

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 10th January 2024

Present: Councillor Jo Lawson (Chair)
Councillor Timothy Bamford
Councillor Hannah McKerchar
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Will Simpson
Councillor John Taylor

Co-optees Garry Kitchin

In attendance: Councillor Moses Crook
David Shepherd, Strategic Director for Growth and Regeneration
Graham West, Service Director - Highways and Streetscene
Elizabeth Cusick, Operational Manager, - Highways and Streetscene
Chris Firth, Compliance and Performance Manager – Highways
Mark Scarr, Head of Highways
Katherine Hunt, Operational Manager, Highways and Street Scene
Philip Waddington, Group Engineer
Yvonne Atkinson , Highways Capital Programme Manager.

Apologies: n/a

- 1 Membership of the Panel**
No apologies were received
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
The Panel considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 25th October 2023 and 6th December 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the previous meetings be approved.

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3 Declaration of Interests

No Interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in the public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

7 Kirklees Highway Safety Update

6 The Panel considered the Kirklees Highways Safety Update report which set out the work delivered within the financial year (2023/24).

Councillor Moses Crook, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Highways introduced the item and explained that the report provided a review of the areas of work undertaken by the Highways Safety Team along with the proposed works to year end. The report also included reference to collision data, which was monitored to target resources and achieve the greatest possible safety improvements contributing towards the Vision 0 agenda. Key highlights included an extensive education programme to support the safety of young people and the Councils shared 2038 climate change targets. This included delivery of; training programmes to 4847 school children, 6456 'Bikeability' training sessions and the 'Theatre in Education Programme' which had been delivered to 1360 secondary school children. Alongside the comprehensive training package, was the promotion of the mode shift programme and once schools had signed up there had been demonstrable reduction in car use by 6.3%. Councillor Crook shared that the programme was forward looking in terms of establishing patterns of behaviour for the next generation, supporting the councils shared ambitions to the climate change agenda, supporting active travel and making a meaningful contribution to keeping communities safe and healthy.

Elizabeth Cusick, Operational Manager, - Highways and Streetscene presented the report, and it was highlighted that:

- The Council had a statutory duty under the 1988 Road Traffic Act Section 39 to promote road safety through education, training, engineering, and publicity.
- These responsibilities and duties were administered by the Highway Safety Team and included Casualty Reduction, Community Traffic Measures and Road Safety.
- The delivery of the statutory responsibilities included:
 - Monitoring all collisions reported to the Police.
 - Analysing and investigating the reported evidence on circumstances and related contributory factors.
 - Developing yearly programmes of work and interventions for priority locations with a history of personal injury collisions.
 - Undertaking Road Safety Audits (RSA) for new schemes on the highway.
 - Developing the Education and Training packages.

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- In Addition to the Statutory Duties revenue funding was also used for several other streams of work i.e. - refreshing road markings, safe routes to school, mode shift and small-scale safety interventions etc...
- Key Road Safety Stakeholders (including the road user) and strong partnership working across Kirklees and West Yorkshire was integral to delivering Vision 0.
- Data showed that at present, there had been an approximate 5% reduction in casualty numbers when compared with the data from 2022.
- This created an average saving of approximately £3.3mil with the average cost of a collision costing approximately at £92,000 per casualty.
- More importantly this was saving lives and reducing the risk of injury and trauma in communities.
- Work from April to November 2023 included the:
 - Delivery of 13 capital schemes (now completed) and 9 schemes which were on site to be completed by year end and supported by CRSTS-1 funding.
 - The early 2024-25 and 2025-26 forward programmes using injury collision data and first year rate of return prioritisation (both years to be CRSTS-1 funded at £925,000 each year).
 - The integration of the West Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership's new criteria into the team, and the promotion of a number of new locations for Average and Community Safety Cameras.
 - 4847 school ages pupils received training which was an increase of 2843 compared to the same point last year.
 - 62 schools had signed up to Modeshift and Warwick Road and Batley High School were named Kirklees Schools of the Year at Modeshift Regional Awards.
- Looking forwards there were plans to; expand the road safety training programmes, deliver 7 capital schemes, continue to identify and promote new locations for Safety Cameras, launch the Kirklees Highways Road Safety Strategy and to continue the integration and promotion of Vision 0.

