

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

1. The report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the Transport and Highways portfolio since the last report to Council.

Community Transport Developments

2. Members may remember that I reported at the June meeting that the Council had successfully gained £161k from the Department for Transport kick-start funding for Community Transport.
3. I am pleased to announce that a further £158,455 was awarded to Nottinghamshire in December as part of a £10 million fund distributed nationally. The funding is for the development of community transport services and will be used to complement other initiatives within Transport and Travel Services including the TITAN (Towards Integrated Transport Across Nottinghamshire) project.
4. Following discussions with Kings Mill Hospital I am also pleased to report that a fully accessible courtesy minibus service between Newark and the hospital started on 9th January. This service will operate for a 6 month pilot period to determine the level of demand that exists following the relocation of patient services from Newark Hospital to Kings Mill.

Street Lighting Energy Saving Project Update

5. I can report further progress on this programme. In Rushcliffe draft proposals will shortly be published for West Bridgford electoral division and consultations are complete for Ruddington, Keyworth and Soar Valley electoral divisions. Works have been completed in East Bridgford, Shelford, Screveton, Kneeton, Langar cum Barnstone and Cropwell Butler.
6. In Bassetlaw, draft proposals have been published for Worksop Electoral Division, and works have been completed in Misterton Electoral Division, and also Blyth, Harworth and Bircotes, Langold and Scrooby.

Bilsthorpe Depot Update

7. Members will recall that construction of the depot started last winter. Further salt deliveries took place in the period before Christmas and the Salt Barn is now full. The office building is now nearly finished with the last decorating taking place, desks being installed, and phones and IT being configured. The first staff are due to move into this building prior to 20 January. The Vehicle Workshop is being fitted out with the specialist equipment required to meet a proposed move date before the end of February. Installation of the racking system into the Stores Building is taking place and the first stores have been moved from existing facilities. Externally surfacing of the car and lorry parking areas is continuing apace and should be finished by the end of January, at which time all the non-building related works except landscaping will be complete. Staff and equipment moves should be substantially complete by the end of February. When the depot is occupied we will be arranging an open day and I hope that in particular local business' will take the opportunity to come and discuss how we can work together and share the benefits of the new facility.

A60 Forest Lane Junction Update

8. Members will recall that £490k was allocated to install traffic lights at this busy junction near Papplewick. I am pleased to report that the works on this junction were finished 4 weeks ahead of schedule on 13th December, and road users are now benefiting from a safer and less congested part of the highway network.

Changes to Highway Services

9. I have, along with Councillor Adair, approved the contracting out of certain aspects of highways works and activities.
10. The main change as far as the public is concerned is that from April next year they will be able to employ their own contractor, via a simple licence system, to install dropped kerbs for access to their property from the highway.
11. The cost of the licence will be charged to the customer but will be less than £50 per application. Customers will still be able to obtain a quote from the County Council to do the work if they wish but the move is expected to provide around £500,000 of work for local contractors.
12. This is a move that will save money, not only for the Council but also for members of the public, and provide a boost for local businesses.
13. Other changes coming in from April 1, 2012 include:
 - carrying out surface dressing through an external competitive contract, which is currently out to tender. Contractors will be encouraged to employ local labour where possible.
 - using existing external contracts to carry out all earthworks, boundary works, land reclamation works and permanent signs manufacture.
 - using existing contracts with Tarmac and local contractors (through a frame-work arrangement) to supply 75% of the County Council's resurfacing work.

14. We are also preparing a new highways term maintenance service contract which from the end of 2012 will deliver most of our external works through a single contractor who will be encouraged to engage with local suppliers and sub contractors. This will be through a modern cost based contract and will create significant efficiencies in the delivery of highways works over the next 10 years. The contract is likely to be an initial 5 years, renewable for up to a further 5 dependent upon performance. We will also consider if some works will be better delivered through this new contract instead of our in-house teams but to be clear I will be retaining an in-house highways works organisation to ensure a responsive highway service is available when it is needed, as with our recent response to the fallen trees as a result of the storm in early January.

On-line Drink/Drive Campaign Success

15. The Council supported throughout December the Government's national Think! campaign which aims to cut the number of deaths on the roads caused by drink-driving.
16. An advert on the Council's Facebook page has been shown more than 2,500,000 times over the period between December 5 and January 2, reaching more than 80,000 people. In addition to the 80,000-plus views of the Facebook page, more than 620 people then progressed to the County Council's website to read more about the consequences of drinking and driving.
17. This year was the first time that the Council had used Facebook and Twitter to get the drink-drive message across.
18. The aim was specifically to raise awareness of the consequences of drink-drive; to reduce the number of young men aged 17-29 who are drink-driving and contribute to a county-wide reduction in the number of road traffic accidents recorded as "driver impaired by alcohol".
19. The Council's campaign also included a series of local radio adverts, posters in prominent positions across the county and Twitter updates throughout the festive period.

Programme of New Pedestrian Crossings

20. We are continuing to install across the County a programme of new pedestrian crossings. These will improve road safety and access to services and will also encourage walking which is both in support of our local transport plan objectives of reducing the need for car travel and in support of improving the health of our communities. I am always very keen to take account of the views of local communities in the details of each scheme where ever we reasonably can and for example I have recently decided to abandon the proposals for a new pedestrian crossing on Burton Road in Carlton following concerns regarding loss of on-street parking and the adequacy of existing nearby crossing facilities.

Statutory Quality Bus Partnership for Mansfield

21. In February 2013 the new Mansfield Bus Station will open, offering a major opportunity to improve bus services across Mansfield. It is important that the quality of the buses and bus services using the facility match the high standards of the new station.

22. To this end I have approved the introduction of a Strategic Quality Bus Partnership (SQBP) for Mansfield Town Centre to coincide with the opening of the bus station. All bus operators serving stops within the SQBP area will sign up to a proscribed quality standard. The main bus operator will draw up a business plan to secure substantial investment in new buses, and the County Council will invest in the bus infrastructure.
23. The improvements passengers should see include
- The new bus station
 - New buses with lower emissions and easier access
 - Improved bus stops with better information provision,
 - Electronic information displays
 - Ticketing improvements.
 - Improved bus punctuality and journey times.
24. These improvements should produce a significant increase in bus patronage in Mansfield, and reduce traffic congestion.
25. In the future I will be looking to approve similar SBQPs for the Retford and Newark areas in order to drive up quality of passenger transport and infrastructure for the ultimate benefit of travelling public.

Environmental Weight Limits

26. I am pleased to confirm progress on various environmental weight limit schemes. The limits for Carter Lane in Mansfield and Kimberley/Nuthall area have recently been completed, removing unnecessary lorry journeys from these unsuitable roads. Members will be interested to know that several other schemes are in progress including Town Street Area in Bramcote, Mill Hill/ Greenhills Lane in Eastwood, and Cromwell/Carlton/North Muskham area.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS