



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Report on the Road Safety Framework for Wales

2013 to 2020

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# 2013 Framework and 2018 Review

The Road Safety Framework for Wales 2013 (2013 Framework)<sup>1</sup> reviewed in 2018 (2018 Review)<sup>2</sup> expired in 2020 so a new Framework is needed.

The overall outcome and vision of the 2013 Framework were formulated as follows:

**“** *The outcome we want to see is that all people are safe on Welsh roads. We believe that all road safety activity undertaken by the Welsh Government and all partners should be concerned with achieving this outcome.*

*Our vision is: A continued reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads, with the ultimate aspiration of no fatalities.*

There were three main targets set:

Our proposed targets, compared to the average figures for Wales between 2004-08, are:

- i. A 40% reduction in the total number of people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads by 2020, meaning 562 fewer killed and seriously injured casualties.
- ii. A 25% reduction in the number of motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads by 2020, meaning 64 fewer motorcyclists killed and seriously injured casualties.
- iii. A 40% reduction in the number of young people (aged 16-24) killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads by 2020, meaning 139 fewer young people killed and seriously injured casualties.

The 2018 Review stated that good progress had been made against the targets for casualty reduction in the whole population and amongst young people. The target for casualty reduction amongst motorcyclists was not on track. However, no changes to the original targets were made.

To provide a more accurate measure it was decided to start using a 5-year comparison against the 2004-08 baseline. (As summarised in Table 1)

**Table 1: % Casualty change against baseline**

	All KSIs	Motorcyclists	Young people
2004-2008	1406	257	396
2012-2016	1147	253.6	259
% Change	-18.42	-1.32	-34.6

<sup>1</sup> Road safety framework for Wales | GOV.WALES

<sup>2</sup> Review of the Road Safety Framework for Wales (GOV.WALES)

Out of the 98 actions from the 2013 Framework, 29 were found to be complete, 55 ongoing, 8 partially complete and 6 yet to be completed. An action plan was to be developed to deliver outstanding actions and that plan was to be owned by a new National Road Safety Board. The 2018 review found that:

**“** *There were too many actions in the Framework and that it was not always clear which part of the Welsh Government or which partner had responsibility for delivery.*<sup>3</sup>

The National Road Safety Board (NRSB) was set up and it met four times, between May 2018 and May 2020. Considering the Green Paper on ‘Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People’<sup>4</sup> and the wider emerging picture of local government, the 2018 Review suggested adopting a regional approach to road safety planning and delivery. The plans to put in place regional structures and NRSB were put on hold in mid-2020 due to limited resources as Welsh Government responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2018 Review identified a number of changes around governance, behaviour change, target groups, data, evidence, collision investigation and technology that were required to the 2013 Framework. Some of those recommendations have been included in this report.

## 1. Appraisal of the 2013 Framework’s success

The 2013 Framework supported Wales’s partnership approach to making roads safer and some important progress has been made in saving lives, however only one of the three main targets of the 2013 Framework has been met (highlighted in bold in Table 2 below).

**Table 2: % casualty change against targets**

	All KSIs	Motorcyclists	Young people (16-24)
2004-2008 average	1406	257	396
2015-2019 average	1138	253	242
% change	-19.06%	-1.56%	<b>-38.89%</b>
Target reduction in Road Safety Framework 2013	40%	25%	40%

5-year period deliberately chosen not to include 2020 because of the Covid19 pandemic leading to statistical inaccuracy. Data retrieved from<sup>5</sup>

3 [Review of the Road Safety Framework for Wales \(GOV.WALES\)](#), p.8

4 [Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for people | GOV.WALES](#)

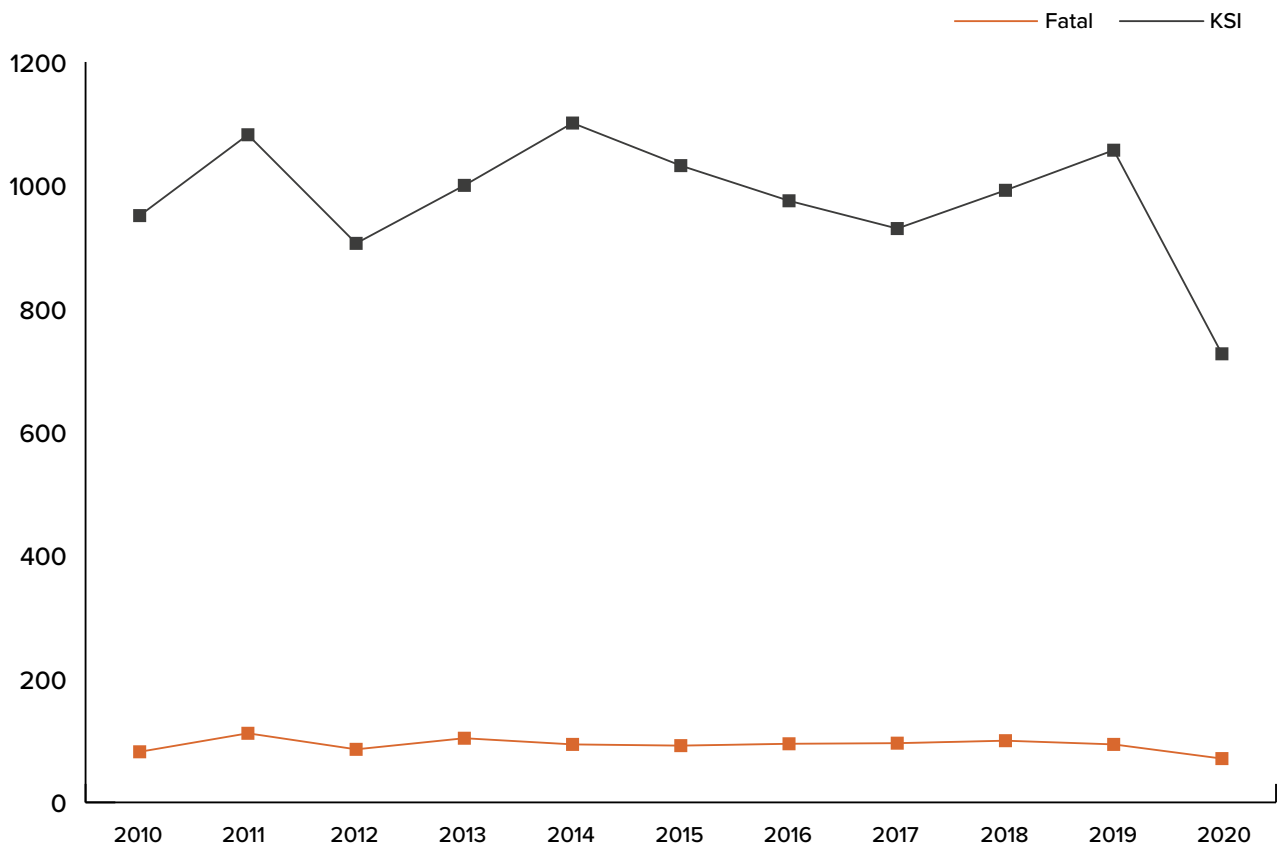
5 [Police recorded road collisions | GOV.WALES](#)

Since 2010 the fatality and KSI statistics have levelled out, as can be seen in Figure A below. This plateauing is not specific to Wales or the UK; it has also occurred across the EU and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries since about 2013. Indeed, Wales was not in line with UN's SDG 3.6 to halve deaths from collisions from 2015 to 2020<sup>6</sup>. The 2020 numbers should be treated as exceptional, rather than presenting an actual downward trend, due to Covid and the related public health restrictions which impacted on the number of people using Welsh roads.

## 2. Non-exhaustive list of potential reasons why targets were not met

1. The natural nexus between road safety and other wider transport polices has not been sufficiently embedded.
2. Road safety has not been a policing priority. The Roads Policing Review 2020<sup>7</sup> found that the police force inspected in Wales did not have a roads policing strategy. In addition, casualty reduction did not feature in its strategic threat and risk assessment (the process by which forces analyse the threats and risks they need to commit resources to) or in any problem profiles.