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from the Panel, with the following issues being covered:

- In relation to the School Streets Trial, it was advised that this involved closing streets outside of schools during morning/evening pick up times except for some residential traffic. The trials found that residents altered driving time to avoid peak hours, but a key challenge was that the scheme was reliant on schools capacity to manage the equipment to close roads and monitor them.
- In relation to the reduction in casualty figures and the link to preventative measures, it was advised that the decrease was attributed to a combination of key factors including vehicle safety innovation, engineering, and human behaviour change. Casualty data was monitored prior to intervention and after implementation to provide an understanding of its effectiveness. It was also noted that Kirklees's performance was good when compared with statistical neighbours.
- Driver behaviour was noted as a key influential factor resulting in unavoidable incidents and it was recommended that the collision data be filtered to

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differentiate between avoidable and unavoidable cases, highlighting where targeted action could be taken.

- A need to understand more about the difference between the nature of collisions in urban and rural areas was highlighted and it was recommended that the collision data be filtered to demonstrate this.
- There were concerns that multiple minor incidents in one location were not recorded in the data and it was recommended that ways to record this be investigated.
- It was highlighted that it was important to showcase examples of success in relation to interventions made in high-risk areas to demonstrate which schemes were effective, it was recommended that officers undertake work to highlight successful outcomes.
- In relation of expanding and supporting mode shift it was advised key challenges included the dependence on schools capacity, but work was being undertaken to encourage Vision 0 and promote increase in uptake.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the Kirklees Highways Safety Update and recommended that:

1. The collision data be filtered to differentiate between avoidable and unavoidable casualties.
2. The collision data be filtered to help identify trends and differences between the nature of incidents in urban and rural areas of Kirklees.
3. The recording and consideration of locations where there were multiple minor incidents be investigated.
4. Work be undertaken to showcase examples of successful interventions made in high-risk areas to demonstrate which schemes were effective.

8 **2 Year Highways Capital Plan Update**

The Panel considered a report setting out the progress of the 2 Year Highways Capital Plan 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Councillor Moses Crook, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Highways introduced the item and explained that the programme was essential as well-maintained highways were safer and led to a reduction in carbon emissions. It was through this programme of work, that Kirklees kept the road network running smoothly despite challenges such as the impact of climate change (which increased damage to highways and drainage infrastructure), increased traffic and funding issues. The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which funded a large portion of the programme stipulated the promotion of active travel, public transport, and modal shift which in turn supported the Councils 2038 climate change ambitions. Highlights of the work undertaken included the street lighting programme - leading to a significant reduction in electric use over time, the LBUR programme, and the continuing maintenance of the PROW network.

Chris Firth, Compliance and Performance Manager – Highways gave a presentation which gave an overview of the programme of works included in the Capital Plan for 2023/24 and 24/25, the funding allocations for 2023/24 and the next steps. It was also noted that:

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- The programmes of works and individual schemes included: Highways Maintenance, Structures, Street Lighting, Public Rights of Way (PRoW), Highways Drainage, Highways Safety and Network Management (UTMC).
- Of the 4 key programme areas (Asset Management, Safer Roads, Network Management and Developer Contributions) had a total expenditure of just under £28mil of funding made up of grants and contributions.
- In relation to Assets there was a need to continue to invest in countering natural and user derived deterioration, to allow these assets to meet the expectations of their users.
- Governance arrangements to manage the Highways Capital Programme included:
 - The appointment of a Capital Works Programme Manager in 2023/24.
 - Monthly Highways Capital Programme Board meetings (chaired by the Head of Highways).
 - Monthly Capital Spend Monitoring spreadsheets, which included scheme progress and budget information.
 - Highways Capital Procedural Guide and Scheme Delivery Checklist to standardise the approach, with regular audits to ensure compliance.
 - Compliance with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Governance for financial claims and monitoring and evaluation of schemes funded via CRSTS.
- The next steps included the:
 - Continued management of the delivery of the 2023/2024 schemes within the Capital Plan through regular monthly monitoring of programmes and budgets.
 - Developing a rolling 2-year Capital Plan using whole life planning and condition data to manage asset deterioration using a risk-based approach.
 - The accurate recording of asset data in order to understand what the Council owned and its condition.
 - A 2-year Highway Capital Plan 2024/25 and 2025/26 would be produced to be taken to Cabinet in June 2024.
 - Continued work with the WYCA to maximise funding available for Highway Maintenance to reduce the national backlog.
 - Working with West Yorkshire Colleagues to review and update the Highway Policy and Strategy

