

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Strong and Resilient Communities Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday, 1 December 2020
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Held Virtually

MINUTES

Present Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, Carr, Fielding, Higginbottom, Hunt, W. Johnson, Leech, McCarthy, Phillips, Pickering, Smith, Wilson and Wraith MBE.

1 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies/Apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

2 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

To minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee held on 26th October and 3rd November, 2020 were noted.

4 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC's) Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), Zero Carbon Engagement, Governance and Delivery Proposals

The following witnesses were invited to the meeting:

- Paul Castle, Service Director, Environment & Transport, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Richard Burnham, Head of Housing & Energy, Place Directorate, BMBC
- David Malsom, Group Leader, Housing & Energy, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Cllr Chris Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson - Place (Environment and Transportation)

Members were invited to consider the report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director Place regarding BMBC's Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), which sets out the Council's ambitions for Zero40 and Zero45 and how it plans to achieve these targets through engagement, the adoption of key principles and partnership working. It was explained that Barnsley's approach will consist of 5 year 'chunks' of activity to improve people's lives concentrating on fuel poverty, an inclusive economy and putting young people at the heart of our economy, with the three elements of civic leadership, positive engagement and positive action.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Councillor Wraith referred to an issue which had arisen around additives in diesel causing problems with Council vehicles. An explanation of the problem was provided by Councillor Leech. It seems there was too much water in the additive which is mixed with the fuel and caused a problem with the vehicles. This issue has been addressed with suppliers who have identified an issue with the facility and re-using of barrels whereby a residual amount of water was being left in the barrels which affected the mixture. Discussions are ongoing with the suppliers and the issue will be resolved within the next few days.

A member raised concerns regarding the cost of bio mass boilers and ground source heat pumps in Berneslai Homes communal properties. In these instances the residents are unable to switch suppliers to save money on the open market. Officers are aware of the higher costs in communal schemes but were under the impression that the cost is subsidised to similar levels as in other properties. Discussions with Berneslai Homes are ongoing and further information will be provided outside of the meeting. It is imperative that higher costs associated with de-carbonisation do not fall on vulnerable people.

Members sought reassurance that the Economic Recovery Plan post-Covid will be in line with carbon neutral targets. It was acknowledged that Covid has affected society in many ways, but with some positives in terms of a reduction in carbon already seen as a result of behaviour changes and also by presenting opportunities to reduce carbon emissions by retro-fitting housing, creating jobs and thus aiding the economy. It was explained that the Government has made available various grants and initiatives for decarbonising private sector property and public sector buildings, partly to aid recovery and also to reduce carbon emissions and aid achievement of the carbon reduction targets.

Partners and stakeholders in the climate action agenda include Berneslai Homes, Barnsley Premier Leisure, schools, Sheffield City Region, Leeds City Region; Sheffield University (who are a world leading facility in food production), Energise Barnsley and Northern Powergrid. A lot of work is being done, but there is a need to do more, particularly in terms of encouraging and growing the capacity of community groups and working with the private and voluntary sector. There is a need for an open dialogue with 'big emitters' - such organisations need to make changes themselves, with an input from Central Government in terms of initiatives and sanctions for carbon emissions, whilst ensuring that companies don't decide to move businesses abroad to avoid sanctions. A programme is being developed to help SMEs to become more efficient, grant funding dependent. In addition the Council has an ambitious aim to plant 10,000 trees in the Borough, working with a range of partners including the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Yorkshire Water and others. Work with younger people is crucial in the carbon neutral agenda as it is about their future.

The biggest threats to achievement of the targets set is the cost and responsibility thereof. For example, by 2035 every property should have an EPC certificate. At the moment 85,000 homes in Barnsley will need work to bring up to EPC C standard which will cost around £1billion, with no clear plan in place to do this. BMBC has no

jurisdiction in terms of private property compliance. Transport and industry are other areas which need attention and depend largely on the actions of central Government.

Strong local engagement and consultation is key to the development of the 2030 Framework and Plan within the Sustainable Barnsley theme.

Barnsley ran a scheme called Better Homes Barnsley which attracted funds which were invested in private sector and owner-occupied households to improve energy efficiency. This is no longer running, but funding from other sources is being explored and pilot programmes will be put in place. There is expertise within the team to support householders, publicising schemes via various means whilst recognising that there is no statutory obligation placed on households to comply.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution, and
- (ii) Members note the report.

5 Road Safety in Barnsley

The following witnesses were invited to the meeting:

- Paul Castle, Service Director, Environment & Transport, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Matt Bell, Head of Highways & Engineering, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Phil Ainsworth, Public Health Senior Practitioner, BMBC
- Cllr Chris Lamb, Cabinet Spokesperson - Place (Environment and Transportation), BMBC
- Cllr Dave Leech, Barnsley Councillor and Chair of South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership (SYSRP)
- Joanne Wehrle, Safer Roads Manager, SYSRP
- Superintendent Paul McCurry, Head of Operations, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
- Inspector Jason Booth, SYP
- Scott Dernie, Safety Camera Manager, SYSC

