

CABINET – 30 NOVEMBER 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Members Questions**Question (1) Will Forster (Woking South):**

Surrey County Council submitted an Active Travel Tranche Two bid to the Department of Transport for ten schemes. Please can the Cabinet Member for Transport provide an update on how the eight schemes taken forward are progressing and specifically whether they will all be implemented by April 2022? Please can the Cabinet Member confirm the reasons for dropping the two schemes?

The County Council has submitted an Active Travel Tranche Three bid for seven schemes and was due to receive a response by this autumn. Please can the Cabinet Member confirm what response, if any, the Council has received from the Department for Transport?

Finally, which schemes are the Council considering including in the Active Travel Tranche four bid?

Reply:

The County Council successfully secured £6,445,000 for our Active Travel Tranche 2 bid. The two schemes removed from the original programme are the Farnham cycle scheme and the School Lane scheme in Ashford. We secured a grant from the “National Highways designated funds” and School Lane improvements were constructed using this income, in April 2021. The Farnham scheme is being considered as part of the wider Farnham masterplan.

The indicative programme for the remaining eight schemes is below

Park Road, Stanwell – completed

Town Lane, Stanwell – start date Jan 2022 duration 2 months

Burpham – start date June 2022 duration 6 months

Gresham Road, Staines – subject to all issues being resolved and supported, start date Jan 2022 duration 3 months

Woking – start date June 2022 duration 6 months

Redhill – on site, completion planned for March 2022

Gatwick – start date Jan 2022 duration 3 months

Dagley Road, Shalford – start date Jan 2022 duration 2 months.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has agreed that our allocated funding can roll into the next financial year and there is no penalty for not completing all these complex schemes before the end of this financial year.

We are waiting to learn outcome of our Tranche 3 bid. The DfT has indicated we maybe advised before the end of this calendar year, but the timetable is outside of our direct control.

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It has not yet been finalised which schemes will be promoted for any Tranche 4 funding, this will be determined when any supplementary guidance is issued by the DfT. It is anticipated schemes will have been identified as part of the “Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans”.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
30 November 2021

Question (2) Will Forster (Woking South):

Surrey County Council is currently in the process of installing 11 pride pedestrian crossings in Surrey, however some concerns have been raised about how these and other colourful crossings impact on disabled people.

Please can the Cabinet reassure members of the Council and members of the public that these concerns are unfounded?

Has the Council carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on these schemes and if so, what did it say?

Reply:

The County Council takes road safety extremely seriously. Before installing the first of these crossings, a detailed safety audit was undertaken looking at any impact to road safety for all users. This is the standard practice we adopt before making permanent changes to the highway network. In addition, guidance was sought from the Department for Transport and best practice considered from other authorities who have installed similar crossings.

The rainbow crossings are only being installed at signal-controlled crossings. This means that road users will still use the well-established push button control with dedicated red / green man symbols. The mandatory white road markings are also maintained.

The County Council has commissioned a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), which we are aiming to complete as soon as possible. Until then, the roll out has been paused. The EIA will be shared with key partners, including the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People. If any recommendations are identified these will be properly considered and if necessary incorporated in future crossings and retrospectively applied to the two already on the network.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
30 November 2021

Question (3) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

Paragraph 6.36 of Item 9 highlights the council’s plan to better understand the carbon impacts of the Capital Programme and states that the Council will allocate funds to address this. Please provide an initial estimate of carbon impact of the Capital Programme, both up front (construction) and in use (e.g. heating of buildings, travel), such that is available for scrutiny alongside the financial aspects of this budget. Please confirm that the ‘twin-track’ approach will build in carbon assessment and budgeting alongside financial and operational planning.

Reply:

The Capital Programme of £1.9bn plays a key part of delivering our Corporate Priorities, including enabling a Greener Future. Inevitably, a number of schemes will carry an inherent risk to increasing the Council’s supply chain and operational emissions. The approach to assessing the impact of programmes is still at an early stage, with detail very much under development, and therefore it is not possible as yet to quantify the overall carbon impacts of the programme. We are exploring how this could be estimated, to establish an approach which will be as near to carbon neutral as is possible. Carbon and climate risk assessments will be carried out at the design stage of each project to inform designs, reduce their operational carbon emissions, future proof them and ensure the procurement process favours suppliers that will put in place measures to reduce emissions from materials and the construction process.

The Major Projects and Greener Futures team have started working on a process to embed the carbon and climate risk assessments process as part of project appraisal, business cases development and design stage to inform low carbon and climate proof infrastructure development. This work began with assessing the financial implications of the Council’s 2030 Net Zero targets which will cost in the region of £65-£71m, reflected in the pipeline allocations in the Draft Budget. We are still at the start of the journey to roll out this process across all the Council services but have committed to the approach.

The ‘Twin Track’ approach to delivering future budgets is designed to direct the Council’s available resources to delivering priorities. It will reflect the Council’s commitments to delivering a Greener Future, including carbon reduction and climate resilience, along with core services and other Council priorities.

Becky Rush
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
30 November 2021

Question (4) Catherine Baart (Earlswood and Reigate South):

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 26 October 2021 quotes resident research showing "fares for buses was listed as the sixth most important factor when taking a bus". However, the external resident survey by Lake Market Research establishes "lower fares as the most important priority for the bus network".

Increasing passenger numbers on public transport will be crucial to the success of LTP4. Please can the Cabinet comment on how this contradiction will be resolved, and which conclusion is being used in the Bus strategy and budget.

Reply:

We know that fares can prove a significant barrier for people choosing buses as their regular or preferred transport option. However, fares are not the only issue of concern. Resident feedback derived from previous surveys conducted for Surrey Bus Reviews and the Local Transport Review highlighted a range of issues, including a desire for more bus priority measures to deliver more reliable services, i.e. make sure the bus turns up when it is supposed to, the desire for better information on times and fares with more real time information, along with a desire to see improvements to the overall journey experience and customer service.

To tackle fares in particular, we have included a number of different initiatives in our Bus Service Improvement Plan submitted to Government in October, including:

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- A half fare scheme for all residents aged under 25
 - Free travel on buses for young carers
 - Supporting people to get back to work or those entering employment for the first time, by paying the cost of their bus travel for a limited time
 - A lower price evening fare that aims to support the hospitality sector and the economic recovery of our town centres as we continue to emerge from the pandemic
 - Tap-On Tap-Off technology with fare capping to simplify fares, with users paying for the trips they make with a ceiling charge.

Once confirmation on the level of funding allocated by Government is received, we will consult with residents and stakeholders on where funding could be prioritised. We will therefore not be using any single conclusion to determine the delivery of the Enhanced Partnership, our Bus Strategy or the bus element of the Surrey Transport Plan. Specifically, for buses we are aiming to deliver a financially sustainable mix of measures, including investment in bus priority infrastructure, better information, a better passenger waiting environment, service enhancements, along with fares, payment and ticket initiatives, all of which will make buses a more attractive choice for residents, more of the time.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
30 November 2021

Question (5) Catherine Baart (Earlswood and Reigate South):

The annual report of the Strategic Investment Board, states that there are no implications that the Cabinet needs to consider with regard to the "Environmental Sustainability" or "Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience" for any of the council's local authority trading companies. In particular, Halsey Garton lists the investment portfolio without the asset's associated energy ratings or current carbon emissions. What is the Council, as owner of these assets, planning to do to reduce the emissions of these assets in the same way as required for decarbonisation of the 'One Surrey' estate.

Reply:

Carbon emissions from trading companies owned by Surrey County Council are not in the scope of the Council's 2030 target, but it is recognised that the Council is responsible for their emissions reduction. Further work needs to be done to consider how trading companies should set net-zero targets.

The Land & Property Commercial team has carried out early analysis of the investment assets, and continues to work with the investment tenants to establish credible carbon management plans for the assets. Officers are also progressing a specific net-zero strategy for the investment portfolio to align with the Council's corporate targets, due to be completed within the next financial year.

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property
30 November 2021