

# Member questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs

Council meeting: 27 July 2023

**Question:** 1.  
**From:** Councillor N Wright  
**Response by:** Councillor Howard (Cabinet Spokesperson without Portfolio)

## Question:

I hereby ask if this council could facilitate some basic mental health training to all ward councillors should the elected member wish to do so.

With this training elected members could gain a basic understanding to the sign & symptoms some of our residents may be demonstrating as a result of a mental health illnesses whilst out and about serving within our communities.

This can only help achieve a better understanding of how to identify individuals in need of help and along with knowing where to quickly signpost these individuals to such as dedicated mental health organisations and helplines.

## Information for response:

Thank you, Councillor Wright, for your question.

There are differences in the training that the council provides to its employees and the support offered to councillors.

The relationship between councillors and residents is clearly not the same as employers and employees. Therefore, in terms of mental health, any training should be limited to awareness raising and signposting to appropriate support services.

Having liaised with the Member Development colleagues in Human Resources and Organisation Development, we'll look at providing a resource for members to use for the purpose of signposting to mental health support services.

For a general overview of mental health awareness, you can take the [Mental Health Awareness e-learning module](#) on POD which takes approximately 45 minutes.

If enough members are interested, we can arrange an information session either face-to-face or via Microsoft Teams which will take about an hour and a half.

If Members are interested in the Mental Health Awareness information session, they can register interest by emailing member development.

The Member Development Working Party also exists to take forward any Member development requirements.

There are also external resources available to help on specific topics related to mental health, for example, [the Zero Suicide Alliance Training](#) which helps people to understand how to respond if someone may be at risk of suicide. It's a free course and takes about 20 minutes to complete.

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**Question:** 2.  
**From:** Councillor Hunt  
**Response by:** Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson Environment and Highways)

## **Question:**

In 2020 the council purchased new Speed Indicator Devices and radar boxes. At Full Council on 3rd February 2022 in response to my question regarding the deployment of these important road safety assets the then Cabinet Member reported that the 4th COVID wave had impacted the council's capacity to roll out the Speed Indicator Devices at that time.

The then Cabinet Member went on to say that "I am pleased to report to Members that this is a temporary situation, which officers are working tirelessly to resolve. In the coming weeks, we will deploy Speed Indicator Devices to Staincross Common (Darton East), Intake Lane (Darton West) and Racecommon Road (Kingstone) - each for a period of 4 weeks."

Can the cabinet member please explain why the Speed Indicator Device eventually deployed to Staincross Common has remained there, not working, for several months?

## **Information for response:**

Thank you, Councillor Hunt, for your question.

Regrettably, the planned rollout of Speed Indicator Devices, including the removal of the device at Staincross Common, has faced delays due to ongoing recruitment challenges in the Traffic Team.

The Traffic Team is working on developing a policy and deployment program across the whole borough.

When the policy has been approved, we'll install Speed Indicator Devices in suitable locations across Barnsley. We'll keep elected members and communities updated on the progress of this rollout.

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**Question:** 3.  
**From:** Councillor Burnett  
**Response by:** Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson Environment and Highways)

## Question:

Like many parents, I often enjoy walking my children to and from school. The physical and mental wellbeing benefits for children are extremely important, especially with the high levels of childhood obesity within the borough, without even mentioning the environmental benefits.

I'm pleased to see the phased introduction of 20mph speed limits outside the Borough's primary schools, following a successful trial earlier this year.

Making sure our roads are safe is vital in helping encourage parents and children to walk or cycle to school.

Could the cabinet member for highways please give us an update on the rollout of the scheme and a rough projected timespan'

## Information for response:

Thank you, Cllr Burnett, for your question, and your continued interest and engagement with me and the Highways Service on an issue that I know is dear to your heart.

After the successful installation and ongoing operation of the pilot scheme at five schools, we're delighted to announce that the Traffic Team will install an additional 25 signs at 11 primary schools during this summer break. These signs will be fully operational at the start of the autumn term.

We've also placed an order for eight more signs at four primary schools and we aim to have them installed during the summer break as well.

We're looking at if we can install these signs at an additional seven schools. We'll provide further updates as soon as the feasibility assessments are complete.

In Penistone East, Oxspring and Thurgoland primary schools are in the first phase and the 20mph signs will be in place for the start of the new school term in September.

We're looking at if we can install signs at Cawthorne, Hoylandswaine, Silkstone, Silkstone Common and we'll provide further updates as soon as the feasibility assessments are complete.

## **Member questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs**

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**Question:** 4.  
**From:** Councillor Fielding  
**Response by:** Councillor T Cave (Cabinet Spokesperson Children's Services)

**Question:**

Will Trinity School on Broadway be ready to take students by September 2024, by which time the school should be accommodating 720 students?

**Information for response:**

The Department for Education and the Trinity Academy Trust are responsible for making sure that the school is open for pupils in September 2024.

The Department for Education has provided assurance to the council that this remains on track.

We continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with them both.

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**Question:** 5.  
**From:** Councillor P Wright  
**Response by:** Councillor Cain (Cabinet Spokesperson Public Health and Communities)

**Question:**

Does the cabinet member support Age UK Barnsley's "Take a Seat Campaign", which aims to support older people in Barnsley to get out and about more by providing suitable resting places?

**Information for response:**

Thank you, Cllr Wright, and yes, I very much do support this campaign!

We're a member of the Age-Friendly Communities Network which is supported by the Centre for Ageing Better and we're committed to making Barnsley, age-friendly.

This work falls under our Age Friendly Barnsley programme and reports to the Early Help and Stronger Communities Partnership.

The 'Take a Seat Campaign' supports people to move a little more by placing seating in strategic positions to allow people to take a rest.

We have 41 benches across the borough in places of natural beauty and promote these with the hope that people will take the opportunity to walk, rest and enjoy the landscape. This is a great way of improving their physical and emotional well-being. You can read more about these benches on our website.

We're also improving and increasing seating areas in many of our local villages, and we're working with Age UK Barnsley and other partners to look at where we can place seats in retail areas.

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**Question:** 6.  
**From:** Councillor Greenhough  
**Response by:** Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson Environment and Highways)

**Question:**

Bullhouse Bridge on the Trans Pennine Trail at Millhouse Green has been closed since May 2022, forcing trail users including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and families to negotiate a diversion via the busy A628.

Can the cabinet member please tell us when the bridge will be reopened?

**Information for response:**

Thank you for your question, Cllr Greenhough.

We're unable to provide a definitive date on when the reopening can take place as this will be influenced by a number of factors, some of which are outside the council's control.

I'll provide you with a brief outline of the issues we're facing:

The overlay surfacing panels give the impression that the deck is in okay condition, but the load-bearing plywood deck panels underneath are rotting at the deck joints and have failed in multiple areas across the deck. The plywood deck is not safe for people to cross.

We've considered several options for the replacement of the plywood deck including a like-for-like plywood deck replacement that has a 15-year lifespan, and a composite bridge deck that has a 50-year lifespan.

Not many companies provide both the materials and carry out installation so they can pick and choose which jobs they estimate for. We've been trying to find companies that have availability so we can then go out to procurement.

We want to have the same company supply and fit, to make sure we have a seamless process for getting the work completed.

This is not a challenge unique to Bullhouse Bridge. It's becoming increasingly common in areas that need highly specialised engineering expertise, particularly in the current economic climate.

We secured £24,000 of Section 106 funding to help partially fund the work, but costs have come back significantly higher than originally estimated, so we're looking at how we can secure other sources of funding.

We all want the bridge to be reopened, and I would like to thank ward members and regular users of the bridge for their continued patience throughout this process.