

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 25 May 2023

Question: 1.
From: Mr R
To: Executive Director Growth and Sustainability
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson
Environment and Highways)

Question:

Has the council a statutory duty to care for and maintain the public highway, including the public footpaths, and grass verges.

When work has to be done, which involves digging up part of a road, public footpath, grass verge to install new fibre network equipment, what procedures are in place between the council and a contractor for such work to be done.

Do the council monitor the progress of the work, and on completion of the work inspect the surface of the area worked on to ensure it is restored to its original condition, or better; and then with the ward councillor, sign it off to be acceptable.

Information for response:

Thank you, Mr R for your question.

The council has a duty to maintain the adopted highway. This can include roads, footways, footpaths and verges.

All statutory undertakers have rights and obligations under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and Traffic Management Act 2004. These legislative requirements apply nationally, there are no bespoke arrangements between Barnsley Council and statutory undertakers. The same procedures and regulations apply to all statutory undertakers regardless of their service provision, this includes fibre broadband companies.

If a statutory undertaker wishes to work in the highway and install equipment, they must submit a permit application to the council. The permit request will include information such as dates and times of work and traffic management methods. Works cannot start without a granted permit, unless they are urgent or emergency works.

After works are completed, highway surfaces must be returned to public use, which will typically mean resurfacing in matching materials and removing any waste materials. Openings in grass verges can be reinstated with topsoil and

grass seed. The legislation requires statutory undertakers to reinstate according to the Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in Highways.

The statutory undertaker will be required to make good any defective reinstatements that are found within the warranty period, which is two or three years after completion, depending on depth.

The council is obliged to inspect a sample of works while the works are in progress to check that signing, lighting and guarding are to the required standard.

The council is also required to inspect a sample of completed works which are within their warranty period. The statutory undertaker will then be required to arrange remedial works within a statutory timescale.

There is no requirement for ward-elected members to undertake inspections or "sign off" reinstatements. Inspections are carried out by qualified and competent inspectors who will pass or fail a works site as appropriate. If defects are found through other inspections or as a result of customer complaints they will be dealt with using the same defect process.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 25 May 2023

Question: 2.
From: Mr R
To: Executive Director Growth and Sustainability
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson
Environment and Highways)

Question:

The council has a new transport strategy the objective being to encourage and promote more active travel, for the public to walk more, and cycle more, and use their motor vehicle less.

What research has been done to show that that from the many millions of pounds to be spent it will be worthwhile, and value for money.

From taking on this plan to change public behaviour, has the council any statistics on how large its workforce, including elected members travel to work and around the borough.

Information for response:

Thank you, Mr R for your question.

The funding for Active Travel schemes has come from the government with set criteria.

The Transforming Cities Fund and the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement have been awarded with clear instructions to reduce the need for private cars and to promote more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

Any proposed scheme undergoes an assessment using the Department for Transport's scoring mechanism to determine the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR). That score will then determine whether it is value for money (VfM) or not. For example, a BCR of between 1 and 1.5 gives a low VfM score. A BCR over 2 is a high VfM and over 4 is very high VfM.

Clearly low scoring schemes are unlikely to be supported and receive funding.

Now that the Transport Strategy has been adopted, we are creating an Active Travel / Travel Plan strategy. This includes the council's own internal Travel Plan.

As part of this, we'll be inviting our employees and elected members to take part in a survey to determine how people travel to work.