

TRANSPORT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Report By: **ACTING HEAD OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To update the Committee on the progress of developing a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) to improve long term planning of investment in the transport network.

Financial Implications

2. None as a result of this report

Background

3. The Council invests over £15M per annum in maintaining, upgrading and adding to the transport network. This is comprised of a combination of capital funding from the Local Transport Plan Settlement (around £10M) and revenue from the Council's own revenue budget (around £6M). Whilst this is a substantial amount to invest, the size of the transport network and the range of assets included represent a significant challenge if we are to ensure that we get real value for money from this investment. A summary of the key transport assets includes:
 - Over 2000 miles of highway
 - Over 700 bridges
 - 13000 streetlights
 - footways
 - cycle routes
 - public rights of way
 - signs and lines
 - traffic signals
 - bus shelters
 - bus stations
 - street furniture
4. Transport Asset Management is defined as a 'strategic approach which helps identify the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation and enhancement of the highways infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of users.' The Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 includes a commitment to develop a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) in recognition of the challenge and the need to continue improving delivery of a vital local service.

Progress to Date

5. Work on the TAMP began in late autumn 2007 and has included a review of the existing approaches to maintaining our transport assets compared with best practice approaches, an extensive public consultation exercise which ends 29 February and a seminar for all Members which was held on 12 February.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Ball – Acting Head of Highways & Transportation

6. Whilst the public consultation exercise has not yet finished the initial response has proven just how important the transport network is to Herefordshire residents. Over 3,500 survey responses have now been received (a questionnaire was included in the January edition of Herefordshire Matters) and around 100 online surveys have also been completed.
7. The Members' seminar was well attended and an interactive workshop enabled Members to express their views on key elements of the transport network against the following service objectives:
 - Provide a safe highway network
 - Maintain network serviceability
 - Improve customer service
 - Protect the environment
 - Improve journey time reliability
 - Improve quality of street scene
 - Availability and accessibility of the network
8. A summary of the comments made by Members set in the context of service delivery objectives includes:
 - Safety comments:
 - It was agreed that improving road safety is a top priority and should remain so
 - Need to ensure good junction design and clear visibility
 - Serviceability comments
 - Drainage and dealing with standing water was regarded as very important
 - Desire for better coordination of works
 - Better management of HGV routeing
 - Customer comments:
 - Managing expectations – there was a clear view expressed that we need to be realistic about what we can achieve and this needs to be clearly communicated to the public
 - Desire for prompt feedback on enquiries
 - Clearer information on what the service is doing/planning to do
 - Protecting the environment:
 - Support for current approach to verge cutting/grass cutting (which was regarded as being environmentally sensitive)
 - Journey time comments:
 - Some support for a focus on the car as the main form of transport in a rural county
 - However, there were also views expressed indicating that more investment in sustainable transport is required – this would help release capacity for car users and improve journey times
 - Desire for real time information (particularly on longer journeys beyond the County boundary – especially whether or not bridge at Chepstow is open)
 - Strong support for safer routes to school to reduce peak hour traffic
 - Support for a relief road for Hereford/additional river crossing
 - Streetscene comments:
 - Strong desire to reduce street clutter
 - Desire for more sensitive traffic management in villages and rural areas – concern about certain treatments which are seen as urbanising these locations
 - Support for better control of utilities works to ensure that they return the street scene to its previous standard
 - Accessible network comments:

- Concern that the TAMP needs to appreciate rural nature of the county as well as urban transport networks – suggested that this would require different strategies
- Consider the needs of all users in new schemes especially pedestrians

Next Steps for TAMP

9. In finalising the TAMP, work will continue on analysing the massive response to the public consultation, feeding in Members' views (from the workshop) and those of Parish Councils (which were consulted directly with the public survey questionnaire). This work will enable the development of '**levels of service**' for all of our transport assets – these are clear statements of the performance of the asset in terms that customers understand (rather than merely technical standards).
10. We are aiming to develop **lifecycle management plans** for two key asset groups – carriageways and structures which will form a template for other asset groups and will help us identify gaps in our data and or processes. This work is to be supplemented by an officer workshop (taking place in March) which will focus on improvement activities required to fully develop the TAMP. Lifecycle management plans will help us set out long term investment strategies for asset/asset groups, taking into account current condition and the projected deterioration of the asset. These specific plans should enable the testing of various investment options which will enable us to make better long term decisions.
11. The work undertaken to develop the levels of service and the lifecycle management plans will identify a number of areas where we currently have insufficient data or have not adopted consistent and clear processes. Hence, a key element of preparing the TAMP is the development of an **improvement plan** which will draw together a number of actions for ongoing improvement. This improvement plan will form part of the TAMP and will identify the further work required to improve the quality of the TAMP and more importantly the long term planning of service delivery.
12. The first draft of the Herefordshire Transport Asset Management Plan should be completed in April 2008 when it will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation for his consideration with a view to issuing a final document in May 2008. It is anticipated that the TAMP will only be the starting point of a more inclusive approach to directing and delivering highways services and that the improvement plan will highlight further member engagement both in taking TAMP forward and also built in to routine processes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comments by the Committee the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.