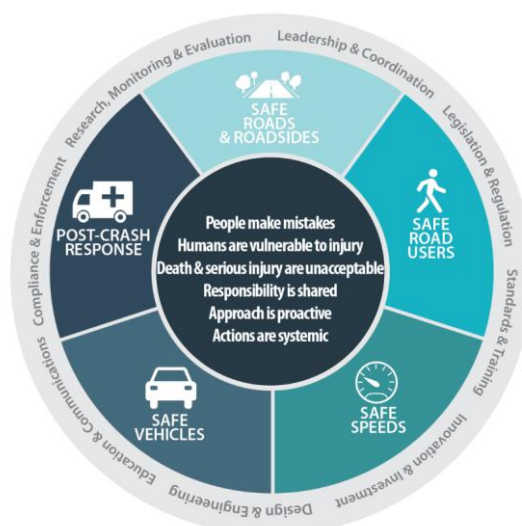
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-casualties-and-deprivation-factsheet-2024-england/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-casualties-and-deprivation-2024-england>

## 2. Safe systems approach - objectives

<https://www.pacts.org.uk/safe-system/>

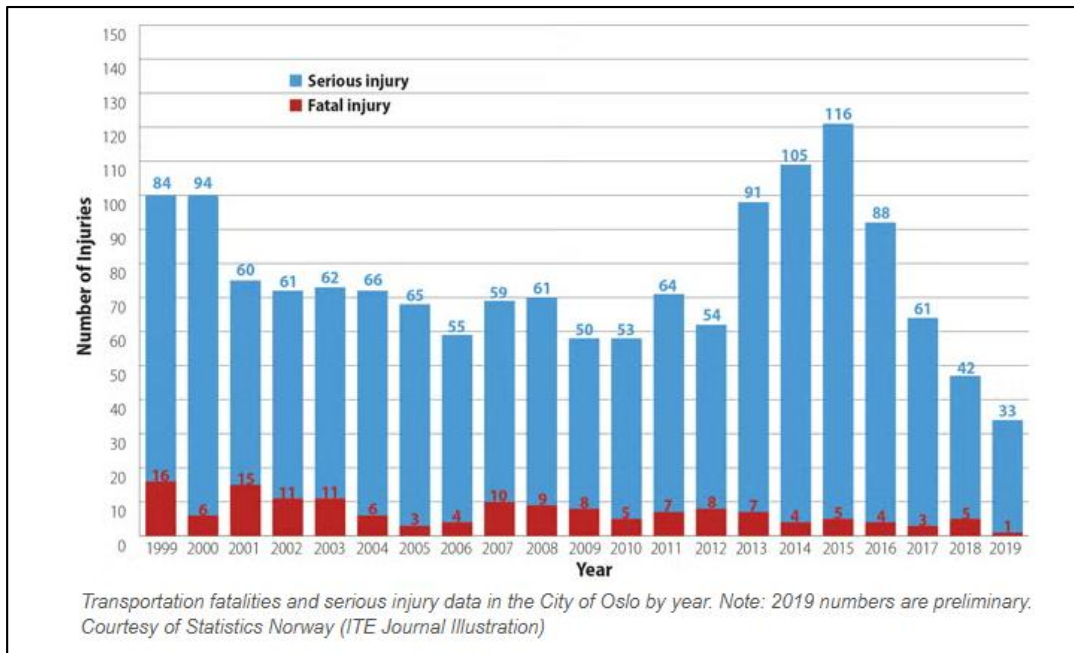
BWA will focus on three of the five pillars of action identified in the Safe systems approach:

- Safer roads
- Safer speeds
- Safer road use



### 3. What is possible – Oslo example

Oslo transportation fatalities and serious injury data



#### How did they do it?

The measures Oslo adopted can be grouped to address two of our areas of focus.

##### Safer roads

- made the city centre car-free by 2019, leading to removal of all regular street parking and closure to all through-traffic
- reduced all road widths to two lanes
- reduced pedestrian crossing distances to 8 metres
- targeted areas with high pedestrian and bicycle collisions.
- build-outs where parked cars or turning lanes obstruct sight lines
- informal or formal zebras at all pedestrian crossings
- narrowed lanes with vertical elements
- tight kerb radii
- wide footways

##### Safer speeds

- 20mph speed limit in local streets
- speed humps in high-density, mixed-use areas

<https://thecityfix.com/blog/how-oslo-achieved-zero-pedestrian-and-bicycle-fatalities-and-how-others-can-apply-what-worked/>

<https://content.tfl.gov.uk/vision-zero-case-study-oslo.pdf#>

#### 4. Possible measures in Bristol by objective

Referring to the list of Oslo's measures, which should Bristol adopt, and how would they fit into existing transport schemes and ways of working?

##### 4.1 Safer streets

Could Bristol adopt the measures that Oslo has? If Bristol were to adopt such measures, what existing schemes would be the best delivery vehicle? This could be considered, for example, by completing the following table:

Oslo's measures	Is it applicable in Bristol?	Fit with existing schemes and ways of working
City centre car-free	Bristol Bridge bus gate and Old City scheme done, and Park St committed, but not feasible in all the city centre?	Pedestrianisation schemes in local centres where feasible
Target areas with high collisions	✓ Would require a periodic review of the collision data on the Bristol 'pinpoint' map	Neighbourhood transport schemes
Road widths to 2 lanes	✓ except on some major arterial roads?	Corridor schemes Liveable Neighbourhoods, School streets/ routes to school  + Kerbside Strategy
Crossings < 8 metres	✓ except on some major arterial roads?	
Continuous footways/ informal zebras	✓	
Narrowed car lanes	✓	
Wide footways	✓	
tight kerb radii/ narrow entrances	✓	
build-outs to improve sight lines	✓	

##### 4.2 Safer speeds

Speed is the most important factor in influencing whether collisions occur and how severe they are. Could Bristol adopt the measures that Oslo has? See the table below.

Oslo's measures	Is it applicable in Bristol?	Fit with existing schemes and ways of working
20mph limit in local streets	Already done	
speed humps in high-density, mixed-use areas	✓	Neighbourhood transport schemes

Transport for London has developed an [Achieving Lower Speeds Toolkit](#), which includes further possible measures, as listed below.

<b>1 Signing and road markings</b>	<b>2 Vertical treatments</b>	<b>3 Horizontal treatments</b>	<b>4 Narrowing the carriageway</b>	<b>5 Rethinking the street function</b>
1.1 Signs and lines	2.1 Road humps	3.1 Chicanes	4.1 Traffic islands and pedestrian refuges	5.1 'Elastic' streets
1.2 Vehicle activated signs	2.2 Speed cushions	3.2 Reduced corner radii	4.2 Median strips	5.2 New public spaces
1.3 Speed indicator devices and flashing beacons	2.3 Raised tables		4.3 Loading bays, parking and 'parklets'	5.3 Temporary or timed road closures
1.4 Virtual speed humps	2.4 Gateways		4.4 Trees and planters	5.4 Low-traffic neighbourhoods
1.5 Centreline removal			4.5 Reallocating carriageway space for walking	
1.6 Varying surface treatments			4.6 Reallocating carriageway space for cycling	

#### 4.3 Safer road use

These are some other possible measures that could be applied for our third area of focus.

<b>Other measures</b>	<b>Fit with existing schemes and ways of working</b>
ANPR enforcement	School Street schemes
Speed enforcement	The Council can influence the police through West of England Road Safety Partnership, and by supporting Community Speedwatch
A communications strategy e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to inspire change to how people feel about road danger</li> <li>to influence specific behaviours such as speeding, or watching for other road users when turning</li> <li>to inform people about positive activity as Bristol closer towards the Vision Zero target</li> </ul>	Bristol City Council <a href="#">Road safety resources for schools</a> including classroom education resources, 'Show You Care, Park Elsewhere' and Safer Routes to School  Bristol City Council Street Improvements Reporter site

## Relevant policies and guidance

Action Vision Zero: policy check-list <https://actionvisionzero.org/resources/vision-zero-policy-checklist-for-councils/>

ATE guidance: Critical safety issues for walking, wheeling and cycling  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/critical-safety-issues-for-walking-wheeling-and-cycling/critical-safety-issues-for-walking-wheeling-and-cycling>

Healthy Streets <https://www.healthystreets.com>

Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-mobility-making-transport-accessible-for-passengers-and-pedestrians>

Manual for Streets  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e0035ed915d74e6223743/pdfmanforstreets.pdf>  
(we understand a long-awaited MfS2 will include revised guidance relevant to pedestrians)

Road Danger Reduction Forum: a forum for road safety professionals <https://rdrf.org.uk/>

RoadPeace: the national charity for road crash victims in the UK  
<https://www.roadpeace.org/prevention/>

ROSPA: a library of independent road safety research and information, including several documents relevant to pedestrians <https://www.rospace.com/road-safety/road-safety-projects/road-safety-observatory>

Seeing streets differently: How changes to our streets and vehicles are affecting the lives of blind and partially sighted people  
[https://media.rnib.org.uk/documents/Seeing\\_Streets\\_Differently\\_report\\_RNIB\\_2021.pdf](https://media.rnib.org.uk/documents/Seeing_Streets_Differently_report_RNIB_2021.pdf)

TfL guidance: Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/pedestrian-comfort-guidance-technical-guide.pdf>

TfL Vision Zero action plan (2018) <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/vision-zero-action-plan.pdf>

Vision Zero action plan progress report (2021) <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/vision-zero-action-plan-progress-report-2021.pdf>