

report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 19 May 2011

agenda item number

11a x.

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

REPORT FOR PERIOD MARCH-MAY 2011

Street Lighting Energy Saving

1. I am pleased to report works to install part-night lighting in the pilot parishes of East Markham, Flintham, Hockerton and Scarrington were carried out during March.
2. Final proposals have been published for nine parishes in the Bingham electoral division and for Bingham Town, following local consultations. Part-night lighting works in this area are expected to be substantially completed during May.
3. Draft proposals for 19 parishes in the Misterton electoral division have been published for consultation. Proposals for Blyth & Harworth, Tuxford, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cotgrave electoral divisions are at various stages of preparation.
4. Local Members are being involved in the consultation process, helping to identify local community groups for inclusion in consultations along with the Parish & Town Councils. This process worked particularly well in Bingham where a good response to the consultation helped to shape the final proposals.
5. This scheme is forecast to save around £1.25m per year at 2010/11 prices and CO2 emissions of approximately 5,800 tonnes per year, saving a further £70,000 on the purchase of carbon allowances.

Royal Wedding Street Parties

6. I am pleased to have been able to assist in facilitating street parties to mark the recent royal wedding.

7. Members will be aware of the encouragement for authorities to cut bureaucracy to enable celebrations to take place. However roads cannot be closed to traffic without regard to the due legal process.
8. I therefore agreed with Highways Officers early in the year that we would seek a way to enable street parties to be organised with as little fuss as possible, yet having regard to risks and liabilities the County Council may attract from these events through the authority's roles of highway and traffic authority. We sought to achieve a balance between the competing demands of road users and local communities and indeed the divisions that sometimes exist within those communities.
9. We therefore took the decision to avoid requiring the public jump through hoops such as providing insurance or incurring additional costs. In order to minimise the risks and liabilities to the County Council, we also decided that street parties would be held in a traffic free environment created with legally correct traffic regulation orders and appropriate traffic signing. This approach meant that the County Council provided both the legal orders and traffic signs to each party.
10. This approach, which has attracted considerable media attention, has supported the many organisers of parties in their local community. In a poll published in early April Nottinghamshire was ranked 4th of all authorities in England which were enabling street parties to take place. Although it was not possible to agree to all requests for road closures due to traffic and access requirements, highway officers planned the logistics of delivering signs and cones to 72 locations across the County.
11. Recognising the considerable public interest in the holding of events on the highway, we have taken the opportunity to move forward with a web based events registration system to ease the increasing workload in this area.

Changes to Highway Maintenance Policies

12. I am able to report that budget savings have been identified in routine highway maintenance activities for 2011/2012 as part of the 'Big Conversation' consultation and were part of the overall budget report considered by Council on the 24th February 2011.

Savings will be made in the following ways;

- By reducing road signing clutter by only replacing and installing essential signing.
- By prioritising the treatment of weed growth and investigating alternative treatments to spraying.

- By reducing urban and rural grass cutting as required to maintain visibility only, and developing guidance to support members of the community wishing to cut grass themselves.
- By consideration of the removal of areas of soft landscaping and prevention of further installations of soft landscaping together with the streamlining of the process for public sponsorship of planting on County maintained areas.
- By prioritising funding for tree and hedge maintenance to maintain the Authorities' legal obligations only.
- By prioritising the funding for gully cleaning activities.

Chapel Lane Ravenshead 30 mph Speed Limit

13. Chapel Lane is a road forming the boundary of Ravenshead and is currently subject to a speed limit of 40mph. The road has residential properties along the entire length of its western boundary and properties on both sides near its junction with Main Road. Though the road is narrow in places, it has no footway for most of its length. As part of the county wide 'Village Speed Limit Review' which aims to reduce average vehicle speeds and improve road safety, it has been proposed to lower the speed limit along Chapel Lane to 30mph.
14. During the consultation the County Council received 9 replies of which 2 objected to the proposed speed limit. The letters of support included the local Councillor and the Parish Council. The County Council received no comments from the Police. The objectors considered that Chapel Lane was suited to the current 40mph limit, and that the new limit would not be enforced, would not reduce traffic speeds and wouldn't be an effective use of public money.
15. I have considered these objections and determined that not only will reducing the speed limit bring the road into line with other village roads within Nottinghamshire, but it is also one of the most cost effective ways of improving road safety including the threat to vulnerable road users at this location. I have therefore decided to make the order.

A614 50mph Speed Limit

16. The A614 is a former trunk road linking Nottingham with the A1 at Apley Head roundabout and is currently subject to the national speed limit of 60mph. As an accident reduction measure and in keeping with the county wide 'A & B Road Speed Limit Review' it was proposed to lower the A614 speed limit between Leapool Island and Ollerton Roundabout to 50mph. It was also proposed to lower the speed limit on the A60 between Redhill and Leapool Island from 60mph to 40mph.

17. Public consultation took place, and a number of objections were raised and subsequently resolved by changes in the design. However one objection remained outstanding. The objector considered that the new 50mph speed limit would cause convoys of vehicles to form and suggested that speed limits should be reduced only at the junctions and that illuminated speed signs should be installed. The police did not formally object, although they did have some concerns over enforcing the new limit, particularly between Mickledale Lane and Leapool Island. If funding becomes available for safety cameras, then the Police would be happy to support the speed limit along the entire route.
18. I have reviewed these representations and considered that by introducing the 50mph speed limit along the entire route, traffic will consistently be freer flowing, therefore reducing the need for overtaking and formation of traffic convoys. I also acknowledged that the introduction of the 50mph and 40mph speed limits would help to reduce speeds and accident rates along the route. I have therefore decided to make the order.

Church Walk Area Worksop Residents Parking Scheme

19. The Church Walk area of Worksop is a residential area near to Worksop town centre and is subject to severe intrusion by short term shoppers' parking and day-long parking by employees at local businesses. The roads in the area are narrow and the intrusive parking is often indiscriminate, leading to the obstruction of private accesses and difficulties for large vehicles traversing the streets. Following consultation with residents and other interested parties, a Residents' Parking Scheme incorporating permit holder parking operating Monday to Saturday between 9am and 5pm, has been proposed.
20. There has been one objection from a resident outside the scheme on Canal Road who was worried that displaced parking will adversely affect his area. However this is over 150m away from the scheme, and much less convenient for access to the town centre. There is no reason to believe that parking will increase on Canal Road, and I have agreed the scheme should be implemented.

Birds Lane Kirkby-in-Ashfield One Way Traffic Regulation Order

21. Complaints had been received about vehicles violating the existing one way scheme on Birds Lane, and plans were drawn up for upgraded signing and lining. It was then discovered that the original traffic regulation order made in 1938 was drawn up incorrectly, and was not legally enforceable.
22. It is necessary to revoke the original order, and make a new one so that enforcement can be carried out. When the public consultation was made, one objection to the revocation of the original order was received. The objector was worried that Birds Lane would become a 2-way street, but this

is not the Council's intention, as the one way system is essential for safety reasons. Despite correspondence explaining the process and requesting the objection be withdrawn, no reply has been received. I have therefore agreed to make the orders so that the signing scheme can proceed.

Local Bus Services in Bassetlaw

23. Four Bus routes in Bassetlaw have been re-tendered and reorganised, to meet a saving requirement of £185,000. The outcome of the tendering exercise surpassed this target and a further saving of £30,000 was made. This extra saving made will now be reinvested in 2 innovative schemes with ERDF support as part of the 'Jobs in Worksop' project.
24. The re-tender will allow 2 existing services from Harworth to Doncaster, and Harworth to Worksop, to be combined. This will allow improved frequencies on the Harworth to Worksop route as requested by local residents.
25. The £30k will be invested in improving Sunday services between Worksop and Retford, and a limited service to villages in the Blyth area. The service to the villages in the Blyth area will be an interim solution pending planned retendering in the area later in the year, allowing opportunity for review. I have approved the award of the new tenders for the local bus services in the Bassetlaw District following the competitive tendering process.

Pavement Café Licences

26. In previous years these had been charged on a cost basis, usually at around £1000. However following a review and simplification of the licensing procedures the charge will now be £215 (non-refundable) for a five year licence. There are currently only a few licensed pavement cafés in Nottinghamshire but I am hoping the lower fee and simpler application process will result in many more.

Sponsorship of Planting in the Highway

27. Following a review and a rationalisation of the licensing procedures no charge will be made for processing application forms for sponsoring planting in the highway. All planting proposals will be subject to a preliminary assessment by the County Council's Accident Investigation Unit for which no charge will be made. However, if any road safety problems are identified it may be necessary for a safety audit to be carried out for which a charge will be made to the applicant (they will be contacted beforehand to ensure they consent to pay). The costs of planting works and the provision/installation of the sponsorship plaques are to be paid directly by the sponsoring body.

Nottinghamshire Sustainable Market Towns – Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid

28. Nottinghamshire County Council has submitted a bid to central Government for up to £4.9million over the next four years. This is a competitive bid process so not all bids will be supported and even those which do gain support are unlikely to be supported in their entirety. A decision on support is anticipated this summer.
29. The bid centres on the four market towns (Mansfield, Newark, Worksop and Retford) in the county and their surrounding built up areas due to the concentration of jobs and services within them (a joint bid will be submitted for the Nottingham principal urban area). The bid therefore aims to improve the vitality and viability of the market towns by improving access to the jobs, training and services, as well as leisure activities (and their associated economy) that are available within the towns. The market towns will act as the transport hubs, given the existing facilities and good transport links to them. The bid will target the key transport corridors into the market towns, and the communities adjacent to them. Where appropriate, mini-hubs will be created along these corridors to provide better integration between the existing cycling and walking networks (and to a lesser extent car users) and the key transport corridors. The bid therefore aims to maximise usage of existing (and proposed) facilities.
30. The package will deliver travel behaviour change and transfer to a low carbon transport system through four complementary elements. The elements focus on improving access to employment and training; managing congestion; helping to attract inward investment; and enabling the transfer to a low-carbon transport system. Element components include targeted travel planning for all ages and activities, supported by training and infrastructure to enable safe and convenient travel; targeted marketing to encourage active and sustainable travel, maximising the existing transport networks; and helping to facilitate the transfer to low-carbon public, freight, and personal transport through marketing and the provision of infrastructure.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways