

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 26th SEPTEMBER 2018

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Community Speed Enforcement

Work is nearly complete installing new average speed cameras to alleviate safety concerns across the county as part of a year-long trial. The speed cameras cover four villages and three key main and rural routes which have various issues and concerns around speeding and safety.

The switch-on started in Sharnford, Measham and Walcote last week, with other cameras in parts of Oadby, Groby, Woodhouse Eaves and Freeby becoming operational over the next month. The County Council is stepping up its campaign to retain some of the fines from the average speed camera trial, which would enable a further roll-out of average speed cameras across Leicestershire. Many communities have expressed a wish to also benefit from having speed cameras and this would help fund these. Once the capital costs of the cameras have been met, the fines would then revert to the Government. Currently, all the money collected through camera fines is retained by HM Treasury. The speed camera trial has also won the backing of county MPs.

School Keep Clear – Camera Car

I wanted to take this opportunity to advise members of the trial to combat the problems of inconsiderate parking on School Keep Clear Zig-Zag markings. We have set aside one-off funding of up to £500,000, to address concerns that parents, residents and teachers have about parking outside schools. We work closely with schools and colleges to improve issues around on-street parking as well as pedestrian and pupil safety and we invited schools to register their interest in the scheme. The work to make the zig-zag zones enforceable involves ensuring traffic regulation orders are in place by upgrading mandatory signs and lines so the zones are enforceable. A total of 32 schools that already have the necessary mandatory markings are taking part in the trial. Another 27 schools who have reported issues with parking also registered an interest, but are not yet eligible to begin the trial as further work is needed at these locations.

Using automatic number plate recognition technology, a camera car is being used by officers to monitor compliance and issue fines where necessary. The remaining schools across the county will be invited again to be considered for inclusion later this year.

Gully Cleaning

To tackle blocked drains, the authority is applying a new 'risk-based' approach to gully cleaning that includes increasing the number of roadside drains treated annually - from 64,000 per year to 92,000 – without costs rising. The change follows a seven-month trial to find a more cost effective and focused way of cleaning the county's 130,000 gullies. The trial found that it would be beneficial for the Council to make more regular visits to roads at high risk of flooding due to the drains filling faster with silt. Previously drains were cleaned on an 18 to 24 month fixed programme, whether the road was at risk of flooding or not. The changes are part of the Council's new highways asset management plan and will be rolled out across the county from early 2019.

Gritting In Summer and Storm Clean Up

The County Council's gritters have spread around 150 tonnes of granite to protect roads across Leicestershire which were melting during the heat wave.

Since the beginning of July, the highways team have dusted more than 25 locations across the county. It is the first time for a number of years the highway teams have had to carry out dusting using modified gritters. However, the impact of the joint hottest summer on record has caused longer term damage to our roads here in Leicestershire and throughout the country. We have assessed the level of damage and the treatments needed. We are also working with other highway authorities to make the case for additional central government funding, as was forthcoming after the last winter for potholes. However, recognising the need to address the most urgent repairs we are looking at bringing forward the 2019/20 allocation of £2.2million (the remainder of the £5million allocated in the MTFs) and look at the possibility of a growth bid to replace the £2.2million in 2019/20.

The weather continues to bring challenges with well over a hundred trees blocking roads and paths across the whole county in the last week. Our gangs have worked day and night clearing the debris and I would like to thank them for their dedication to keeping our roads safe.

Waste Treatment

I'm pleased to inform members that the authority has recently become a shareholder in the Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Ltd. As a shareholder, the authority has secured increased waste treatment capacity at the energy from waste plant in Coventry increasing the resilience of the waste management service as well as a significant financial saving of over £0.5million by 2020.

Body Cameras

Staff within the Environment and Transport Department who work on the front line are unfortunately being subjected to increasing instances of abuse, threats and near misses. To support staff and provide evidence of criminal activity and unacceptable behaviour, the department is currently trialling the use of body cameras at two of the recycling and household waste sites, in the highways delivery service and in the infrastructure planning team. As well as providing evidence, it is hoped that the cameras will act as a deterrent to potential offenders. Depending on the success of the trial, the cameras may be rolled out more widely across the department.

Centenary Remembrance Events 2018

Finally, I am pleased to advise that Environment and Transport Department has continued to support numerous organisations holding Remembrance Parades and other events in this centenary year. We are providing support to over 60 events with everything from signs and cones, to advice sessions for volunteer traffic marshals. In addition over 300 Council vehicles will proudly display a Poppy in support of the British Legion to help raise public awareness of all those who have served.

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