

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2019

**QUESTIONS ASKED BY MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(3)
AND 7(5)**

Question by Mr. Max Hunt CC

I am concerned that whilst local planning authorities have given great emphasis to the provision of public transport, cycling and walking, this may not always translate into related major highways works.

1. When making a case for major highways works to the Government Growth and Housing Fund or the Local Growth Fund, where housing developments are involved, what priority in the process is given to improving public transport access (including bus lanes), safe cycleways and attractive pedestrian routes?
2. Where such housing developments are likely to take many years to complete and bearing in mind this may take 20 years for a Sustainable Urban Extension, what consideration is made to meet climate change targets and the policies being cited by the profession.
3. Do we need to plan our transport network differently to meet climate change targets and the necessary mitigation if we fail, if so where should members learn more about this?
4. Were public transport and active travel modes considered at a sufficiently early stage in the recent A512 widening programme and what developer funding was provided for the scheme and from which developers?
5. I have been told that tree planting replacement on the areas around the A512 project is not possible due to the gradients. Is this the case, and if so what other planting is possible?

Reply by the Chairman:

1. When developing any bids, such as the Local Growth Fund or the Growth and Housing Fund, Leicestershire County Council, as the local highway authority, will always look to see what transport improvements can be made against the funding stream criteria. If public transport access, cycle provision or pedestrian facilities are appropriate we will bid accordingly. However other funding streams such as the Access Fund or Local Sustainable Transport Fund are often more suitable for funding these type of measures. The County Council has a strong track record of bidding and securing funding, in a competitive environment, to improve sustainable transport infrastructure as can be seen through the Local Growth Funding scheme on the A50 and the Housing Growth Funding on the A46 and Anstey Lane. Whilst we always seek to secure such

infrastructure, it is dependent on the criteria of the funding stream as well as what can be physically delivered.

2. In the main this is a consideration for the Local Planning Authority when the developments are first proposed. As highway authority the County Council feeds into the planning process and the on-going review of the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide is likely to provide guidelines on how developers can address these issues as far as highway construction and mitigation is concerned. In addition, the continued work undertaken with developers to put in place Travel Plans and promote sustainable modes of travel will also help to contribute to the climate change targets.
3. Regarding planning of the transport network, the County Council has to operate within the context of the national transport policy framework. For several years, the Government's emphasis for transport policy has been to support housing and economic growth with limited consideration of the environment and climate change.

The Government have begun the groundwork on the first detailed plan to decarbonise the transport sector and we understand this will be launched next year. The climate action roadmap will be one of many new government climate proposals expected in 2020 to help meet the UK's legally binding target to build a carbon neutral economy by 2050. It will set out in detail what Government, business and society must do to deliver the emissions reductions needed from all modes of transport. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan will take a co-ordinated, cross-modal approach to deliver the transport sector's contribution to our decarbonisation targets.

The County Council will take account of this plan as it undertakes the work to review the Environment Strategy to reflect the Council's carbon neutral commitment and the emerging work programme in developing an updated Local Transport Plan building on the work of LTP3. Both the Environment Strategy and LTP4 will be subject to consideration by Members through the appropriate scrutiny processes and by the Cabinet and the full Council as appropriate.

In terms of delivery of highway projects, the department is currently reviewing the Council Climate Change Risk Register for Highways and this is likely to identify any gaps in terms of both mitigation and adaptation for Climate Change. The Leicestershire County Council Highways Design Guide is soon to be reviewed which will be an opportunity to consider how best to address issues around climate change related to new development standards. The Environment Group formed as part of the County Council, Morgan Sindall and Midlands Highway Alliance partnership will also be examining issues around climate change and the wider environment to ensure infrastructure delivery minimises carbon emission where we can.

4. The key criteria for securing funding for the A512 widening programme was to unlock housing and economic growth. As part of this, a non-motorised user audit on the proposed J23/A512 scheme identified the need to ensure the scheme tied in appropriately with the existing walking and cycling provision along the A512. In addition, where possible, improved facilities will be provided, for instance, the new toucan crossing points for pedestrian/cyclists on various legs of J23 and the new roundabout on A512.

Contributions relevant to the scheme have been sought from third parties. The exact details of these contributions are set out in commercially sensitive agreements. The position with regard to funding is that the Council has received (or are able to draw down) £5m Growth and Housing Fund from Highways England, £12m Local Growth Fund, administered by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

The scheme budget is £25m and whilst Leicestershire County Council is forward funding the remaining 3rd party contributions, provided the scheme is delivered within budget the County Council is not ultimately contributing to the scheme as the authority will be repaid via developer contributions.

5. The preparation of the landscape scheme is in the early stages but discussions on the proposals have taken place with Charnwood Borough Council and have fed into the public consultation exercise. The proposals are to be vegetation replacement including native trees, shrubs, hedgerows and grassland and to generally maximise opportunities for improving the biodiversity as far as possible along the road corridor. It is not possible to tree plant on slope profiles greater than 1 in 2 and these slopes would be limited to shrub planting, hedgerows and grassland establishment as appropriate.

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