

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 24 November 2022

Question: 1.
From: Councillor Lodge
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment and Highways)

Question:

Pavement Parking is of significant concern to residents across the Borough, making it extremely dangerous for those with mobility difficulty, sight or hearing impairments and for pedestrians.

Will the Council work with other responsible bodies, to create a targeted awareness campaign around pavement parking and put in place measures where possible to limit the risk to the groups outlined?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Lodge.

Our Highways Traffic team are aware of these concerns. It will be a key part of the safety campaign that is in development. Once this is launched, it will provide messages across the borough through different channels.

From a parking enforcement point of view, if the driver is parked in contravention of an existing Traffic Regulation Order, they may be subject to enforcement by our Civil Enforcement Officers.

When we're notified of 'hot spot' areas, we'll endeavour to provide patrols to change habits and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists.

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Question: 2.
From: Councillor Kitching
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Spokesperson Environment and Highways)

Question:

What plans does the Council have to install street based EV chargers in Barnsley to assist residents without off street parking to transition to electric vehicles and what do you consider to be the barriers to their installation.

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Kitching.

The council's role is to facilitate and we're working to both support and stimulate the market.

We've recently been awarded £275,000 of grant funding which will be used to install more EV charging capacity in council car parks. This will provide convenient charging options for both shoppers and people who do not have off-road options for charging.

We're at the costings stage and hope to install a number of charging points in the locations described below (subject to remaining in the budget envelope).

2 x 7kW chargers at Church Street Car Park, Darton

3 x 7kW chargers and 1 x 50kW charger at John Street Car Park, Barnsley Town Centre

3 x 7kW chargers at Mark Street Car Park, Barnsley Town Centre

3 x 7kW chargers and 1 x 50kW charger at Market Gate Car Park, Barnsley Town Centre (with the possibility of 1 extra rapid charger subject to costs)

2 x 7kW chargers at West Road Car Park

Installations are due to take place week commencing 21 November 2022 and should be live before the beginning of February 2023.

At present, Barnsley Council does not permit trailing cables on pavements and highways for use in EV charging, even where safety measures have been taken.

We're aware that other councils do permit on-street charging, but we have deemed

this to be a safety concern locally.

It's proposed that further discussions are required within the Highways Service to evaluate options that may permit the charging of electric vehicles parked on the street from home charging stations.

We recognise that this will affect residents with no access to off-street parking and to try and remedy this, we're currently installing EV chargers in a number of public car parks. The car parks with EV charging are located at <https://www.zap-map.com/app/>

We deem the following to be barriers to the installation of on-street EV chargers:

- EV Charging is not a statutory responsibility, therefore given the funding constraints and other pressures on the council, other areas of need have been prioritised. However, it is recognised that by supporting the delivery may help us to meet our objectives in relation to climate change, reducing emissions and pollution.
- Lack of detailed analysis of where on-street charging is needed at a national, regional and local level to meet both existing and future demand. This will also need co-ordination with Northern Power Grid (Distribution Network Operator) to understand where additional network capacity may be required, including developing below-the-ground cabling and power connections.
- Safety concerns owing to trailing cables and pavement obstructions
- Payback Period for the installation of charging points can be long; there are various funding models available, however, the revenues from on-street charge points generally do not cover running costs or the upfront costs to install infrastructure.

Breakeven is estimated to be anywhere between 7-9 years but this is uncertain as it depends on the rate of EV updates during this period.

- The single largest issue for private investment is the low use at present of existing on-street charge points (reported nationally), and the high costs that are associated, when demand, use and investment in charging infrastructure are dependent on each other.
- Most current contracts are around 5-10 years but typically involve public funding to cover a substantial proportion of the upfront capital expenditure; the council would need to find a suitable and appropriate delivery model.

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Question: 3.
From: Councillor Lodge
Response by: Councillor Frost (Cabinet Spokesperson Regeneration and Culture)

Question:

In recent weeks, £58,684.31 has been received in Section 106 monies from developments in the Worsbrough Ward, £10,000 of which has already been made available to a local group.

With the remaining balance from these first payments, will the Council look to refurbish play areas in the Worsbrough Ward?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Lodge.

Decisions regarding the use of S106 monies consider a range of areas, including value for money and alignment of a project with the council's strategic priorities.

It has long been established that Section 106 monies are not ring-fenced to the ward where the monies originated from.

