

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks to update members on various issues relating to the Transport and Highways portfolio since the last report to Council.

Key Achievements in Highways Services in 2011/12

2. The Highways Division has continued to restructure and reorganise to deliver existing services, while improving efficiency, taking on new services and strengthening links with local communities and businesses.
3. The former district council highways staff have been transferred to the Highways Services Group and we have been able to reduce the number of depots with the opening of the new purpose built facility at Bilsthorpe.
4. The Traded Services Review will establish a new relationship with the private sector, and encourage local spending. The ten-year contract is worth up to £150 million and includes resurfacing, road markings, surface dressing and patching, gully emptying, street light column replacement, fencing and land reclamation. We will also retain a responsive in-house highways team to deliver services such as winter maintenance.
5. We have been working closely with local communities, for example through the Snow Warden scheme and the Junior Road Safety officers. The Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) continues to deliver cost effective environmental improvements which make a big difference to residents.
6. We have made it easier for the public to access services. Procedures have been simplified and costs reduced for pavement cafe licences, seasonal decoration licences, sponsored planting in the Highway, and dropped kerb installations.
7. We have run a number of very effective campaigns both locally and at a national level. The A453 widening scheme has been given the go ahead, as has the Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme. We have made use of on-line social media to run campaigns on Drink Driving, Cycling Safety, and the "Fatal 4" reaching sections of the community not reached by traditional press releases.

8. Through all this, we have delivered a big programme of improvements and maintenance to roads and public rights of way. As a small sample of the variety of projects I will mention the A614 safety scheme, the A60 Forest Lane junction, the programmes of new pedestrian crossings, environmental weight limits and parking schemes, and the Ashfield and Mansfield Multi-user Trail.
9. Finally, as the new Lead Flood Authority for Nottinghamshire, we have set up the Flood Board, which for the first time bring together all the agencies involved in managing surface water flooding. This is already delivering joint projects will reduce the risk of flooding for residents.

Key Achievements in Transport Services 2011/12

10. Transport Services have continued to innovate and reinvest savings into improving public transport across the County.
11. There has been major investment in infrastructure. The new Newark bus station opened in November, and work on the Mansfield bus station is well underway. In addition, two pocket park and ride sites at Cotgrave and Stragglethorpe opened in time for Christmas, allowing them to be promoted for Christmas shopping trips to Nottingham.
12. Bus services have been revised; a new service linking Hucknall, Annesley Business Park and Selston started in August, and an improved frequency between Worksop and Harworth started in May. We have been installing real time information displays which, by improving the information to customers, have been shown to increase ridership.
13. The concessionary travel scheme has been secured over the next two years allowing for anticipated patronage and bus fare increases, providing the council and operators with budget stability through to March 2014, and continuing to provide the residents of Nottinghamshire with a wide range of travel opportunities and choice.
14. We are making improvements to community transport provision as well. The Transport Accessible to All (TATA) interactive website was launched which gives information about transport offered by a wide range of community and voluntary groups, as well as information on accessible taxis, links to other sources of information and volunteering opportunities. The TATA website also includes a Mobility Needs Register whereby individuals can supply information where appropriate transport is not available, or about additional mobility needs. In addition we have secured funding for four new vehicles, as the TITAN (Towards Integrated Transport across Nottinghamshire) project is rolled out.
15. We have also made significant efficiencies and improvements to the operation of the County Councils vehicle fleet by introducing a real time tracking system for all vehicles and reducing the fleet size by over 50 vehicles and reducing the spend on business travel, altogether delivering savings of over £800,000.

Street Lighting Energy Saving Project Update

16. I am pleased to announce further progress on the street lighting energy saving project. We are listening to what residents have to say, and taking a flexible approach to the programme, responding to issues and making changes if they are justified.

17. In Rushcliffe, works have been completed in Ratcliffe on Soar, Stanford on Soar, Sutton Bonington, West Leake, Bradmore, Bunny, Normanton on the Wolds and Plumtree parishes. Consultations have now finished in West Bridgford and the responses are being considered.
18. In Newark and Sherwood, consultations have finished in Farnsfield and Lowdham Electoral Division, and the responses are being considered. Consultation is now underway in Blidworth Electoral Division.
19. In Gedling, consultation is underway in Newstead Electoral Division, and will start shortly in Arnold.
20. In Bassetlaw, works have been completed in Dunham, East Drayton, East Markham, Laneham, Normanton on Trent, North and South Wheatley, North Leverton, Rampton, South Leverton, and Treswell parishes. In Worksop, we have decided not to switch the street lights off, after taking advice from other bodies, including the police, who have a number of concerns surrounding crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. What we are doing in Worksop does not set a precedent for other areas. Each area will continue to be judged on its own merits and amendments made as a result of consultation and feedback.

Acquisition of Colliery Branch Lines

21. I can confirm that we have completed the purchase of three disused colliery railway lines. These are the Calverton, Cotgrave and Bilsthorpe lines. A fourth line is in the process of being purchased. The intention is to use some LTP budget allocation to undertake first phase of restoration work and if possible attract additional external funding needed to develop the lines as recreational greenways. Further development work will be required to attract further funding and complete restoration over the next few years. The lines are well placed to link into the County's existing and successful network of recreational routes, and to connect with existing country parks and tourist sites. When developed the routes will offer a great amenity to local residents, and significantly enhance the County's offer to visiting tourists looking for off-road cycling as part of their holiday or visit.

Bilsthorpe Depot Opening

22. The new Bilsthorpe depot was officially opened on Wednesday 11th April by Councillor Keith Walker, Chairman of the Council. The event was attended by the Leader, Councillor Richard Jackson, Mick Burrows, Tim Gregory and Jas Hundal, plus invited guests from Interserve, URS, UK Coal, Bilsthorpe Parish Council, and Nottingham City Council. Despite the provision of a last minute supply of umbrellas, the rain was kind enough to stay away.
23. I am pleased to report that the project has since been commended in the ICE East Midlands Merit Awards 2012 held on Friday 20th April, which is a great credit to the consultants, contractors and the Council's highways staff involved in the project.

A6075 50mph Speed Limit

24. The A6075 is a principal road connecting the A614 at Ollerton to the A60 at Mansfield Woodhouse via the village of Edwinstowe. The road is rural in character and carries a mix of local and through traffic. In the three years up to December 2010 there were 25 accidents causing injury on this stretch of road, including 3 fatalities. A significant number of these accidents were caused by vehicles travelling at excessive speed and/or losing control. Despite a number of schemes aimed at reducing the accident rate, including signing and lining, and skid resistant surfacing, accidents have continued to occur. A statutory public consultation on the proposal to reduce the speed limit was carried out, and only one objection was received. Given the high number of accidents on this stretch I have therefore decided that the new limit will be introduced as advertised.

A60 Bunny 30mph Speed Limit

25. As part of the review of speed limits across the county, one aim of which was to introduce a 30 mph speed limit for all villages meeting Department for Transport criteria, a statutory consultation was carried out on the introduction of such a limit on the A60 in Bunny village. This was to be combined with a reduction to 40 mph in the speed limit between Bunny and Bradmore. 21 responses were received of which three were objections, the other 18 supported the proposal and a number, including a 61 signature petition, were asking for the proposed 30 mph limit to be extended. After considering all the responses and the views of the police, I have decided that the 30 limit should be extended north to include part of Bunny village just outside the main village centre and from there to Bradmore the new 40 limit will apply. The Traffic Order has been amended accordingly, and I have therefore approved the making of the traffic order as advertised.

Coach Drop-off point at The Wharf, Newark

26. Following representations from the Confederation of Passenger Transport, it was recognised that Newark has a need for a coach drop-off and pick-up point. Owing to limited space at the new bus station, a site was identified on The Wharf, which had been used by service buses while the new bus station was being built. A consultation was carried out and a number of responses of differing views were received. There was concern at the noise and intrusion that might be suffered by local residents, but also support for bringing in tourists by coach to appreciate Newark's rich history. I have listened to the concerns of local residents, and the scheme has been amended to remove the remaining service bus stops from the Wharf, and provide two coach bays opposite the public car park which will minimise any disturbance to residents. In combination with a new one-way system and controlled parking for cars, a balance has been struck between the needs of residents and of the local economy, and I have approved the making of the necessary traffic order.

Update on the Supporting Community Transport Fund

27. Members may recall that the Department for Transport (DfT) Supporting Community transport fund has allocated £158,000 to Nottinghamshire in March 2011 and a further £158,000 allocation for 2012/13. It has now been decided to use the money to purchase two new vehicles for use in Newark and Mansfield/Ashfield, operated if possible by the Community Transport sector but with ownership retained by the Council. The vehicles will

be put to work as part of the TITAN (Towards Integrated Transport Across Nottinghamshire) project pilot which aims to improve the efficiency of public transport provision. Other notable items in the TITAN programme are;

- MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training for volunteer drivers.- Establishment, development and capacity building in the voluntary and community transport sector. £30,000
- Provision of new flexible/connecting bus services in the Newark pilot area. £40,000
- Provision of trip booking software for community transport operations. £50,000
- Developing independent travel training. £30,000
- Promotion and management of the scheme. £8,500

28. In addition to the DfT funding, Broxtowe Borough Council has kindly offered the County Council £45,000 of Section 106 funding to purchase two small multi-purpose vehicles to operate community transport services in the Eastwood and Stapleford areas. The fully accessible vehicles will be allocated to existing operators in the areas and will provide much needed services to local people, especially those with mobility difficulties. The operators will be responsible for all ongoing revenue costs and the use of the vehicles will be governed by a service agreement.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS