This document is a summary of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership’s Vision Zero strategy. The full strategy document is available at:

saferessexroads.org/vision-zero-no-more-deaths-on-essex-roads
The Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) was formed in April 2014 with the aim of delivering a coordinated road safety service across the area covered by Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council. This is also the area covered by Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and will simply be referred to as ‘Essex’ in this document.

**The following organisations are members of The Partnership:**

- Essex County Council
- Essex Police
- Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- thurrock.gov.uk
- PFCC
  POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX
- East of England Ambulance Service
  NHS Trust
- SRF
- Essex & Herts Air Ambulance
  Your local life-saving charity
- Highways England

## OUR VISION

“**Vision Zero**”

For there to be zero road deaths and serious injuries in Essex by 2040

This document summarises the Vision Zero strategy and Safe System approach to road safety. Vision Zero is an aspiration that the Partnership cannot achieve alone. Safer roads benefit everyone so we are calling for all organisations and individuals in Essex to support and be part of the changes required. This will allow us all to benefit from a road network free from death and serious injury.
Despite long-term progress in casualty reduction, there are still too many people suffering trauma, life changing injuries and loss of friends or family in road collisions.

Traditional road safety approaches in the UK have achieved much, and the UK is recognised as an international leader in road safety. However, progress has stalled as we near the maximum potential for what traditional approaches can achieve.

Everyone starts their journey expecting to reach their destination, but all too often death on the road is accepted as one of the prices we pay for having the freedom of public roads.

Collisions are not normally expected by those involved, but the causes are always predictable. By addressing the things we know cause collisions, we can add new ‘layers of protection’ to existing successful road safety measures. We must do this to stop more families being torn apart by the sudden unexpected trauma of a serious road collision.

One death on the road is one too many. People do make mistakes and have lapses in judgement but nobody deserves to die for having these very human characteristics.
50 deaths

= annual average on the roads of Essex 2016-2020

55% reduction

in the number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads of Essex between 2005 and 2020

We can reduce harm on the roads by working in partnership with our colleagues across the emergency services and local authority partners but the people who can make a real difference are you – the people of Essex, who drive and use our roads.

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex

Factors involved in fatal and serious collisions

- **31%** Speed related factors
- **9%** Driver impaired by drink or drugs
- **29%** Motorised traffic colliding with pedestrian or cyclist
- **26%** Percent of urban road collisions resulting in death or serious injury
- **33%** Percent of rural road collisions resulting in death or serious injury
- **21%** Percent of trunk road collisions result in death or serious injury

Deaths and serious injuries per million miles travelled

- **5.6**
- **0.94**
- **0.48**
- **0.058**

For more information visit: saferessexroads.org/collision-data
VISION ZERO

What it is:
The ethical position that deaths and serious injuries are not an acceptable consequence of human error on public roads. In Essex this means the aspiration that there should be no deaths or serious injuries on the roads by 2040. Traditional road safety approaches tend to focus on the responsibility of individual road users. Vision Zero expands this responsibility to include all people involved in designing, building, operating, maintaining and using the road network. However, Vision Zero does not diminish the responsibility of individual road users to comply with road traffic laws, but builds upon this by adding layers of protection to account for human error.

To achieve Vision Zero, everyone has a responsibility to improve the parts of road safety that are under their influence. There will be a process of learning, planning and investment which is why Vision Zero is very much a long term aspiration.

Why we have adopted it:
Essex has seen a steady long-term reduction in deaths and serious injuries, but in recent years the rate of reduction has slowed. The Partnership believes that any death or serious injury on the roads is unacceptable and that Essex residents should not have to accept them as inevitable. Whilst current approaches to road safety have been very successful, the Partnership is focussed on delivering injury reductions that are sustainable in the long term.

COST OF INJURIES

£205 million
Financial cost of traffic injuries in Essex in 2019

£127 million
Incurred by Essex taxpayers, most of which was in social care costs.
Benefits:

- Preventing the thousands of deaths and serious injuries that will continue to mount up unless we all make changes.
- Preventing the heartache and distress of families being torn apart by the sudden unexpected trauma of a collision and its long-term consequences.
- Safer roads create a more pleasant journey for everyone.
- Safer roads mean fewer traffic jams caused by collisions, reducing congestion, improving air quality and bringing more reliable journey times.
- Road traffic collisions are expensive for those involved, but also for businesses and taxpayers. On average, each fatality costs the economy over £600,000, each serious injury costs £110,000.

Challenges:

It is widely believed that most of the ‘easy wins’ in road safety have already been achieved. The significant changes required for further improvements require investment in vehicles, roads and people. This investment costs money, and it takes time for people to modify their behaviours and for social values to evolve.

For these reasons we recognise that Vision Zero is an aspiration that will take time to achieve. There is widespread support for safer roads, so the real challenge is to coordinate the efforts of public authorities, businesses and individuals who want to make the changes that will deliver the safer roads everyone wants.
The ‘SAFE SYSTEM’
HOW TO ACHIEVE VISION ZERO

The Safe System approach prioritises human life and health in the design, maintenance and use of the roads.

