

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET 23 April 2024

Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Agree to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report, and
 - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendation, or until they are is completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and its recommendation.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. At its meeting on 07 February 2024, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on the progress of the Vision Zero commitment and work programme and also considered the Council's draft Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan. This had been published on 31 January 2024 at the beginning of a public consultation which was to close on 10 March 2024.
4. Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, attended to present the report and was accompanied by Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place, Caroline Coyne, Programme Manager, Anthony Kirkwood, Team Leader (Vision Zero) and Andy Ford, Road Safety Education Team Manager. The Committee would like to express its thanks to all those who attended and answered the Committee's questions.

SUMMARY

5. The draft strategy detailed the Vision Zero road safety aims, ambitions, and outcomes under each of the Vision Zero aspects. It also had an accompanying action plan for each aspect of the programme and there were 58 actions set over a two-year period which sought ensure the holistic delivery of Vision Zero.
6. There was a wide-ranging discussion about the strategy and the action plan with members seeking assurance on a range of issues which are essentially summarised in the 13 recommendations made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The Committee makes a number of recommendations which, fundamentally, seek to improve the robustness of the outworking of the strategy for the safety and benefit of residents. Vision Zero is an undoubtedly ambitious policy aim but it is not something that the Council can achieve independently. Indeed, as stated in paragraph 6f of the draft strategy, “partnership working is essential to delivering Vision Zero.” The Committee recognises this and notes that the Council’s Fire and Rescue Service “supports the countywide Safer Oxfordshire Partnership, which brings together a wide range of practitioners including Public Health, safeguarding, and Thames Valley Police.”
8. Close engagement with TVP will be crucial in realising the ambitions of Vision Zero and the Committee is keen that the Council’s commitment to “look to maintain and develop this partnership with Thames Valley Police who have the critical role of law enforcement elements of Vision Zero” is indeed undertaken. The Committee is aware of correspondence between the Cabinet member and the Police and Crime Commissioner and recognises that enforcement has been raised as an area where further support from TVP is needed. Without enforcement and without strong partnership, the commendable ambitions of Vision Zero will be next to impossible to achieve.
9. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Council should continue to work to build a stronger relationship with TVP and with other partners. A partnership board including TVP as a key partner would demonstrate that commitment. As part of this collaboration, the Committee would wish to see an increase in enforcement over speed limits.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should work to establish a partnership board to monitor progress on Vision Zero with Thames Valley Police being fully involved as a key partner.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should continue to engage with Thames Valley Police in order to encourage enforcement of speed limits.

10. Whilst the Committee does, at one meeting each year, sit as the Council’s Crime and Disorder Panel, it is not – in this report – making recommendations

to TVP but, rather, to Cabinet. In doing so, it reflects that there are large numbers of organisations both across the county and across the region more widely responsible for scrutinising TVP, including the Police and Crime Panel on which members of councils throughout the region serve. The Committee questions the benefit of such duplication but recognises that neither it nor Cabinet has power to amend it.

11. The Committee was advised that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue had requested that Government should implement graduated driving licences for young people. The Committee considers that it would be of benefit to the Council if it were to explore what legislative changes it would make that would support its Vision Zero ambitions if it had the power. Once those are identified, the Committee recommends that the Council writes to the Secretary of State to identify the changes sought and to call upon Government to consider their implementation.

Recommendation 3: That the Council should identify additional powers that would support delivery of responsibilities and Vision Zero ambitions and requests the Secretary of State for Transport to implement them.

12. The Committee notes that the Council has engaged with Kent County Council but is aware of much work going on across the country, including areas which have similarly diverse counties with cities and market towns as well as rural areas. The Committee accepts that there are challenges when seeking to implement change in a county with settlements that include a city, market towns, villages, and hamlets with the commensurate diversity of roads and road users. However, there is similar diversity in other counties and ensuring that both positive and negative aspects of their experiences are considered will be to the benefit of the strategy's success in Oxfordshire. The Committee calls upon the Council to take on board the learning from them as well as considering best practice.

Recommendation 4: That the Council should engage with other local authorities, particularly those with similarly diverse counties, and learn from them as well as to take learning from best practice in other authorities.

13. In section 6 of the draft strategy, the Safe System Strategy is described which has five key areas, namely: safe roads; safe speeds; safe road users; safe vehicles; post-crash response. The Committee would welcome these being added to the five pillars workstreams for the strategy.

Recommendation 5: That the Council should add greater emphasis on the five pillars as integral to the Vision Zero Key Areas.

