

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

1. Cabinet decisions since the last Executive Report to the County Council

1.1 There will have been 3 Cabinet meetings (21 September 2015, 12 October 2015 and 2 November 2015) since the last Executive Report to County Council. The items of business specifically attributed to this portfolio were:-

- Development of Stage 2 Transport Vision – Strategic Packages for Stakeholder Engagement
- Adoption of Employment Land Areas of Search Waste Plan Supplementary Planning Document

2. Consequences of Cabinet decisions before the last meeting of the County Council on 21 July 2015

2.1 These are:-

- Changes to the way local bus services are supported by the County Council came into effect in September 2015. After some initial issues over changes to schedules and capacity at peak travel times bus operators have reported that services are running as expected.
- The Minerals Local Plan Initial Consultation closed on 16 October 2015 and responses will be reported to Panel in February 2016.

3. Anticipated/ future decisions to be made by Cabinet

3.1 Nothing to report.

4. Key Partnerships

4.1 Wider South East Collaboration/London Plan

All roundtables across the wider south east to consider setting up political arrangements to better collaborate on strategic issues across borders are now complete. Findings are to be reported to a second Summit of Leaders to take place on 11 December 2015. Emerging consensus appears to be that a new political grouping be assembled, comprised of 4/5 representatives from each of the three constituent areas (East of England, South East England and London). If agreed at the Summit, that Group would identify priorities and move forward with a work programme, reporting to the wider group of all local authorities.

4.2 Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP)

The October meeting of HIPP received updates on progress in relation to the Transport Vision being developed by the County Council and a Water Study being taken forward by the County Council on behalf of partners (including districts, water companies, Environment Agency).

HIPP is continuing to work towards a strategic planning framework for Hertfordshire and to develop a shared understanding of the infrastructure needs arising from future growth. Demographic change, coupled with a recovering economy, are likely to point to the potential requirement for in excess of £35k - 40k per dwelling to pay for the essential infrastructure we need in Hertfordshire. Funding future infrastructure is going to remain a major challenge in the light of increasing challenges on public funding sources and changes to S106 and the new CIL regime.

4.3 Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board

The Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board is a political grouping of West Essex, East Hertfordshire and North East London local authorities of which the County Council is a member. The Board has existed for around a year and its focus to date has been to take forward key technical work (relating to the scale of housing and employment needs in the sub-region) to inform the preparation of the Local Plans for the four 'core authorities' of Harlow, Epping Forest, Uttlesford and East Herts. The Board has agreed that there would be benefit from a joint vision for Harlow and its surrounding areas which provide greater context for individual district plans, and work to progress this is planned shortly.

4.4 Hertfordshire Transport Vision for 2050

Stakeholder engagement is now underway with particular events planned with District Councils, the Hertfordshire LEP and various Business organisations.

4.5 A414 Infrastructure Planning Group

The first meeting of this group took place on 7 October 2015. It comprises the Executive Members of Planning for East Herts, Welwyn and Hatfield, St Albans, Dacorum and Hertfordshire County Council. The aim of the group is to ensure effective coordination of growth and infrastructure across boundaries and a shared approach to funding.

4.6 Local Transport Board (LTB)

The last LTB on 1 October 2015 received updates from Highways England on the proposed introduction of Smart motorway technology between junction 6-8 of the A1(M) by 2018/19, and from Network Rail on various national rail studies, including Cross Rail 1 and 2 and the Anglia Route Review.

5. Other comments

5.1 other comments are summarised below:-

- The outcome from the Rail Strategy consultation will go to Cabinet Panel in February 2016.
- Network Rail has agreed to give a presentation to members, outlining the work to date on the East West Rail Central Section link and the implications

for Hertfordshire, including the 7 route corridors considered to date and the 2 now being taken forward for further work.

- Similarly, a meeting has been arranged with GTR, the new franchisee for Great Northern and Thameslink services, on 8 December 2015 to discuss performance, investment plans and incentives for passengers.
- Officers are preparing for a Bus Summit in the spring of 2016 to bring together bus operators, community transport providers, the Traffic Commissioner and other key stakeholders to discuss the current and future public transport issues for Hertfordshire.
- A meeting has been arranged in November with Arriva to discuss improving bus punctuality in the County.
- I have written to the Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, Elizabeth Truss, in relation to the need for sustainable funding for the new responsibilities assigned to the County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority to provide advice to the local planning authorities on drainage for new development. I am awaiting a response.
- Following a matter raised at the last full Council meeting on surface water drainage and particularly the role of Thames Water, I met with representatives of Thames Water on 30 September 2015 and have agreed with them to improve our liaison mechanisms and partnership working where drainage matters require the collaboration of the County Council and Thames Water to assess, and hopefully identify, potential solutions. Officers will be working over the coming months to put these new practices in place.
- I and Cllr David Andrews will be meeting with the Chair of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), Amanda Nobbs, on the 3 November 2015 to discuss flood risk issues in Hertfordshire and how Hertfordshire can contribute to and benefit from the work of the Thames RFCC.

6. Cabinet Panels

- 6.1 Since the last Executive Report to Council, the Environment, Planning & Transport Cabinet Panel has received two reports regarding Network Rail (NR) issues in Hertfordshire. The first regarding the closure of Cottonmill Lane level crossing in St Albans and the second regarding NR's wider National Level Crossing Closure Programme plans. Cottonmill Lane level crossing was unilaterally closed by Network Rail without consultation with any local authorities. After pressure from the County Council Rights of Way officers and others, it was reopened pending a bridge construction and a proper legal diversion order. The wider paper gave a summary of the national level crossing closure programme being undertaken by Network Rail and the implications and issues for those level crossings at risk of closure in Hertfordshire.

The matters discussed at the Panel's meetings on 16 September 2015 and 22 October 2015 can be found at the following locations:

Environment, Planning and Transport Cabinet Panel
16 September 2015

<https://cmis.hertsdirect.org/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/443/Committee/52/Default.aspx>

Environment, Planning and Transport Cabinet Panel

22 October 2015

<https://cmis.hertsdirect.org/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/444/Committee/52/Default.aspx>

Derrick Ashley

Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport

November 2015