In the discussion to follow, questions and comments were invited from the Panel, with the following issues being covered:

- In relation to the inspection frequency of adjoining roads, it was clarified that this was determined by a hierarchy system and the regularity of inspection could be between 3-6 months.
- In relation to the governance arrangements, it was advised that work was being undertaken to streamline the process and feedback loop.
- The commitment to good governance was welcomed by the Panel and highlighted as comprehensive, and the importance of robust processes to successful delivery was noted.
- Gratitude was expressed to the Highways team for the work undertaken over the Christmas period during the inclement weather, and it was agreed that thanks be given to officers.

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- In relation to Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS), it was clarified that there could be room for minor alternations to the location of a SID and if residents or ward councillors had suggestions or questions, they should contact the service by email. In response to a request from a Panel member with regards to updates of future moves and planned locations it was agreed that the specific area be investigated.
- In relation to deferred schemes, it was confirmed that these would be delivered in the next financial year.
- In relation to hazardous potholes, it was noted that spot fixes degenerated quickly, and generated a longer-term cost. It was further advised that upon receiving report of a pothole there was a 28-day target date within which the hazard must be removed. It was not always practical to take out large areas of the highway, but when safety inspectors felt it was necessary a request for a larger repair would be put forward.
- In relation to expired street lighting columns, the replacement would be brought in line with current standards which may also mean updating lanterns as well as the columns.
- In response to a question around the potential impact changes to national policy and climate change targets may have on local schemes it was agreed for a discussion to be held with officers in the Councils Transportation team and for an update to be provided to the Panel thereafter.
- In relation to Highways drainage, the importance of minimising flooding from blocked drains to mitigate the risk of further damage to the highways was noted. It was advised that due to the budget, a reactive approach to blocked drains was currently taken but a review of funding was to be undertaken with the ambition to re-introduce a limited amount of cyclic cleaning. It was also highlighted that the Council could only clear gullies on the public highway and that clearing blockages in private carrier drains relied on working closely with Yorkshire Water and Private Landowners. It was further agreed that the specific location where there were issues with blocked drains raised by the Co-optee be visited and investigated.
- It was noted that the A636 Denby Dale Road in the report should be changed to Wakefield Road for clarity.
- It was advised that the scheme listed from Blackmoorfoot Road to Dryclough Road was in development for the future years plan and proposals would be put forward as the scheme developed.
- The emphasis of net zero and climate change objectives in the report was welcomed by the Panel.
- It was requested that further opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the Capital Plan be considered.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the 2 Years Highways Capital Plan Update and it was recommend that:

1. Thanks be given to Highways Officers for the work undertaken over the Christmas period during the inclement weather.
2. That clarity around the location and future planned moves of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) be investigated provided to the Panel.

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3. The Panel be provided with information about the potential impact the recent changes to national policy and climate change targets may have on local schemes following discussion with Transportation Officers.
4. The issue of blocked drains in the specific location raised by Co-optee (Garry Kitchen) be investigated.
5. The road name A636 Denby Dale Road be amended in the report to Wakefield Road for clarity.
6. Further opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the Capital Plan be considered.

9 Work Programme 2023/24

The Panel considered its Work Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the work programme, and it was agreed that:

1. The Home to School Transport item be added to the work programme (in the new municipal year) for pre-decision scrutiny.
2. The link to use of pesticides be clarified.