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Highways & Transport Committee

20 July 2023

Highways & Infrastructure 22-23 Annual Performance Review

Report of: Tom Moody, Director of Infrastructure & Highways

Report Reference No: HTC/02/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report gives an update on performance across Infrastructure and Highways services for 2022-23.

Executive Summary

- 2 Infrastructure and Highways is part of the Place department and consist of four service areas these being Highways, Infrastructure, HS2, Strategic Transport and Parking. Services are delivered using a mixed economy of directly employed Council staff and commissioned work. A summary of each service description is below, and the report contains details of performance by service area for 2022-23.
- 3 **Highways** – The Council is a local Highway and Transport authority, and in this context, it has several statutory duties to perform that have an impact on the maintenance of the public highway and the provision of transport in the borough. These include:
 - Highways Act 1980 –The duty to maintain the highway maintainable at public expense
 - Traffic Management 2004
 - New Roads and Street works Act 1991
 - Flood Water Management Act 2010

- 4 It is important that in using the limited resources available, the duties contained in the Highways Act and Traffic Management Act, particularly in maintaining a safe network for all users, are given priority.
- 5 The Council's highways are valued at £6.6bn, and it receives capital grants from central government to invest in the structural maintenance of that asset and the Highways Service Contract defines the maintenance and management requirements of the Council's Highway Network and its assets, these include:
 - 2,707km of roads
 - 2,162km of footways
 - 1,047 bridges and structures
 - 112 traffic signal junctions
 - 152 Pedestrian Crossings
 - Over 600km of cycle route
 - Over 40,000 streetlights
 - 100,4540 gullies
 - 4,500 illuminated signs and bollards
 - 5.8 million m2 of grass verge
- 6 **Infrastructure** - The Infrastructure Team delivers major capital improvement projects to Cheshire East's strategic highways and transportation networks to enable economic growth across the borough in line with the Local Plan Strategy and economic regeneration objectives.
- 7 Each scheme in the Department for Transport (DfT) large Local Majors Programme has had a detailed business case prepared and approved at Strategic Outline Business Case and Outline Business Case stages and prior to commitment to construct, at Full Business Case stage. These business cases present detailed evidence to demonstrate the benefits and costs of each scheme using the Green Book 5 Case Model – this is a standard tool used by the DfT.
- 8 The current programme is focused on delivering the objectives of the Council's Local Plan Strategy, providing housing and employment growth, enhanced access to services, reductions in traffic congestion and pollution along with increased opportunities for sustainable travel, thus contributing to the Council's carbon reduction targets. The programme is funded by a combination of Central Government, Council and third-party funding.
- 9 **HS2** - HS2 is Government designed, funded and delivered scheme to deliver a new high-speed rail network in the UK, connecting towns and cities across the UK. The scheme aims to provide more capacity and resilience on the west coast mainline and free up conventional capacity

for more passenger and freight services. The scheme aims to move more long-term journeys and freight movements from road to rail and is supported by an HS2 Net Zero Carbon Plan which looks to accelerate the wider industry's transition to Net Zero.

- 10 Cheshire East is impacted by two phases of the HS2 scheme:
 - Phase 2a between Fradley and Crewe; and
 - Phase 2b between Crewe and Manchester.
- 11 In addition, HS2 services will call at Crewe station, with HS2 services between Crewe and London when Phase 2a opens, and also infrastructure to enable services between Crewe and both Manchester and Birmingham delivered as part of Phase 2b.
- 12 HS2 will have significant impacts on the Borough of Cheshire East Council and directly on the lives and livelihoods for many of its residents. This includes the economic and levelling up opportunities for the Borough arising from the arrival of HS2 services at Crewe railway station but also the negative impacts of the delivery of the scheme on the environment, ecology, transport network and to several communities in Cheshire East.
- 13 The Council's HS2 Programme service manages the Council's response to HS2 and use the powers, methods and provisions available to influence the scheme to provide a better outcome for Cheshire East and its residents. The HS2 programme is a high profile, high priority and highly political programme for the Council.
- 14 **Strategic Transport and Planning** - The Strategic Transport Service is responsible for maintaining and updating the Council's policy framework for transport infrastructure and services to ensure that delivery is well aligned with corporate and national policies. A key objective is to develop and implement the Local Transport Plan (LTP), as a basis for delivery of multi-modal transport solutions, innovations and investments. The aim is to achieve a modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport use, as well as considering wider transport decarbonisation and the role of transport in place shaping in Cheshire East.
- 15 The team leads on local strategies, funding bids and key projects such as the recent Local Walking & Cycling Improvement Plans, as part of the Council's sustainable transport agenda. We work across the Council and with stakeholders to develop local sustainable transport, including Public Rights of Way and Sustainable Travel to Schools.
- 16 The Transport Contracts & Monitoring team manage the procurement of Passenger Transport Services. Through a monitoring programme they ensure contract compliance by suppliers of Home to School Transport and Council supported Local Bus Services. Annual agreement for a

Cheshire East Concessionary Travel Scheme and subsequent reimbursement to Local Bus suppliers is managed in line with Government guidance. The team will also support the Local Bus Network Review and Enhanced Partnership Plan & Scheme for Cheshire East all of which aim to contribute to a stable network and better bus services for local people.

- 17 The Parking Team manages the civil enforcement of both on and off-street parking, including notice processing and appeals. They are responsible for parking projects such as Resident Parking Schemes, management of Pay & Display machines, and amendments to the Parking Consolidated Order. The team safeguards revenues of approximately £4.5 million annually and operates in a highly visible, public-facing environment. In addition to day-to-day operational responsibilities, the parking team contributes to strategic development of the Council's parking policies and strategies, including implementation of parking initiatives within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 18 Highways Development Management team provides transportation input to the statutory planning process, in the role of the Local Highway Authority. The team works with developers / agents to ensure planning proposals are in accordance with the Council's transport policies and objectives. The team has a leading role in ensuring delivery of transport and highways infrastructure associated with all forms of spatial development in Cheshire East, in accordance with the policy framework defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Local Plan and associated policies of Cheshire East Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. That the Committee note the performance of these services in 2022/23.
2. That the Committee note the on-going work of the Highways Service to support delivering the Council's Brighter Futures customer strategy.

Background

- 19 The Infrastructure and Highways Department is responsible for advising the Council on key policy areas, notably the Local Transport Plan and Local Plan, and is responsible for delivering front line customer facing services, related statutory functions and major projects and programmes. These include all highway services, strategic transport, parking, active travel, public transport, HS2 and major transport projects.

- 20 The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 sets out our vision for an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East with three broad aims to be an open and enabling organisation; a council which empowers and cares about people, and a thriving and sustainable place. The Infrastructure and Highways Department contributes to several the priorities under the theme of “A thriving and sustainable place”:
- A great place for people to live, work and visit
 - A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
 - To be carbon neutral by 2025

Highway Service

- 21 The Highways Service manages the £600m Highway Services Contract (HSC) with Ringway Jacobs. The current HSC started on 4th October 2018 for a period of 15 years. Appendices 1 and 2 contain information on service performance to date with the delivery of revenue and capital funded activities and projects for 2022/23 and on the Performance Management Framework which measures key outputs of the Highways Service Contract with Ringway Jacobs.
- 22 The highway revenue funded routine and reactive service budget for 2022/23 was £10.427m and the capital budget for significant repairs and improvements to the highway network was £23.418m. This included additional capital investment from the Council for managing and maintaining the highway, approved as part of the MTFs in February 2022 and DfT Traffic Signal Maintenance funding, which saw approximately £5.5m of extra work delivered through the contract, compared to 2021/22 this included:
- 23 Delivery of core maintenance services including:
- Carrying out regular safety inspections on all 2,760km of the public highway in accordance with the Code of Practice (11,531km over the whole year).
 - Gritting of circa 1,050km of the highway network on the winter service gritting routes
 - Undertaking 1,269 street lighting repairs
 - Processing 40,109 permits for 3rd party utility works, developer activities and Council promoted works on the highway
 - Attended 52,244 gullies with 47,449 emptied
 - 22,924 enquiries received (15,980 thorough online reporting tool, 5,344 over the phone, 1,558 via email and 42 from other channels
 - Repairs completed including 20,025 Level 1 potholes repairs, 42,557m² of Level 2 patching and 60,164m² of Resurfacing – for Level 2 and 3 works this equates to patching and resurfacing of over 14 football pitches.

- 24 Delivery of capital investment programmes and projects including:
- Year 1 (£7m) of the Council's additional investment for Managing and Maintaining the Highways. The initial 3-year investment of £19m has now been spread over 4 year as part of the approved MTFS in February 2023 which is to help address the current financial challenges the Council faces.
 - Traffic signal equipment upgrades utilising additional £0.50m investment secured from Department for Transport (DfT) Traffic Signal Maintenance Fund. Twelve junction controller upgrades across the borough including four Inflow upgrades at key junctions in Macclesfield.
 - Year 2 of investment in Traffic Signs and Bollards – LED replacement to invest in solar and LED lighting conversions to lit signs and bollards on the highway to reduce carbon and energy costs.
- 25 Delivery of road safety improvements along A536 and A537 funded from the DfT Safer Road Fund and public realm scheme in Nantwich
- A536 Congleton to Macclesfield - The road has been resurfaced with a new higher skid resistant surface. We have refreshed the road markings and added new edge of carriageway lines to enhance visibility of the road edges. Works have been completed on installing a new average speed camera system between Eaton and the outskirts of Macclesfield. New speed limit and average speed camera signs have been installed and the design for delivery of the improvement of the crossroads junction at Gawsforth.
 - A537 Macclesfield to Buxton – The project is nearing completion of works to replace the old average speed camera system with a new system, including extending coverage towards Macclesfield. Works to lay a new higher skid resistant road surface have been completed. At the same time, we refreshed the road markings and road studs. This includes recently completed carriageway surfacing works near Macclesfield and installing new vehicle restraint barriers, bollards and signs along the route.
 - Beam Street - This has included the scheme to improve the public realm along Beam Street in the centre of Nantwich, these were completed on time and within the available budget. Further carriageway improvements were completed during January 2023.
- 26 Continued delivery of column replacement programme (as required based on condition data), despite continued challenge of increases of material prices and lead-in times for delivery. Up to end of February 2023,

2,895 upgrades completed as part of LED Signs and Bollards investment programme – will continue to be delivered in 2023/24.

- 27 Implementation of funding associated with securing Band 3 status as an Asset Management led highway authority for the DfT Incentive Fund, maximising CEC highway maintenance funding for 2022/23.
- 28 **Potholes** - In 2022/23 the investment in category 1 defects (this is defect that we aim to make safe/repair by the end of the next working day) was £2.207m and 20,025 potholes were filled, this compares to 27,474 potholes were filled in 2021/22. As expected, the rate of number of potholes reported and identified rose throughout the second half of 2022/23 particularly in quarter 4 due to the challenging weather conditions which saw very cold snaps, followed by higher temperatures and thawing.
- 29 It is challenging to manage the resources for these types of repairs, however, as shown there has been an overall downward trend in the total number of potholes due to the proactive approach in maintenance and level 2 patching works undertaken. This approach is supported by Council's additional £19m over 4 years capital investment into its highway network will go some way to alleviating the issue of the number of potholes increasing annually.
- 30 In October 2022, the 2022/23 **winter maintenance season** commenced. In Cheshire East there are three distinct climatic domains, these are geographic areas that exhibits similar climatic properties. For Cheshire East these are the High East, East and South. The service undertook 107 (117 21/22) treatments on the High East Domain, 62 (56 21/22) treatments on the East Domain and 62 (50 21/22) treatments on the Southern Domain. There were some challenging times throughout the season, notably the heavy snow that impacted the Borough (in particular the high routes during March 2023) but overall, the service performed well. A winter maintenance review paper is due to be considered by Highways and Transport Committee in September 2023.
- 31 The highway team is continuing to explore wider investment in the Councils **highways depot** assets to ensure service delivery can be optimised. Proposals include a new salt barn at Macclesfield and it was intended that planning permission was submitted and obtained during 2022/23 and construction completed in readiness for the 2023/24 winter season. However, this was delayed due to complications around drainage design options and budget availability, it is intended that a decision will be made around the depot strategy in Summer 2023. The new salt barn at Wardle is fully operational for the 2022/23 winter season. During 2022/23 salt stocks operated from Macclesfield under sheeted

stockpiles, it is anticipated that this requirement will continue into the 2023/24 winter season.

- 32 **Inflation** remains challenging and elevated in the UK. The invasion of Ukraine exacerbated global inflation trends, particularly around food and energy. The rise in energy and fuel prices has been a significant factor behind the UK CPI rising to just over 10% during 2022. Rises in fuel prices particularly affects bituminous materials, which has seen costs for surface dressing and surfacing/patching rise more significantly than CPI, however through the buying power of the wider Ringway Jacobs family of companies, the Council has sought to try and manage the impact of this as best as possible.
- 33 The impact on highways has also seen global increases in the prices and availability of construction materials, particularly for street lighting and ITS components, which has been managed through advanced purchasing of materials to mitigate the impact and any delays. The labour market also continues to be very buoyant and local competition for a limited pool of subcontract and labour resource has added to this pressure. It should however be noted that against this backdrop the performance of the service has continued to be strong throughout.
- 34 In February 2023, Full Council approved the **Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)** for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2023/24 to 2026/27. Within, highways proposals to support the council's financial pressures include additional highway's income from licensing and permits (additional £100,000), the reallocation of revenue to capital funding for road maintenance (budget reduction of £375,000) and a reduction in the maximum response times of the highway's incident response teams, out of hours (budget reduction of £100,000). These savings were included in the base budget for 2023/24 and were reported as part of the overall Highway and Transport Works Programme approved by the Highways and Transport Committee at its meeting in March 2023.
- 35 In addition to the highway revenue savings, the MTFS proposals put forward and approved during 2023/23 included future energy savings associated with street lightings. The Council provide over 40,000 streetlights across the borough. Whilst there have been energy saving measures adopted in respect of retrofitting LEDs to 39,000 street lights, we will reduce our energy consumption further by reducing the number and timing of street lighting in the Borough. Options will be reviewed to consider priorities and safety aspects associated with turning off alternate lights or turning lights off (completely or during in the early hours of the morning in some areas), Streetlighting energy proposals will be detailed in separate reports to Highways and Transport Committee.

- 36 In support of the continuing financial pressures facing the highway service, Ringway Jacobs has continued to perform strongly in generating income for the Council including green claims (recovery of monies from insurers following accidents/damage to Council highway assets) with circa £0.45m recovered in 2022/23 and £3.66m generated for streetworks related income for Fixed Penalty Notices and other highway services such as skips/scaffolding licences and road closures.
- 37 Ringway Jacobs continue to support the Council in response to claims for damage occurring on the highway. There were 867 claims against the Council received in 2022/23, the third highest annual number in the last 10 years, and reflective of the impact of adverse weather and harsher winter. Claim numbers averaged 72 per month and the rolling 12-month repudiation rate is running at 99% based on the Council's Section 58 defence.
- 38 For **Safety**, during 2022/23 there was one RIDDOR incident, 2 Lost Time Injuries, 2 First Aid Incidents and 5 service strikes. This was a disappointing year this year from a health & safety perspective, compared to previous year's performance which have been strong, however overall, each incident is an opportunity to learn from those incidents and to put measures in place to continue driving forward a strong health & safety culture.
- 39 From a sustainability point of view, Ringway Jacobs are actively involved in supporting the Council in its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025 and wider pledge to support the borough being carbon neutral by 2045. RJ and Ansa are the key services in the Fleet Workstream working to deliver the Fleet carbon reduction target set for 2025, this has included the introduction of 6 fully electric vehicles and EV charging points in the depots. They are also moving towards fully electric plant/hand tools and the use of solar powered/hydrogen welfare units on site. For 2022 79% of all asphalt laid, was lower temperature, saving 84 tonnes of carbon, equivalent to saving 215,419 car miles or the electricity for 9 homes for a year.
- 40 From a waste management perspective, Ringway Jacobs continued to meet the requirements for waste management regulations and environmental compliance, with 100% of waste diverted from landfill.
- 41 Finally, Cheshire East Highways secured the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Medal for the sixth consecutive year. The latest award recognises the commitment to health and safety across Ringway Jacobs during 2022. In gaining a Gold Award the team demonstrated that the adopted approach to health, safety and wellbeing that is driven from the very top of the organisation and embedded in every level of the business.

- 42 For **Customer Service and Communication**, during 2022/23, the Highway Service have continued to be involved in a service redesign to become more customer focussed as part of the Council's Brighter Future Together Programme (Customer Communications and Experience Workstream). The service has created a Customer Experience Project Group, focussing on four key areas, each area being led by a designated Project Lead:
- Demand Management and First Point of Contact Resolution
 - Inspection and Asset Management
 - Digital and IT changes
 - Culture
- 43 In 2022/23, the Highways Service have had ongoing involvement with the NHT survey and undertook satisfaction surveys with Members and Town & Parish Councils.
- 44 Continuing from 2021/22 the service completed customer journey audits (10 per month) into 2022/23 to establish where things have gone well as well as understanding areas for improvement. These audits have become a vital tool in the way of improving the customer's experience within Highways and continue to drive significant focus in this area. This has included changes to create a Customer Experience team, along with an associated action plan to continue to drive improvements to the way enquiries are managed across the service.
- 45 From a communications perspective the Highways Service have implemented the following:
- Monthly newsletters published, with the first one in April 2022, the numbers of subscribers have increased throughout 2022/23 from previously reported figures of 1,300 to now over 1,650. The newsletter provides updates on delivery, forthcoming events and social value initiatives.
 - Building on social media platforms – Twitter subscribers as of April 2023 - 7,458. We are looking at other opportunities within other social media platforms.
 - We have a new communication plan agreed for scheme delivery in 2023/24, this will see us take a more proactive approach to the way we communicate our schemes and recognise that some high profile or sensitive schemes need a more enhanced communication process. This new approach sets out consistent templates and timescales for communicating including advanced email notification of the works out to Councillors and Parish/Town Councils.

- We have also recently launched a new online map for our works programme for the forthcoming year from our annual plan ([CEC Highways Interactive Mapping System \(arcgis.com\)](#)), which gives residents much more information on schemes in their area and will be regularly updated.
- The Member and Town and Parish Satisfaction surveys closed on 31 May 2022. An action plan from the survey is in place and this was developed using the feedback received. This is currently being reviewed to close out and include any new activities. It is intended that this survey is repeated annually in June but survey planned for quarter 3 to take account of recent elections to give new Members and Councillors time to settle in first.
- Held two Engagement Days in the Borough. The first on 4th July at Crewe Alexandra's stadium with 38 members in attendance and they were able to watch demonstrations, talk with officers around service priorities and constraints and give feedback on their key issues. The second on 30th September at Macclesfield Town Hall with 25 members in attendance and members were updated on structures of highway teams, winter maintenance and flooding with opportunities to meet partner organisations such as the Environment Agency and United Utilities plus Senior / Local Highway Officers at Cheshire East Highways
- Re-launched the Fix My Street system in July 2022 as the principal way of contacting the Service with asset related enquiries.
- The Highway Service during 2022/23 worked towards implementing a new regime of quality audits, this has included the recruitment of a new Highway Assurance Engineer from December 2022 who has completed initial audits and scrutiny of works delivered and developed a full plan for 2023/24.
- Providing online briefings to Ward Members on Ward Member Budgets (December 2022) and Speed Management Strategy (March 2023).

46 **Governance** for the Highway Service Contract was improved by implementing a new governance structure during 2022/23 including Service Performance Board (chaired by Head of Highways), Quality, Audit and Value Board (chaired by Contract Asset Manager), Core Commercial Services (chaired by Contract Operations Manager) and Customer Experience, Communications and Engagement (chaired by Contract Performance and Customer Services Manager).

- 47 Information related to performance is presented in dashboard format, with key budgetary and progress information presented in each case, with any issues of note highlighted by exception on each sheet.
- 48 These reports are a key part of the monthly contract monitoring processes undertaken by the Council's client team with Cheshire East Highways as the service delivery partner.
- 49 A range of service specific reports considered and approved by Highways and Transport Committee including:
- Highways and Transport 2022/23 Programme
 - Winter 2021/22 End of Season Review
 - Speed Management Strategy, Vehicle Restraint System Strategy and Skid Resistance Strategy
 - It's Not Just Water – consider findings from Working Group
 - Review of Highways Ward Member Budget Scheme
 - Notice of Motion: Criteria for the Installation of Zebra Crossings and Light Controlled Crossings
 - Highway Asset Management Policy, Plan and Strategies
 - It's Not Just Water – Officer Recommendations
 - Notice of Motion: Tree Planting
 - Highways Tree Safety Inspection Policy and Code of Practice
 - Highways and Transport 2023/24 Programme
- 50 Across Highways, during 2022/23 **external recognition** was received from industry bodies for individuals, teams and also statutory bodies relating to compliance, examples include:
- Winners at the Highways Awards for Bollin Grove (Steve Berry Highways Authority Innovation Award) and Apprentice of the Year (Daniel Johnson).
 - Winner at APSE Highways Innovation Awards 2023 for the Apprentice Award (Daniel Johnson).
 - Received the Platinum Award for excellence in management of street information by the GeoPlace Awards.
 - Awarded the Considerate Constructor Award for work on Beam Street
 - Shortlisted at the Local Council Roads Improvement Group (LCRIG) for the best use of technology in the Highways and Transportation sector for Bollin Grove scheme.
 - Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award (March 2023) recognising commitment and approach to health, safety and wellbeing during 2022
 - Continued compliance with British Standards and regular BSI audits relating to Quality, Environmental, Occupational Health and Safety,

Asset Performance Management and Building Information Management.

Overall, whilst many improvements to the service have been delivered during 2022/23, there remains a comprehensive programme of identified improvements and actions which both the Highways Client Team and Ringway Jacobs remain committed to deliver during 2023/24 focussing on the key contract objectives of; People; Value for Money; Programmes and Delivery and Communications & Engagement.

Infrastructure Services

- 51 Appendix 3 contains information on service performance on the delivery of the major transport scheme capital programme.
- 52 The information is presented in dashboard format, with key budgetary and progress information presented in each case, with any issues of note highlighted by exception on each sheet.
- 53 These reports are a key part of the monthly monitoring processes undertaken by the project teams. The information is the latest available prior to the drafting of this report for the three major schemes currently being delivered.
- 54 **Congleton Link Road (£91m)** was opened in April 2021. It is the largest project ever delivered by the Council. The scheme is now in a period of post-monitoring evaluation to assess how successfully it is meeting its objectives.
- 55 **Poynton Relief Road (£53m)** was opened in March 2023. It was delivered on budget and despite being constructed throughout the period affected by the pandemic, was delivered with minimal delays.
- 56 Work commenced in May 2022 to construct the **North West Crewe** major highway scheme and remains on programme for completion in March 2024. The scheme will enable delivery of large strategic housing sites near Leighton Hospital.
- 57 The public inquiry to consider the compulsory purchase, side roads and bridge scheme orders for the **Middlewich Eastern Bypass** scheme was held between 8th November and 11th November 2022. The Inquiry Inspector's report is now with the Secretary of State for decision. The time for decision has now gone beyond its target date of April 2023 which will add to the cost pressures that the scheme has experienced due to the very high inflation rates in the construction sector. Meanwhile, work is continuing on the preparation of the Full Business Case for submission

to the Department for Transport for final approval (subject to a positive decision by the Secretary of State).

- 58 Scheme development work has also continued on the **A500 Dualling** scheme that will enable delivery of planned growth and strategic access to Crewe and the HS2 Hub Station as set out in the Local Plan.

HS2 Programme

- 59 This service is responsible for the Council's response to the national High Speed Rail 2 project in accordance with the Council's priorities and overarching HS2 position.
- 60 This includes leading the Council's response to the line of route proposals for HS2 Phases 2a and 2b by responding to HS2 and DfT consultations and the petitioning process to ensure they deliver the maximum levels of environmental mitigation and compensation in accordance with Government policy. Once the phases become Acts of Parliament the service manages the Council's relationship with HS2 Ltd, and its contractors, as the scheme is constructed to ensure that HS2 undertake delivery of the scheme in accordance with the hybrid Bill and related undertaking and assurances secured by the Council.
- 61 The service is also responsible for influencing the Scheme to seek to maximise the local benefits for the Borough. For the towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, this will include developing and delivering complementary packages of access improvements for all modes of transport, including active and public transport options and supporting more sustainable end-to-end travel. In addition, the service works to secure key HS2 commitments from Government to achieve a better Crewe hub solution.
- 62 The HS2 service also manages the Council's key relationships with wider strategic rail partners in addition to HS2 Ltd, including Network Rail, Transport for the North, North Midlands Growth Corridor and Growth Track 360 to ensure that plans and strategies that impact the borough are aligned.
- 63 In January 2022, the Phase 2b Hybrid Bill was deposited in Parliament. The Phase 2b Hybrid Bill is seeking the powers to construct and operate the section of the route between Crewe and Manchester. In July 2022, the first additional provision to the Bill, known as AP1, was deposited in Parliament.
- 64 In August 2022, the Council submitted petitions against the original Hybrid Bill and AP1, setting out its objection to elements of the Bill and AP2 and what it wanted HS2 to do differently, our asks, to secure a better outcome for Cheshire East.

65 Key concerns raised in the Council's petition include:

- That the inclusion of the Crewe North Connection provides the rail track solution that would provide the option for HS2 Phase 2b services, including those between Birmingham and Manchester, to route via Crewe station, rather than through the Crewe HS2 tunnel, when Phase 2b opens. However, the Indicative Train Timetable that accompanies Hybrid Bill proposals for Crewe station do not assume any HS2 Phase 2b services use the Crewe Northern Connection.
- The Indicative Train Timetable that accompanies the Hybrid Bill assume no additional HS2 services are calling at Crewe station, other than the 2/3 trains per hour enabled via Phase 2a, until (or indeed if) NPR is delivered.
- The Hybrid Bill proposals do not provide sufficient infrastructure and investment at Crewe station, including a Transfer Deck, to allow efficient and accessible Station facilities, to safely accommodate 5/7 HS2 trains per hour and are not future proofed for additional HS2/NPR services calling at Crewe station or using the Crewe North Connection.
- Underestimation of the potential impacts to the local highway and public transport network during construction
- Lack of provision for innovative approaches to the delivery of the green corridor principle and to deliver active travel
- Lack of mitigation and/or compensation to address the environmental, landscape and ecology impacts of the Scheme
- Concerns over the Scheme will reduce the North West Area of available inert landfill capacity by 87%
- Potential flooding and drainage impacts
- Inadequate provision for the additional Council resources that would be required to provide appropriate community engagement

66 Following the submission of the petitions, the Council entered into negotiations with both HS2 Ltd and Government to seek to identify appropriate assurances, undertakings and commitments that could address the issues and concerns raised by the Council.

67 The Council was invited to appear before the **Hybrid Bill Select Committee** on the 13th March 2023 where it would have the opportunity to present its petition, and supporting evidence, and seek assurance and

undertakings directly from the Select Committee, should the negotiations not provide sufficient assurances.

- 68 On the 13th March 2023, the Council agreed to withdraw its petition after receiving a package of assurances and commitments from HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport that included ones relating to:
- (a) Crewe Hub Station design development
 - (b) A500 and Middlewich Eastern Bypass schemes
 - (c) Highway junction improvements
 - (d) Road safety improvements
 - (e) Further highway impact assessments
 - (f) Active travel enhancements
 - (g) Public transport mitigation
 - (h) Tatton Park – Key Event assurances
 - (i) Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
 - (j) The second additional provision to the hybrid bill, AP2, is expected to be deposited in Parliament in July 2023, the Council will be petitioning against AP2 also to seek additional mitigations and improved outcomes, where appropriate.
- 69 In addition, the Council will have the opportunity to petition against any future additional provisions which impact the Borough and also to petition as the Bill passes through the House of Lords.
- 70 A commitment to the Council included the establishment of a new Crewe Hub Taskforce, to be attended by senior CEC officers and senior civil servants from across government departments. The Taskforce will seek to unlock HS2 regeneration opportunities around Crewe station.

Parking Service

- 71 The adopted MTFs for 2023/24 includes a commitment to develop proposals for changes to the Council's parking tariffs across its car parking estate. An earlier set of proposals were debated at Highways Committee in September 2021 without agreement. Further work is underway to produce a more holistic and equitable approach to parking management across the borough, which is expected to be taken forward on a town-by-town basis as part of the next Local Transport Plan review. Committee

will receive specific reports on the outcomes of this work at future meetings during 2023/24.

- 72 Recruitment and retention of Enforcement Officers is an ongoing pressure on the Parking Service, with current vacancy levels at about 40%. Local employers and businesses recovering from the pandemic are actively recruiting to roles that may be considered more appealing or less challenging than the work of the parking enforcement teams. The Council faces on-going challenges to retain a full complement of trained Civil Enforcement Officers in order to protect communities against illegal / irresponsible parking.
- 73 Updated enforcement policies for the Parking Service – Civil Enforcement officers were approved by the Highways and Transport Committee in November 2021.
- 74 The Council's Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22 was submitted to PACER in February 2023. In previous years, the team has been awarded the overall winner of the national Promoting Awareness of Civil Enforcement through Reporting (PACER) Awards. Work has started to prepare the Council's updated annual monitoring report for 2022/23.
- 75 The use of the Council's car parks has increased steadily through the year during the different levels of restrictions through the pandemic. Since the removal of restrictions levels of demand has levelled off at around 88% of pre-pandemic levels, with revenues reduced by a similar factor. Growth in card and phone payments has been part of the recovery, up by 37%, with cash payments down by circa 20%. The service is constantly monitoring usage and revenue to determine what impact this could have on income and budget setting next financial year. At financial year-end, current levels of use a covid-related impact could of around £0.8million was evident compared with pre-pandemic levels of parking activity.

Strategic Transport

- 76 The draft Borough-wide Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy was approved at Highways Committee in July 2021. Consultation responses have been analysed and the draft strategy updated. The final Strategy will be reported to Highways and Transport Committee at its meeting in July 2023, setting out the forecast requirements for EV charging infrastructure throughout the borough to enable rapid uptake of electric vehicles.
- 77 A bid to Government's On-Street Electric Vehicle Charging programme has been successful, securing funds for the installation of an initial set of 15 public charging points to serve users in Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Middlewich, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Sandbach. The

scope of this bid was closely aligned to the requirements of the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles guidance. It is expected that further bids to the fund will be prepared in future years.

- 78 Work to procure a partner to supply, install and manage EV infrastructure is on-going and will be the subject of a further report to Highways Committee when bids have been received and reviewed. Government recently published details of the new Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund (LEVI) which is intended to give councils access to funding and technical support to accelerate the development of nationwide charging networks. The Council has prepared an expression of interest to the LEVI fund and expects to prepare a business case for circa £2m of grant funding by the autumn 2023.
- 79 Local Transport Development Plans have been developed for all Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. These were reported to Highways and Transport Committee in 2022, they now form part of the Council's strategic infrastructure planning framework for transport. Government has indicated that revised national guidance of the requirements for the next generation of Local Transport Plan will be published for consultation soon. LTP's are expected to play a crucial role in delivering a more sustainable future. They are uniquely placed to change local transport networks to meet the needs of communities and to facilitate growth. Government is expected to seek reforms to the LTP funding regime as well, introducing a greater level of performance-related funding into the local transport financing system. Committee will receive reports on this new guidance when it is published and on the proposed programme of work to ensure Cheshire East Council responds effectively to the new requirements.

Walking and Cycling

- 80 Cycling infrastructure schemes are being implemented in accordance with the Councils adopted Local Cycling & Walking Improvement Plans, schemes include:
- The Wilmslow Station – Royal London scheme was completed and open for use in TBC
 - Work continues on the Crewe – Leighton – Nantwich Greenway scheme.
- 81 Government announced additional funding through the Active Travel Programme (Round 4) which is being used to develop schemes at Manchester Rd, Wilmslow and Manchester Road, Tytherington. Both of these schemes are intended to be demonstrator projects for the type of measures that can be introduced to encourage more walking or cycling for local trips. Consultations have taken place on these Active Travel

schemes with feedback informing on-going work to deliver the schemes. Construction work on both schemes will commence subject to agreement of final designs and release of funding from Active Travel England.

