

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 29th January 2025

Present:

Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards
Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin

In attendance:

Councillor Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Transport
and Housing
Elizabeth Cusick, Operational Manager – Highways
Mark Scarr, Head of Highways
Phillip Waddington, Group Engineer

Apologies:

Councillor Will Simpson

1. Membership of the Panel

Apologies were received from Councillor Will Simpson

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Panel considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 20th November 2024.

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

3 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.

Highways Safety Update

The Panel considered an update on Highways Safety, which was introduced by Councillor Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways. It was advised the update detailed progress against highways safety targets and the administration's commitment to achieving Vision Zero by 2040. Positive progress against interim targets was highlighted, and officers were thanked for their efforts. Additionally, it was noted that educating young people on road safety remained a key objective, with Cllr Crook expressing satisfaction with progress in this area.

Phillip Waddington, Group Engineer provided a presentation which gave an overview of;

- Vision Zero - The premise that no-one should be killed or suffer lifelong injury due to a road traffic incident.
- The 5 themes to a Safe System approach - Safe behaviours, speeds, roads and vehicles and the response to collisions on the network in Kirklees.
- The Ambition - To eliminate road deaths and serious injuries (KSIs) to zero by 2040 and improve road safety for everyone using the Safe Systems approach.
- The West Yorkshire Vision Zero- Launched August 2024 and focused on the 5 themes to a Safe System approach as well as 4 cross-cutting themes (ensuring community involvement, taking a data led approach, education and providing justice to those who had been injured).
- The launch of the Kirklees Strategic Vision Zero Group which would;
 - Support the aims and objectives of the West Yorkshire's Vision Zero Board and Kirklees Shared Outcomes as the new Kirklees Vision Zero Strategy was developed.
 - Provide intelligence led strategic direction and governance to all relevant Kirklees Boards/ Groups / departments and agencies associated with road safety activities.
 - Drive forward a holistic, safe systems approach to achieving Vision Zero, based on the five themes and fully recognising that it was fundamental to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
- The Vision Zero Governance including how the new Kirklees Vision Zero Board would feed into the West Yorkshire Board at an executive/strategic level.
- The current position of KSI's aligned to the Vision Zero milestones for 25% by 2026 and 50% by 2030. The current trajectory indicated that the targets were on track to be met.
- The Fatal 5 - Speeding, Drink or Drugs, Distraction, Carelessness and Not Wearing a Seatbelt and their contribution by percentage to fatal collisions.
- The key areas of work in Highways Safety in 2024 including;
 - 11 capital schemes completed leading to 13 pedestrian crossing improvements, 4 traffic calming schemes and 7 junction improvements.
 - 10 traffic management/ parking schemes implemented.
 - 45 road safety audits commissioned and completed internally at various stages in 2024.
 - The integration of the West Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership, the first average camera site installed on site in Dewsbury East and 13 new locations installed and promoted for the new Community Safety Camera Vans.

- 6401 school aged pupils received training from officers within the safety team, 2700 pupils had received Bikeability training, and 76 schools currently signed up to Modeshift.
- The Kirklees Highway Safety Strategy 2025-2040 – One of several strategies being updated and would evolve as Vision Zero became embedded across Kirklees.

During the subsequent discussion, the Panel raised several questions and comments:

- In response to several questions from the Panel regarding road safety around schools it was advised that;
 - A speed limit review had been conducted in previous years. This review had concluded that most speed limits were adequate but had highlighted some priority schools.
 - Approval had been given to focus on 38 schools the following month. Once collision and speed data were collected, a consultant would be commissioned to conduct an independent review of these 38 schools, including feedback on speed limits.
 - The plan for the 38 schools was expected to be completed by April 2027.
 - It was difficult to judge how far funding would stretch and the intention had been to ask the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) for additional funding as well as considering other streams of funding such as the School Streets where suitable.
 - The ambition was that the in-depth work the consultant would undertake would give a better understanding of the best solution for each school.
 - It was important to note that safety outside schools was generally good and that child pedestrian collisions were not occurring outside schools or during school drop off and pick up times.
 - The Vision Zero initiative focused on prevention at schools due to risk but intelligence suggested that the primary focus should be on educating young drivers, who were most at risk.
- The Panel noted the responses and in respect of school safety, the Panel highlighted how the use of child-shaped bollards used outside a local school were visually very impactful.
- In response to a question from the Panel around whether there was a way to demonstrate a causation between areas where capital schemes had been implemented and a decline in incidents, it was advised that the conditions of the funding from the Combined Authority challenged the Council on interventions. A piece of work around the implemented schemes was in production and the initial data looked positive. The caveat was that while engineering solutions helped driver behaviour was a large influencing factor which could not be controlled.
- The Panel noted the response, and it was agreed that (i) the data demonstrating the causation between areas where capital schemes had been implemented and a decline in incidents be provided to the Panel and (ii) Future updates regarding the implementation of the Vision Zero Strategy continue to be provided to the Panel.
- In response to a question from the Panel regarding the Kirklees Vision Zero Board, it was advised the Chair would be internal to Kirklees and would attend

the West Yorkshire Vision Zero Board to feed into the external governance. The Panel were asked if one of its members would be interested in being a member of the Board once established.

- The Panel noted the response and the offer for Panel member involvement with the Board and it was agreed that the process for formal appointment be investigated.
- In response to a question from the Panel regarding the new devolution white paper and its provisions for powers around highways, it was advised that there wasn't a significant focus on road safety, but officers would monitor this and respond accordingly as the detail developed.
- In response to a question from the Panel around why Kirklees was in the development phase when WYCA had launched its Vision Zero strategy, the Panel were reassured that the Councils progress in this area was in line with neighbouring local authorities and that all West Yorkshire local authorities were working together towards the same vision and strategy.
- In response to a question from the Panel around the spike in data, it was advised that in 2022, the Council had moved towards a different way of recording collisions (CRASH), making it seem like there was a spike in the data. This was a national issue where incidents were recorded as more severe than under the previous system.
- In response to a question from the Panel regarding the possibility of identifying which age groups were most affected by data, it was agreed that this data including a full breakdown of casualties by age be provided to the Panel after the meeting.
- The Panel noted the response and observed that the 2021 data may also be impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.
- In response to a question from the Panel in relation to educational work being undertaken in sixth forms and colleges, it was advised that during Road Safety Week, the focus was on these age groups. When informed by intelligence, action days could also be undertaken alongside key partners such as the police.
- In response to a question from the Panel in relation to how effective tackling driver behaviour was through education vs enforcement, it was advised that approximately 91,000 drivers had been re-educated, and new technology was continually being introduced to improve enforcement. The police had introduced Operation Snap, allowing people to upload footage of poor driver behaviour. Approximately 70% of the uploaded information resulted in some form of police intervention. Furthermore, the Executive Board had established a West Yorkshire communications group and work being undertaken with Kirklees College would offer invaluable insights into reaching the most at-risk demographics.
- In response to a question from the Panel about the introduction of speed cameras in a particular problem area the Panel were reassured that Highways were aware of the area and it was advised that it may be likely a camera would be installed. It was also highlighted that for any new community concern sites, enforcement would be made easier through the safety camera partnership. The only requirement was that speeds were above enforcement levels and there was community concern for the area in question.

- In response to a question from the Panel around potential links with the charity BRAKE, it was advised that the charity was represented on the Vision Zero Board and there was a funded Collision Officer post.
- In response to a question from the Panel about the potential benefits of implementing a widespread 20mph speed limit policy in residential areas, it was highlighted that though the highways authority were open to considering the measure if deemed suitable for an individual area that this issue had a high level of public sensitivity which was an important consideration. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of 20mph restrictions where they had been implemented elsewhere was important, as well as including the views of residents and local councillors in the discussion.
- The Panel noted the response and highlighted that 20mph zones could also cause challenges, such as frustrated drivers overtaking those obeying the limit, leading to collisions.
- In response to a question from the Panel about the best use of data to prioritise locations and funding it was advised that early conversations were being had at a West Yorkshire level about what a preventative programme may look like.
- The Panel highlighted that it was important to look at the near misses as part of the preventative approach and in response it was noted that the West Yorkshire data group was starting to consider damage only data and the causation to identify if there may be an engineering solution.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report 'Public Space Protection Orders' and it was recommended that:

- (1) The data demonstrating the causation between areas where capital schemes had been implemented and a decline in incidents be provided to the Panel.
- (2) Future updates regarding the implementation of the Vision Zero Strategy continue to be provided to the Panel as this work progresses.
- (3) The process for appointing a member of the Panel to be involved in meetings of the Kirklees Vision Zero Board be confirmed.
- (4) Data including a full breakdown of casualties by age be provided to the Panel.

9. **Work Programme 2024/25**

The Panel reviewed its Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Panel requested that Winter Maintenance be added to the work programme to consider lessons learned in the previous month, preparedness should a similar inclement weather event arise again and addressing some of the key issues.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the Work Programme and it was agreed that an update on Winter Maintenance be added to the work programme.