

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 16 JANUARY 2025**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26 – 2028/29

MINUTE EXTRACT

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2028/29

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Highways and Transport side of the Environment and Transport department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O. O'Shea CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transport, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

Growth

- (i) Street lighting reactive maintenance jobs had increased by 257% since 2022/23 due to aged assets. Aged Assets referred to columns and cables that had a life expectancy and needed maintaining. Members queried whether any scoping exercises had been carried out to see if alternative sources of power could be utilised which were more sustainable. In response, Officers explained that the current approach was to switch to LED lighting and that replacement programme was underway on what was a large scale. Assets needed to be reliable and alternative sources were taken on board as the technology improved over time.

SEN Transport

- (ii) Assisted Transport was a significant part of the department's budget and the spend on it was continuing to increase. A member acknowledged that the money needed to be spent and forecasts and provision for the future needed to be made. However, Members suggested that as this was an issue affecting local authorities across the country it should be addressed nationally by government.
- (iii) The Council had a statutory duty to deliver the SEN Transport service and the department's growth would continue to be dominated by increased demand for SEN Transport. Members noted that the Council was able to increase the Adult Social Care precept by 2% without requiring a referendum and submitted that until the government addressed the SEN Transport issue nationally the County

Council would have to keep increasing the precept by the maximum amount each year.

Savings

- (iv) A Member raised concerns about a lighting in urban areas and questioned whether increasing the amount of lighting was a cost worth paying. In response it was explained that a substantial saving had been made as a result of dimming street lighting and the saving would have to be made elsewhere were it not made from street lighting, but The department was aware that dimmed street lighting might not be suitable for all areas and would take feedback from the ongoing pilot scheme and address the concerns where necessary.
- (v) As many electric vehicles were heavier than other vehicles due to the weight of the battery, Members queried whether this resulted in more deterioration of the roads. In response it was acknowledged that there had been an acceleration in deterioration on the network in recent years and that there were many factors that impacted this such as weather. The fact that EV's were heavier and heavier vehicles had an impact on the road network was an area that would need addressing nationally.
- (vi) Members raised concerns regarding high volumes of traffic around Junction 21 of the M1. It was suggested that the government's requirements of local authorities to increase housing growth should come with additional investment in the transport infrastructure as the existing road networks would not be able to cope with additional growth.

Capital Programme

- (vii) In response to a Member query about Zouch Bridge highlighted in the report it was noted that the bridge had been identified as an asset that needed replacing as it was a key link on the strategic network. Works would continue towards completion in 2027 which members welcomed.
- (viii) A member raised concerns regarding maintenance of the existing highways network. Some maintenance had originally been planned to be funded through the Network North funding but this is no longer available under the new Government and monies that had already been accelerated to carry out some of maintenance would now be accounted for in expected multi-year settlements from DfT over the period of the MTFS. It was noted that this highlighted the need for ongoing planned maintenance so the department could make the best use of available funding while managing the risks attached to this as a result of current uncertainty in funding.
- (ix) The amount of future contributions to be received by the department from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 were hard to predict so could not yet be allocated in the budget until confirmation was received. However, upcoming Section 106 funding was closely monitored to maximise the use of this funding.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 -2028/29 be noted;
- b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 27 January 2025.

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