



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Council
22 September 2016
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<u>Item</u>
<b>9</b>

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

**Responsible Officer: Cllr Simon Jones – Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport**

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### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to update and highlight the key issues and developments within the Highways and Transport Portfolio in the previous year.

#### **Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package: SITP**

The Public and Stakeholder consultation process is now complete on the range of interventions and proposals under the initial draft proposals as were submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) within the initial Outline Business Case. In light of the feedback received, the final design work on the package elements is now underway. The full report on feedback and adaptations made to the cycle, pedestrian and public realm elements in particular is available on the Councils Consultation portal. Further updates on design and progress will continue to be published here throughout the delivery phase of the package.

The first element of the package programmed for delivery, the Key Junctions (Reabrook, Meole Brace, Longden Coleham and English Bridge Gyratory), has now undergone the Pre- Qualification Questionnaire ( PQQ) process and the shortlist of potential suppliers completed. The full tender for delivery of this element will be

undertaken shortly. In line with the package delivery programme, work will commence on these in January 2017.

Joint working continues with local stakeholders and Shrewsbury BiD on the development of the Wayfinding element of the Package. Initial samples for the on street inserts and the street furniture that will be commissioned to display these is now underway. The final design of these has undergone extensive public consultation, along with joint working on the optimum locations for these to be installed.

The SITP Package continues to progress in line with the agreed delivery plan, and in line with the spend profile dictated by the external Growth Deal funding that the Council is accessing through the Marches LEP. This represents £12m of external investment in the town over the next 4 years.

### **Oxon Link Road**

The Link Road has now received a contract to deliver from the LEP, releasing the Growth Deal funding that will, when combined with developer contributions, deliver this new highway project. Work commenced this financial year and is proceeding through detailed highway and drainage design work, liaison with developers and landowners, and Highways England, in order to achieve completion of the project by 2021.

### **Rail**

Shropshire Council continues to be actively involved in West Midlands Rail at an Officer and Director Level. Through this involvement, Shropshire has worked hard to guarantee that the recently released Invitation to Tender for new operators will include considerable improvements for Shropshire users in its base specification.

The devolved service, post 2017, will manage the replacement for the current

London Midland operated elements of the service between Shrewsbury and the Birmingham conurbation. The improvements that will be delivered include; a doubling of the current services to Birmingham to two an hour from the current hourly operation, increased services into the evening and later night running, Sunday service improvements that will effectively operate a full Saturday timetable. The benefits that will accrue to users, and also the economy of Shrewsbury and Shropshire could be considerable. Work now continues at an officer level to explore further potential enhancements with the shortlisted tenderers directly under individual Non-Disclosure Agreements.

In terms of the soon to be devolved Welsh Government Franchise, post 2018 (currently Arriva Train Wales operated), Shropshire Council is also now directly engaged with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales on shaping the future franchise mapping and service levels to ensure maximum benefit for Shropshire passengers.

### **Midlands Connect**

Through active engagement in the Technical Advisors Group, Shropshire Officers, along with colleagues from Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire Councils representing the Marches LEP, continue to lobby for prioritisation of local key Highway and Rail corridor prioritisation within future funding rounds of the Highways Agency and Network Rail. To date, a number of key local corridors within Shropshire have proceeded beyond the first sift process, and remain in scope as Midland Connect works to finalise its priorities for future strategic transport investment.

### **Local Transport Plan**

The Transport Act 2000 placed a requirement on all local transport authorities in England, outside of London, to produce a local transport plan (LTP). Shropshire Council's current LTP (2011-2026) was never formally adopted and following a strategic review in 2015, it was widely acknowledged and supported by senior managers and Portfolio Holders (Transport and Highways and Economic Growth) that a new LTP should be developed. An up to date LTP will be key in Shropshire Council's future ability to bid for funding. Revenue funding will need to be identified to produce a new LTP to enable wider funding opportunities within Shropshire Council to be explored.

### **Accident review**

Over the last year, the accident review process has been refined to look at accident cluster sites. This will enable Shropshire Council to prioritise its accident data led interventions annually.

### **Road Safety Policy – Community Led Concerns**

Out of 84 submissions for 2016/2017 design funding, 10 schemes were taken forward. Pressure on the budget is mainly a result of major scheme match funding and issues with legacy schemes. Submissions for new design funding in 2017/2018 will be reviewed and prioritised in October 2016. Wherever possible, a rolling programme of design in Year 1 and delivery in a future year is being adopted to align with Shropshire's asset management objectives.

### **National Highways and Transport Survey (NHT)**

The National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction (NHT) Survey is conducted annually. In 2015, 898 questionnaires were completed in Shropshire. Compared to its peer group of 29 Local Authorities, Shropshire Council was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> for overall

satisfaction with transport and highways, compared to 9<sup>th</sup> in 2014 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2013.

Shropshire Council was ranked highest for satisfaction for the following Benchmark Indicators within its peer group:

- The condition of pavements
- The cleanliness of pavements
- Direction signposts for pedestrians
- Good Park and Ride schemes
- The routes taken by heavy goods vehicles
- Keeping drains clear and working
- Weed killing on pavements and roads
- Provision of drains

Further data provided demonstrated that the Highways and Transport Services was overall:-

Low Cost

Medium Quality

High Satisfaction

### **Traffic surveys**

A significant HGV survey has been undertaken in the Wem area using ANPR technology. This will enable Shropshire Council to better understand the nature of HGV movements through Wem and to determine appropriate interventions, if any.

Annual multi-modal surveys and cycle counter monitoring continue to be undertaken in Shrewsbury and will support future review of the forthcoming major schemes.

### **Shifnal Transport Strategy**

A successful consultation event was undertaken in December 2015 and clear support for the proposed enhancement scheme in the town centre was demonstrated. Funding for the enhancement scheme is dependent on a decision regarding the allocation of CIL by Shropshire Council.

**Permits for Highways Work, system and Network Management Team.**

The Network Management team who are based within the wider Highways and Transport section of Shropshire Council undertake Shropshire Council's legal duty to coordinate the highway network, this includes the facilitation of Shropshire Council lead works, Utility company works, private works on properties, the undertaking of development sites on our network and any highway licence such as skips and scaffolds.

To allow the service to undertake this function the applications from utility companies have a charge placed on them which is then used to fund the operation of this service. On average the service is dealing with approx. 600 permit applications per month for the whole county, there has been a significant increase in the number of application since the introduction of the scheme in 2014 however this trend is reflected nationally due to the upsurge in work occurring since the recession ended. Around 90% of these are granted with those that are refused are done so mainly due to either insufficient information being given, the work being developed in a way that is detrimental to Shropshire or due to the increased number of works on the network to facilitate at times it is not achievable to get all the works on the network at the times requested. The service is currently developing an annual report on how the permit scheme has performed in the first two years and this will be provided to the Portfolio Holder in early Autumn with a view to publish late Autumn.

In addition to managing the road network the service is tasked with managing the overall performance of those working on the network and undertake this duty by levying enforcement penalties for failings to adhere to the legislation. These charges are varied and provide a driver for these stakeholders to improve their performance and also provide data to that the authority can target and allocate our resource to tackling poor performance in our county.

The main enforcement tool allows us to serve Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for legislative non-compliance in place of prosecutions; the service reviewed and assesses whether it is in the public interest to offer a discharged liability via an FPN or to progress immediately to prosecutions. Since April 2016 the tem have issued 862 FPNs and are working with Public Protection colleagues on a prosecution due to safety breaches. Of these issues 516 have been successfully enforced and the remaining are in negotiation with the utility companies with an aim to have payment within the legal timescales for payment; if they remain unaccepted the service will review and progress further to a formal prosecution.

In addition the most high profile enforcement tool is charges for works that exceed their reasonable timescale to undertake the work; i.e. the permit will be granted with a reasonable duration for the works to be completed within, should the works exceed this date without a valid reason a charge will be applied. These charges are based around the type of road, the disruption caused and are a daily charge. Since the introduction of an Inspection team to the Network Management Service there has been a dramatic increase in the number of sites identified, and this is due to the fact the service is now able to proactively inspect the works taking place in the county and identify any breaches. Since April 2016 the service has agreed with the relevant utilities that there were 268 sites that overran the reasonable timeframe and this in

total resulted in penalties of £858,975 being agreed to be paid. It is important to note that there are a number of utility companies who are performing poorly currently and the team are working with them to improve their performance as each instance causes disruption to our residents.

Following a Scrutiny review in 2011 where the team were asked to focus on the reinstatement work that was done in the county, the service now undertake a robust coring inspection regime; this is where we take a core of the reinstatement and check its compliance with legislation. It is important to note that if the Network Management team don't identify these failing within the first 2 years after the work is completed the burden of the remedial work is then passed to the Highways teams in Shropshire Council. In 2011 the failure rate of these tests was at 53% however once more samples were taken this lead to a decrease in performance which saw the pass rate drop to 24% in 2014; however following a push with the utility companies and the identification of the key reasons for failure the latest phase has a pass rate of 75%; while it is still 1 in 4 reinstatements failing the service is pushing the performance in the right direction.

A further Scrutiny review was undertaken in Autumn 2015, and the progress and impact the team are having in organising and challenging organisations was well received and supported.

### **Highways Development Control – HDC.**

The Developing Highways Team are progressing the update of our Specification & Design Guide to ensure that we are achieving best practice in terms of inclusive design, materials, incorporating sustainable drainage and on-going maintenance costs to the public purse. This is aimed also at helping developers wanting to



develop in Shropshire that we are a progressive and helpful authority in terms of modern design but that is fit for purpose.

### **Highways Drainage (major / centralised schemes)**

The approach that is being taken to deliver a three year rolling programme suits the asset management approach well and allows efficiency of cost and delivery with internal arrangements and external providers, with schemes being identified and prioritised in year one, designed in year two and constructed in year three. The construction of this year's schemes has also required the production of tender documents in order for a mixed commitment of in house and external contractors to be utilised to support the programme delivery to be commissioned.

The delivery of the prioritised matrix of highway drainage schemes continues satisfactorily in 2016/17. The Mouchel commission has assisted the design of larger drainage schemes and the site monitoring of a wide variety of schemes.

### **Highways Maintenance.**

Shropshire Council's highways service has developed an updated Highway Safety Inspection Manual for consideration and approval by Cabinet. The highway network represents a significant asset to support the connectivity, resilience and reputation of the county. It is vitally important that this network is managed and developed appropriately.

Shropshire Council is responsible for the majority of highways in the county and these are used for:

- Vehicle journeys
- Walking
- Cycling
- Horse riding etc.

To provide some perspective, the table below provides a “dashboard indicator “of the volumes and scope of the highways assets.

<b>Asset type</b>	<b>Quantity – length in kilometres or volume</b>	<b>Condition</b>
<b>Carriageway</b>	5,150 km	Asset condition is comparable with other rural shire authorities. 13% of the carriageways could be considered for maintenance.
<b>Footway</b>	1,350 km	Approximately 2% of footways could be considered for maintenance.
<b>Structures</b>	1015 in total	The Bridge Condition Indicator for the stock of bridges is 80%.
<b>Drainage</b>	85,290 gullies in total	Gully data is being recorded and cleaning programme is ongoing.
<b>Street lighting</b>	18,311 columns in total	The equipment associated with traffic signals is in good condition, only smaller projects of upgrading pedestrian crossings required over the next 3 years and few major junctions in the next 5 years require Capital

allocation.

Shropshire has the following type of road by kilometre length (excluding trunk roads which are managed by Highways England.)

Road type	Length (km`s)	Percentage of total
Minor roads	4,613.6	91.33%
Major Principal Roads	437.8	8.66%

The type, location, geography and topography of the road network, causes operational issues of logistics, network management and inherent hidden costs in physically assessing and 'seeing' the network in a dynamic and responsive content. For clarity and understanding, the legal definition of the highway includes footpaths, walkways etc.

The refreshed Highway Safety Inspection Manual will continue the existing countywide approach of utilising a formal system that prescribes the frequency of inspections and the method of assessing and recording its response to defects on the highway, and move towards identifying further efficiencies locally. The revised guidance will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016.

Therefore, an updated and corporately agreed inspection manual is critical for the Council in respect of ensuring adequate resources are deployed by the Highways Authority to ensure a high quality intervention regime is constantly delivered, providing confidence that statutory functions are being delivered as well as the reputational, economic and perception forming elements that the Council's major assets can create.

