

OXFORDSHIRE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 7 February 2024 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Kieron Mallon – in the Chair

Councillors:

Charlie Hicks
Robin Bennett
Ted Fenton

Freddie van Mierlo
Liam Walker
Richard Webber

Susanna Pressel
Nigel Simpson

Other Members in

Councillor Andrew Gant

Attendance:

Councillor Damian Haywood

Officers:

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Caroline Coyne, Programme Manager
Anthony Kirkwood, Team Leader (Vision Zero)
Andrew Ford, Road Safety Education Team Manager at
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Constance and from Cllr Enright. Cllr Simpson attended as a substitute for Cllr Constance and it was noted that he would be joining the Committee on a permanent basis once it had been notified to Council. Cllr Pressel attended as a substitute for Cllr Enright.

Cllr Walker was welcomed as a new member of the Committee.

2/24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3/24 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

The Committee resolved to **AGREE** the minutes of the meeting of 06 December 2024 as a true and accurate record.

It was requested that an update be provided to the Committee on the status of the Castle Quay library and the Council's involvement.

4/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 4)

John Center, a resident of Littlemore, addressed the Committee on the impact of the Council's policies on the vulnerable.

Three speakers spoke specifically to the Vision Zero item.

Danny Yee, of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, raised a number of concerns about particular junctions.

Robin Tucker, of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel, spoke to the importance of partnership working.

Alison Hill, of Cyclox, expressed concerns that the objectives of the Vision Zero strategy were not SMART.

5/24 VISION ZERO (ROAD SAFETY)

(Agenda Item 5)

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, attended to present the report on the Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan which were out for public consultation. Bill Cotton, Corporate Director of Environment and Place, Caroline Coyne, Programme Manager, Anthony Kirkwood, Team Leader (Vision Zero), and Andrew Ford, Road Safety Education Team Manager at Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service. Cllr Damian Haywood attended as Chair of the Vision Zero cycle group.

Cllr Gant introduced the Vision Zero policy describing it as part of an overarching vision and strategy for a place that works better for everybody and is an important policy in managing an increasing busy road network. As evidence of a wider vision, the Programme Manager raised other road safety investments such as the Road Safety and Accessibility fund.

The Vision Zero policy had been adopted in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan under policy 15 and was an enabling piece of policy for the county's active travel ambitions.

Following the presentation of the report, there was a desire to scrutinise the Thames Valley Police as a response to queries and concerns members of the public raised with the Vision Zero policy. There was a welcomeness to

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hear from other local sources with particular interest or knowledge of the issues being addressed.

Cllr Gant addressed the importance within the policy of reducing speed limits, particularly to evidence showing a 30% lower mortality rate to those being hit at 20mph compared to 30mph.

The viability of enforcement of 20mph speed limits, especially in rural areas, was considered with the potential that greater educating and licensing regulations would have greater impact on driver speed awareness. The Road Safety Education Team Manager described the various educational road safety projects of the Fire & Rescue service, and welcomed the increased support for these projects, especially from a marketing standpoint, from the Vision Zero policy. Age and experience of drivers were suggested as key contributors to road incidents. Mr Ford spoke to potential legislative works for a graduate licence for younger drivers, and the potential of retaking assessments for older drivers. The influence and importance of driver education was again highlighted.

In light of *Safer Speeds action 4 (SS4)*, a review of all speed limits across Oxfordshire, the Committee sought further information on next steps and whether there was a specific evidence base requirement to change a speed limit. The Committee was informed that the Council had powers over non-national highway roads, allowing a process for officers to assess the justification and judgement for a change in speed limit. Each 20mph zone and scheme was planned bespoke in consultation with local communities. The delivery of these schemes was under constant review to ensure smooth implementation. Considerations included the nature of the road, its connectivity, and the view of the police that the speed limit was self-enforceable by a driver understanding the road. Beyond simply considering a speed limit change to make a road safer and fit for purpose, other elements would be considered such as signage or the layout of the road.

An update was provided on the programme for a 20mph speed limit default across the city of Oxford. The 3-year programme was ongoing; however, its implementation was more complex than for similar programmes rolled out across more rural areas of Oxfordshire. The lessons learnt from previous attempts, both successful and less successful, were being taken on board. Many of the urban factors were being considered, especially the operational response of the bus companies in Oxford with whom the Council sought to strike the right balance to supply a better bus service and avoid policies pulling in different directions.

Examples from across the country, from a variety of county Councils, showed the importance of partnerships for Oxfordshire's Vision Zero project. It was suggested that greater partnerships with Thames Valley Police (TVP), Fire & Rescue, Ambulance, National Highways, and other agency teams were important to the success of Vision Zero. The committee was assured that there had been a commitment from TVP to work together going forward and there had been meetings to this effect. Similarly, the Committee had

input from other associations, such as the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Association.

The Committee was advised that the majority of infrastructure projects being implemented were around Oxford because evidence was being followed and these projects were targeting the incident hotspots of the county. That these hotspots were in Oxford did not discount the importance of the policy and projects across the county.

Additionally, the Road Safety and Accessibility Fund looked at information across the county to determine roads of concern, with an analysis of what could be done to make these roads safer. A desire was expressed to work more closely with developers to ensure that new roads were built with safer transport routes in mind, including segregated cycleways. The Council was urged to look at whether these short-term infrastructure projects could be tied to section 106 payments, to deliver the required infrastructure before it exceeded safety requirements rather than after safety concerns had arisen.

The Committee resolved to make **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Cabinet under the following headings:

- 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;
- That the Council should continue to engage with Thames Valley Police in order to encourage enforcement of speed limits.
- That the Council should identify additional powers that would support delivery of responsibilities and Vision Zero ambitions and request that Government considers implementing them.
- 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.
- That the Council should add the Vision Zero Key Areas to the five pillars workstreams.
- That the Council should ensure that its Vision Zero ambitions should be led by evidence and not be overly-focused on behaviour.
- 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.
- That the Council should publish the danger hotspots on its website clearly linked to the underlying evidence.
- That the Council should publish the numbers of road deaths of children and teenagers, and also by sex, clearly linked to Vision Zero.
- That the Council should add SUVs and motorcycle categories to its safer vehicles section.
- 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.
- That the Council should ensure that existing road layouts are planning considerations in its responses to new residential developments.

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

6/24 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda Item 6)

Having reviewed the progress of actions and recommendations the Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendations tracker.

7/24 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee resolved to **NOTE** the Cabinet forward plan.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing