

G REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

Flooding and Winter Maintenance

- 1 The national position regarding flood defence responsibilities is still unclear but it is under consideration by the Government. An option may be to expand the role of the Environment Agency. Dominic Grieve MP has indicated a willingness to take this matter forward with the minister, once discussions with Bucks County Council and other agencies have taken place.
- 2 **Pound Lane, Marlow** opened to through traffic on 2 July following repairs, with more to follow. Consultants' advice is being sought about the possible nature and cost of a long term 'solution' to the problems in this locality. The scheme for **Vale Road, Chesham** is due to go to tender with a start date of late August. The estimate has now risen, as a result of the need to increase the pipe size and extend the scheme. These costs will have to be met from existing budgets. **Hedgerley Lane, Gerrards Cross** is now open to traffic. Windsor Road tank bridge is to be removed on 19 July and will involve a temporary road closure. Repair works will then be completed before winter.

A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass

- 3 Discussions with Shanks and Railtrack are continuing and it is hoped there will be a successful outcome shortly. Senior officers met Government officials on 12 July to discuss funding, with the agreed figure likely to be capped. Officers are investigating a Design and Build contract process to minimise the risk associated with this kind of work.

De Trunking of A41

- 4 I received a report seeking approval to the outcome of negotiations with the Highway Agency, including the revenue settlement, for the de-trunking of the A41 and its acceptance as a County Highway. I have now approved this.

High Wycombe, Frogmoor and Oxford Street Enhancements

- 5 Three phase works in connection with pedestrianisation will be completed at the end of September, phase 2 commenced on the 25 June following the reopening of Oxford Street. This stage will last approximately 6 weeks and will involve the closure of the western carriageway of Frogmoor (northbound traffic) adjacent to the existing central island. Diversion routes are in operation.

A418 Oxford Road Bridge and Busway

- 6 It is now unlikely that the new bridge will be available to traffic until Christmas or the New Year. The main work outstanding is cable laying by BT who estimate this will take 8 to 12 weeks. Single line working can then commence around mid September.

Lorry Crash at Junction Crendon Street and Easton Street, 14 June 2001

- 7 I await the outcome of the Coroner's Inquest on this sad accident but in the meantime the arrester bed and its signing have been checked. These were found to be in satisfactory condition and in place at the time of the accident. There are a number of other possible measures to be considered.

County Structure Plan Review – Public Consultation

- 8 Since the publication of the final version of the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) in March this year, work had been proceeding apace on the Review and Roll-Forward of the County Structure Plan. Alongside a number of technical studies dealing with matters such as urban housing capacity and the future of the local economy, meetings have taken place individually with each of the four District Councils and Milton Keynes Council, to discuss their future priorities.

- 9 Over the coming months, the Joint Structure Plans Panel will meet on two occasions to consider a number of alternative options for meeting the additional development requirements imposed by RPG9 in looking forward to 2016. Cabinet and then County Council will then agree the content of the public consultation document. A Member seminar will also be held. Subject to County Council approval, the public will be consulted early in the New Year and feedback used to inform the preparation of a Deposit Draft Plan.

Central Railway

- 10 The County Council has joined a consortium of 16 local authorities in the South East and East Midlands concerned about the impact of the proposal for a 672km line from Liverpool to Lille. The consortium wishes to ensure approval is not given unless, or until, its contribution to a national rail freight system has been established, and the concerns of affected local communities met.
- 11 Whilst the previous scheme was promoted under the Transport and Works Act, this time Central Railways is looking to the Government to promote its scheme using a hybrid bill. Before deciding whether or not to support the scheme the Government has sought the advice of the Strategic Rail Authority.
- 12 The consortium has engaged consultants for a technical and financial overview of the project. The proposal was recently discussed at a SEERA Regional Planning Committee who made a number of recommendations including that the Government should consider all route options, including potential routes to the east of London, as part of a broader regeneration and intervention strategy from the Thames Gateway.

Local Bus Service Contracts

- 13 A number of the former Wycombe Bus Company routes in High Wycombe were de-registered by Arriva in April, as a result of which more than £100,000 of the extra £150,000 Rural Bus Grant received this year has already been used to maintain existing services in the area. Re-tendering of several bus contracts in Aylesbury Vale has seen contract prices once again increasing significantly – in several cases by more than 50%. Whilst these increases can be sustained in the short term to ensure continuity of service, consultation will commence shortly in those areas where service reductions may be necessary to contain spending within the available budgets.

Penalty Charge Notice Increase

- 14 From 2 July and following Government regulations, the PCN level was increased to £60, discounted to £30 if paid within 14 days. The charge will only be incurred by those failing to comply with parking regulations in the Special Parking Area of High Wycombe.

Motorway Service Area Proposals

- 15 The Secretary of State has decided to hold a Public Inquiry to consider 6 proposed MSA sites on the M25, M4 and M40. The Inquiry is scheduled to open in January 2002 and last for some 16 weeks. The Head of Spatial Planning is investigating the possibility of running a joint case with the District Councils to save costs and to present a seamless case. The case would centre on opposition to the Warren Farm and M40 sites. A Pre-Inquiry Meeting is due to be held on 30 July.

RODNEY ROYSTON
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