

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 8th JULY 2015
POSITION STATEMENT BY THE LEAD MEMBER FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

North West Leicester Transport Project

As members will have seen on their way into County Hall, work has started on the first stage of a multi-million pound project to improve the road links into the City from the north west part of Leicester.

The major part of the work is along the A50 from the A46 Western Bypass into the City. On the County side this will mean works between the A563 Outer ring road and the A46 bypass. I would like to take this opportunity to apologise in advance for the inevitable disruption and delay the work will cause but it is essential that this work is done now.

The north west of Leicester plays an important role in generating wealth and jobs as well as providing access routes into the City. This area contains a number of places that attract visitors (customers, residents and employees) such as the Glenfield Hospital, Beaumont Leys Shopping Centre and the surrounding industrial estate, the National Space Centre and the Great Central Railway Station near Birstall. It also provides an important role in facilitating the orbital movements – northeast between the A6 and A47 and southwest between the A50 and the A426.

This Scheme, which is run jointly by the City and County Councils will improve the main junctions with wider lanes and better signalling. It will also provide much improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users thereby encouraging a modal shift to other forms of transport. When the work is completed we will see amongst other things:

- Benefits for businesses as a result of better journey times and reliability for employees and delivery vehicles;
- Reduced congestion at the key junctions with better traffic flows into and out of the City as well on the ring road;
- Reduction in carbon emissions from greater take-up of walking, cycling and public transport.

As I said earlier this is a joint City/County scheme. The total investment for this scheme is £19million of which £16million is coming from central government following a successful bid to the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF). The remaining £3million is to be met by the City and County Councils.

The Leader in his position statement has talked about the Combined Authority bid and the benefits this will bring to Leicester and Leicestershire through joint working and co-operation. This scheme is a prime example of the County, City and the Local Enterprise Partnership working together for the benefit of the area. The £16million bid to Government was only successful as we were able to demonstrate joint working at a political level but also that we had the support of the business community through the LEP.

A511 Growth Corridor

M1 junction 22 and A42 junction 13 are important points of access to the Strategic Road Network, providing access to existing businesses in North West Leicestershire (which is home to a number of major logistics businesses).

The Coalville and Ashby areas have plans for the delivery of major growth, including over 5,000 dwellings and further employment sites. However modelling undertaken to develop the North West Leicestershire Core Strategy and in connection with planning applications has shown that the scale of the development proposed would have a severe impact on the highway network without specific targeted interventions. Highways England has previously imposed holding directions on planning applications and the local highway authority has also expressed concerns about the impact of growth on the efficient and safe operation of these junctions.

The County Council therefore decided to submit a bid to the LLEP for funding under the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) for this project which will remove this uncertainty, deliver benefits much earlier than would otherwise be the case and enable the prompt and efficient delivery of significant growth.

The bid was successful and funding was awarded for the A511 Corridor project as part of Growth Deal 1 in July 2014. The funding is split over two years, 2015/16 and 2016/17 with improvements to M1 J22 this year and A42 J13 next.

The additional funding needed from the County Council for the junction improvements is included in the LTP Implementation Plan approved by Cabinet on 16th March 2015 and the project also forms part of the Enabling Growth Plan similarly approved by Cabinet on 16th March 2015. There is also funding available from S106 monies linked to a development in Ashby.

The project will be delivered in two phases. Improvements to the M1 J22 will start in October this year and the improvements to the A42 J13 in spring 2016. Given the works on the M1 to build the New Lubbethorpe Bridge and the roundabout improvements on the A50 at the County/City boundary, I have emphasised to officers that it is vital that these works are coordinated to minimise disruption and close liaison between the projects and with Leicestershire Police will be maintained throughout.