

Appendix B – Highways & Transport Annual Report highlights

Economy – Transport

People and businesses need infrastructure that provides excellent connectivity that meets their every-day needs. Transport infrastructure is a key enabler, providing access to opportunity and opening up sites for growth. We aim to ensure good connectivity within the county, the region and across the UK by working closely with partners, such as Midlands Connect, National Highways and Network Rail, to deliver improvements to rail services and the strategic road network. We also continue to progress delivery of our local transport priorities to help business recovery and growth, reduce congestion and emissions, allow safe travel and support more sustainable travel options.

Midlands Connect – we have provided input into the refresh of the Midlands Connect Strategy to ensure that it continues to provide a robust basis for securing investment in the region’s transport system. We are currently involved in a number of Midlands Connect projects that will greatly enhance people’s ability to travel efficiently and safely around and through Leicestershire in the context of much needed houses and jobs to meet the demands of the area’s growing population. These projects include provision of direct Coventry to Leicester rail services; improvements to the speed and frequency of rail services between Leicester and Birmingham; and upgrades to the A5, A42, A46 and A50 corridors.

Transport for East Midlands (TfEM) – through our involvement in TfEM we have set out our top priorities for transport improvements across the East Midlands including making the most of any HS2 development, securing a Midland Mainline fit for the 21st century, improving access to East Midlands Airport, the A5 Improvement Corridor and transforming East-West connectivity.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities (LLSTP) – jointly developed with Leicester City Council the objective of the LLSTP is to ensure that Leicester and Leicestershire’s transport system is capable of addressing the significant challenges that we face over the coming years. In November 2020 we approved a blueprint setting out the key, long-term approach to transport priorities for the county and city for the next 30 years. The LLSTP sets out where the city and county will work together, particularly around tackling poor air quality and the effects of climate change, alongside continued support for the local economy and jobs and the delivery of new houses. Improvements in rail (such as the Midlands Connect projects) and public transport and better provision for walking and cycling schemes are among the priorities set out. The LLSTP acknowledges a drive to attract greater numbers of car users on to public transport and on to cycling and walking routes. The ambition is to continue to encourage use of the commercial bus network of electric vehicles and to increase the number of bus lanes and cycleways/pedestrian routes developed.

Network Management Plan (NMP) - in December 2020 we approved a refreshed NMP. The NMP describes the positive on-going work the County Council undertakes, as the local highway authority, to keep all forms of transport moving

safely and efficiently on the county's road network. This includes how we collect and use data and intelligence, how we manage planned and unplanned events, how we manage the impact of growth and how we manage network demand and encourage sustainable travel.

Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy – developed with the City Council and LLEP it sets out rail priorities up to 2043. We have used it as a basis for working with Midlands Connect on its projects and to inform our input into the HS2 project and the wider considerations of the National Infrastructure Commission who have been asked by Government to consider an integrated package of rail improvements that would be associated with delivery of the HS2 Eastern leg. Potentially this package could include completion of the Midland Main Line electrification, which we are continuing to push for both the service improvements that it would deliver and also the carbon reduction benefits.

Ivanhoe Line - we are providing our support, including financial, to the Campaign for Reopening the Ivanhoe Line (CRIL) who are currently working with the Department for Transport to develop a business case to reintroduce passenger services on the line.

Major Road Schemes Supporting Growth

The Council has a strong record of securing funding to deliver transport infrastructure to enable growth, supporting the delivery of outcomes to promote a strong economy and ensure a supply of quality and affordable homes. We will continue to work to secure vital funds to invest in homes, regeneration and infrastructure across Leicestershire. A total of £21.7m has been spent on the preparation and delivery of major projects in 2020/21, including:

Interim Coalville Transport Strategy (ICTS) - in September 2021 we approved the ICTS. A key element of the ICTS is the Coalville A511 Growth Corridor scheme and the importance of its delivery to the enabling of growth in the A511 corridor. It also highlights complementary highway schemes and sets out how work will be taken forward to develop proposals for improving passenger transport provision and active travel provision in the area.

Coalville A511 Growth Corridor and A511 Major Road Network Scheme – in March 2021 major plans to develop junction and road improvement schemes through an estimated £49m programme of work between Ashby and Coalville were considered. The Council's A511 Growth Corridor is one of seven schemes across the region put forward to a national £3.5 billion Major Roads Network (MRN) fund by Midlands Connect. The scheme proposes improvements to eight junctions along the A511, including a new link road off Bardon Road and a dual carriageway between Thornborough Road and Whitwick Road. Leicestershire is growing and needs the right infrastructure in place to manage that growth. The A511 has suffered from congestion for many years and tackling it with this scheme will also have benefits environmentally in leading to a reduction in exhaust emissions. It will also provide the opportunity, as part of a wider transport strategy for Coalville, to address public

transport improvements and promote walking and cycling initiatives. Prior to submitting a Planning Application for the new link road off Bardon Road, further informal consultation will take place in Autumn 2021 to give local residents and stakeholders a further opportunity to provide comment and shape this element of the project.

Interim Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy (IMMTS) - in July 2021 we approved the IMMTS, which sets out a wide package of measures and further work required to help address the town's existing traffic problems, support the growth of the town and to achieve wider objectives, including environmental and health factors, such as encouraging more walking and cycling. Among the proposals outlined in the strategy are further work to explore potential improvements to the walking and cycling network and the possibility of a 'bus hub' to support passenger transport provision; along with measures to re-classify and re-sign town roads as well as re-route lorries to encourage as much traffic as possible to use the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.

Melton Mowbray North and East Distributor Road – the project to build the distributor road to the north and east of Melton Mowbray to ease congestion in the town centre and facilitate growth commenced in 2017/18. Further development of the project post approval of the planning application in May 2019 has focussed on detailed design and securing the necessary land to deliver the scheme through the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process. The CPO and Side Roads Order (SRO) notices were submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation in October 2020. A number of objections to the CPO and SRO were received and the Secretary of State gave notice in January 2021 of the intention to call a Public Inquiry to consider the objections. The Public Inquiry took place at the end of September 2021. Subject to the outcome of the Public Inquiry, it is anticipated on site advance works will start in 2022.

Melton Mowbray Distributor Road South – positive progress is being made with Homes England to secure funding via the Housing Infrastructure Fund towards the cost of this project. Project activities also include starting to engage in house design/technical services along with procuring external project planning and environmental services.

Hinckley Junctions - a scheme to improve two key junctions on Rugby Road, alongside a range of improvements to existing cycling and pedestrian routes in Hinckley, will begin in early 2022. Work on the £5m scheme was due to start summer 2020, however, was rescheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Once work commences, there will be improvements made to both the Rugby Road/Hawley Road and Rugby Road/Brookside junctions. The scheme will also implement pedestrian and cycling improvements at Granville Road, Spa Lane, London Road and Coventry Road and also proposes introducing a 'residents parking zone' and reviewing town centre parking facilities. Once delivered, the scheme will improve sustainable transport options in and out of the town with quicker and more reliable journeys and encourage more people to walk and cycle.

Hinckley Road Improvements - in June 2021 a project to improve road and footway condition in the Hinckley area began with work on the A47 Dodwell's Road/Normandy Way, Hinckley Bypass. Work between the A5 roundabout near McDonalds and the roundabout connecting with Roston Drive began in September 2021 and will last for around three months.

Ashby Road, Coalville - in January 2021 work began on a series of improvements to Ashby Road in Coalville with a £250,000 scheme aimed at improving the highway environment in the area. The works involved removing outdated traffic-calming features, such as chicanes, providing more on-street parking and making the area safer for pedestrians. The project also provides safer access to the main entrance to the revamped Snibston Country Park and a petrol station as well as complementing the recent regeneration of the former Snibston Colliery site.

M1 J23/A512– the detailed design and construction of improvements to ease congestion and provide access to the West of Loughborough housing development commenced in 2017/18. Work on this major scheme has continued throughout the pandemic and was completed in June 2021. In February 2021 the Council and Morgan Sindall were highly commended for outstanding teamwork on the highways improvement scheme on the M1 J23 and A512. Judges agreed that the partnership work excelled in many areas, especially community engagement, which led to many local people welcoming the project and understanding its value.

A46 Anstey Lane – the detailed design and construction of improvements to ease congestion and mitigate the Aston Green housing development commenced in 2017/18 with the works being completed in 2020/21. The scheme has won a number of awards including Construction News award for Health, Safety and Wellbeing Excellence as well as Considerate Constructor Site award.

Lutterworth East - ongoing work has continued on the design of highway infrastructure to provide access to the proposed new housing development in Lutterworth.

