



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **Thursday, 7 October 2004**

agenda item number

from: **Cabinet Member for Environment**

REPORT FOR PERIOD JULY 2004- SEPTEMBER 2004

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.

Nationally there is growing concern about motorcycle and moped casualties and national statistics have shown a steady increase over the past 10 years. During the last 6 months the Department has introduced a number of initiatives to target this group and improve the figures for Nottinghamshire:

- "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. Building Better Communities

I was pleased to receive a progress report on this year's programmes of work. You will recall that the programme this year, the early action year, consists of three strands:

- environmental and highway works in deprived and disadvantaged areas
- refurbishment of existing environmental improvements
- improvements to highway maintenance in built up areas

In total some 247 projects have been identified totalling £4.78m. Many of the projects are now at the design stage and some of the work is being carried out by our partner, Babtie. The bulk of the refurbishment work and the highway maintenance improvements are scheduled to commence in the autumn.

I remain confident that the delivery of the BBC programmes will be achieved and I am sure Members would like to join me in thanking all the officers involved in making this major initiative a success.

3. Progress with Implementing the Authority's Waste Strategy

Discussions are continuing with the County Council's two preferred Bidders under the headings of Legal, Financial and Technical such that the Best and Final Offer documentation can be agreed with the two Bidders to reduce the final negotiation period with the preferred Bidder. It is proposed that the Best and Final Offer documentation will be issued to the two Bidders on the 1 October 2004 followed by an eight week tender period with the documents returned to the Authority on 29 November 2004. The Authority's Procurement Team will then assess the return bids in order to identify the successful Bidder by early January 2005. This will then lead to a period of final detailed negotiations to include the Bidders Bank and Insurance Company.

The Council will recall that it authorised the development of a Members Project Board to oversee the implementation of the Contract. The Board consisting of myself, Councillor Carter and Councillor Cutts, the Director and Deputy Director of the Environment Department together with the Executive Head of Democratic & Legal Services and Assistant Treasurer Financial Strategy. The Board has held monthly meetings with representatives of the County Negotiations Team so that they can be fully advised of the key issues of the Contract and the services that are to be provided.

4. Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs)

In February 2003 the Authority was selected by the Countryside Agency to be one of eight pilot authorities nationally to formulate pilot ROWIPs and test out the statutory guidance released by DEFRA. This will allow the Countryside Agency to pull together good practice guidance.

The Authority elected to carry out the project in Ashfield, Broxtowe and Gedling. The Nottinghamshire ROWIP was the first to be published in March 2004 and the remaining seven pilot plans are still awaited. The feedback from the Countryside Agency and other authorities is extremely positive and the pilot ROWIP has raised the profile of Nottinghamshire County Council's work on countryside access nationally. A copy of the ROWIP is available in the Local Government Library. It is an excellent document and I have offered my congratulations to the officers involved in its production.

All Highway Authorities must publish a ROWIP by November 2007 and the County Council clearly has a head start as a result of this pilot work. The Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum, a statutory consultative body established in July 2003 under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, will have a role in the production of the full ROWIP.

5. Transport White Paper (TWP)

The latest Transport White Paper was published in July 2004. It sets out the Government's vision for transport for the next 30 years with a funding commitment until 2015 and I thought Members would be interested in the main points.

The Government's starting point is that Britain cannot build its way out of growing road congestion. There will be some selective additional capacity and a pricing system leading to more optimal use of available road space. The County Council has a number of road schemes in the Highways Agency's current work programme (the Targeted Programme for Improvement (TPI)) including the A46 improvement, three A1 junction improvements, the M1 and A453 Multi Modal Studies. The broad thrust of the White Paper would seem to suggest that the current TPI schemes will be delivered.

Buses are recognised as the main form of public transport for reducing congestion and tackling social exclusion and some changes are proposed to help local authorities manage local bus services more effectively. It is expected that we will have to deliver the changes through LTP2 and the bus strategy as little or no additional funding has been identified.

The TWP states that despite a significant increase in light rail over the past few years, the picture for individual schemes is mixed. Light rail works best on routes with high traffic and passenger flows, but bus options are considered to offer the most cost effective solutions on most corridors. Any new schemes must be consistent with the principles set out by the National Audit Office (ie part of an integrated transport strategy) and be financially robust. We are confident that NET Line 2 meets this criteria and evidence of the early success of NET Line One has been forwarded to DfT to support the case for Phase 2.

I am optimistic that the policies outlined in the White Paper are broadly in line with the Authority's transport strategy.

Councillor Terry Butler
Cabinet Member for Environment

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