Figure A: Fatalities and KSI Statistics



6 Goal 3 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs (un.org)

7 Roads Policing: Not optional – An inspection of roads policing in England and Wales – HMICFRS (justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

3. Dedicated roads police units have shrunk over the past years. Figures from 2016 show that the number of specialist roads officers was cut by almost three-quarters in some parts of England and Wales.<sup>8</sup> Between 2013 and 2019, spending on roads policing fell 34% in real terms, compared with about 6.1% across all police functions.<sup>9</sup>

4. A lack of effective data analysis and sharing. The 2018 Review recommended setting up a collision studies group and a data coordinator was to coordinate the work. Due to difficulties in recruiting an analyst it was decided this was not an avenue to pursue at the time.

5. Road safety funding has not been sufficiently aligned with the targets set in the 2013 Framework.

6. The target reduction for motorcyclist KSIs was set at 25% in the 2013 Framework, potentially a too ambitious target to be met. Several education programmes targeted at motorcyclists have been set up and funded in Wales, but it is unclear and difficult to demonstrate how effective they have been in reducing and preventing additional KSIs.

7. The target reduction in KSIs for young people of 40% was met. Possible reasons for the reduction in KSIs in young people could be attributable to societal change,<sup>10</sup> changing attitudes and potentially demographic change and vehicle safety, amongst others, rather than to any single road safety activity. More young people live in urban areas<sup>11</sup>, where there is less need to use private motorised vehicles, because there are other modes of transport available.<sup>12</sup> Young people are more likely to use their car less or give it up compared to previous generations.<sup>13</sup> Changes to legislation in 2017 mean young people (those who have had their driving licence in the last two years) might lose their driving licence if caught using a mobile phone and will get 6 penalty points and a £200 fine.<sup>14</sup>

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8 Roads policing number fall ([racfoundation.org](http://racfoundation.org)),

9 Less policing 'causing rise in road deaths in England and Wales' | Road safety | The Guardian

10 See for example A. Davis, 'Digital Natives and car use', 2013, No 101: Digital natives and car use – Travelwest

11 Half of all higher education and employment is concentrated in South East Wales, Summary Statistics for Wales, by region: 2020, Welsh Government, [Summary statistics for Wales, by region: 2020 \(GOV.WALES\)](http://summarystatisticsforwales.gov.wales)

12 Initiatives such as Welsh Government 'My Travel Pass' for young people and Government subsidised transport for 16 to 19 year olds in education [Subsidised transport for 16 to 19 year olds in education – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://gov.uk) encourage the use of public transport with discounted bus fares. This not only helps with travel to work but can help encourages the use of public transport for young people to avoid the temptation of drink driving when socialising.

13 'Peak Car use in Britain', Department for Transport, November 2013, [Peak car use in Britain \(parliament.uk\)](http://parliament.uk); C. Focas and P. Christidis, 'Peak car in Europe?'. Transportation Research Procedia 25 C (2017) 531-550; B. Davis and T. Dutzik (2012) 'Transportation and the New generation: Why Young People Are Driving Less and What It Means for Transportation Policy', The Frontier Group; A. Delbosc and G. Currie (2013) 'Causes of Youth Licensing Decline: A synthesis of Evidence', Transport Reviews, vol. 33, No.3; 'RAC Report on Motoring 2019', Section 5.1. and 8.10, [RAC Report on Motoring 2019 | RAC Drive](http://racdrive.co.uk)

14 Highway Code, [Using a phone or a sat nav when driving – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://gov.uk)

# Recommendations for a new strategy

Wales finds itself in a unique position in the world to have adopted legislation for the Wellbeing of Future Generations.<sup>15</sup> This legislation and the current climate crisis<sup>16</sup> call for a bold paradigm change in how we think about road safety and the roads and transport more in general. If we are serious about meeting our decarbonisation targets<sup>17</sup> and accept that ever-growing mobility will not bring more happiness and wellbeing, but rather a decline in resilience, health, air quality, social cohesiveness, the local economy just to name a few<sup>18</sup>, we cannot continue doing ‘business-as-usual’.

