

MEETING:	Full Council
DATE:	Thursday, 25 November 2021
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

37. Questions by Elected Members (Pages 3 - 8)

To consider questions received from Elected Members and which are asked pursuant to Standing Order No. 11.

(a) Councillor Fielding

'Given that this Council has declared a climate emergency and has both zero 40 and zero 45 ambitions, what is the Council's current policy and attitude to permitting the extraction or recovery of coal under any circumstances in our borough?'

(b) Councillor Hunt

'At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1st December, 2020 it was revealed that the Council does not have a Road Safety Strategy. When will this be in place?'

(c) Councillor Kitching

'When compared to the established structure, is there currently a shortage of Social Workers in Barnsley?'

In answering please can the Cabinet member provide staff numbers at the start of 2021, details of how many Social Workers have both left and joined the authority since then and the current number of staff analysed between permanent and agency employees.'

(d) Councillor Hunt

'In August 2020 Cabinet considered and approved the response to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations in relation to poverty. One of these recommendations was for additional investment to enable a locally delivered boroughwide outreach provision. The Cabinet report states "As part of our recovery arrangements we are reviewing the advice services available within each locality area as part of the alignment of Area Councils recovery work. As part of this we will review whether there is scope to recommission as a borough-wide provision." Please can an update be provided as to how this review is progressing and whether a borough wide provision is to be recommissioned?'



Sarah Norman Chief Executive

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS Council Meeting – 25th November 2021

Question: 1.
From: Councillor Fielding
To: Executive Director Place
Response by: Councillor Lamb

Question:

‘Given that this Council has declared a climate emergency and has both zero 40 and zero 45 ambitions, what is the Councils current policy and attitude to permitting the extraction or recovery of coal under any circumstances in our borough?’

Information for response:

In the current political climate, it is highly unlikely that any mining license would be granted for the extraction of thermal coal by the Coal Authority, the statutory body set up to manage the UK’s remaining mining industry.

It is also highly unlikely that Barnsley Council would grant planning permission for any new surface or underground mine.

However, there may be a situation where coal must be removed for safety reasons under an incidental coal agreement granted by the Coal Authority. This is where coal outcrops found near the surface by earthworks must be removed for safety purposes.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 25th November, 2021

Question: 2.
From: Councillor Hunt
To: Executive Director Place
Response by: Councillor Lamb

Question:

‘At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 December 2020 it was revealed that the Council does not have a Road Safety strategy. When will this be in place?’.

Information for response:

Following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 December 2020, a local strategic Safer Roads Working group was formed by officers from across the council and partner organisations, including South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership.

One function of the group is to set the strategic vision, ambition and priorities to improve road safety and reduce the number of road traffic collisions occurring on the network.

The group has met monthly since August 2021 and has begun developing Barnsley’s new Road Safety Strategic Plan. They’re currently undertaking a scoping exercise to determine Key Performance Indicators and what resources are available across the partnership.

Once they have established this baseline position, the Safer Roads Working Group will further develop the local strategic plan. The aim is to have agreed and published a local Road Safety Strategic plan for April 2022.

In addition, a local Road Safety Action Plan has been produced, which collates all the actions and recommendations from the Health Needs Assessment and the Overview and Scrutiny meeting in December 2020. The coordinated partnership working, creation of the working group and development of the strategic plan are all included in the action plan.

At a regional level, South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership is also developing a new strategy that will be published imminently. Our Safer Roads working group will ensure that Barnsley’s Road Safety Strategic Plan sets out how Barnsley will

contribute to the regional strategy and, importantly, our local priorities and ambitions about Road safety.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 25th November, 2021

Question: 3.
From: Councillor Kitching
To: Executive Director children's Services
Response by: Councillor T Cave

Question:

'When compared to the established structure, is there currently a shortage of Social Workers in Barnsley?

In answering please can the Cabinet member provide staff numbers at the start of 2021, details of how many Social Workers have both left and joined the authority since then and the current number of staff analysed between permanent and agency employees'.

Information for response:

There's currently a national, and local, shortage of Social Workers to meet the nationally reported increase in demand to children's services.

Compared to the established structure:

On 1 January 2021, Barnsley Council employed 118.73 FTE social workers equating to 127 actual staff members (some staff work part time).

The range included in these figures includes newly qualified, social work and experienced social workers. It does not include any social work managers.

On 18 November 2021, Barnsley Council employed 111.22 FTE staff equating to 117 social workers. This is an overall reduction of 7.51 FTE social work capacity.

There is a proactive, rolling recruitment programme in place to recruit new Social Workers to the borough.

Barnsley Council have invested in 12 additional social workers until 2023.

Children's Services have employed 9 additional Family Support Workers to work alongside and support Social Workers in light of the national and local increase in demand and workload pressures.

There have been no agency Social Workers during this period.

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MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 25th November, 2021

Question: 4.
From: Councillor Hunt
To: Executive Director Adults & Communities
Response by: Councillor Platts

Question:

'In August 2020 Cabinet considered and approved the response to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations in relation to poverty. One of these recommendations was for additional investment to enable a locally delivered boroughwide outreach provision. The Cabinet report states "As part of our recovery arrangements we are reviewing the advice services available within each locality area as part of the alignment of Area Councils recovery work. As part of this we will review whether there is scope to recommission as a borough-wide provision." Please can an update be provided as to how this review is progressing and whether a borough wide provision is to be recommissioned'.

Information for response:

Our pandemic response has impacted upon our capacity and ability to follow up on the recommendation and we're working towards presenting a report to cabinet in early 2022.

We have, however, been supporting Barnsley communities through extensive support offers including the Covid-19 support programmes, Holiday Activity Fund programme, and the new £2.3 million Household Support Grant which this Council is matching with a further £1 million of investment to support our communities through the Winter period and the 'cost of living' crisis.