The Council maintains a high repudiation rate in respect of third party claims, and this could have obvious consequences. **Currently the repudiation rate is circa 91.4% for 2016** (i.e. 91.4% of all claims defended / resisted). Obviously the figures vary depending on when the claims data is run, but Shropshire’s repudiation rate is consistently above 90%, which is well above the national average. The average insurance claim nationally is circa £3,000, which can impact upon the council’s direct and indirect budgets – i.e. increased insurance premiums. For context the recent repudiation rates are:

<b>2014</b>	<b>90.9%</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>95.4%</b>
<b>2016 (part year figure to date )</b>	<b>91.4%</b>

**Highways Delivery.**

Highways Maintenance has three key areas of work that have developed over the last year.

**Asset Management** - the service is currently assessed as a Level 2 service by the Department for Transport (Level 3 being the highest) and the review and transformation of approach to the service is ongoing. This has resulted in the DFT providing additional incentivised funding for this financial year of £926,000 although the overall capital grant from central government is still in a net reduction of £470,000, as part of the overall budget reduction that will continue to see reduced capital budgets from central government over the next few years. Shropshire highways was invited to share its best practice recently at a national event in London to other authorities.

**Redesign of Services** – the redesign of minor maintenance has undertaken a significant re-design, this will support improved quality of works and permeant repairs to individual pot holes, and use of technology to ensure works efficiency in partnership with our term maintenance contractor. This initiative is supported by £500,000 of additional DFT finance, as Shropshire Highways has been awarded £1,036,000 in this financial year (over and above the £926,000 quoted earlier) to support maintenance improvements, the remaining £500,000 has been invested into carriageway resurfacing.

**Capital Project Delivery.**

The Highways Services has reorganised its capital project delivery, this is now a centralised team working in partnership with Mouchel in order to deliver the £8 million capital programme across the county, this has seen significant improvement in the identification, delivery and overall project management of the highways programme, ensuring higher quality works delivered as effectively as possible.

Further improvements in the use of technology and social media (web based blogs, work programmes valuable on the Council's web site, interactive road works map that are accessible to all, ability to subscribe to email alerts on road works updates all now existing and continue to demonstrate reduced number of telephone contacts with the council and increased use of web based services.

**Comment [GC1]:** Where should the closed bracket go in this sentence?

**Shropshire Parking Strategy Development.**

New parking equipment including new payment machines, barriers and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) has recently been installed in Ravens Meadow Multi Storey car park in Shrewsbury town centre. The new equipment integrates vehicle sensors, number plate cameras and technology in barriers on entry and exit points to improve customer service. There are also new ways for motorists to pay for

parking, as well as accepting cash payments including banknotes, payments can now be made by card including both chip and pin, and contactless card payments. Current strategy development proposals moving forward for public consultation in the near future include:

- i. A standard linear tariff banding and ranking system
- ii. The introduction of a flat rate evening charge 6.00pm to 8.00am, 365 days year on all on and off street pay and display parking areas across the county
- iii. The extension of opening hours in Raven Meadows multi storey car park Shrewsbury to 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Business improvement, payment technology, asset management development, efficiency and streamlining work also continues to progress.

#### **Sustainable Transport and Road Safety Education**

A full programme of sustainable transport and road safety initiatives including Stepping Out pedestrian safety and Bikeability programmes continue to be delivered across Shropshire Schools and Colleges. DfT grant funding has been secured for continued delivery of Bikeability through to 2020 however funding levels have been significantly reduced which will require a review of costs, and possibly the way the service is delivered in the future.

#### **Public Transport**

A redesign of local bus services placing a greater emphasis on a transition to the commercial operation of these services was undertaken in 2015/16. This has seen a significant reduction in the overall public transport budget, achieved without a reduction in service levels to passengers.

**Comment [GC2]:** Do we want this in  
Could create debate and media attention  
ahead of any cabinet paper

During this period 2 services transferred from a subsidised to a commercial operation immediately and are continuing to flourish with those operators.

The Shrewsbury Park and Ride service was also redesigned prior to a procurement process, with an aim of improving service reliability and punctuality to passenger's whilst at the same time significantly reducing costs to the council. The contract for this was awarded to Arriva with effect from November 2015 with savings achieved of c£367k per annum, essentially meaning that the park & ride passenger element of the service would be delivered at zero cost to the council. In addition new low emission environmentally friendly vehicles are to be introduced into the service by Arriva in 2017 to provide a further enhancement to the service.

<b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</b> <b>Cllr Simon Jones</b>
<b>Local Member</b> <b>N/A</b>
<b>Appendices</b> <b>None</b>