

9f. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORTATION

Local Transport Plan Consultation

The Council has to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP), which sets out its plans for transport. A new Local Transport Plan is being developed to replace the current plan, which will run out in 2016.

At the end of the summer we held a successful initial 'snapshot' consultation, to help us to understand people's priorities for the plan. This used an innovative online consultation tool, which asked people to prioritise a range of transport issues using sliders to allocate a 'budget' of points. This helped us to gather more responses (over 600) from a more representative range of people, than more traditional consultations have.

The results will inform a Draft Local Transport Plan, which we intend to consult on formally at the end of the year.

East West Rail

The consultation exhibitions that were held at the end of September for East West Rail Phase 2 (Bicester to Bedford/MK to Princes Risborough via Aylesbury) were well attended (estimated at over 1500 attendees at the seven sessions). Good, if not strong, support for the scheme overall was reported.

The review of Network Rail's delivery of the Government's railway investment programme for 2014-19 known as Control Period 5 (CP5) is nearing completion. Otherwise known as the Hendy Review, we understand that an announcement could be made on the programme between early November and early December 2015. There have been some speculative national media reports that some schemes could be delayed beyond the end of CP5 – March 2019. The Consortium suspects that EWR will not be immune, but awaits the outcome of the Review to understand the implications.

In the meantime some key elements of Phase 1 are nearing completion. New train services between Oxford Parkway (at Water Eaton) and London Marylebone via a re-modelled Bicester Village Station (formerly Bicester Town) are scheduled to start from 26 October 2015, and from Oxford by March 2016.

National Recognition for School Travel Planning in Bucks

Modeshift STARS is a national accreditation scheme for School Travel Planning. Schools have to upload their School Travel Plan information to an online system, highlighting all of the work and initiatives they complete each year in order to encourage safe and sustainable travel to school. They log mode of travel data, enabling them to monitor progress against targets for reducing car use on the school journey and increasing active travel (walking and cycling). Schools have to meet set criteria before achieving either a Bronze, Silver, or Gold level of accreditation.

This year (summer 2015) 347 schools nationally achieved Modeshift STARS accreditation. 72 of these were Bucks schools, meaning that over a fifth of all accreditations nationally are in Buckinghamshire. This is a fantastic outcome and highlights our national success in encouraging sustainable travel with schools.

All accredited schools have the opportunity to be entered into the National STARS Awards scheme. This scheme recognises schools that have demonstrated excellence in encouraging active, safe and sustainable travel for the school journey. Two Buckinghamshire schools won awards this year, and they were presented with their trophies at the annual Modeshift STARS Regional Awards event in London.

The winning schools are:

- The Downley School won the STARS Award for Promoting Walking
- Stoke Mandeville Combined School won the STARS Award for Promoting Road Safety

M4 Smart Motorway Development Consent Order

An application has been made by Highways England to the Secretary of State for Transport for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008. The order would grant powers to improve the M4 to a smart motorway between junction 3 (Hayes) and junction 12 (Theale). The scheme will help relieve congestion by permanently converting the hard shoulder of the M4 to a running lane and using technology that varies speed limits and manages traffic.

The County Council and South Bucks District Council have jointly produced a Local Impact Report (LIR), which sets out both authorities' positions in relation to issues of concern. The LIR includes matters such as air quality, noise pollution, nature conservation, flood risk, minerals and waste and traffic impacts. The LIR can be viewed online through the National Infrastructure Planning website and will be considered by the Secretary of State as part of the Examination:

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/m4-junctions-3-to-12-smart-motorway/>

Site visits are due to take place 11-12 November, followed by Examination hearings during the week commencing 16 November. Buckinghamshire County Council will be attending issue-specific hearings, providing evidence on areas of outstanding concern.

Asset Management Policy / Strategy

A Policy and a Strategy for Highways Infrastructure Asset Management are to be debated and finalised for approval by the Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Transportation in November. The Policy sets out the guiding principles for the Strategy that takes a systematic approach to deliver the most efficient and effective highways service over the long term, ensuring best value for the authority. It covers all maintenance and investment activities to all highways assets, and informs decision-making in the Business Planning Process and in the Medium Term Financial Plan budget setting. This Policy will enable TfB to comply with national best practice and aligns with national guidance, whilst still having a member-led approach to decision making.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has decided to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of each highway authority by requiring them to complete a self-assessment questionnaire each November. This assessment will influence future funding levels. The Strategy and Policy are key documents enabling us to improve our responses to this questionnaire and maximise and protect Buckinghamshire's share of DfT funding.

The Strategy serves as a basis for the development of detailed asset management planning and its implementation. It embeds a continuous improvement approach to highway asset management including allowing for national developments and good practice to be taken into consideration. Successful implementation will take a number of years to achieve a level of maturity and to fully realise all the benefits of the approach.

The main benefit of adoption of the Strategy will be that it will promote efficient and informed decision-making in the use of the available budget and to secure best value from that budget by taking a long term, systematic approach.

The Strategy is designed to align delivery with the corporate objectives to ensure that what is important to the County Council's long term goals is matched by the works' programmes we deliver on the ground.

Capital Maintenance Programme: End of October Status

Benchmarking Programme

- 24 schemes have now been completed (53% of revised list: 40 original schemes + 5 additional schemes).
- Four crews now operating countywide.
- Expected completion of 42 schemes by the beginning of December.

Conventional Surfacing Programme

- 25 schemes completed to date.
- Remaining scheme to be completed this week.

Surface Dressing Programme

- All 30 schemes completed in full.

Micro Surfacing Programme

- 49 schemes (30%) completed in full.
- 122 schemes (75%) of all schemes expected to be completed in full by the end of December.
- Remaining 40 schemes (a mixture of both machine and hand-applied treatments) will be re-programmed to be delivered in March 2016.

Plane & Patch Programme

- 18 schemes (75%) completed by the end of October.
- Remaining 6 sites to be completed by the end of November.

Footway Surfacing Programme

- 44 schemes (88%) completed to date.

High Friction Surfacing Programme

- Work commences 03 November.

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