

**HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
4 NOVEMBER 2021**

**HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Highways & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an annual performance update on the key performance indicators that the Council is responsible for delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan. Most performance indicators included in this report are reported by the Highways & Transport sections of the Environment & Transport Department.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan to 2022, and the Highways & Transport (H&T) performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies.

**Background**

3. Following the decision to separate the Environment and Transport scrutiny committee by the full Council in July 2021 this is the first annual report to the new committee covering solely H&T performance. This report highlights how the Strategic Plan indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes Strong Economy, Keeping People Safe and Great Communities, and highlights for the year.
4. This report includes Appendix A, containing a performance dashboard covering performance indicator progress within the Council's Annual Report 2020/21 Performance Compendium. The performance dashboards include a few indicators where the Council does not have direct or a lot of control of delivery, such as satisfaction with local bus services and perception of traffic levels & congestion. They have been included to provide greater oversight of the wider H&T outcomes in Leicestershire and help to understand what life is like in the County and include a mixture of national and locally developed performance indicators. Measuring these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence government policy and funding. It is expected that action by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time.
5. The Council's performance is benchmarked against 33 authorities which cover large, principally non-urban, geographical areas. Where it is available, the dashboards indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The 1st quartile is

defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county areas (the best). The 4th quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county areas (the worst). The comparison quartiles are updated annually in November.

6. Improvement or deterioration in performance is indicated by the direction of travel arrows on the performance dashboard. For example, if the number of road casualties has fallen, the direction of travel will show an arrow pointing upwards representing an improvement in performance.
7. Appendix B contains a draft of the Transport & Highways highlights. Once finalised it will be included in the Council's Annual Delivery Report due in November 2021.

### **Performance Update – Annual Report 2020/21**

8. The Annual Report dashboard shows H&T performance up to March 2021. Overall, there are 12 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan Outcomes. The dashboards in Appendix A show: the indicator description, the quartile position, the direction of travel of performance, end of year data, target/standard; the previous end of year data; polarity (whether a high or low number is good performance) and commentary.
9. Improvement or deterioration in performance is indicated by the direction of travel arrows on the dashboard. Where a direction of travel is available, 5 show improvements, 3 had declined and 3 remained the same as the previous update.
10. The Council performs extremely well compared to other English county councils with 8 performance indicators falling within the top quartile. These include: the 'Overall satisfaction with traffic levels and congestion (NHT satisfaction survey)', 'Percentage of principal (A class) road network where structural maintenance should be considered', and 'Percentage of non-principal (B&C class) road network where structural maintenance should be considered', 'Overall satisfaction with the condition of highways (NHT)', 'Overall satisfaction with the Rights of Way network (NHT)', 'Total casualties on Leicestershire roads' and 'People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents' and 'Road safety satisfaction'. None of the Council's Strategic Plan performance indicators for H&T fall within the bottom quartile and the majority are above average when compared to other English county councils.

### **Highways and Transport**

#### **Strategic Transport Infrastructure (Strong Economy Outcome)**

11. The 'Average vehicle speeds during the morning peak (7am-10am) on locally managed 'A' roads in Leicestershire' indicator showed an increase in average speed from 31.1mph in 2019 to 32.5 mph in 2020. This increase is almost certainly as a result of reduced traffic levels due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This indicator is below average when compared to other English county councils (3rd quartile in 2019). Average vehicle speeds are used as a proxy measure for peak time congestion. Tackling congestion continues to be a priority, with several road schemes progressing to help alleviate it as well as work to support walking, cycling and public transport use.

12. Satisfaction with traffic levels and congestion is derived from the National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) satisfaction survey. The NHT Public Satisfaction Survey collects public perspectives on, and satisfaction with, H&T Services in local authority areas. Satisfaction with traffic levels has improved in performance from 32% in 2019 to 40% in 2020. There were significantly fewer vehicles on our roads during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns during 2020 which is likely to have influenced people's perceptions. It performs in the top quartile when compared to other English county councils in 2020.
13. Businesses' perceptions of congestion in the County are gathered in the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) business survey every 2-3 years. The LLEP changed the survey during 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic and ran 3 smaller surveys across the year. These covered a period before there were Covid-19 restrictions in place, a time period during the Covid 19 restrictions and a post-national restrictions survey. The percentage of businesses saying that a reduction in traffic congestion would significantly benefit their business increased from 28% in 2017 to 53% in 2020. This result was drawn from the first two surveys up to the end of March 2020. The LLEP report that the 2020 survey cannot be compared directly to previous surveys due to the special circumstances around the Coronavirus pandemic and the extent to which businesses were affected by this from mid-March onwards.

#### Sustainable Transport & Road Maintenance (Strong Economy Outcome)

14. Leicestershire has an excellent record on road condition and continues to have some of the best maintained roads in the country. The Council was amongst the highest rated county councils for satisfaction with condition of highways in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey in 2020, in the top quartile. The 'percentage of the principal A class roads within the road network where structural maintenance should be considered' remained relatively static at 2% during 2020/21 and has met its 2-4% target range. However, the 'percentage of the non-principal B & C class roads where structural maintenance should be considered' declined in performance from 3% in 2019/20 to 4% in 2020/21. Despite this slight increase it has met its 4-6% target range. Both 'A class' and 'B and C class roads' perform in the top quartile compared to other English county councils. Relatively low funding levels available for road maintenance combined with the increasing proportions of the network requiring treatment is likely to result in greater challenges in maintaining these roads in future.
15. The latest update for 'Overall satisfaction with the condition of highways,' derived from the NHT Survey 2020 remained steady at 37% for 2020. Despite appearing to be a low figure, low satisfaction levels are typical across the country. This result was the highest satisfaction rating when compared to other English counties and remains in the top quartile for 2020.
16. There was a notable improvement in performance for the 'Overall satisfaction with the rights of way network (NHT survey)' indicator as it increased by approximately 8 percentage points from 46% (2019) to 54% (2020) resulting in improved performance and meeting its target (53%). It remains in the top quartile when compared to other English counties. During the Covid-19 crisis in 2020, more people walked generally and were likely to have more fully utilised the rights of way network in their area, which could have positively contributed to this result.

17. Carbon emissions from transport within LA influence remained similar in performance to the previous year as emissions fell only slightly from 1,184 kilotons in 2018 to 1,179 kilotons in 2019. It continues to perform above average when compared to other English county councils (2<sup>nd</sup> quartile). This data is sourced from the published subset from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
18. Results from the 2020 NHT survey show that satisfaction with local bus services has declined again slightly from 58% in 2019 to 57% in 2020. Satisfaction with bus services has been declining since 2016. When compared to other English county councils this was above average performance (2<sup>nd</sup> quartile).

#### Road Safety (Keeping People Safe Outcome)

19. There was a 12% decline in 'Total casualties on our roads' from 996 in 2019 to 878 in 2020, demonstrating an improvement in performance and meeting its target. It remains in the top quartile compared to other English county councils for 2020. The data should be treated with a degree of caution due to possible underreporting of accidents following changes to police reporting procedures in 2017 (reported to the E&T scrutiny committee in the 'Road casualty reduction in Leicestershire' report in March 2020). The Police are trialling new methods to ensure they more accurately report on road accidents in the future.
20. The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on our roads declined in performance due to a 19% increase in the number of KSIs from 175 in 2019 to 208 in 2020. Unfortunately, this remains above the target of fewer than 168 casualties. During the pandemic lockdowns, there were fewer vehicles on the roads, however, there was an increase in the severity of road accidents. This is still below the average of 218 KSIs over the past 10 years of results. The Council continues to remain in the top quartile compared to other English county councils. Similar to the road casualty results, this data should be treated with caution.
21. The road safety satisfaction indicator improved in performance from 54% in 2019 to 59% in 2020 and remains in the top quartile when compared to other English county councils. The Council is the highest performing council on this measure. This reflects the efforts of the Council in ensuring all road schemes promote good road safety standards.

#### **Background papers**

Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Plans 2018-22

NHT Survey Results (National Highways and Transport Network) 2020, Available on request.

Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey 2020, Available on request.

**Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

**Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

There are no specific equality and human rights implications to note as part of this performance report.

**List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Highways & Transport Annual Report Performance Dashboard, 2020/21

Appendix B – Highways & Transport Annual Report highlights.

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