

REPORT OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: VISION ZERO

Cllr Kieron Mallon
Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee
July 2023

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 recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

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

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. At its meeting on 26 April 2023, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report providing an overview and update of the Council's Vision Zero Programme, work carried out to date, and an overview of the Vision Zero Strategy and Capital Business Case timeline going forward. The Vision Zero Programme aims to: "Eliminate all fatalities and severe injuries on Oxfordshire's roads and streets, to have a safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility for all. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology, and legislation to achieve this change."
4. The Committee received the input of the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, Councillor Gant, the Corporate Director for Environment and Place, Bill Cotton, the Director of Highways and Operations, Paul Fermer, and the Vision Zero Programme Manager, Caroline Coyne. The Committee would like to thank everyone for sharing their time and expertise with the Committee.

SUMMARY

5. Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Highways, introduced the item. The workstream was less than a year old and set up after fatalities in and around Oxford. It consists of eight areas of work, namely: Policy Development; Speed Management; New Infrastructure and Development; Cycling Safety; Road Safety Education; Improvement Programmes; Communication & Engagement; Stakeholder Engagement.
6. Paul Fermer, Director of Highways and Operations, explained that the report outlines how the Council sought to approach Vision Zero pulling together the variety of activity across the Council into one coherent programme.
7. Different governance structures for the programme are intended to be complementary structures rather than separate ones. Embedding behavioural change and a cultural shift must be done in a coherent, holistic way. The structures are about bringing together disparate activities that are already happening to ensure the monitoring of a coordinated programme.
8. The Council is committed to its approach and agreed that there continued to be some work needed to ensure that it was seen at the operational level. Consultants were used on occasion for transport infrastructure projects and it was incumbent on the Council to ensure that the brief was particularly clear about the standards and specialisms wanted.
9. The Committee requested further information regarding the training provided and the information surrounding road safety (including Vision Zero, Active Travel, and LTCP) provided in contracts and briefs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. As the authority responsible for Highways, significant work has been done over many years on road safety and in recent years capability has been affected by a reduction in professional expertise and the level of funding. The Council's professional capacity is now increasing and Council funding is available for specific road safety initiatives. There is an acknowledgement that the data has shown a negative trend in road safety outcomes and the Council is committed to reversing that situation swiftly. The intention is that this will be facilitated by the Vision Zero approach rather than simply standard road safety initiatives.
11. Vision Zero will help to deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) road safety commitments with the improvement of road safety being a fundamental part of achieving the LTCP. There are high-level commitments in the LTCP and the Committee was told that officers were intending to work on the strategy and action plan and part of that work will be to examine more closely the details behind the geographic differences in the county. Consideration will be given to whether having more ambitious targets in urban areas where it could

be easier and potentially cheaper to make a big difference swiftly is appropriate. The Council was keen to explore, in writing the strategy and action plan, the idea of localised targets so that it could be held to account against them.

12. The Committee supported these strands of work. To ensure that this ambition is translated into on the ground improvements it is recommended that the Council assures itself of the alignment of its strategic ambitions and the tools through which it will realise those ambitions by undertaking an audit of contract delivery and training and the development of appropriate targets.

Recommendation 1: That the Council provides an audit of what is included in contracts, commissions, and briefings for infrastructure delivery and how far Vision Zero, Active Travel, and the LTCP are emphasised.

Recommendation 2: That the Council provides an audit of training undertaken to date of those responsible for implementing infrastructure delivery and how far Vision Zero, Active Travel, and the LTCP are emphasised.

Recommendation 3: That the Council should endorse additional targets and geographically focused targets within the Vision Zero workstreams.

13. The impact on road safety of Heavy Goods Vehicles was explored and the Committee was considered that the Developer Design Guidance had recently been approved by Cabinet and that much work had been done regarding requirements for developers using HGVs.
14. The Committee noted that Oxford City Council had recently adopted the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) Standard and there was discussion around whether the County Council was planning to adopt it.
15. The Committee heard that the application to CLOCS is complex and there are a number of different strands that would be relevant for the Council including the Council's own vehicles and fleet; the contracts let by the Council and the obligations it places on contractors; acting as the planning authority in respect of decisions made around schools and mineral extraction sites; planning issues when the Council is a statutory consultee.
16. The Committee is conscious that adopting the standard could cost the Council significant sums of money and understands that the implications must be fully considered before making a commitment. Nevertheless the Committee considered that this would be beneficial in the delivery on Vision Zero, as well as also supporting the Council's ambitions to reduce emissions and improve air quality, and recommends that the Council takes steps to move towards the CLOCS standard as soon as it is possible taking into consideration the issues raised.

Recommendation 4: That the Council should move towards the CLOCS Standard as soon as is reasonably practicable.

17. The Committee considered that the Council, in the absence of a Central Government campaign, should plan to provide training on changes to the Highway Code, particularly focusing on raising the understanding of the responsibilities within the new hierarchy of users and focusing messaging towards children and young people in order to push towards lasting culture change. The Committee heard that the Community Safety team has a number of well-established campaigns but considered that more could be done to refresh and revise training, and while there would be costs involved, the allocation of money towards Vision Zero meant that this could be progressed.
18. The Committee agreed that all users need to act sensibly, from drivers of HGVs to pedestrians, and also discussed how Vision Zero might best be communicated and behavioural change be encouraged. The Committee recommended that corporate communications focus on those road users whose behavioural change would create the greatest positive impact – drivers, particularly of large vehicles, and not vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. The Committee commended recent communications from Transport for London for taking that approach.

Recommendation 5: That the Council prepares a road safety campaign focusing on the need for behavioural change and, in accordance with the Highway Code's hierarchy of users, gives the highest responsibility for change to those with most power whilst recognising the need for all to act responsibly.

19. The Committee considered whether it was appropriate to give weight to the perception of risk in addition to actual risk. There was recognition that there was data which demonstrated some locations were extremely dangerous and it was agreed that work should focus on improving those. However, the perception of risk also has a big impact on residents' travel choices and the Committee considered how reducing the perception of risk could lead to positive outcomes that would support Vision Zero. Consequently, the Committee recommended that the Council work with key stakeholders and local communities so that progress could be made on reducing the perception of risk. As the work proceeds, it would be expected that safety concerns would lessen. Regular surveys to track public perceptions on road safety locally would be a useful tool to employ.

Recommendation 6: That the Council prepares metrics, by, for example, commissioning external polling agencies to conduct surveys, regarding perception of risk as part of the Vision Zero workstreams that could be tracked with the intention of reducing them.

20. The Committee recognised that the success of Vision Zero rested in large part on the ability to effect cultural and behavioural change but considered that this must be complemented by physical improvement projects, including the upgrade of junctions that are deemed dangerous. The Committee heard that in addition to £5m from reserves (which would fall under the umbrella of discretionary funding), there were different funding streams that were allocated

to particular aspects, including the Safer Roads Fund, Active Travel tranches, developer funds, HIF Fund, the HMI fund. However, realising the Council's ambitious vision will require significant investment and the Committee recommends that funding for it is deemed a priority in the upcoming budget cycle.

Recommendation 7: That the Council recognise the important need for Vision Zero and that funding for it is a priority in the upcoming budget cycle.

NEXT STEPS

21. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee will review the published Cabinet response to this report and its recommendations at the meeting of the Committee after Cabinet's response in accordance with part 6.2, 13(f), of the Constitution of the Council.
22. The Committee may wish to revisit progress on aspects of Vision Zero during this time.

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