

23 October 2019

ITEM: 14

Council

Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Report of: Councillor Ben Maney, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport

This report is Public

Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I introduce my first report as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. The services within this portfolio are among the most important to residents and cover everything from working with promoters of large scale growth sites in the Borough to design appropriate transport systems, to ensuring the road network runs efficiently and is well maintained.

As well as the long-term and successful work under the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it initiative, which has ensured 100% of potholes are repaired within target , £1m has been invested in the Kerb-it scheme which has been well received by residents, provided much needed additional parking in priority areas and improved the appearance of our roads.

In July, Cabinet authorised £971,000 investment in the Integrated Transport Block which will deliver improvements in the Council's priority areas across the borough and work continues to install the long-awaited east-facing slip roads at the A126 junction of the A13, following the funding announcement made by government last year.

All in all, a lot of excellent work has been done and many improvements achieved on behalf of residents. There is still more work to be done, but I am confident we can continue to deliver the high level of service our residents deserve.

1 Network Management

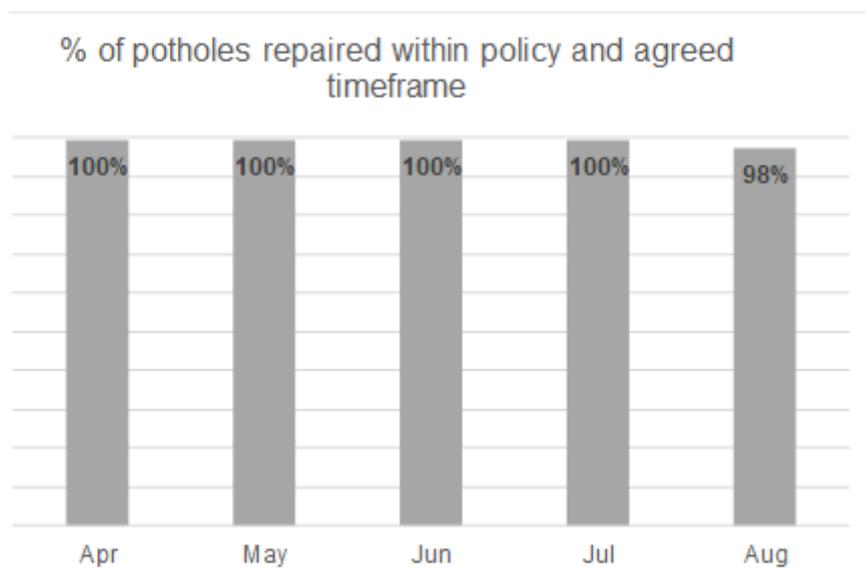
- 1.1 2,015 applications to work on the Highway have been received so far this calendar year and over 220 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for non-compliance of permit conditions
- 1.2 We continue to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and utilities and we've seen the benefits of this with the continuation of the Gas Main renewal works on London Road. We are already reaping the benefits on the sections completed, as we've received no emergency permit applications on London Road where the repairs have been completed. Phase one was completed ahead of schedule last year and phase two is also being delivered to schedule.

2 Highways Infrastructure

- 2.1 The council manages and maintains a road network that is 545 km long, has 27,000 lighting units and over 117 structures. Through our Capital Programme 19 roads have been resurfaced so far this year from the Maintenance block allocation, which constitutes approximately 5 km of the road network. A new bridge has been built across the Mardkye at Davey Down and we have carried out repairs to 3 other structures.
- 2.2 Preparations are underway for the delivery of the remaining schemes on the 2019/20 Capital Programme and the design for the reconstruction of Stonehouse Lane is nearing completion.
- 2.3 Efficient and effective programme management and delivery through effective asset management has enabled us to maintain Level 3 in the DfT's Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme, the highest available, enabling us to secure maximum funding, equating to an additional £334,000 towards the up keep of our roads.
- 2.4 Sound budget management and a resulting revenue surplus has enabled delivery of much needed repairs to Long Lane, additional kerb-it works, new boundary signage and renewed road markings on the strategic road network.

3 Reactive Maintenance

- 3.1 545km of Network requires safety Inspections and our Inspectors so far have carried out 1,156 inspections, this has resulted in the identification and repair of 3285 potholes. We are exceeding the annual KPI target of 98% for pothole filling, with repairs being completed well within the allocated timeframe. This shows our continued commitment to the 'fill it' campaign.



- 3.2 We've taken delivery of two brand new gulley cleansing machines, which will see the number of cleansed gullies continue to increase. In 2018, 13,396 gullies were attended and this year due to changes in the approach to the management of gullies 11,629 gullies have already been attended between January and August, which is projected to be a 24% increase on last year.
- 3.3 The Highways Team continue to rise to the challenge of unplanned works where they've attended incidents on the Network from oil spills, to concrete spills on the A13, fallen trees on Stifford Hill, Road Traffic Accidents, traffic signal strikes and the out of hours gully cleansing crews attendance at the Globe Industrial Estate unit fire to assist emergency services. The team continue to work around the clock to keep the network moving.

4 Transport Development

- 4.1 The Integrated Transport Block (ITB) capital programme was approved in July 2019 which sets out how the £971,000 funding allocation from DfT to the Transport Development Service within the 2019/20 financial year will be utilised. The programme includes a range of improvement and enhancement schemes and strategic priorities as set out and agreed in the Council's Transport Strategy.
- 4.2 A five year programme of funding for Safer Routes to Schools and Road Safety Engineering schemes has been approved and ring fenced by Cabinet. A methodology for prioritising and delivering these schemes has been developed, ensuring at least ten Safer Routes to Schools schemes are delivered each year. This is based on a criteria of accident records outside the school and progress in delivering a valid school travel plan. Ten schools have been identified to be delivered within 2019/20, of which four have been delivered at Kenningtons Primary Academy, Dilkes Academy, Thameside Primary School, and Arther Bugler Primary School, with schemes for a further six schools currently in the planning stage to be delivered by March 2020.
- 4.3 The Council leads a number of discussions with key stakeholders across the borough in regards to its highway network, including the Congestion Taskforce, Thurrock Road User Group and Freight, Logistics and Transporting Partnership. In an effort to improve efficiency and minimise the time demands on stakeholders, the Congestion Task Force and Thurrock Road User Group are to be amalgamated into one meeting, with a consideration to integrate freight issues into these meetings if and where appropriate.

5 Road Safety

- 5.1 A broad range of exceptional education and practical road safety initiatives during the previous academic year, including: Bikeability Cycle Training (including Level 1 & 2, Balance Bike and Learn to Ride) in 38 Schools covering 2496 pupils.

Key highlights over the past 12 months:

- Road Safety Pedestrian training in 41 Schools for 8048 pupils;
- Twilight Trail events (awareness of being Bright and Being Seen during the winter months) held in 12 schools for 278 Year 3 pupils and parents;
- Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) adopted in 8 schools. Road safety activities are taking place within schools with JRSOs including poster competitions / assemblies / fashion shows which involve both pupils and staff;
- Crucial Crew safety event held for 1000 Year 6 pupils in one week;
- 6 Surround a Town (SAT Days) held in conjunction with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership and Thurrock Road Safety;
- 15 School Crossing Patrol (SCP) sites;
- 18 School Travel Plans completed online with Modeshift STARS. This year has seen a higher number of Silver and Gold applications for accreditation. Currently we have 12 Bronze, 3 Silver, and 3 Gold accredited schools. Secondary Schools are actively becoming more involved in the school travel plan process with St Clere's achieving Silver Accreditation and working towards Gold;
- Scooter training – since April 2019, 14 schools and 535 Year 1 pupils have participated in scooter training. The Road Safety Team have 10 schools booked in for scooter training starting in the new school year with many more schools requesting dates;
- Adult cycle training – 10 adults have received adult cycle lessons, in collaboration with the South Essex Active Travel Programme (SEAT).

5.2 Looking forward to the current academic year and into 2020, we are committed to delivering even more support and initiatives across the borough to enable all schools to achieve school travel plan accreditation. All Bikeability Cycle training including Learn to Ride and Balance Bike sessions will continue to be offered to schools. Scooter Training will be offered to all pupils in Year 3 and a further 8 Surround a Town days are planned. The success of Crucial Crew means that it will be held again in summer 2020.

5.3 In September this year, Cabinet also approved the enforcement of idling car engines in parked cars. With this new power, will be able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those who do not switch off their car engines after being asked and are therefore unnecessarily damaging the environment. Officers are engaging with schools and motorists to promote and encourage behaviour change - using FPNs as a final resort.

6 Highways Development Management and Traffic

6.1 The Highways DM team have again assured a high level of support for high-profile developments in the Borough. The Team continues to play a key part in pre-application dialogue with the Planning Service, providing confidence and support to the development industry.

6.2 The team maintain strong relationships with developers to ensure the Council's Highways DM policy direction is adhered to as improvements are made. Enhancements to Junction 31 have been agreed, as have freight travel plans and vehicle access agreements. Dialogue and liaison continues with proposed development of the former Arena Essex site and the proposed Thames Enterprise Park – including enhanced enforcement along the A1014 Manorway and junction with the A13.

6.3 In relation to Traffic, key highlights over the past 12 months include:

- £1m of funding became available this year to deliver the Kerb IT scheme – funding has enabled the delivery of treatment in five locations across the Borough, including Aveley, Grays, South Ockendon and Corringham. The programme has been positively received by residents, helping to improve the visual amenity of local areas while also allowing more drivers to park legally along the roadside. A further capital bid is being developed by the team in order to address additional priority areas across the borough.
- Parking Permit Areas (PPAs) have been identified, consulted upon and progressed in Stanford le Hope, Grays and Tilbury. Zones B and C have been delivered in Stanford le Hope with some minor amendments and Zone T4 in Tilbury with a small number of limited waiting bays and associated signed installed in September. An extension of Zone H in Grays, incorporating Gipsy Lane and Charles Street is expected to be implemented by the end of September 2019. These schemes will remain subject to periodic reviews, so as to ensure they continue to meet the needs to residents.
- A new average speed camera system is now live on Southend Rd, Stanford le Hope to address the high number of Personal Injury Accidents recorded on this part of the network. Speeding along the route has now reduced with enforcement action being undertaken by the police where speeds are deemed to be excessive. 1,218 offences were recorded in the first formal two months of operation, of which 1,123 were offered a speed awareness course rather than prosecution. In total, 3,175 offences were recorded by the police between the scheme going live in January 2019 through to July 2019.
- HGV restrictions have been successfully implemented on Woodview and Dock Approach Road to prevent vehicles from parking near residential areas.
- Over £1m has also been secured for the A126 through the DfT Safer Roads Fund. A package of safety measures will commence next year, with preliminary surveys being commissioned for the autumn.
- The Council continues to work with all stakeholders to determine a solution to enforce bus lanes and width restrictions across the Borough, including a possible camera enforcement methodology.
- The team have also progressed a capital funding bids for a range of improvement and enhancement schemes including additional Kerb-it programme, Aveley Freight management and provision for a new access scheme to support school growth aspirations on the A1013.

6.4 Steps have been taken to implement freight management measures along Rectory Road in Grays while HGV access to and from Towers Road / Globe Industrial Estate have been restricted improving the safety for all road users with vehicles moving to and from the estate. Parking within Towers Road and Rectory Road have also been improved with newly implemented parking restrictions, improving vehicle access and sight lines. A width restriction has also been implemented at the top of Rectory Road with Lodge Lane to prevent freight vehicles travelling on Rectory Road using inappropriate routes and a new loading bay has been installed for use by businesses by the Oak Public House.

7 Orsett Road two-way scheme

7.1 Our plans to create a new two-way system in Grays involve significant changes to Orsett Road to allow two-way traffic between Derby Road and Stanley Road, as well as the upgrading and installation of pedestrian crossings, resurfacing work and various other highways improvements.

7.2 This is a vitally important scheme that will improve traffic flow and provide significant benefits to residents, visitors and businesses in Grays.

7.3 During stages of the project there will be traffic management required at the following four junctions of Stanley, Clarence, Derby and Orsett roads and any disruption during the works to a minimum and to take into account other planned work affecting the town centre.

8 Parking Enforcement

8.1 The provision and enforcement of parking supports the delivery of the objectives of accessibility, tackling congestion, improving air quality, safer roads, assists the efficient movement of traffic, increases compliance, maintains access to services and amenities and facilitates regeneration of the Thurrock transport network.

8.2 To ensure achievement of the above objectives full time Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) are employed to patrol the borough, with focus on problem hot spots to enforce parking restrictions and issue penalty charge notices where parking contraventions are deemed to have occurred.

8.3 To tackle the ongoing issues around the illegal parking of HGVs in the borough a twilight shift and an intermittent night shift were operated. This resulted in increased HGVs parking in appropriate parking areas provided by private companies in the borough.

8.4 Together with the Environmental Enforcement Officers they have reduced the borough of significant damage to grass verges and footpaths. This focused approach resulted in 167 Driver Community Protection Warnings (CPWs), 25 Driver Community Protection Notices (CPNs) and 8 Driver Fixed Penalty

Notices. As a result there have not been any significant reports of HGVs causing criminal damage to grass verges and public footpaths of late.

- 8.5 In response to reports from CEOs of eleven trailers parking on the clear way at Thurrock Park Way, Environmental Enforcement Officers have carried out regular visits. Using the Community Protection Notice (CPN) process they have successfully cleared the trailers.
- 8.6 We continue to use a well-placed company to trace and pursue the keepers of foreign registered vehicles with the view to collecting outstanding payments. In 2018/19 the council received a payment of almost £12k for debt owed to the Council in relation to foreign vehicles.
- 8.7 At the end of February 2019, the Parking Services Back Office successfully completed a much needed upgrade to the Parking Software which has resulted in a more efficient service, higher payment rate on penalty charge notices and better reporting.
- 8.8 All CEOs have been issued with a body worn video camera (BWVC). In the case of any prosecution, case officers can use the footage from the BWVC to support a written statement.
- 8.9 The Council went cashless on the 25 February 2019, which has resulted in an increase in income, a very positive change we hadn't anticipated.
- 8.10 The Parking Enforcement service together with Network Management are also regulating the suspension of parking bays more effectively and in accordance with the Fees and Charges agreed by Council. This has resulted in over £40,000 of income, as well as a better regulated system of minor works carried out in the borough by utility companies and private companies.
- 8.11 In the 2018/19 financial year the parking service produced a surplus of £416,951 – a 6% increase compared to £393,031 in 2017/18. All income generated is used for the operation of public passenger transport services, highway or traffic improvement projects and maintenance of parking restrictions, as per legislation.
- 8.12 An increase of 17% in the total number of penalty charge notices issued (18,723) in 2018/19 compared to (16,017) issued in 2017/18 demonstrates increased activity in enforcing Thurrock roads.

9 East-Facing Slips

- 9.1 A major success in the past year was the announcement by the Secretary of State, for funding towards the long-sought A13 East Facing Slips scheme. Since the announcement, work has been ongoing to prepare a submission for the Outline Business Case (OBC) to the DfT to provide the economic and strategic case for the scheme. The OBC submission is expected in December 2019, which will outline the expected cost and funding allocation required from

Government to deliver the scheme, as well as outlining the expected delivery timeframe and regulatory framework to enable the scheme construction. Current estimates expect the construction to commence in the financial year 2022/23 with a construction time frame of 18-24 months. Once the OBC is submitted and approved, a Full Business Case will be developed and shared with DfT for final sign off of the scheme and the scheme taken through the planning process.

- 9.2 In addition to funding achieved for the East Facing Slips, the Government has created a new opportunity to address other congestion pinch points across the Borough. The Council can bid for funding, where high impact schemes will help to address and reduce congestion on the road network. A maximum of £75m is available each year for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and schemes will need to show where congestion is preventing economic growth. The Council will need to submit an Expression of Interest by January 2020.

10 Passenger Transport

- 10.1 This year the Passenger Transport Team Tendered and successfully procured a new three year contract for local Bus Services 11, 265 and 374. This has enabled us to provide a service for 6 communities which would otherwise have not had access to a bus Service. Provision has also been made for amendments to the routes to be made to ensure links to the Integrated Medical Centres are available, as and when required. Feedback received from the Bus User Group has been very positive.
- 10.2 Bus punctuality continues to be good, major road improvement schemes and essential utility works have had minimal impact, with 91.2% of bus observations for 2018/19 classified as on time. The figure for buses starting their journey on time was also very good at 99.2%.
- 10.3 The Bus Shelter Contract has been awarded, which will facilitate improved and modern facilities with the first phase of delivery due to commence in the autumn.
- 10.4 The team provide school transport for all pupils in the borough that meet the eligibility criteria, both mainstream and those with special educational needs and disabilities. In an average years approximately 400,000 school trips are provided.
- 10.5 Currently the Passenger Transport Team are managing approximately 23,000 concessionary fares pass holders, which the Council continues to fund.

11 Liaison with c2c

- 11.1 Our relationship with c2c continues to develop and provides opportunities to understand the issues and improvements that c2c deal with on their network, it also provides an opportunity for the Council to respond to consultations relating to service changes. c2c provide updates to the Council's Congestion

Taskforce when required and attend O&S meetings to provide service updates as requested. The Council's Communications Team continue to work with c2c to develop a collaborative communications strategy (including social media sharing, Variable Message Signs at stations, Tic-Tac network updates and other measures). c2c are committed to delivering infrastructure improvements that will enhance their service.

11.2 Station refurbishment works have commenced at Ockendon and Grays Stations and similar works are planned at East Tilbury, Tilbury Town and Chafford Hundred. New trains are to be added to the Thurrock line from 2021 and timetable amendments are to be explored.

11.3 Opportunities to utilise the c2c Customer and Community Improvement Fund have also been discussed with c2c. Ideas including Electric Vehicle (EV) charging, water fountains, bike pumps, increased seating and onward journey information have been highlighted to c2c.

12 Smart Thurrock

12.1 The Transport Development team continue to explore opportunities that will support the Council's vision for a smarter and more connected borough. Opportunities identified within the TD team include managing traffic flows through Variable Message Signs (VMS), Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS), contactless payment on trains and Real-time Bus Information.

12.2 The Council is procuring five new large VMS signs to advise motorists of issues on the highway network and eight new VMS signs are to be delivered within the vicinity of the Lakeside Basin in collaboration with Intu Lakeside to manage congestion and traffic flows to car parks.

13 Fleet Management

13.1 Following on from the Council's previous investment of £8m on fleet renewal, Fleet have so far for this year invested an additional £900,000 of capital on further replacements these include 2 new gulley suckers, 2 mid-range street sweepers, 2 large street sweepers, 2 tractors and 2 mini buses. We have also ordered and are awaiting delivery of 2 new grave diggers, a JCB for Highways, a tele handler for the recycling plant and 4 precinct sized sweepers that are all due for delivery before November and provide a further commitment of £500,000.

13.2 All new vehicles meet Euro 6 standards and all vehicles are ULEZ compliant, allowing them to travel into London and the ultra-low emissions zones.

13.3 New vehicle tracking systems have been fitted to all 140 of the new vehicles which are now monitored in relation to driver behaviour, environmental impact and effective utilisation of our assets.

- 13.4 The Council's MOT station has completed 389 MOTs in the previous year which includes a saving on expenditure as we MOT our own vehicles in house and an income generation from private MOTs from members of the public.
- 13.5 Fleet have also conducted over 400 taxi licence compliance checks, 600 in house vehicle inspections and approximately 3,800 in-house repairs over the past year.

14 South Essex Active Travel

- 14.1 The collaborative working relationship with colleagues in Southend and Essex continues to deliver the £3.3m South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) programme which encourages and enables increased walking and cycling across the borough. A number of innovative ideas and events (including the Civic Offices Healthy Walk) have been delivered and developed and SEAT has enabled the Council to engage with local businesses. The SEAT programme has recently become publically rebranded as Forward Motion. DfT have recently announced that the SEAT project will gain additional funding for 202/21 to deliver similar projects.
- 14.2 June 2019 saw the opening of Thurrock's first cycle hub in Tilbury, a scheme funded by the Council's Public Health team and SEAT which will deliver improved access to cycling opportunities, refurbished bikes and community advice that will encourage cycling. The Strategic Transport team has engaged with the Household Waste and Recycling Centre to direct any bicycles which are brought to the site to be refurbished at the cycle hub, thereby enabling low cost bikes to be make available to the Tilbury community. Observations to date have shown a positive reaction towards the facility by local residents. The Cycle Hub is currently open three days per week – Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

15 Travel Plans

- 15.1 Workplace and residential Travel Plans continue to be assessed and approved in order to bring forward sustainable travel options to mitigate the impacts of new development. Encouraging and enabling more walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing are all recognised as having a beneficial impact on the highway network. Within the past year, the Purfleet Regeneration Travel Plan has secured funding for a formalised Car Club scheme, which will also be implemented as part of future large residential and employment site based travel plans, creating a borough wide Car Club, giving residents access to private vehicles without the cost of owning a vehicle.

16 Transport Strategy

- 16.1 As part of the Lower Thames Crossing, engagement continues with Highways England and key stakeholders to promote the Tilbury Link Road (TLR). Working alongside our consultants, the Council has developed an Options Assessment Report to identify and prioritise the scheme variations as a

requirement of any future Outline Business Case. The submission of robust and matured TLR options identifies the Council's commitment to a link road scheme. DfT will advise the council when suitable funding sources become available.

- 16.2 Agreement has been secured with Highways England to migrate the signals at Junction 31 to Highways England in order to provide 24/7 focus and management on this part of the network and to allow more appropriate and effective clearance plans to be applied when there is severe congestion or in the event of an incident.
- 16.3 The works will involve enhancing the existing signal controllers on Junction 31 and when congestion occurs, implementation of a pre-determined clearance plan to help improve traffic flows on the junction, minimising exist blocking. This work will enable further collaboration with Highways England and Essex to enhance the technological investment on Thurrock's roads.
- 16.4 The Transport Strategy team lead on Flood Risk Management for the Council and provide advice and support to the Thurrock area, working with Essex County Council and the Environment Agency. A new flood risk officer is currently being recruited to provide a dedicated resource towards this statutory responsibility, and is expected to be in post in December/January.
- 16.5 A new Parking Strategy is being developed to help improve engagement with developers with formalised parking standards. The new strategy, when approved, will enable the authority to inform developers, residents and businesses of required parking provision for all modes and requirements dependant on the nature of the development. The parking strategy will also enhance the existing strategy for parking enforcement, creating improved policies for the Council to utilise. This will create a more transparent opportunity to engage and inform the public. Consultation will be undertaken toward the end of the year and the strategy is expected to be presented to O&S and Cabinet in early 2020.
- 16.6 The launch last year of the London Gateway bus service, linking Stanford le Hope Station and Corringham to London Gateway development– creating a sustainable transport link to the site continues to operate. Patronage is growing on the service, but it cannot be run commercially at the moment. Efforts continue to determine longer-term funding for the bus, with contributions from businesses on site to ensure a continuous link to the station. Route and timetable enhancements are also being considered, and a new promotional leaflet for distribution to staff and placing at stops have also been finalised.

17 Gritting

- 17.1 Winter will soon be upon us and preparations are underway, with weather monitoring commencing in October and the gritters are on standby for action. Last season we completed 40 runs, during what was considered to be a mild

season, with Twitter alerts to inform our residents when our teams were active.

- 17.2 We are in the process of installing Thurrock's very own Weather Station. Historically we have relied on the weather station which is located on Canvey Way, the procurement of a Thurrock based station will enable us to receive more accurate forecasts which identify when our crews will be active.

18 Finance

- 18.1 Significant further investment has been made in the vital services and the table below summarises the budget and income targets.
- 18.2 Variances are as a consequence of medium term financial strategy growth and movement of budget between services. The budgets for Fleet and Logistics and Parking Enforcement are balanced by recharges and revenue respectively.

Service	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20
Fleet and Logistics	(604,499)	(400,807)
Highways Infrastructure	5,958,290	7,592,638
Passenger Transport	1,862,848	1,765,716
Transportation Development	255,135	884,247
Parking Enforcement	(448,984)	(376,193)
	7,022,789	9,465,600