



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **Thursday, 6 May 2004**

agenda item number

from: **Cabinet Member for Environment**

REPORT FOR PERIOD MARCH 2004 – APRIL 2004

1. Draft Traffic Management Bill

The Bill is currently running through Parliament and contains a wide range of proposals to reduce congestion on the national road network. Some of the main implications for the County Council are listed below:

- There will be a duty on Local Authorities to keep traffic flowing and they will be required to appoint a Traffic Manager who will co-ordinate all functions which have an impact on traffic flow and congestion
- Powers under the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) will be enhanced giving Authorities more powers to co-ordinate works effectively with the aim of minimising disruption
- Consolidation of civil traffic enforcement legislation covering parking, bus lanes and some moving traffic offences.

These extra duties will in most cases require some additional resources in terms of staff, IT equipment and also changes to existing policies and procedures.

I have reported previously on the County Council's feasibility study into the implications of pursuing parking enforcement powers. The main reason for considering taking up these powers is the opportunity it provides for better traffic management. This opportunity will now potentially be extended to include many moving traffic offences. This will mean that the Authority will have considerably greater influence over traffic management in its area.

I will bring a further report to Council when more details are known. I think it is worth noting that the Department for Transport specifically asked for one of our Principal Officers, Clive Wood from the Transportation Division to be seconded to them to work on the

regulatory framework of the Bill. This is a positive acknowledgement of the commitment of the County Council to the aims of the legislation.

2. **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and Rights of Way**

I am pleased to report the adoption of new policies in compliance with the DDA which will improve the accessibility of rights of way for a greater number of people. This will involve keeping the number of authorised structures on rights of way to a minimum and ensuring that we always favour the least restrictive option. For example, stiles may be changed to gates and stone surfaces may be laid on some sections. We hope that as a result many more people will be able to enjoy the rich rights of way network across the County.

3. **Grants for Community Transport Schemes**

Nottinghamshire County Council has made money available to fund the development of voluntary and community transport since the mid 1980s. Approximately 25 voluntary car and minibus schemes are currently supported throughout Nottinghamshire providing a vital service to people who are without access to, or unable to use, normal public transport. Many of these citizens are from vulnerable groups and would otherwise be seriously isolated.

I am pleased to be able to award grant aid amounting to more than £177,000 to a number of voluntary and community transport schemes for the 2004/05 financial year.

4. **Extension of Contract with Babtie Group**

The County Council entered into a contract with Babtie Group for the provision of engineering and related services in July 2000. The contract is operated as a mutually beneficial partnership and provides an efficient response to a fluctuating workload. The volume of work undertaken by Babtie over the last three and a half years has totalled nearly £4m. The availability of this level of additional resource has been a key factor in our ability to achieve full Local Transport Plan spend.

The improved LTP settlement and the forthcoming Building Better Communities programme mean that the range of work available for Babtie will increase significantly over the coming year. We have a good and improving relationship with Babtie and, therefore, I have approved the extension of the contract until 31 March 2005.

5. **NCC Cycling Design Guide 2004**

Nottinghamshire County Council has been at the forefront of cycling promotion and infrastructure implementation for over 20 years. The Local Transport Plans acknowledge the contribution that cycling can

make towards a more sustainable local transport system. The Highway Services Best Value review identified the need to implement cycling policies and practices to ensure consistency of approach across all services.

The Cycling Design Guide (CDG) draws together and rationalises existing cycle design guidance into a single comprehensive reference document. It will be used by our staff, partners and agents not only when designing cycle facilities, but during the design of all traffic/transport, development control and maintenance schemes.

I am pleased to adopt the CDG and proud to report that the Department for Transport have asked if they can include sections from the Guide on the National Cycling Strategy website to illustrate good practice.

Councillor Terry Butler
Cabinet Member for Environment

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