It accepts that humans make mistakes but also recognises death and serious injury does not need to be an inevitable price to pay for mobility. It is based on the following principles:

1. Road users are human and they will make mistakes that can lead to collisions, so the Safe System needs to allow for human error.
2. The force of impact that the human body can tolerate is limited.
3. There is a shared responsibility between the people who design, build, maintain and use the road network, to prevent death and serious injury.
4. All parts of the road system should be made safe, rather than waiting for injuries to occur and then reacting. All parts of the system must be strengthened to multiply the protective effects so that if one part of the road system fails, road users are still protected.

These principles require a forgiving road system that caters for the safety needs of all users. This system uses the five layers of protection illustrated below.

| Safe speeds | Vehicle speeds are at a level that make collisions easy to avoid |
| Safe vehicles | Vehicles are always roadworthy, consumers demand the best safety features and understand how to use them |
| Safe road use | Road users are competent, paying full attention and complying with the law, everyone is considerate and takes responsibility for other people’s safety as well as their own |
| Safer roads and roadside | Road design is consistent and easy to understand, encouraging safe behaviours, roadsides are forgiving of mistakes, with hazards removed or made safe |
| Post collision response | Collision victims receive prompt and high standard medical care and rehabilitation, information about collisions is accurate and analysis of this information is acted upon |
GLOBAL RECOGNITION

The Safe System has been endorsed internationally as best practice in road safety, including by the UK Government, World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD has produced a comprehensive document that discusses the Safe System approach to road safety. It has been adopted in Europe, Australasia and North America at regional, national and city levels, as well as by many organisations in the UK.

Other benefits of the Safe System

Environment: Safe roads, that encourage walking and cycling, will reduce the high traffic volumes that cause congestion and air pollution.

Active travel and Leisure: Safer roads, that encourage walking and cycling, will mean more people can benefit from physical activity being part of their routine. The health benefits of being active already outweigh the risks from injury, and these injury risks are reduced further by the good quality infrastructure required by the Safe System.

Public health: Aside from the health benefits of more active travel and cleaner air, the Safe System will reduce the impact of death and serious injury on health and social care services. In the UK, 41% of accidental deaths and 11% of all deaths among 15 to 24 year-olds are from road traffic collisions.

Business: Around a third of collisions involve at least one person who was driving for work. Health and Safety at work legislation applies whether a person is working at fixed premises, a building site, or using the roads. It also applies both to employees and to the self-employed. Changes made by businesses to improve safety for their drivers, and for other road users, will protect the business’s reputation and reduce costs incurred from vehicle damage, insurance premiums, lost trade, employee down-time and legal expenses.

HEALTH & WEALTH

The Safe System will not happen in isolation, it must complement plans for economic recovery and environmental protection.

Safe, clean town centres that attract customers to local businesses, and unspoiled countryside that is accessible to all, are part of what will make the Safe System a successful one.
Our full strategy document outlines the actions required to implement the Safe System for Essex, some of these are summarised below.

To implement the Safe System for Essex we will:

- Work with other partnerships and authorities to share data, research and knowledge.
- Help each partner highway authority to review its speed management strategy (how road speed limits are decided), complementing this with targeted speed enforcement to reduce collision frequency and severity.
- Build on the work of our Community Speed Watch volunteer groups, learning from their contribution to local communities and to Vision Zero.
- Review the Partnership’s wider enforcement strategy to promote greater compliance with all traffic safety laws.
- Develop our existing education and communications programmes on road user safety, to complement the rest of the safe system approach.
- Help each partner highway authority to create a safe and forgiving road network that reduces the risk and severity of collisions. This will include developing a safety rating system for roads to help prioritise engineering and maintenance activity.
- Encourage fleet managers and members of the public to purchase vehicles with the highest Euro NCAP safety ratings and to use the safety features they provide.
- Continue to enforce the removal of unsafe and illegal vehicles from the road.
- Promote ways for members of the public to communicate accurate information to the emergency services.
- Investigate opportunities to maximise the speed and quality of care available following severe road traffic collisions.

**OUR APPROACH**

Vision Zero is the aspiration.

The Safe System approach to road safety is the means by which the aspiration is to be achieved.

Education will help people make informed choices about how to be part of the Safe System.

Enforcement will encourage people to make positive choices about their safety and the safety of others.
The Partnership needs to:

- Help everyone understand the Safe System and how it can achieve Vision Zero.
- Understand how people want to help make the roads safer and what support they need to do this.
- Consider what road safety activities people want more of, or want done differently.
- Identify the best ways to co-ordinate actions between different organisations.
Visit our website now for the latest information, and for details on how to join the Vision Zero engagement workshops in October 2021

saferessexroads.org/visionzero

PLEASE GET INVOLVED

- Learn more about safe road use on our website www.saferessexroads.org
- Like/follow/share on our social media channels @saferessexroads
- Talk to family, friends and people in your community about Vision Zero
- Share ideas about how to make improvements where you live with your local elected representatives
- Subscribe to updates from us at: saferessexroads.org/subscribe-to-news-alerts
- Submit footage of road traffic offences to our Extra Eyes campaign: saferessexroads.org/driving-complaints-2020
- To share any ideas you have about how you might be able to help achieve Vision Zero in your community, please contact us at: SaferEssexRoads@essexhighways.org