

FULL COUNCIL

5TH JULY 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members that two decision-making sessions were held on 14th April 2022 and 1st June 2022, covering CPH Environment and Infrastructure.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.2.2 Attached to this report is a list of decisions made.

1.3 Decisions 14 April 2022

1.3.1 Street Lighting Annual Update

1.3.2 I received a report from the Street Lighting service noting the efforts to convert all street lighting to energy efficient LEDs and work with residents to install new footway lighting in areas considered necessary. I approved the alterations to the pricing structure to move to a more task based approach which will allow clarity and certainty to both the Council and third parties, whilst also giving sufficient flexibility to ensure the service does not operate at a loss overall. The provision of payment in advance of works commencing will also allow the service to be more operationally efficient and minimise any outstanding future debt.

1.3.3 Highways Management Service Update

1.3.4 I was provided with an update and opportunity to comment on the Council's statutory Network Management Plan for the public highway which I approved. This included priorities for Road Safety, Sustainable Travel, Management duties and details of the on-going highway improvements which included reinstating a programme of Parking Displacement Schemes to help address some of the parking pressures in our local residential communities to consultation and if supported, construction.

1.3.5 Urban Traffic Control Asset Management Plan Update

1.3.6 This report provides oversight of the Traffic Signal controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings, along with other intelligent systems used across the Borough to manage the flow of traffic on the highway network. Through this report I approved a 5 year asset investment plan (£1.3m) to maintain the quality and performance of these

1.3.7 Flood Risk Management Update

1.3.8 I received the Flood Risk Management Annual Update Report and was pleased to note the contents of the report and the work undertaken by officers in response to the flooding in June 2021 along with the action plan presented for the coming year to continue to seek funding and investment into property flood resilience improvements which can have a significant and lasting benefit to some of our most vulnerable

residents. I approved the continuing efforts of the officers and the property flood resilience project in accordance with the secured external funding from the Environment Agency of c.£2m. I will receive a further report in April 2023 to review the scheme progress and proposed works programme for the 2023/24 financial year.

1.3.9 **Petitions**

I received updates on 11 petitions since my last update to Council. Officers responded to these individually and various recommendations are in the process of being taken forward to help respond positively to the specific concerns raised. The main theme received from Ward Councillors related to road safety and specifically speed of traffic in some residential streets. In view of the high demand for this service area I have asked the Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board to review current services provided to ensure our statutory duties are being responded to appropriately and the available resources used to deliver best value which is programmed to take place in September.

1.3.10 **Decisions 1 June 2022**

1.3.11 I received a Petitions Report and noted the current position with regard to the nine petitions and agreed the proposed recommendations as set out for each.

1.4 **Good News and Issues of Interest**

1.4.1 **The Armed Forces Community Garden** at Hillfield Park in Solihull was officially unveiled on Friday 20 May by the Vice Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Professor Helen Higson OBE, the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Ken Meeson, the President of Warwickshire and Birmingham County Royal British Legion (RBL), Elaine Butler and six Armed Forces Veterans. Veterans included people who had recently been badly injured during service, or who had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, or who had lost relatives in active service.

1.4.2 Although the Garden has been open since last summer, the official opening and celebrations have been postponed twice because of Covid restrictions. Two years in the making, RBL Warwickshire & Birmingham County and Solihull Council have worked in collaboration to construct and create a unique outdoor garden space for the Armed Forces community and their families to visit and enjoy in Solihull. The Garden was commissioned to provide a place of reflection, relaxation, and inspiration for veterans, currently serving, the injured, sick, and wounded and their families. It will also be enjoyed by the local community.

1.4.3 **Flood Risk Management** – Works have commenced on the property flood resilience scheme for those residents affected by the June 2021 floods. Contractors have been appointed and over 200 homeowners are having design and installation appointments scheduled in for the coming months.

1.4.4 **Tranche 2 Cycle Routes** - The Millisons Wood to Meriden Cycle and Knowle routes are complete with minor changes required to some of the works. The construction on the Blossomfield Road route has been completed with the final stage to connect Cranmore Boulevard to A34 Stratford Road is being constructed currently with completion expected at the end of June / early July. 130 cycle stands have been implemented across the Borough in all wards near local shops and centres.

1.4.5 **Tranche 3 Active Travel Routes** – I am pleased to report that we have secured circa £1m of funding from Active Travel England and the Department for Transport to fund walking improvements across the borough. Tranche 3 is committed to improving the walking and cycling for vulnerable road users by encouraging and promoting journeys to schools and key local destinations. Tranche 3 will set out

improvements to crossing facilities and providing a safe pedestrian and cycling environment around schools particularly, to support children travelling independently to and from school. These improvements will also provide new and improved links to nearby local areas.

1.4.6 **Blythe Valley Park to Monkspath and Dorridge Cycle routes** – We are currently working on the feasibility / concept design connecting Blythe Valley Business Park to Monkspath and Dorridge. The concept design has been shared with Ward members and we are in early engagement with business and resident forums. The current plans are to provide a shared use facility along the A34 connecting to the Monkspath Hall Road Roundabout with connections to Hay Lane and Stanbrook Road. The connection into Dorridge looks at a number of routes. It is likely to be a less intrusive scheme and will seek to use the current network of roads to safely connect the business park with Dorridge centre. If proven to be acceptable we envisage an experimental trial in the summer months. The designs will be consulted upon in June/July with construction scheduled for summer this year.

1.4.7 **Parking Enforcement fleet goes electric** – The Council's Civil Parking Enforcement Officers took possession of 4 new e-scooters and 2 new electric powered cars earlier this month. The new modes of sustainable transport will enable the team to reduce carbon and travel more efficiently around the Borough of Solihull to complete their parking enforcement and car park management duties.

1.4.8 **Cycling** - Last week our 2022/23 school cycle training booking system opened using a new self-service software solution, allowing schools to make their own bookings, download consent forms and share required data with us securely and efficiently.

“Get Pedalling” was run from Tudor Grange Cycle Track and North Solihull Sports Centre over half term with 31 children attending these learn to ride sessions.

Our Cycle mechanics have been supporting groups of refugee's in the borough teaching them basic cycle maintenance. successfully run 3 sessions upskilling 26 people and have another 4 sessions booked in June. This is in collaboration with the Refugee and Resettlement team who are supplying bikes and helmets to this group.

The Sustainable Travel team have been running a schedule of FREE adult cycle training sessions from the Solihull Active Community Cycling hubs supported by funding from the Capability fund in May and June. These have been well received and have been fully booked. Cycle training and maintenance courses for children, adults and families throughout the summer months.

1.4.9 **School Streets** - Two new sites launched at Cranmore Infants and Windy Arbor Primary on the 6th June as part of School Streets Phase 3 project which also includes Olton Primary School that was launched earlier in May. Later this month additional parking restrictions are planned to be installed in and around Grandborough Drive again in support of the Council's Sustainable Travel objectives.

1.5 **Future Decisions**

1.5.1 At my July Decision Session, I will receive reports on the following:

- 20mph Speed Limit Review
- School Crossing Patrol Service and Site Prioritisation Review
- Parking Services Strategy
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement
- Solihull Town Centre Public Realm Improvement Scheme