

**1 September 2021**

**Agenda Item:5**

## **REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE HIGHWAYS REVIEW UPDATE REPORT**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to:
  - Update Councillors on the County Council's Highway Services Review, which is underway following the motion agreed at Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021;
  - Update on the Local Government Association Peer Review of Highways planned for September 2021;
  - Recommend that all Councillors are invited to an open day at Bilsthorpe Depot to gain a full understanding of operational highways activities.

### **Information**

2. At the Transport and Environment Committee of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021, Councillors agreed to the commencement of a cross-party highway review. The first meeting of the review panel took place on 14<sup>th</sup> July. The members of the Panel are:
  - Cllr Neil Clarke (Chairman)
  - Cllr John Ogle
  - Cllr Sam Smith
  - Cllr Nigel Turner
  - Cllr Tom Hollis
  - Cllr Penny Gowland
  - Cllr Maureen Dobson
3. The panel resolved to add the management of utility works to the scope of the review, and the revised terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1 reflecting that change. Members of the panel took part in an introductory discussion on highway services and agreed to write to all Councillors seeking views on what currently works well and where improvements are needed as well as seeking ideas for improvement from Councillors. This call for evidence was sent to all County Councillors following the meeting.
4. A page on the Council's website setting out the progress of the Highways Review work has been set up and is being updated regularly:  
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/cross-party-highways-review-panel>
5. As part of the review, it was agreed to seek support from external consultants to provide national and international knowledge and expertise. WSP have been appointed to support the work of the panel. WSP have many years experience of working in the highways sector and

currently have clients in over 20 highway authorities providing guidance and support on highways reviews and highway asset management and maintenance practice.

6. The second meeting of the panel, a day-long meeting, took place at Biltshorpe Depot on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and involved practical demonstrations of plant and equipment used in highway maintenance, specifically spray injection and mechanised patching and cold-bagged material pot-hole filling. Members of the panel discussed current approaches and techniques with front-line staff to understand their perspectives. Member also saw a range of environmental maintenance and winter maintenance plant and equipment and met some of the key staff involved in those activities. Training of staff was discussed and panel members viewed the new Via training centre. The interaction with frontline staff and seeing practical demonstrations was felt to be very useful by the panel. Following the demonstrations, members discussed possible improvements to approaches to road and footway maintenance with officers, and requested further work be undertaken on revised approaches, for consideration at the next meeting of the panel on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2021. The third panel meeting will also consider current drainage and environmental maintenance matters, and will receive an initial input from WSP.
7. Further Panel meeting dates have been set for 7th and 20th October. In addition, dates are currently being finalised over the late summer/early autumn for the Panel to meet with members and officers from a number of Councils across the country to share their perspectives on highways matters and receive details of relevant innovations and approaches that may be worth consideration in Nottinghamshire.
8. As part of the overarching review, the Local Government Association (LGA) will undertake a targeted highways peer review to consider the progress made and emerging outputs from the highways review work. The LGA peer review is planned to take place during the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> September. As part of the process a number of Councillors, officers and stakeholders will be interviewed. The peer review will be delivered by a group of Councillors and officers drawn from other local authorities

### **Biltshorpe Depot Members Open Day**

9. Following on from the success of the practical demonstrations which formed part of the second review panel, it is considered appropriate to offer a similar session to all County Councillors as part of an Open Day at Biltshorpe Depot. This would be timed to be ahead of any recommendation emerging from the review coming to Transport and Environment / Policy Committee so that Councillors have the opportunity to see the practical techniques in action and to meet front line staff.

### **Other Options Considered**

10. None

### **Reason for Recommendations**

11. The review provides an opportunity to renew and develop highways services to match the ambitions of the County Council and expectations of residents to ensure the right services are being delivered in the most cost effective way.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human

rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

13. Per the Resolution of Transport & Environment Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, the cost of the review is being accommodated within the existing highway budget and is estimated to be £20-£40k . Any financial implications arising from the review will be considered as part of the review outcomes and reported to Committee.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

14. Any public sector equality duty implications arising from the review will be considered as part of the review outcomes and report to Committee.

### **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

15. Effective highway maintenance approaches can reduce congestion, its knock-on effects on air quality and its impacts on local communities. The recycling of materials and aggregates is also considered when delivering highways schemes. Any specific implications for sustainability and the environment will be considered as part of the review outcomes and report to Committee

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) Considers the update provided in the report
- 2) Approves the holding of a Members Open Day at Bilsthorpe depot ahead of final recommendations coming to this Committee.

**Adrian Smith**  
**Corporate Director, Place**

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (SJE – 03/08/2021)**

16. This decision falls within the Terms of Reference of the Transport & Environment Committee to whom responsibility for the exercise of the Authority's functions relating to the planning, management and maintenance of highways and pavements has been delegated.

### **Financial Comments (RWK 05/08/2021)**

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Report to Transport and Environment Committee 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – Highways Review

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All