

Reference: EP1323

Cllr Emily Smith
Leader of the Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
OX14 4SB

**Communities
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND**

**Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for
Environment and Place**

Via email: Emily.Smith@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

5 July 2022

Dear Cllr Smith

Re: Amendments to the Highway Code

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 2022 regarding the recent amendments to the Highway Code which has been passed to me for response.

I would like to assure you that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) are working across the board to ensure that the amendments to the Highway Code are taken into account. OCC is aiming to undertake general maintenance to cover major and growth schemes in the near future.

As you may be aware Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, has announced her commitment to a Vision Zero approach within Oxfordshire.

The adoption of a Vision Zero approach for Oxfordshire is signalling the clear ambition and commitment to achieve the new approach. This is a joint effort that requires working closely with partners and stakeholders to look at infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Vale of White Horse District Council on this.

Vision Zero was first implemented in Sweden in the 1990s and has proved successful across many large European cities. It is currently being actively progressed within the UK in a growing number of authorities. One of the main challenges will be the rural network.

Although the total number of reported road casualties in Oxfordshire has fallen over the past 10 years, road deaths have remained unchanged, with an average of 25 per year. In recent years, the annual average total of serious injuries in the county has been 210.

The council has set interim targets of a 25 per cent cut in casualties by 2026 and a 50 per cent reduction by 2030 before aiming to reach zero by 2050.

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There are a number of different strands which will need to be combined and managed as a single programme to achieve this ambition.

These include:

- policy
- speed management in partnership with Thames Valley Police
- good and fit for purpose new infrastructure
- improvements for cyclists
- road safety education and training
- wider improvement programmes, including Oxfordshire County Council's 20mph scheme.
- to eliminate deaths and serious injury on our roads, which is going to require huge commitment and a change in approach from the council and its partners.

Road safety is firmly on the agenda of the council's administration and we will continue to undertake media/communications campaigns to promote this over the coming months and years. I can confirm that the authority has already been undertaking advertising campaigns on the matter and to date we have commissioned adverts on social media and the rear advertising spaces across the bus network.

Officers are also working hard on the recent award of Tranche 3 Active Travel. This will include Local Cycling and Walking Plans for many of our towns. Delivering these plans will ensure that we are adding sufficient provision to adapt the hierarchy of the highway network to; Pedestrians, Cyclists, Buses and Cars, (in that order).

We appreciate your proactive approach in relation to the changes to the Highway Code. I will reiterate the matter to officers and request that they deliver robust responses when commenting on highways design as part of the County's response to planning applications in the Vale.

Our Fire and Rescue Service deliver the training and main messages around road safety in the county. I will pass your comments on to the relevant team so that we can work together on campaigns within your area.

I would be delighted to meet with you to discuss the above and the related motion that was recently debated at Vale, along with the recent changes to the Highway Code.

Yours sincerely



Sean Rooney
Head of Service- Highway Maintenance

Email: sean.rooney@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Cc.: Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy
Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Highway Management
Cllr Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment
Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place