14. The Committee agrees that "good behaviours and safe practices by all road users are essential for achieving Vision Zero" but there is a concern that the strategy and the policy more widely should not be primarily seen through a prism of behaviour change but, rather, should be led by evidence. The Committee would welcome seeing the strategy demonstrate that there is a considerable evidence base. That evidence should be at the heart of the

outworking of the strategy and should be presented clearly and simply so that residents can see the reasoning behind the changes necessary.

Recommendation 6: That the Council should ensure that its Vision Zero ambitions should be led by evidence and not be overly-focused on behaviour.

15. Data and evidence, as set out above, are key. When prioritising its infrastructure projects, the Committee is keen that this prioritisation is based on data and evidence and that should also be seen to be the case. The majority of infrastructure projects currently being implemented are around Oxford because these projects are targeting the current incident hotspots. Explaining the rationale for choices made will be important and the Committee would encourage the Council to continue with its evidence-led prioritisation on the most dangerous parts of the county are. Local members will have an important role to play in having an input into that evidence base.
16. Publishing information about the danger hotspots on the Council's website clearly linked to the underlying evidence will contribute to building awareness and will give greater information about why changes are being made in a particular location.

Recommendation 7: That the Council should continue to prioritise its infrastructure projects on the basis of data and evidence, taking account of the insights of local members.

Recommendation 8: That the Council should publish the danger hotspots on its website clearly linked to the underlying evidence.

17. The Committee is aware that the annual Oxfordshire County Council Road Casualties report publishes information relating to the numbers of deaths of children and teenagers, and also breaks figures down by sex. However, the Committee would see value in these being published separately and additionally as headline figures, or 'highlights', clearly linked to Vision Zero and its ambitions. These figures would potentially provide road users with an element of a shock factor which would provide a greater commitment to the need for change.

Recommendation 9: That the Council should publish the numbers of road deaths of children and teenagers, and also by sex, clearly linked to Vision Zero.

18. The Committee highlights two changes it sees of help to the Strategy. Firstly, and simply, at 6b, the Safe Vehicles section of the strategy, there is no reference to motorcycles. This appears to be an oversight when considering Vision Zero.
19. Secondly, within section 4, on data trends, it is noted that road collisions data is "sometimes referred to as killed or seriously injured (KSI) data" and that this data is used to inform a wide range of the Council's decisions relating to road infrastructure. Within the grid graph at image 4 of the report, which sets out what killed or seriously injured 307 road users in 2022, there is reference to

motorcycles and to motorcyclists with that being sub-divided between those with engines under 50cc and those over. There is no sub-division of 'car', though, and the Committee would welcome the data being broken down to show what proportion of collisions involved SUVs. Monitoring and reporting on this would provide valuable data on which to base future policy.

Recommendation 10: That the Council should add SUVs and motorcycle categories to its safer vehicles section. It should also delineate the number and proportion of collisions which involve SUVs.

20. The Committee recognises that the budget for Vision Zero is outlined in Annex B and that there is information in the 'costs to society' section of the strategy. However, the Committee is of the view that this should be set out in more detail with the costs associated with the policy being entirely clear. How budgets underlie this strategy is a key factor in its implementation and success. The Committee considers that there should be as much on budgets and costs within the strategy as possible to ensure greater awareness as well as transparency.
21. Similarly, there will be ongoing revenue costs attached to the strategy. The Committee considers that these should be set out too.

Recommendation 11: That the Council should set out, in as much detail as possible, information relating to the budget for this strategy and the costs associated with it, as well as the associated ongoing revenue costs.

22. When new developments are proposed, the Council should seek to ensure that existing road layouts are considered and highlighted as material planning considerations in its planning application responses. The Committee was advised that, despite being a relatively new development, Barton Park is not felt to be safe, thanks to its sub-optimal interface with the A40. That is of huge regret but the lessons the Council has learned from that should be taken on board and used in considering future developments.

Recommendation 12: That the Council should ensure that existing road layouts are considered as material planning considerations in its responses to applications for new residential developments.

23. The Committee is aware that road safety schemes are routinely reviewed and that earlier schemes have been subject to such review. However, the Committee is of the view that it would be useful for there to be a safety audit undertaken of past initiatives so that the Council can ensure the learning has been applied. What has worked previously – and what has not worked previously – will be useful information going forward.

Recommendation 13: That the Council should undertake a safety audit of past road safety initiatives to learn from what has – or has not – worked previously.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

24. There has been some expression of interest within the Committee to consider this work further, but the precise shape and timing is as yet undetermined.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
26. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

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Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
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