

meeting	COUNTY COUNCIL		
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REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY – APRIL 2010

Newark Bus Station

1. In my last report to Council I explained that I had approved provisional funding for a replacement bus station in Newark, but that the scheme was dependent on the wider redevelopment of the Potterdyke site which includes a new supermarket, car parking, retail outlets and health care facilities. I am pleased to report that Newark and Sherwood District Council have now granted planning permission for the whole redevelopment.
2. The existing bus station will close at the end of May and passengers will be directed to new, temporary, on-street bus stops. The new bus station will be fully enclosed and will include a staff office, information point, public toilets, a driver toilet, a baby changing room and seating. It is due to open by Christmas 2011.

Highway Maintenance

3. I am delighted to announce that we will be spending an extra £4m on repairing the county's roads compared to the last financial year, and this brings the total budget to £38.4m. This represents an increase of 11% which is well above inflation. We know from consultation and feedback that this is something people feel very strongly about and the extra money should go some way to addressing the problem. It will be used to repair potholes, resurface roads and pavements and clear roadside drains and gulleys.
4. I also welcome the recent announcement by Government that it will give a further £100m to local councils to tackle the problem of potholes caused by the recent bad weather. Nottinghamshire County Council has been

allocated £1.315M of this money and I look forward to bringing a further report forward detailing how this will be spent across the County.

Transport Schemes for 2010/11

5. I am also pleased to report that on 24 March, Cabinet agreed a provisional programme of transport improvement schemes for 2010/11. The programme is wide-ranging and includes road safety measures (including those near schools), cycle routes, improvements for pedestrians and public transport and enhancements of the rights of way network. All the schemes will be mainly funded by the Government through the Local Transport Plans. The overall programme will make the roads across the county safer and less congested.

Road Safety Figures

6. I am delighted to report the latest road safety figures which show that the County has already reached Government targets for this year. The number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents in Nottinghamshire has fallen by almost 75% in 10 years, the number of adults by 45%. By 2010 the Government expected a 40% reduction in the number of adults killed or seriously injured and a 50% in the reduction of children.
7. These are significant reductions and are a tribute to the work of the Council and our partners on the various initiatives we have implemented, including education and awareness campaigns and targeted traffic calming measures.

Speed Management Strategy

8. Effective speed management is a key factor in achieving government targets to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in road accidents. It can also lead to considerable improvements in the environment and the quality of life of many residents. The County Council has developed its current speed management strategy in line with government guidance with the key elements being:
 - a review of village speed limits
 - a review of speed limits on A and B classified roads
 - A trial of 20 mph limits outside schools
 - traffic calming measures
 - collaborative working with the Police on speed enforcement using speed cameras
 - the introduction of interactive speed signs

9. During 2009 the Government issued its consultation document 'A Safer Way' which outlined its road safety targets for 2020. In order to achieve these targets the County Council needs to be sure that its speed management strategy is robust. I have approved a revised strategy which will continue with the successful programmes above and will include the following additional programmes:
- a review of the speed limits on C and unclassified roads where there are identified road safety issues
 - introduction of 20 mph zones in residential and urban areas where this is identified benefit
 - support for community speed watch schemes.

Environmental Weight Restrictions Programme

10. The County Council carried out significant work during the 1990s to introduce weight limit restrictions on C and unclassified roads in response to long standing problems with HGVs in rural communities. Since that time there has been a spread of both residential and commercial developments into urban and rural areas and this has resulted in calls for more EWRs to be introduced, clearly illustrating the adverse affect HGVs have on the local environment and quality of life.
11. A review has now been completed and I have agreed that the County will be split into urban and rural areas, with equal funding for each and this will ensure that the implementation of schemes will be split across the community bringing benefits to more residents than is possible under the current policy.
12. The assessment criteria will be based upon 5 scored factors:
- the road hierarchy
 - volume of HGVs
 - road safety factors
 - environmental considerations: noise, pollution, vibration
 - special factors eg proximity to schools, hospitals etc, integrity of the network
13. The assessment method does allow for some subjectivity to be applied: for example other factors may include the increased mileage that HGVs would have to travel and the commercial viability of businesses.
14. It is recognised that the delivery of all the identified schemes will take some years to complete, so I have agreed that, as an interim measure, 'Unsuitable for HGV' signs will be placed on those roads that have a high priority for the introduction of an EWR.

15. The effective enforcement of EWRs relies heavily on police resources and in some cases the Council's trading standards officers have been enforcing restrictions. At present I am considering a 12 month pilot enforcement regime which will be managed by trading standards officers and which will call on the involvement of local residents and organisations very much in line with the local community speed watch schemes. I will bring a further report on how this develops in due course.

Residential Parking Standards for New Developments

16. The County Council adopted the "Parking Provision for New Developments" guidance document in May 2004 to support policies in the Draft Joint Structure Plan. The guidance applies to both new residential and non-residential developments and is aimed at encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport to the car.
17. However since that time the Structure Plan has been replaced by the East Midlands Regional Plan and a new Planning Policy Statement, PPS3, has been published. PPS3 states that local planning authorities should develop residential parking policies for their areas, taking account of expected levels of car ownership, the importance of promoting good design and the need to use land efficiently.
18. In view of this, it is considered that standards for residential parking are solely a matter for district councils, as planning authorities, and the County Council should not seek to formulate a policy on this matter as it has little, or no, involvement in the layout of individual residential developments. I have agreed, therefore, that Council's current guidance document is withdrawn. Temporary residential parking standards will be adopted until the local planning authorities have had an opportunity to develop their own policies.
19. I can confirm the County Council's continued commitment to the parking standards for non-residential developments which are set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 13. The Local Transport Plan provides the overall context for parking policy in the county.

