

Response from Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum welcomes the adoption by Kent County Council (KCC) Vision Zero for its roads.

For more than a decade, the RTW Town Forum has engaged with TWBC and KCC to improve safety in the town for pedestrians and cyclists, tackle congestion and pollution from vehicles and improve health of local people by encouraging more walking and cycling within the town centre.

People are very concerned about traffic speeds, insufficient safe crossings, limited cycling infrastructure and traffic volumes. Residents demand for 20mph restrictions has seen much of the town's residential districts and town centre covered (or soon to be), and safer crossings and junctions are being actively sought.

This Vision Zero document is timely and necessary not only for reducing death and injury on the roads and perceived road danger, but also as another step towards a carbon zero future by enabling people to choose to walk and cycle safely where they can.

Vision Zero can't come too soon for the people of Tunbridge Wells. We are, however, concerned the strategy may not achieve its ambitious objectives because:

- 1) Committed funding does not appear to be included to achieve these objectives.
- 2) The 2050 target is too long.
- 3) Undertaking further research is an unnecessary expense that takes time and significant funding away from delivering solutions known to work and when data already exists to support it.

The RTW Town Forum endorses the comprehensive response to this consultation from Action Vision Zero of which we had early sight. In particular, we note its recommendations as follows:

- 1) **Place greater emphasis on serious injury reduction** as well as deaths
- 2) **Prioritise the impact of perceived road danger** which limits the take up cycling and walking in our town
- 3) **Bring forward Vision Zero to 2041** to align Kent with other leading counties and Transport for London
- 4) **Prioritise population-wide strategies as [casualties on urban minor roads](#)** are now at least as great a concern as those on rural roads and make up 40% of KSIs in 2019
- 5) **Include Vision Zero in public health and environmental objectives and targets** to enable pollution, obesity and climate change objectives to be interlinked.
- 6) **Embed Vision Zero in all new developments, highways schemes and Local Plans.**

Formed in 2005, the Town Forum is the voice of the 50,000 residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells on issues of common interest

Town Forum Management Group

Adrian Berendt (Chair); Alastair Tod (Deputy Chair); Don Sloan (Deputy Chair); Carolyn Gray (Culture, Leisure & Tourism); David Wakefield (Finance); Jane Fenwick (Transport); Marianne MacDonald (Wellbeing); Mark Booker (Strategic Planning); Michael Holman (Water in the Wells)

- 7) **Examine the root causes of all fatalities and the 'most serious' injuries** and commit funding to deliver the changes needed that arise from this analysis.
- 8) **Direct education for behavioural change** towards those that cause the road danger including failures of hard engineering, and back this up with enforcement.

Our experience of traffic safety issues in Royal Tunbridge Wells suggests that the following actions would make substantial contribution to the achievement of Vision Zero in our town and help to reduce the perceived safety risk and increase actual safety of our residents, workers and visitors.

- **Adopt 20mph** across the whole urban area as default speed with 30mph allowed only where justified
- **Install safe crossings and junctions** for pedestrians and cyclists
- **Limit through traffic** by closing side roads to develop LTNs and adopt an LCWIP
- **Enable safer cycling** in protected cycle lanes on main roads
- **Limit traffic volumes** to allow for more walking, cycling and public transport
- **Clear and visible police enforcement.**

I am pleased to submit this consultation response to Vision Zero on behalf of the RTW Town Forum.

Yours sincerely

Jane Fenwick

Chair of the Transport Working Group of the RTW Town Forum

12th March 2021