Traffic Management and Safety

Average Speed Cameras – in October 2020 we agreed to introduce a further 7 average speed camera sites across the county. The proposals will see the average speed cameras move locations yearly to change driver behaviour across our towns and villages. This follows a successful scheme which saw cameras installed at seven locations, Sharnford, Walcote, Oadby, Groby, Measham, Woodhouse Eaves and Freeby. Sites where communities have previously raised concerns about speeding. The scheme highlights our commitment to make our roads as safe as they can be. The cameras have proven that they can make a difference in communities, whose lives can be blighted by the effects of speeding motorists as well as make a positive change to driver behaviour. We also continue to press the Government to consider a new approach to funding the camera sites. At present, funds generated through camera fines are retained by HM Treasury.

Reducing Rural Speeds – in March 2019 we announced that we were expanding our speed reduction scheme to include a further 24 rural routes. The project sees stretches of roads with a speed limit of 60mph reduced to 50mph. The move follows a study in 2017 which found that around 60% of collisions which caused injury on rural routes involved motorists exceeding the 60mph limit and the routes chosen all had well evidenced collision reduction reasons to reduce the speed limit. The speed limit reductions also incorporate reviews of the existing road markings and signs to ensure that they provide adequate warnings of the road conditions.

Driver Education - in 2020 our popular pre-driver days designed to promote safety to novice drivers and our older driver scheme, Safer Driving with Age (SAGE), had to be paused. Both schemes have practical driving elements and as such it was impossible to run these courses safely during the pandemic. SAGE opened again for bookings in the autumn of 2021 and it is envisaged that a programme of pre-driver course dates will be developed for 2022. Driver education remains an increasingly important part of speed management and driver behaviour change. We were able to continue to run national driver education workshops on behalf of Leicestershire Police by switching from classroom presentations to presenting virtually via video call. In 2020/21, 18,200 drivers opted to attend courses as an alternative to receiving a fine and points on their driving licence. The courses help drivers understand the adverse consequences of their driving behaviour and give tips and advice to improve compliance and safety.

School Keep Clear Scheme – in September 2019 schools across Leicestershire were encouraged to sign-up to a scheme to combat the problems of inconsiderate parking. The School Keep Clear scheme aims to address concerns that parents, residents, and teachers have about parking during the school run by using a camera car to enforce mandatory zig-zag zones outside school entrances. A total of 68 schools became enforceable in September 2019, in time for the new school term. Since it launched in September 2018, the scheme has seen 146 schools sign up, with a further 11 schools set to join the scheme later this year, subject to consultations. We know that inconsiderate and dangerous parking outside schools can be a real problem, and the School Keep Clear scheme has gone some way to alleviate concerns in communities. Since the beginning of the scheme, 22 warnings have been issued and 241 penalties have been processed to motorists parking illegally.

Parking Enforcement - with traffic levels rising, our parking enforcement teams have been increasing patrols to keep vehicles moving and keep the roads safe.

Motorcyclist Safety - we remain supporters of The Shiny Side Up Partnership (SSUP), an East Midlands motorcycle safety partnership. Originally set up to try and drive down casualties relating to sports-bike riders, this has now broadened to include lower capacity scooters and motorcycles. We use a variety of roadside posters at sites that have a poor motorcycle casualty history. These messages include Bike Crash Site Ahead and Think Bike. The roadside posters are bright yellow and have become a regular seasonal way of reminding riders and other road

users to take extra care and look out for each other. The regional website has been refreshed and updated with new training resources.

Community Speed Watch (CSW) – due to the pandemic, we were unable to run community speed watch with volunteers in 2020 and 2021. We adapted the delivery approach and ran a successful free volunteer scheme, where educational roadside boards were placed at various key sites of community concern to remind drivers to check their speed. The boards remained in situ for 8 weeks and have been located in various communities across the county. Planning ahead for 2022 we are inviting expressions of interest in running a fully supported volunteer run CSW scheme. The aim is to support communities to use speed detection equipment under our supervision. Volunteers will capture speeding vehicle details and, rather than prosecution, drivers will receive an educational letter from the police helping to underline the community's commitment to reducing speed.

Sustainable Travel

Transforming Cities Fund and Air Quality – in October 2019 we supported proposals by Leicester City Council for a bid to the Transforming Cities Fund in response to the Government's Air Quality Directive. The City Council has been awarded over £32m, which will enable initiatives in Leicester to improve public transport, cycling and walking provision to improve overall air quality. This will benefit both city and county residents.

Personal Travel Planning (PTP) – in June 2021 we announced that personal travel plans were being launched in the Glenfield, Anstey and Westcotes areas. Around 5,000 households in Glenfield and Anstey, and 5,000 households in the Westcotes area of the city will be targeted to encourage residents to reduce their car journeys and use more sustainable forms of transport, including walking, cycling and taking the bus. Information includes advice on walking, cycling and public transport, maps and guides, information on electric bikes and cars, along with several incentives. These include activity trackers for up to 50 residents, 20 e-bikes and 10 pedal cycles available for loan, along with cycling equipment. Reducing the number of car journeys and travelling more sustainably has huge benefits to physical and mental health, as well as helping the environment. 17% of participants from previous PTP projects have sustained behaviour change, for example switching from car use to cycling and walking.

Bus Service Partnership - in June 2021 we announced plans to create an enhanced partnership with local bus operators as the pathway to improving public transport in the county. The plans to work more closely with bus operators to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will help to unlock significant Government funding through the National Bus Strategy. We aim to work closely and swiftly with local bus operators to deliver benefits such as simpler fares, contactless payments, more services at the right times and ticketing so people can easily inter-change across public transport. The BSIP will also be a vital strand of our Environment Strategy, to help reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport. There's

also a need to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport as a result of the pandemic and encourage passengers back on to public transport.

Electric Buses – in June 2021 a new £5m fleet of near silent electric buses powered entirely by renewable energy hit the streets of Leicester and Leicestershire. Eleven of the new vehicles transport shoppers and commuters between the three park and ride sites at Enderby, Birstall and Meynell's Gorse and the city centre. The distinctive green buses are equipped with on-board digital screens and USB charging points at every seat and provide passengers with free Wi-Fi. People waiting for the bus will benefit from real-time arrival information and smart new bus shelters. The project has involved the County and City councils working closely together and is part of a wider agenda around decarbonising transport and investing in electrified buses to help reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to our aim to be carbon neutral by 2045.

On Demand Travel - a new demand led bus service was launched in April 2019 in New Lubbethorpe, funded by Section 106 monies. The Arriva Click service operates every day (except key bank holidays) from 06:00 to 23:00 using high specification Mercedes Sprinter minibuses. Passengers book journeys using an app showing their preferred pickup point and destination and are matched with others. We have also been successful in securing £1.3m of the Government's Rural Mobility Fund to introduce a new 3-year pilot of a modern demand responsive transport (DRT) service which is anticipated to start early in 2022. The service will operate within an 85km² area to the south west of Leicester and to the east of Hinckley, covering 17 communities and providing a total resident population of 43,000 with the opportunity to be able to book a journey on a shared accessible minibus, via an app or phone call. The new DRT will seek to fill the gaps in the existing network and aims to improve access to employment, education, healthcare and other services. This pilot provides an excellent opportunity to trial a modern rural DRT service, as part of work to explore the evolution of our approach to supporting passenger transport services, helping to meet the needs of local communities.

E-Bike Scheme - electric bikes for loan to workplaces across the county is another initiative by the council to encourage active and sustainable travel to and from work. The loan scheme proved to be a hit at fashion giants Next, with 10 bikes used by staff at their Enderby base. The bikes were available for staff to use to commute to work as well as for travelling to meetings or events during the working day and for leisure purposes. This resulted in 20% of participants going on to purchase their own e-bike. The council is encouraging businesses to take the opportunity to borrow the electric bikes free of charge. In 2021 we also offered residents incentives on electric bikes. A series of try-out events were held over the summer explaining the benefits of e-bikes. The Council also provided the opportunity for people to attend a training session and then apply for a voucher which gave them £300 off the cost of an electric bike. Electric bikes are great for people making longer journeys who may not be used to cycling or need more assistance when they cycle.

Cycling and Walking Strategy – in July 2021 we unveiled plans to boost cycling and walking by creating more networks, revamping routes, and teaming up with

schools and workplaces. The Cycling and Walking Strategy sets out a vision to upgrade and provide cycle routes, cycle parking, and pedestrian facilities to create healthy streets and spaces. It will also include the provision of traffic education measures and cycle training for schools and workplaces to increase the number of cyclists and walkers. Initial priority areas will include Loughborough, Oadby, Wigston and Blaby. The new strategy aims to help more people to make more sustainable and healthy travel choices, by increasing the number of journeys by bike or on foot.

Highways Maintenance and Management

The Council faces significant challenges in looking after its highways' assets. Present levels of government funding are insufficient to maintain even Leicestershire's A roads in their current condition.

Highways Maintenance – in 2020/21 a total £21.6m was invested in Highways Asset Maintenance including £17.3m on carriageways, £2.0m on footways and rights of way, £1.0m on bridge maintenance and strengthening, £0.6m on street lighting maintenance, £0.4m on flood alleviation, £0.1m on traffic signal renewal and £0.2m on other activity including joint sealing.