Rail Links

20. In January 2009 the Government set up a company, 'High-Speed Two', to "analyse the business case for a high speed rail line initially between London and the West Midlands; to make detailed route proposals for this first stretch of line; and to outline options for extension to cities further north and to Scotland". There was no reference at that stage to serving the East Midlands. Jointly with the City Council, officers have been working to urge that we should be included in the high-speed network.

21. On 11th March 2010 the Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Adonis, published the report and a White Paper setting out the Government's strategy, which is "for the development of an initial core high speed network which would link London to Birmingham, Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds, with high speed trains running from the outset through to Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow and Edinburgh". I greatly welcome that the East Midlands has now been included in the proposed high-speed network on exactly the same basis as other places. The fast connections this will give us to London and the other Cities will be of huge benefit to our local and regional economy. Work will be undertaken over the coming 18 months to establish the precise route and the location of the East Midlands stations. Officers will engage with this work to press that the station should be appropriately located to maximise accessibility for City and County residents.

Concessionary Bus Travel

22. Members will be aware that changes had been proposed to the local concessionary bus travel scheme as part of the 2010/11 budget. However, following extensive consultation with local voluntary and community groups, we have decided to continue to provide free travel for the companions of some disabled passengers. This will ensure that blind passengers and people with learning difficulties or mental health problems will be able to have access to key services and maintain an important level of independence when traveling by bus around the county.

Transport Improvements in Kimberley

23. I was very pleased to see the start of this major improvement scheme in Kimberley earlier this year. There was wide consultation with local people and businesses on this scheme in 2007 and the scheme was developed in partnership with Kimberley Regeneration Group which consists of representatives from local government and businesses.
24. General improvements will be made to road surfaces, drainage and lighting around the town and new bus shelters will be installed. Main Street will also benefit from Victorian-style lights, refurbished zebra crossings and attractive paving. The scheme is due to be completed in July of this year and I very much hope that the scheme will support existing businesses, encourage new business and boost community pride.

Transport Improvements in Carlton, Netherfield and Gedling

25. In February of last year the Council asked residents, businesses and community organisations for their ideas on how to improve the areas of Carlton, Netherfield and Gedling. As a result a range of improvements will be carried out over the next two years, including pavement repairs, the installation of pedestrian crossings, upgrading bus stops and timetable

information, improved parking for disabled people and measures to improve traffic flow in Carlton Square.

26. These improvements are designed to cut congestion and make it easier for people to shop in their local centres whether they travel by foot, car, bike or bus. It is hoped that this, in turn, will help local business to prosper.

Transport Improvements in the Warsop Area

27. A similar consultation to that which took place around Carlton and Netherfield, is now underway in the Warsop area. Local residents and businesses in Market Warsop, Church Warsop, Meden Vale, Warsop Vale and Spion Kop have all been asked to suggest improvements that would encourage them to shop locally and get around more easily. The consultation will run until 23 May. Work will begin on the improvements in July and schemes should be implemented over the next few years.

Village Speed Limit Review

28. The county-wide review of village speed limits aims to reduce average speeds through villages and improve road safety. As part of this review I have agreed that the 30 mph speed limit on sections of road through Kneeton will be extended to within the limits of the residential development. One objection was received concerning the installation of repeater signs on Vicarage Road. However, the signs are required by law and they must be installed at prescribed intervals if the speed limit is to be legally enforceable.
29. Similar changes are taking place in Sutton Bonington and West Leake where 30 mph limits are being extended and some 40 mph limits are being introduced within the extent of the residential development. During the informal consultation it became clear that residents favoured an extended scheme along some sections of road and the final proposal incorporated some of these changes. A number of objections still remain, but having looked carefully at all the arguments I am satisfied that the scheme should now go ahead as planned.

Interactive Speed Signs

30. The use of 'Your speed' signs was pioneered in Nottinghamshire and they are very popular with local communities reducing vehicle speeds by up to 5mph. As such they are a valuable tool in our work to improve road safety. In my report in December I announced that I had reviewed the current policy for the installation of interactive speed signs and approved a widespread programme for a further 27 signs around the county.

31. I was delighted to switch on the first of these signs on Swiney Way in Toton on 25 March. Swiney Way is a busy 30 mph road with many residential properties and a school nearby and I am confident that the new signs will help combat the speeding problems that have been identified.

Voluntary and Community Transport Schemes

32. The County Council provides almost £135,000 in funding and support to 14 voluntary car schemes which provide 110,000 trips per year for over 2,700 registered users and with 277 volunteer drivers. We also support 10 community minibus schemes with funding of £95,513 which provide 100,000 trips per year with over 800 registered users and 150 volunteer drivers. The schemes are used by local people and community groups who need help to access shopping, health, learning or leisure activities.
33. In 2008 the Council commenced a review of third sector transport and funding with the intention that new arrangements would be introduced from 2010. However, in autumn 2009 national changes to the funding for community transport were proposed. Having carefully considered the feedback we received during the consultation period, I have agreed to extend the existing funding arrangements for a further year. This will allow for the full review to be completed.

Highways Agency plans for A52 - Priory to QMC

34. I have asked for an urgent meeting with representatives of the Highways Agency to discuss their proposals to close a section of the A52 in one direction from May to August. I have concerns that no alternative routes have any capacity to accommodate many of the 40,000 vehicles that currently use that section of road daily.
35. My favoured solution is for the Highways Agency to maintain a “tidal flow” allowing traffic to get into Nottingham in the morning peak and out again in the evening. This would seem to be the best compromise if the works are needed and I am advised it is technically achievable.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways