



Meeting **ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE**

Date **Monday, 18 October 2004**

agenda item number

From: **Cabinet Member for Environment**

REPORT FOR PERIOD JUNE 2004-JULY 2004

I reported the following issues to Council on 29 July:

- Building Better Communities – progress
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Transport White Paper

1. Road Safety Improvement Plan

The Road Safety Improvement Plan was formally published in November 2003 to bring about a more effective integrated service delivery and to achieve national road casualty reduction targets by 2010. I receive regular reports on the progress of the Plan and am pleased to report that over 80% of the tasks are either complete or on target.

In particular I thought it was worth noting that provisional figures for 2003 show a 17% reduction in overall KSIs (killed and seriously injured) and a substantial 46% reduction in child KSIs. The Government's target for 2010 is 40% and 50% respectively.

However, there is growing concern about motorcycle and moped casualties which increased in 2003 and which depress our overall figure. During the last 6 months the Department has introduced a number of initiatives to target this group:

- "Think Bike!" signs at junctions to alert drivers
- "To Die For" signs located at bends to alert riders to speed, position, visibility

- in partnership with the Transport Research Laboratory, a countywide motorcycle forum has been established to help understand the needs of all motorcyclists in the county and to promote safer riding
- a hard-hitting publicity campaign targeting 6th forms, colleges of further education and employers with young employees
- a motor scooter road safety education programme aimed at teenagers which complements the Fire Service's IMPACT education programme.

I very much hope that these initiatives will bring about a reduction in the number of KSI among this very vulnerable group of road users.

2. Bingham's Big Day Out

I was very pleased with the success of Bingham's Big Day Out on September 18. This was part of the 'In Town Without My Car initiative' supported by over 1500 cities across Europe. The event promoted alternative forms of transport in a fun and entertaining way. Members of the public were able to find out about the range of public transport services across the county and the different choices available when planning journeys. There was also plenty of information about cycling and walking in the Nottinghamshire countryside. It is interesting to note that if everyone travelled to work by public transport for just one day a week, there would be a 20% reduction in traffic levels making the county less congested and polluted for us all.

Other attractions included a picnic area in the town centre, circus skills and story telling workshops which were a great hit with the youngsters.

3. Local Bus Service in Mansfield and Sutton

The County Council supports local buses to the tune of £4.5 million per year (in addition to expenditure on home to school transport). This makes us one of the major providers of local bus services in the County. The Authority receives numerous requests and petitions to reinstate local bus services when they are discontinued and we endeavour to do this if it is affordable and appropriate. The Strategic Plan is committed to improving public transport and the Authority's Bus Strategy promotes a network of services to cater for the needs of people and vulnerable groups without access to private transport who are excluded from accessing local services.

I was pleased to see recently that the County Council have been able to respond to the wishes of local people in Mansfield by sponsoring a new bus service which will run hourly between Woodhouse and Huthwaite taking in the Kings Mill health complex. The service will run for a trial period and its success in the longer term will depend upon its usage.

4. Proposed Weight Limit, Halloughton Road, Southwell

Halloughton Road is a residential road which can be used as a cut through and it is currently on the 'through traffic' traffic calming list. However, as it is in 80th place on a list of 110 it is unlikely to ever qualify for special measures. In 1999 a culvert on Halloughton Road was found to be below the required standard and a weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes was introduced with no exemptions. The culvert has now been reassessed and is capable of carrying loads up to 40 tonnes. The current weight restriction can now be lifted and the road can be reopened to vehicles not exceeding 40 tonnes.

Clearly this would not be popular with local residents who feel that the restriction stops medium and heavy goods vehicles from using the road as a short cut. However, the road is very narrow in some places and is unlikely to attract HGVs, especially as the formal route is much wider and suffers few delays. Furthermore, the 7.5 tonnes weight restriction was abused on a weekly basis by the refuse collection vehicles, and also on occasions by gritters, fire appliances and street cleaning vehicles.

Therefore, despite local opposition, I have agreed that it would be appropriate to lift the current restriction and replace it with an 18 tonnes weight restriction. This is essentially a compromise which would allow access to council vehicles, fire appliances and so forth, but would still restrict multiple axle HGVs.

5. Parkdale Primary School Awareness Zone, Carlton

Parkdale Road is very wide and straight, two factors which are known to encourage high speeds. The road width, in excess of 9 metres, also means that those crossing are at risk for a comparatively long period. As part of the Safer Routes to School, a school awareness scheme is proposed which includes high visibility signing, red imprint paving, guardrails and two build out features. The build out features provide an improved crossing point, better visibility and serve to break up the straight appearance of the road, narrowing it visibly and physically. Two-way traffic flow will be maintained.

A number of objections were received from those residents who would lose on street parking as a result of the scheme. Some on street parking is always lost when a scheme of this nature is implemented but efforts are made to keep this to an absolute minimum. I have agreed that the scheme should proceed.

6. Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum

I received the first annual report of the Nottinghamshire LAF. Members will recall that the Forum was established in July 2003 under

the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an independent statutory consultative body which will offer advice and guidance to the County Council, the Countryside Agency and others, on countryside access issues. It consists of 18 members including 2 elected members and the County Council has a duty to support the Forum both administratively and financially.

The Forum has formally met 5 times in the first year and responded to a number of consultations from Defra and the Countryside Agency. They also received presentations from a number of organisations concerned with countryside access and Forum members have participated in a number of training and development events organised by the Authority. A website has been created with help from the corporate e-content team and more information on meetings, membership, formal responses etc can be found on it.

Councillor Terry Butler
Cabinet Member for Environment

Member&SeniorManagementSupport/CabinetMemberReportsforCouncilandScrutiny/SelectCtteEnv/18Oct04