Members were invited to consider the report of the Executive Director Core Services, the Director of Public Health and Executive Director Place in respect of Road Safety in Barnsley. The purpose of this report was to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the findings of the recently completed Road Injury Health Needs Assessment (HNA) 2020, detailing the number of people injured or killed in the borough broken down into three broad age groups, and the next steps required to respond to those findings. It was highlighted that it is too early to say how COVID-19 has impacted on road injuries in Barnsley, although the report considers how residents may have been affected. In addition, the report outlines the road safety activities carried out in 2019, by both BMBC and its partners, and the local governance arrangements for road safety in Barnsley.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Members expressed concern that the report indicated a 229% increase in the number of people killed and injured between 2015 and 2018, with child injuries three times the national average. It was explained that in 2016 a new recording system for road traffic collisions was introduced, which reclassified how accidents were recorded, making it impossible to compare pre 2016 and post 2016 when system came in. The Department for Transport acknowledges that comparison is not possible and produced adjustment factors which show that killed and serious casualties would have been much higher pre 2016 if an injury based recording system had been in place earlier. A graph showing this was to be shared after the meeting. Whilst any loss of life on our networks is not acceptable, the number of deaths has remained consistent across the years, with between 8 and 13 deaths on the network. Road safety was reviewed around 18 months ago, with a change of perspective from an engineering/highway point of view. The road safety education, training and publicity function had transferred to public health, which demonstrates how important it is to address the issues. Financial constraints have made this a challenging period. However, it is important to acknowledge that there were over 1,697 fewer casualties reported as injured on the roads in South Yorkshire in 2019 than 10 years ago (5,437 casualties in 2009 and 3,231 casualties in 2019). The number of people killed and seriously injured has increased across all age groups and road user types, not just for the 0 to 15 age group.

A Councillor reported that In the UK, 2.1 million speeding fines are issued annually (with a minimum individual fine of £100); meaning that £210 million is raised, £6.5 billion from vehicle excise duty and £28 billion from vehicle fuel duty. However, there appears to be no money available to save lives, which is deeply frustrating for local councillors, who are passed from agency to agency without resolution.

It was reiterated that responsibility for the roads network is taken seriously. There are around 740 miles of highway in Barnsley to look after. Unfortunately, there is a £70m backlog for works. Resources are limited and approaches are data driven, using a 'worst first' approach to prioritise. However, a gap remains. Some initiatives are to be brought forward in the New Year, including an expansion of the Radar Box Programme to try to leverage local needs out of the wards and put investment into them, which will go to Cabinet in February. An issue regarding speeding at Ardsley was taken to the Safer Roads Partnership earlier in the year but remains unresolved. It was acknowledged that this year in particular has been challenging in terms of communications, although efforts have been made to involve all Area Councils, contact details for reporting highways issues will be re-issued.

A Member felt that more enforcement is needed. It was explained that the Police had seen a decrease in resources along with other public sector agencies and it is not always possible to respond to individual issues. However, use is made of Community Speedwatch delivered via the local Neighbourhood Teams, although this has slowed recently due to Covid, which has led to increased frustration. Social media is used to highlight the amount of work which is done. Barnsley now has 18 new community concern sites for mobile camera enforcement, identified within the last 12 months and South Yorkshire Safety Cameras is happy to receive new requests from Council members or the community through the website.

Data on life changing injuries is not routinely broken down to that level of detail and is not published in the report. There are 3 levels of severity within the serious category. Some initial analysis has been undertaken but more detailed work is required to look at the split. SYSRP is currently carrying out some benchmarking with other Safer Roads Partnerships across the country. Some partnerships are setting targets for the reduction of fatal and the highest level of serious injury.

A Councillor was aware of 4 local fatalities due to driver error and speed, particularly with younger drivers. It was acknowledged that younger drivers are over-represented in accident statistics. Education and training is offered through the Safer Roads Partnership. A Young Driver Package is currently being developed which gives access to classroom sessions and e-modules through to post-test practical training. All young people from Year 12 onwards are eligible to access the sessions via schools, colleges and driving instructors, free of charge. Normally around 6000 young people access the training across South Yorkshire annually. BMBC also has a Road Safety Technician who delivers training in schools but this has been difficult this year due to the virus. During 2018/19, 29 interventions were delivered in primary schools and 1100 in secondary schools and colleges. Road Safety is very much on the curriculum in schools and colleges and is also on the agenda for all recently passed drivers. HGV drivers have to take a refresher test every 12 months and would reduce accidents if this was rolled out amongst other drivers.

A Councillor felt that a central referral point is needed to refer issues to, with the expectation of a timely response, which is not always received. This will be provided after the meeting. Barnsley, in line with other authorities, uses a transparent data driven process to identify where investment needs to go. Local initiatives brought forward next year may help with this. Also, as explained earlier, SYP now identifies new locations of 'community concern' whereby preventative enforcement is carried out on sites without the serious accident data.

Barnsley has Local Neighbourhood Teams who can be a first point of contact for any local issues, PCSOs attend many local meetings and can listen to concerns.

It was felt that performance indicators relating to road safety should be included within the Corporate Performance Data Set. This will be taken away and raised with the Director of Place. The Safer Roads Partnership incorporates all 4 South Yorkshire Authorities, with a county wide strategy and full governance structure in place, reporting to the South Yorkshire Chief Executives and Leaders. It was felt that the budget is inadequate and needs to be at a realistic level. In the future the emerging Barnsley Road Safety strategy and the complementary South Yorkshire Safer Roads Strategy will report into the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Safer Barnsley Board before going to Cabinet/Full Council.

SYSRP will be running a drink driving campaign over the Christmas period from 1st December through to 1st January. However, drink driving and drug driving enforcement is carried out all year round. A media launch has already taken place and paid for advertising will run throughout the month. Additional measures have been put in place for Covid, against a backdrop of fewer pubs, works parties etc. and results will be put out over media channels.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution;
- (ii) Graphs showing the adjusted data regarding accidents due to a change in recording method be circulated to the committee;
- (iii) Officers re-issue contact information to Members with regards to reporting highways/road safety concerns;
- (iv) Consideration be given to the inclusion of Road Safety Key Performance indicators within the corporate performance data set, and
- (v) Consideration be given to key reports on Road Safety to be taken to Full Council.

Chair