

Overview & Scrutiny LGA Peer Review

Highway's & Transportation
February 7th 2023



The Peer Review Process



- It is part of the LGA support of sector-led improvement
- Not an inspection – invited in as “critical friends”
- Non-attributable information collection
- Feedback is based on the triangulation of a range of views from various sources (i.e. that we have read, heard and seen). These have come from across the Organisation and from stakeholder.
- People have been open and honest.
- The Peer Team were very grateful for all the support they have had from colleagues in Barnsley.

The Peer Challenge Team



- **Lead Peer:** Simon Green (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director Commercial at North Lincolnshire Council)
- **Member Peer:** Councillor Gillian Campbell (Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth, Schools and Transience at Blackpool Council)
- **Senior Officer Peer:** Matt Davey (Assistant Director, Highways, Transport and Planning at West Sussex County Council)
- **Senior Officer Peer:** Carol Valentine (Highways Project Manager at Kent County Council)
- **Review manager:** Ernest Opuni (Local Government Support Team, LGA)

LGA Highways Strategic Review - Core Components



1. **Context and priority setting**: This looks at assessing how the council's delivery takes into account national and local transport policy, corporate vision, stakeholder expectations, legal and financial constraints
2. **Planning and performance**: This covers the council's strategy, performance, data and information, and lifecycle planning and works programmes
3. **Enablers**: This component focusses on leadership, risk management, asset management, and performance monitoring
4. **Delivery**: This considers programme and service delivery and procurement

The team were asked to focus the Strategic Review for Barnsley in addressing a range of questions in four main areas:

Highway's & Engineering – Focus Areas (1)



- 1. Financial Aspects:** This included consideration of
 - a) service spends,
 - b) value for money.

- 2. Customer Aspects:** This included consideration of
 - a) engagement and interface with members and customers,
 - b) the contribution from the service Highways Engineering to the council's overall 2030 strategic priorities and
 - c) maturity of the service's strategic partnerships/collaborations

Highway's & Engineering –Focus Areas (2)



- 3. Process Aspects:** This included consideration of
- a) the alignment between BMBC's capital and revenue programmes for highway maintenance with the council's regeneration (e.g. Principal Town Investment Strategy and other operational services such as Neighbourhoods);
 - b) overall condition of the network; and
 - c) areas of potential improvement and innovation.
- 4. People Aspects:** This included consideration of
- a) the culture of the service,
 - b) effectiveness of the service's leadership and management practices,
 - c) how the team is managing resilience and succession planning given the shortage of resources; and
 - d) governance and delivery of South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) funded highway maintenance activities and the effectiveness of sub-regional relationships in delivering improved outcomes

Feedback - Key Areas for Consideration



- 1. Review the structural alignment of highway related services;**
- 2. Better utilisation of external benchmarking datasets;**
- 3. Long term programming of capital investment;**
- 4. Communication with front line; and**
- 5. Strengthening the relationship between the service and Elected Members**

Feedback Key Service Strengths



1. Barnsley has a clear Borough identity which is being taken advantage of;
2. There are good relationships, and a positively regarded delivery record, with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority – “you do well and are well positioned to punch above your weight not only in the sub region but nationally”;
3. Senior Management are bought into and keen to deliver the overall vision for Barnsley;
4. Annual works programme for Highways delivery are clear and longer-term work programmes exist for related areas;
5. Leaders at every level – empowering staff to makes change. This is particularly strong at middle manager level;
6. Recognition schemes are in place and used regularly – Thank you letters, Shout-Out’s, etc;
7. Career grade apprenticeships are working well at Smithies Depot;
8. Staff exhibit high levels of commitment and loyalty to Barnsley.

Next Steps



1. Action Planning Review Day – December 14th 2022;
2. Development of Action Plan (Jan/Feb)
3. Delivery of specific improvement projects / initiatives;
 - a) Integration of Strategic Transportation into Business Unit (Underway)
 - b) Review of external benchmarking data sets (Underway)
 - c) Review of future Capital investment pipeline (Underway)
 - d) Task & Finish Group – Improving Front Line communications (Underway)
 - e) Cross Party Group to explore improvements to the existing Members Enquiries process (Underway)
4. Organisational Development Programme (Underway) looking at;
 - a) Building an enabling culture;
 - b) Building long term resilience through succession planning and skills development; and
 - c) Reviewing overall methods of communication