**Roads and streets should become shared spaces, where everyone is safe and welcome. The freedom to mobility must be balanced against the freedom from fear and harm and this needs to go hand in hand with a dethroning of the motorised vehicle as king of the roads. Motorised vehicles, that can do most harm, should become guests on our roads where they come to contact with pedestrians and cyclists. Road space will need to be reallocated to facilitate sustainable transport and active travel to reduce our reliance on private cars. Our roads need to be rehumanised.<sup>19</sup> The advantages of**

**private cars are instant, obvious and personal whereas the disadvantages are both now and, in the future, and they are societal, rather than simply personal. Therefore, the freedom to use the private car cannot be solely a private matter.**

Road safety has traditionally been understood as and translated into ‘reduction in KSIs’. This is laudable, but road safety (as measured by reported casualty numbers) has been ‘achieved’ through fear<sup>20</sup> and a rise in motorised traffic with a marked fall of vulnerable modes of transport (walking, cycling and users of two-wheeled motor vehicles).<sup>21</sup> In Western European countries, car use is now 2.5 times that of 1970.<sup>22</sup>

15 [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

16 [Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration | GOV.WALES](#)

17 [‘Prosperity for All: A Low-Carbon Wales’, Welsh Government, 2019, low-carbon-delivery-plan\\_1.pdf \(GOV.WALES\)](#)

18 S. Jones, ‘If electric cars are the answer, what was the question?’, *British Medical Bulletin*, 2019, 129:13–23; J. Whitelegg, ‘Mobility’, Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016; L. Sloman, ‘Car-Sick: Solutions for our Car-addicted Culture’, Green Books, 2006 Chapter 2; S. Jones and C. Musselwhite, ‘The Transport and Health Integrated Research Network’, [The Transport and Health Integrated Research Network \(healthandcareresearchwales.org\)](#)

19 L. Sloman, ‘Car-Sick: Solutions for our Car-addicted Culture’, Green Books, 2006, p.15

20 M. Hillman, J. Adams, J. Whitelegg, J. (1990) ‘One False Move. A study of children’s independent mobility’ London: Policy Studies Institute

21 R.J. Smeed, (1973) ‘The frequency of road accidents’, *Bulletin of the International Statistical Institute*, Vienna XLV, 44–78; UK Government [National Travel Surveys, National Travel Survey – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

22 European Commission Directorate-General for Energy and Transport in cooperation with Eurostat. Energy & transport in figures 2004. Brussels: European Commission, 2004.

A paradigm change was supported by both UK policy: The UK **House of Commons Transport Committee (2008) Report**<sup>23</sup> stands out in this circumstance. It identified the need for a new vision for road safety beyond 2010. The Report, *Ending the Scandal of Complacency*, called for:

“ *A strategy that explains how casualty reduction, danger reduction and the various other important policy objectives such as a sustainable transport system, economic efficiency, climate change, social inclusion and physical health are integrated.*

Welsh Government policy also clearly underwrites to this change. The current Transport Strategy – Llwybr Newydd<sup>24</sup>, supports the well-being ambitions of:

“ *Good for people and communities, the environment, the economy and places and for culture and the Welsh language.*

The paradigm shift is outlined in the Welsh Government 20mph Task Force Group Report 2020:<sup>25</sup>

“ *Road safety is more than about the avoidance of being injured. It must also address the perception of risk of harm and freedom from harm and its manifestation at the individual, community and societal levels.*

The traditional casualty reduction led focus misses a central challenge which is road danger reduction at source.<sup>25</sup> Hence, now is a time to re-think and re-calibrate in a world where recognition of climate catastrophe and the need to decarbonise the transport sector fits with the need to reduce car use and reduce overall kinetic energy in the road transport system.

## Future ideas and considerations

1. The new Strategy is a great opportunity to demonstrate how road safety can contribute to cross-cutting national priorities and fits in the wider political agenda and direction of Welsh Government.
2. Roads and streets should become shared spaces, where everyone is safe and welcome. The freedom to mobility must be balanced against the freedom from fear and harm.
3. The natural nexus between road safety and active travel should be fully recognised.
4. Road safety should support other Welsh Government priorities like decarbonisation, clean air, equality, physical and mental well-being, cohesion of communities and a resilient Welsh economy.
5. Embrace Vision Zero, a moral and ethical demand of zero deaths from transport and the Safe System which accepts and builds in human error and distributes responsibility of road safety to all components of the system.
6. Danger in road safety needs to be addressed at its source like in other areas. We need to move from a reactive to a proactive approach to road safety, eventually (See Figure B) leading to a generative approach to safety being embedded at all levels and in all components of the system.

