

Statement – Councillor Saskia Heijltjes

I registered to speak at today's meeting because I wanted to speak on Vision Zero, but I was told this wasn't allowed because I am a member of this body. I was asked to share my statement with the Chair and they would then decide if I was allowed to give my statement or not. Hence why Cllr Joanna Wright is now subbing for me so I can give my statement today.

This panel was expecting Vision Zero to be on the agenda for this meeting, as discussed as part of the workplan, and it is very disappointing to see that it isn't on the agenda for today.

When I queried this, I was told that it was being covered as part of the Cabinet Member update because officers weren't ready with the required papers. The Vision Zero motion was passed unanimously 12 months ago and in the motion, it was requested for the administration to report back to the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on progress towards these steps in 12 months' time.

Covering this as part of a Cabinet Member Update doesn't give it the same attention as an agenda item. It also means members of the public aren't aware it is being discussed today, which means they haven't been given the opportunity to speak on the topic.

As part of the Vision Zero motion, several steps were identified to be looked into in the short term, without having major cost implications. There were also further steps identified that would need to be costed.

Without having been provided with a paper on this topic, it is very hard to scrutinise the work that has undoubtedly taken place in this area, as BANES had already adopted a Vision Zero approach much earlier than when the motion to eliminate road deaths by 2030 was adopted a year ago.

In addition to the update from the Cabinet Member that we'll hear in this meeting, I would like to request that Vision Zero is brought back to this meeting in January or March, to allow us to give it the full attention it deserves.

I would like to close with the terrible news of a teenager being hit and seriously injured on Newbridge Road and a woman seriously injured in a collision on Mount Road, both in September of this year.

When Vision Zero gets discussed at this panel, today or at a future meeting, I hope we will hear from the cabinet member how we are making progress in gaining up-to-date data on the numbers and locations of people killed or seriously injured, to inform our decision-making on highway projects.