- 82 Sustrans awarded funding to support improvement of the Middlewood Way scheme at Black Lane, Macclesfield, which is part of the National Cycle Network linking Macclesfield to Bollington. Work started in March 2023 to deliver improvement works to the existing pedestrian and cyclist environment at the junction of B5470 Hurdsfield Road and Black Lane, Macclesfield, the works were substantially complete in June 2023.
- 83 The Council was unsuccessful in a bid to Government for a Social Prescribing Pilot Project with Public Health to promote cycling in Crewe. Work with colleagues from Public Health and the NHS continues to seek alternative funding options to deliver the planned initiatives. Also, in the same area of Crewe, the Council has completed a study to assess the feasibility of creating a “Mini Holland” Neighbourhood of measures to promote active travel, manage traffic and improve residential amenity. This study was submitted to Government in May 2023, one of 19 nationwide, and we await further clarification of future funding opportunities.
- 84 The Council has engaged and promoted Bike and Walk to School Days, through liaison with local schools. Engagement with promotional events and training sessions has been positive as people are seeking opportunities to improve health and well-being post-pandemic. Capacity funding has been secured as part of pandemic recovery measures which is being used for training and promotional events offered to schools and businesses.
- 85 Temporary cycle facilities were trialled through deployment of Covid Emergency Active Travel funding in 8 locations. Community views on 5 on-road schemes were mixed with these schemes removed on expiry of the relevant Temporary Traffic Orders. Three experimental town centre cycle access schemes allowing cyclists to access pedestrian priority areas in Crewe, Congleton and Macclesfield have now been made permanent after monitoring and amendment to the relevant Traffic Orders.

Public Transport

- 86 The pandemic has significantly reduced the use of local public transport and this has affected the ability to develop plans for rapid transit initiatives. Current monitoring indicates that ridership overall is at 70% to 80% of pre-pandemic levels, making the commercial operating environment very challenging. There is a more noticeable reduction in concessionary travel, which is at circa 60% of pre-pandemic levels.

- 87 Throughout the pandemic, most if not all the local public transport network has been heavily impacted by social distancing and changes in travel behaviour. The Council and local operators have relied on Covid Bus Recovery Grant and latterly the Local Transport Fund, which was intended to cover revenue deficits on services to end of June 23. In addition, Government introduced a national £2 fare cap on local bus services to encourage ridership and recovery of commercial viability. Most operators in Cheshire East are participating in the Fare Cap scheme, with its impacts being monitored closely to assess the longer-term impacts of reduced fares.
- 88 The Council published its first Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), in response to the National Bus Strategy. The BSIP was submitted to Department for Transport on 31 October 2021 in accordance with the Government's programme. On 5th April 2022, Department for Transport informed the Council that it would be receiving no additional funding in response as part of the BSIP process. In accordance with the National Bus Strategy, we have started work to produce an updated BSIP which will be submitted to Government in October 2023.
- 89 On 23 April 2023, Arriva buses ceased all operations in Cheshire, from its 2 depots in Winsford and Macclesfield. Prior to this, Arriva provided approximately 40% of the bus network in Cheshire East. Other commercial operators registered local bus services covering much of the network, although some gaps in service remain. Since this time, the borough's largest operator is D&G buses, with other key routes operated by First Group, Stagecoach, Hollinshead Coaches and Goodwins Coaches. Participation in the Councils Enhanced Partnership for Buses will be adjusted to reflect these changes.
- 90 Enhanced Partnership Agreements were approved at Committee in July 2022. Government has indicated that this arrangement will be a pre-requisite for future funding awards for local bus. The inaugural meeting of the Enhanced Partnership Board meeting took place on 21 March 2022. The Partnership will help the Council to develop an updated Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 91 Where commercial bus services cannot be provided, the Council has discretion to support (subsidise) local bus routes through contracted services. There are significant inflationary pressures affecting bus operations across the Borough and the changes arising after Arriva's decision to cease operations led to some revisions or reductions in the level of contracted services provided. The Council is receiving higher prices for contracted services and will face budgetary challenges when central government funding comes to an end. To inform these decisions, the Council has an adopted set of bus support criteria. In November 22, Committee resolved to consult on an updated set of local bus support

criteria and recommendations based on the outcomes of this consultation will be reported to Committee at the November meeting.

92 Following a successful funding bid to Government, the new Rural Mobility Fund service “Go Too” commenced operations on 4th October 2021, serving the rural areas to the south and west of Nantwich. Patronage levels and customer feedback have been building steadily on Go-Too, although the service has been subject to short term pressures owing to staff availability during recovery from the pandemic. Recent marketing activity has aimed to raise awareness of the services.

93 Go-Too is one part of the Council flexible or demand-responsive transport services. FlexiLink also provides a network of flexible transport services for elderly, disabled or other users without access to conventional public transport. Work is taking place to assess opportunities to strengthen and improve the offer to passengers, including consultation with users and stakeholders. Committee will receive a report on options for demand-responsive transport in July 23.

Consultation and Engagement

94 No consultation has taken place specifically on this report as it is intended to be a review for 2022-23 relating to the Infrastructure and Highway services. It is worth noting that across the four service areas (highways, infrastructure, HS2 and Strategic Transport and Parking) that consultation would have been carried out where appropriate and required by legislation.

Reasons for Recommendations

95 To provide an update to Committee on performance across Infrastructure and Highways services for 2022-23.

Other Options Considered

96 Not applicable, this report is to update Committee on performance from 2022/23.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

97 There are no legal implications arising from this Report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

98 The financial implications of changes in performance requirements or responding to current performance levels will be provided in separate Finance Review reports to the Committee.

This report considers performance for 2022/23. However, reference is made in the report to future changes to baseline budgets referenced in the Council's approved budget/ Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Policy

99 Highway Service

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aim
A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel	Safer and well-maintained roads

100 Infrastructure Service

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aim
A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel	Successful delivery of the major infrastructure programme

101 HS2 Programme

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aim
Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	Successful delivery of the Crewe HS2 Programme.
A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel	To protect residents and minimise the impacts of the HS2 line of route on our environment

102 Parking Service

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aims
To increase parking provision close to local transport hubs	Broadway Meadow multi-storey car park (MSCP) Complete Local Transport Plan parking reviews

103 Parking Service

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aims
Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure in our key service centres	Secure supplier and install charging points in Cheshire East car parks

104 Walking and Cycling

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aims
To promote uptake of cycling in our local service centres	Installation of cycle storage facilities in Cheshire East car parks Invest in new cycle routes and improve existing ones Prohibit parking in existing cycle lanes
More residents to use walking routes	Promote existing routes and nature trails Create new walking routes between service centres

105 Public Transport

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority	Aims
To improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys	Feasibility studies into the creation of rapid transit routes connecting existing infrastructure with key employment site
To reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport	Submit proposals to Rural Transport Fund Quality bus partnerships with operators and town councils
To encourage an increase in the use of public transport (especially buses)	Operators work together to share real time information Bus routes planned to provide multi-modal connectivity Cheshire East bus app developed

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

106 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

107 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

108 The performance reporting process provides opportunities for the Council to identify and focus on areas for improvement to support achievement of its strategic ambitions. Timely performance reporting mitigates risk of the Council not achieving its outcomes by providing the opportunity to review outputs, identify trends and areas for improvement, and introduce

corrective and/or preventative actions wherever necessary to address areas of poor - or under – performance.

Rural Communities

109 There are no implications for rural communities arising from this report.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

110 There are no implications for children and young people arising from this report.

Public Health

111 There are no implications for public health arising from this report.

Climate Change

112 Decarbonisation of the local transport network is a stated national objective that will be embedded into future Local Transport Plans and funding regimes. Specific technical guidelines are to be issued to all Local Authorities on how to analyse and embed defined carbon reduction pathways into their strategic plans and funding bids.

113 Active travel and passenger transport programmes that can encourage long-term behaviour change and generate travel choices that are less reliant on private cars, especially petrol and diesel cars are key policy priorities for successful local transport strategies. These measures are also a good strategic fit with Council policy priorities for carbon reduction and health & well-being as part of our response to the climate challenge.

114 The Highway Service continued to be committed to the Council's 2025 carbon neutral target. The Carbon Neutral Board as four key work packages seeking to deliver net zero carbon. The Highways Service is a key contributor to the Fleet and Street Lighting work package and involved in the Nature Based In setting work package.

115 Along with this the service is actively working to reduce its carbon footprint and further contribute to the net zero target. This is wide ranging and includes expanding its use of electric plant and tools, selection of lower carbon materials, expanded use of recycling and reduction in use of virgin aggregates, changes in working arrangements and travel patterns etc.

116 Within 2022/23, the service identified the following successes:

- In 2022/23 79% of asphalt laid, lower temperature asphalt, saving 85 tonnes of carbon, this is equivalent to 217,940 car miles saved or electricity for 9 houses for a year.
- Continued growth in the use of electric powered tools
- The use of solar powered welfare units and first use of a net zero hydrogen fuelled welfare unit
- Demonstration of a low carbon structures site at Marthall Lane, this included all vehicle, plant, generators, and welfare units being fully electric or hydrogen powered
- Recycled concrete slabs from footway improvement schemes to use as sub-base.

117 Within the 2022/23 Performance Management Framework, the Highway Service we have two performance measures:

Carbon Reduction within Highways Service Depots	This indicator measures the energy usage (diesel usage for vehicles (Fleet) / electricity for depots and offices / waste data) within the Highway Service. This indicator measures the CO2 emissions in tonnes In 2021/22 - 518.2 tonnes of carbon, in the above areas was produced. In 2022/23 – the target was for 492.29 tonnes (5% lower). Up to end of Q3, 173.5 tonnes of carbon had been produced across the town depots.
Carbon Reduction Programme – Traffic signs and bollards	This indicator measures the number of traffic signs and bollards replaced with either LED or solar as part of the Carbon Reduction Programme. On target to upgrade 3,400 traffic signs and bollards to either LED or solar in 2022/23.

118 The highway service is represented on the Corporate Carbon Board and relevant Carbon Neutral work package project boards and has established a team internally to focus and deliver reducing carbon across its highway maintenance and improvement activities.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Tom Moody, Director of Infrastructure & Highways Services thomas.moody@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Performance Framework - Highway Service Contract 2022/23

	<p>Appendix 2 - Highways Contract – Revenue and Capital Programmes 2022/23</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Infrastructure Service – Capital Programme 2022/23</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p>	<p>Infrastructure & Highways Department – Mid-year Performance Review</p> <p>Noted at Highways and Transport Committee 26 January 2023 (available at Agenda for Highways and Transport Committee on Thursday, 26th January, 2023, 10.30 am Cheshire East Council)</p>