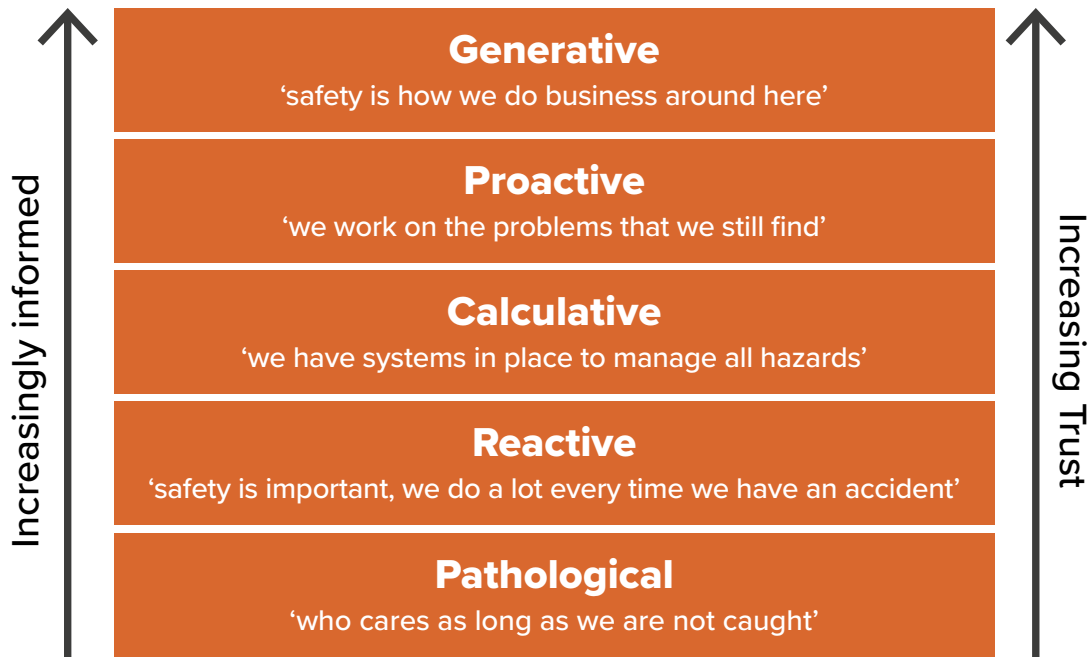
23 House of Commons – *Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010: Government Response to the Committee's Eleventh Report of Session 2007-08 – Transport Committee* ([parliament.uk](http://parliament.uk))

World Resources Institute, 2018 Sustainable & Safe. A vision and guidance for zero road deaths. Washington

24 Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 | GOV.WALES

25 20mph Task Force Group report | GOV.WALES, p.8



**Figure B Safety Management and Safety Culture**

Hudson, P. 2001 'Safety management and safety culture: the long, hard and winding road' In: Pearse W, Gallagher C and Bluff L, (eds) Occupational health and safety management systems, 3–32. Melbourne

7. Traffic safety culture change requires both transformative actions at societal cultural levels and at the organisational level. Behaviour change needs to be built around a paradigm change and value-based arguments.

**“** *Ah, but it just isn't reasonable to expect everyone to drive so slowly, people say. I do not really think there is any answer to this, except to ask, is it reasonable to tell a mother or a father that their child has been killed for the sake of a few saved minutes?*<sup>26</sup>

8. Adopt voluntary standards such as the Driving for Better Business programme developed by DfT in the public sector and spill-over to private sector through supply chains.

9. Make the most of and lobby for the adoption of existing technologies and processes, like alcolocks, ISA and graduated and medical driver licensing.

10. Engage with the private sector and private industries to make the most of adopting innovative technologies. Embrace new technologies, like automated vehicles, that can bring safety benefits but also make sure any negative externalities can be limited.

11. Road safety should have an important part to play in tackling inequalities in Wales, making sure those in the most deprived areas are not disadvantaged.

12. Particular attention should be paid to rural roads and an ageing population in rural areas and see how Vision Zero and 'safe roads' can best be adapted to a rural Welsh environment.

26 L. Sloman, 'Car-Sick: Solutions for our Car-addicted Culture', Green Books, 2006, p.33

13. The pandemic has given visibility to the acknowledgment that existing speeds are causing serious injuries (and deaths), yet these are not being sufficiently addressed for themselves until they risk limiting treatment of COVID-19 cases.<sup>27</sup>

Build on the lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic (i.e., reducing speed limits, making more space for pedestrians and cyclists).<sup>28</sup>

14. The important contribution of improved data collection, sharing and analysis should be recognised. A better and deeper understanding of the underlying causes behind collisions and near misses are needed. This can be achieved inter alia through supporting and helping to shape the newly proposed Road Collision Investigation Branch (RCIB).<sup>29</sup>

15. A new Governance structure for road safety needs to be set up.

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27 R. Job, (2020), 'Policies and Interventions to Provide Safety for Pedestrians and Overcome the Systematic Biases Underlying the Failures', *Front. Sustain. Cities* 2:30 doi: 10.3389/frsc.2020.00030

28 Can we improve the NHS's ability to tackle covid-19 through emergency public health interventions? – The BMJ

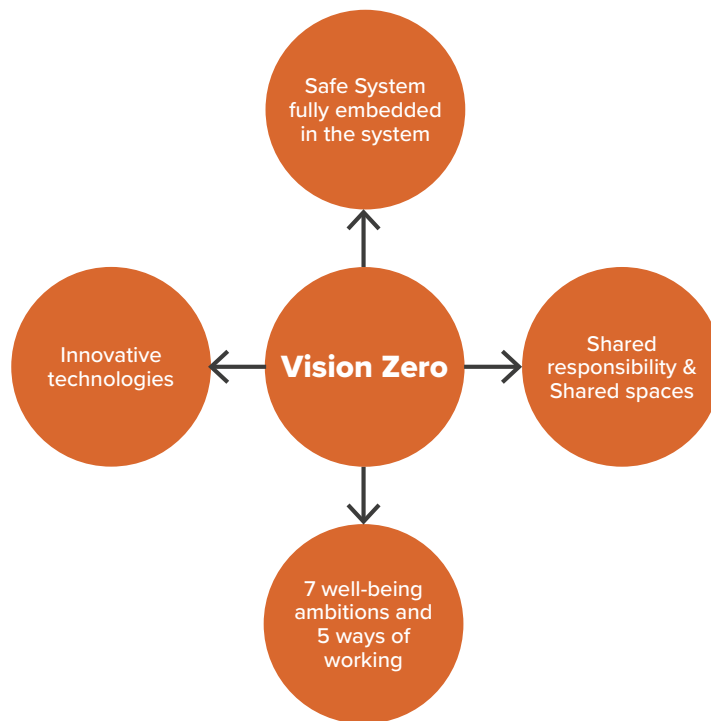
29 Creating a Road Collision Investigation Branch (RCIB) – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# Conclusion

The new Road Safety Strategy should build on the successful collaboration between Welsh Government, local authorities, the Police, Public Health Wales and other road safety stakeholders and shape road safety around currently planned changes including the introduction of a new 20mph default speed limit on restricted roads, introducing restrictions on pavement parking and introducing 50mph speed limits in 5 locations to reduce pollution.<sup>30</sup> This also includes aligning road safety with wider policy goals not least the Sustainable Development Goals and public health.<sup>31</sup>

New ways of thinking about and understanding of road safety must be built into the new Strategy; fully embracing Vision Zero and the Safe System, See Figure C addressing danger in road safety at its source, making safety a shared responsibility and building the links to and supporting other Welsh Government priorities. Road safety must go hand in hand with an important modal shift towards sustainable public transport and active travel. Transport policy and road safety can support the paradigm and behaviour change needed to honour Wales's decarbonisation targets and truly live up to securing the well-being of future generations.

**Figure C: Vision Zero and Safe Systems**



<sup>30</sup> 50mph speed limits to reduce pollution | GOV.WALES

<sup>31</sup> [rosipa-road-safety-and-public-health.pdf](#)