Incentive Fund 2021/22 – we were successful at securing Incentive Funding by demonstrating a band 3 (Highest) level of Asset Management which enabled us to drawdown the maximum level of funding available to us under this mechanism.

Green Highway Improvements – in March 2021 we reported how we were working to become cleaner and greener by using recycled and carbon friendly products in highway improvements. Around 5000 recycled tyres were used in a special asphalt mix on the A426 Blaby bypass, which is expected to save 10 tonnes of carbon. The white lines were marked out using a cold plastic product which is environmentally friendly and should last three times longer than the traditional thermoplastic products used. It is not just the new products which help to cut emissions, all of the bituminous material removed from the carriageway construction is also recycled elsewhere.

Road and Community Investments – in June 2021 we allocated an extra £5m investment into Leicestershire's roads and environment, supporting both safety and environmental improvements in communities. The money is being spent on extra maintenance including road repairs, looking after verges, cleaning signs, emptying drains and gullies, and improving rights of way with more going to flashing signs, supporting average speed cameras and other measures to deter speeding motorists. The plan is also about improving green spaces in communities. Protecting verges adds to an area's visual appeal and helps efforts to tackle climate change as well as protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The cash injection also includes a £25,000 fund for every county councillor – see below - enabling communities to get involved in influencing the improvements they want to see where they live.

Members Highway Fund – the new Members Highway Fund will provide each Council member with £25,000 to use on small scale highway and environmental improvement works in their own divisions. We recognise how important small-scale

highway works can be to our communities and therefore this additional funding will cover a range of highway improvement works. Examples will include the provision of village gateway measures, flashing speed signs, vegetation clearing and minor improvements to roads and footways. Officers will support members in developing proposals for their areas so the measures can be delivered quickly.

Winter Gritting – during the 2020/21 winter our gritters and drivers were out treating key routes to keep the county moving, spreading approximately 10,772 tonnes of rock salt over 1,240 night-gritting runs to combat the drop-in temperature. Keeping the county moving and motorists safe is our top priority each winter. Our gritting crews are on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week from October to March – including Christmas and New Year – and ready to respond to the forecasts. We monitor the weather constantly and if freezing temperatures are forecast, our fleet of gritters go out at night to treat major roads and key routes which equates to almost half of the county's road network. The Council has a fleet of 23 gritters available, three of which were recently replaced with new state of the art vehicles. The other twenty vehicles have also been fitted with the latest sat-nav technology, to ensure all routes are gritted correctly. This year, the council's salt barns were stocked with up to 18,000 tonnes of rock salt.

Snow Wardens - in addition to winter gritting, there are also a number of snow wardens based in communities across the county who grit paths, as well as farmers who, during deep snow, fit ploughs to their tractors and assist the council in clearing roads. The authority is working with parish and town councils to train and encourage more people to sign-up to its Snow Warden Scheme to help keep the county moving during the winter. We also have a team of carers and health visitors who can reach their patients if there is prolonged heavy snowfall.

Gully Cleaning - to tackle blocked drains we apply a 'risk-based' approach to gully cleaning that increased the number of roadside drains treated from 64,000 per year to 92,000 without costs rising. The change followed a 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 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 highest priority drains are now cleaned every 10 months.

Flooding – during 2021 we responded to over 430 flooding related incidents. We received 10 yellow weather warnings and one amber warning for potential disruption caused due to flooding. There were also 69 road closures implemented in response to flooding to protect the travelling public on the network. We constantly monitor the weather situation based on alerts from the Met Office. Resources are available 24/7 and we are able to re-deploy additional highway maintenance teams to deal with flooding emergencies.

Grass Cutting – in April 2021 our annual programme of grass cutting started across Leicestershire. Teams mow the equivalent of 28 football pitches a day in towns and villages across Leicestershire, cutting the equivalent of three million square metres of grass. Our urban programme sees the grass cut six times throughout the season.

These routes are mainly on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less and is cut primarily for safety rather than aesthetic reasons. The rural programme focuses on cutting back of the verges on roads between villages and is carried out three times a year to help with visibility and safety.

Biodiversity - we've changed the way which we manage our rural verges after many residents said that they would prefer less grass to be cut and wildflowers allowed to thrive. We left a significant number of wildflower verges across Leicestershire uncut as parish councils prepared them to bloom during the summer.