In the Worsbrough ward, there's a small pipeline of potential projects which would be eligible for Section 106 funding. The refurbishment of play equipment would be considered alongside these, as well as any borough-wide projects which would benefit people across the borough including people who live in the Worsbrough ward.

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Question: 4.
From: Councillor P Fielding
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment and Highways)

Question:

The Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019. In September 2020 the Council published its first Strategic Energy Action Plan setting out its ambition to reduce the Borough's scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 65% of its 2017 levels by 2025. The Council also aims to reduce its own carbon emissions by 60% of 2019 levels by 2025. Can the Cabinet Member quantify the current reduction in carbon emissions relevant to meeting these targets?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor P Fielding.

The council's carbon emissions (Scope 1 and Scope 2) for 2018-19 were 10,041 tonnes – these carbon emissions to date have reduced by 24% compared with 2018-19 levels, which amounts to a reduction of 2,418 tonnes of carbon.

Borough emissions are based on local authority Greenhouse Gas Emissions data (GHG) which is supplied by the government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The latest data is for 2020 which shows a 13% reduction from 2017 levels and amounts to 166,500 tonnes of carbon.

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Question: 5.
From: Councillor Lodge
Response by: Councillor Makinson (Spokesperson for Public Health and Communities)

Question:

Parks and Play areas across the Borough have been subjected to mindless vandalism over several years, which has seen thousands of pounds of damage to parks and play areas in Worsbrough alone.

Will the Council work to introduce a Public Space Protection Order, as it has done to cover moorland and the town centre, to protect our parks and play areas from further mindless vandalism?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Lodge

I think we can all agree that damage and vandalism in our Parks and Play areas are incredibly frustrating. Sadly, a small minority of people think that this kind of behaviour is acceptable.

We're considering all options available to protect parks and play areas across the borough from acts of vandalism and damage.

Money is being invested from the Safer Streets Programme, to improve safety in Locke Park and Wombwell Park and specific schemes are being developed for Littleworth Lane and Mapplewell Park to improve surveillance capacity.

Other physical measures have also been taken to address inappropriate access and use in several other locations. Public Space Protection Orders are an option which can be considered however making such an order must be evidence-based, proportionate and subject to consultation. We will ensure that the protection of our parks and play areas is fully considered and responded to as part of the Safe Places delivery partnership business.

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Question: 6.
From: Councillor W Fielding
Response by: Councillor Makinson (Spokesperson Public Health and Communities)

Question:

Can the cabinet member inform Council on the number of asylum seekers held in hostels, hotels or refuge centres in the borough?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fielding.

There are no Home Office-designated hostels, hotels or refugee sites in the Barnsley borough.

As of 17 November 2022, there are 316 asylum seekers supported under Section 95 and Section 4: in dispersed accommodation, managed by Mears.

- *Section 95 – has leave to remain Section 4 – awaiting deportation.*

There are 292 under Section 95 and 24 under Section 4.

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Question: 7.
From: Councillor W Fielding
Response by: Councillor Makinson (Spokesperson Public Health and Communities)

Question:

With reference to my previous question referring to asylum seekers, can the Cabinet Member also outline what the council's role is in working with the Home Office, Mears Group and other agencies, specifically in relation to security and public health?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fielding.

The health screening for asylum seekers takes place before dispersal: this includes testing for TB. Vaccinations are also given at this point, with an assessment of medical need. This health screening is done in the initial holding centre of arrival.

The council has weekly meetings with the Home Office regarding asylum and Migration Yorkshire has a designated officer for asylum seekers.

The Home Office would also provide on-site security at hostels and hotels.

The council has weekly meetings with Mears to discuss any management issues. They provide a monthly update on accommodation and request background information on accommodation before purchase to make sure it is suitable.

Mears have support workers for each asylum seeker, with additional support from The council's Refugee Integration Service and with the Safer Communities Team.

Refugee Council, Health Integration Team, City of Sanctuary and Red Cross all offer free support and advice on a range of topics including access to healthcare.

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Question: 8.
From: Councillor Hunt
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson for Environment and Highways)

Question:

An additional £2m of highways investment was included within the 2022/23 budget. This was for highways safety measures including expanding advisory 20mph limits outside schools and schemes suggested by elected members. Please could the cabinet member provide an update on progress on this important road safety initiative?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Hunt.

Following Cabinet approval of the additional investment into 22/23 Highway Capital Maintenance programme, I am pleased to report back to members the following update with regard to the School Safety Zones Initiative (the successor to the 20MPH pilot project) and the two phases of the Neighbourhood Road Safety Scheme.

School Safety Zones

Following the recruitment of a dedicated project lead in July 2022, and working with our School Crossing Patrol Co-ordinator, all 74 Primary Schools within the Borough have been assessed, baselining the existing provision of road safety initiatives and identifying areas for improvement.

Using the existing School Crossing Patrol risk assessment process and tailored site visits, 12 more schools have been earmarked for the second phase of the 20mph signage scheme, which also includes changes to the existing Traffic Regulation Orders (yellow zig-zags).

Recommendations for further road safety improvements have also been made but these are unique to each location considering specific local factors.

Detailed consultation with the 12 schools is set to start before the Christmas break and the service is currently tendering for the additional 20 mph signage.

Following the learning that has taken place as a result of the pilot 20MPH scheme, the long-term agreements for maintenance of the current and existing signage are

also under review. I am pleased to report that issues around the programming of current advisory signs installed in phase one have now been rectified.

Members should consider this initiative as something greater than a prescriptive rollout of advisory speed signs. Improving road safety outside of our Primary Schools is a priority but the interventions must address the local issues if they are to have the desired effect. The introduction of 20 MPH advisory speed signs is only one of the tools being deployed by our officers to improve road safety outside our schools.

Neighbourhood Road Safety Schemes

Following the initial Phase one shortlist of schemes, I can confirm that both the crossing improvements to Park Street and Hough Lane in Wombwell have been completed. The schemes for Shaw Lane, Cudworth; Pontefract Road, Hoyle Mill; and Sheffield Rd, Penistone will be delivered in the new year.

A number of additional member requests have also been brought forward as a result of the additional investment in the Neighbourhood Road Safety Scheme. These includes:

Broadcarr Road, Hoyland, where initial investigations have been completed and safety designs are in production. The target completion date is the end of the calendar year 2022.

New Street, Mapplewell where investigations are now complete and the associated Traffic Regulation Order process is underway.

Gilbert Hill, Langsett where investigations are underway including meeting with National Highways and Yorkshire Water. A scheme to provide additional parking protections is in design.

Paddock Road, Mapplewell where three options are being considered and will be consulted with Ward members in the coming week, the intention being to finalise one option for detailed design before the end of the calendar year.

A616 Hazlehead to Victoria, where investigations are underway and an initial design will be completed by end of the calendar year.

The remaining 10 schemes within the phase two programme are currently under initial review and an outline design will be produced for discussion with Ward councillors by end of the calendar year. Final design and construction will follow with delivery taking place before the end of March 2022.

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Question: 9.
From: Councillor W Fielding
Response by: Councillor Lamb (Deputy Leader)

Question:

Can the cabinet member outline what the council is doing to provide a safe and secure place for transgender and non binary employees, contractors and partners to be themselves in an open, friendly and encouraging environment free from bullying, harassment and abuse?

Information for response:

Thank you Councillor Fielding, for your question.

The council values diversity and inclusivity and is committed to creating a positive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This includes recognising and supporting all protected characteristics, including gender identity for employees, contractors and partners.

The Council has produced Gender Identity Guidance which provides employees with a set of organisational principles to help manage and support workplace transitions.

Our Equality and Inclusion Action plan is linked to our People Strategy and is currently in the final stages of agreement. The plan is centred around working towards an inclusive workplace where people feel able bring their whole selves to work. Some specific areas from the plan include; strengthening the equality and diversity training offer, the creation of staff networks for protected characteristics as well as a review of equality implications in the recruitment process. Our PROUD staff network (LGBTQ+) has been successfully established, providing a safe space for those who identify as LGBTQ+ and receives really positive feedback. The network is planning a series of activities linked to promoting understanding of a variety of related issues. As a Council we tackle any reported bullying, harassment and abuse promptly in line with our organisational policies.

In the recent employee survey we asked a number of questions related to inclusion and areas for improvement. The results (available in January) will inform our action going forward. We also have an established Equality Impact Assessment process, which is required when any new service or change in service is being proposed and is designed to identify and negate negative impacts on protected characteristic groups.

