

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

Author: Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment
Wards: All
Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment.
- 1.2 A key purpose of the Scrutiny Committee function is to hold the Cabinet to account and ensure that Council priorities and performance are being delivered. The Scrutiny Committee partly fulfils this requirement through the use of question and answer sessions with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Question and Answer session is to ensure that the Cabinet Member provides the Scrutiny Committee with performance information that relates to their portfolio responsibilities. It also requires the Cabinet Member to provide budget information for their portfolio responsibilities and provides an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to ask questions on the portfolio responsibilities.
- 1.4 The remit of the Committee includes the review, scrutiny, and development of policy recommendations and the monitoring of performance of corporate priorities.

2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Take note of the report by the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment.
- 2.2 Put appropriate questions to the Cabinet Member.
- 2.3 Advise if any further action is required.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment is Councillor Maureen Penny who is accountable for the following Pledges from the Council's Vision:
 - 3.1.1 Pledge 3 (in part) Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

place. We will do this through b) delivery of the bus boulevard, c)
Delivering improvements to the strategic town centre transport network.

3.1.2 Pledge 5. Enhance Wellington Street as a prime thoroughfare for the town.

3.1.3 Pledge 13. Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.

3.1.4 Pledge 14: Encourage Swindon residents to increase recycling and reduce their waste in line with the Council's Waste Strategy. Swindon Borough Council to reduce the use of single use plastics with the intention to stop using such plastics by 2019/20 and encourage local businesses to do the same

3.2 The Portfolio responsibilities for this Cabinet position are as follows :

3.2.1 Waterside Depot, including Household Waste and Recycling centre (but not PPS)

3.2.2 Streetsmart

3.2.3 Public Toilets

3.2.4 Waste Disposal/Waste Minimisation

3.2.5 Street Lighting

3.2.6 Street Cleaning

3.2.7 Recycling

3.2.8 Refuse Collection-Domestic and Trade

3.2.9 Ground and Tree Maintenance and Open Spaces

3.2.10 Removal of graffiti and abandoned vehicles

3.2.11 Parks (Streetsmart services only)

3.2.12 Playgrounds

3.2.13 Maintenance of Roundabouts and non-HRA verges

3.2.14 Building Services, cleaning, catering and security services

3.2.15 Gullies, drainage, minor road repairs and potholes

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

3.2.16 Public Transport, Concessionary Fares, Specialist Transport, Council Transport and Fleet Management

3.2.17 Traffic and Transport Forward Planning including Local Transport Plan and implementation

3.2.18 Building community capacity

3.2.19 Envirocrime

Update on current priorities and key achievements

Delivering The Council's Vision and Pledges

Pledge 3 (in part) Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern place. We will do this through b) delivery of the bus boulevard, c) Delivering improvements to the strategic town centre transport network.

- 3.3 The proposals for a new central public transport interchange at Fleming Way, now commonly referred to as the Bus Boulevard, are an integral part of the outline planning consent for Kimmerfields, a new mixed use development located on the prime route from the railway station to the town centre.
 - 3.4 The Bus Boulevard would directly contribute to the town centre strategy by delivering against the connected, attractive and focused town centre themes, while also contributing to prosperity. The bid to government will represent collaboration and cooperation amongst key town centre agencies and strong civic leadership. Supporting Urban Living, Green and Clean, and being Easy to get to. It will be the destination for the rapid transit routes from our urban extensions at Wichelstowe and the New Eastern Villages and will bring together both local urban and rural buses as well as national services.
 - 3.5 The Bus Boulevard is a place making initiative which will create a thriving, attractive and accessible public and civic facility surrounded by high quality public realm.
 - 3.6 The scheme will remove the severance caused by Fleming Way, reuniting the Central Business District with the Town Centre retail core. Businesses on the northern side of Fleming Way have reintroduced canteen facilities in recent years which further discourages movement by the 1000's of office workers into the town centre at lunchtimes and after work.
 - 3.7 In addition, it will offer excellent support for cycling and walking, improving the pedestrian and cycle experience of users, completing the 'missing link' for the Eastern and Western Flyer cycle routes and promoting healthy lifestyles.
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Steve Jorden, Communities and Housing, sjorden@swindon.gov.uk

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 3.8 Delivery of the Bus Boulevard will also free up land at the existing bus station which increases the developable area of Kimmerfields by circa 20%.
- 3.9 Preliminary designs are complete, with detailed design about to commence. Works on site are provisionally programmed to commence in January 2021 subject to funding for the scheme. Cabinet considered a report in March and authorised an application for external funding to deliver the Bus Boulevard scheme via the government sponsored Future High Street fund initiative.
- 3.10 Improvements to the strategic town centre transport network will be delivered within the framework of the Town Centre Movement Strategy. The purpose of the Movement Strategy document is to provide a policy framework for a range of transport interventions sought within the Town Centre. The Town Centre Movement Strategy sits beneath the Local Transport Plan and the overall Swindon Vision. The strategy will also form the basis for the updated movement chapter within the revised Central Area Action Plan.
- 3.11 The draft Town Centre Movement Strategy was agreed by LAG on the 31st January. The document is continuing to be developed before it is presented to the Cabinet in April 2019.

Pledge 5. Enhance Wellington Street as a prime thoroughfare for the town.

- 3.12 Wellington Street provides the main route for pedestrians and cyclists between the Railway Station and the heart of the Town Centre. It connects the Railway and Bus Stations and will also provide the main route from the Railway Station into the Kimmerfields development site. It also provides the first impression that many visitors arriving by rail will have of Swindon; it is therefore important that a high quality environment is provided.
- 3.13 The benefits of delivering an improvement scheme on Wellington Street are an improved public realm and environment for the residents and businesses living on the street, but also crucially the improvement of one of the most important gateways into Swindon for people arriving in the town. Given the renewed impetus to deliver the Kimmerfields Business Quarter and the associated Bus Exchange and Fleming Way schemes, potential investors arriving by train will pass along Wellington Street, and therefore it is critically important that a positive first impression of the town is maintained.

Works commenced on the 7th January 2019. This scheme is progressing well and is scheduled to be completed on the 1st of May 2019.

Pledge 13: Find new ways to engage communities and neighbourhoods to increase the cleanliness of their local areas.

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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 3.14 As way of meeting this pledge StreetSmart are working to deliver waste and recycling educational programmes to school children through education programmes and visits from the Lead Envirocrime Education Officer. As well as this, StreetSmart's EnviroCrime team supports requests from Parish Councils for support with community clean-ups with which the cleansing teams are actively engaged.
- 3.15 The appointment of new Waste Wardens further enhances this approach with their remit to engage with and advise residents about waste reduction and increased recycling as well as working closely with the EnviroCrime teams to tackle on street waste issues such as littering and the illegal dumping of waste (fly tipping)

Pledge 14: Encourage Swindon residents to increase recycling and reduce their waste in line with the Council's Waste Strategy. Swindon Borough Council to reduce the use of single use plastics with the intention to stop using such plastics by 2019/20 and encourage local businesses to do the same

- 3.16 This is a new pledge and is supported by the Ten Year Waste and Recycling Strategy as outlined below and measured by an overall reduction in the tonnage of waste collected per household, which is currently around 455kg per household per annum and targets a c. 5% reduction of this rate
- 3.17 The target reduction of kilograms of waste per household per annum is commensurate with a targeted increase of kilograms of dry recyclables from households (benchmark 130kg per household per annum in 2017-18) to give an overall target recycling rate of 50% by 2020

4. What we did well

Highways and Transport

- 4.1 The scale of highway infrastructure work contained within the Council's capital programme coupled with the need to maintain the highway asset continues to be a major focus for the highways team.
- 4.2 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the principal means of delivering the Council's transport programme and an Implementation Plan is produced for each year, with indicative information for the following two years (a rolling three year programme) and is subject to annual approval by Cabinet. The LTP Implementation Plan 2018/19 approved by Cabinet in March 2018 is included in Appendix 1. Delivery of the programme is monitored on a regular basis and progress reported to members via monthly summary reports. Delivery of the programme remains substantially on track.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 4.3 A key role of the team is to manage the temporary disruption caused by the Council's own programmes works as well as the significant levels of temporary works caused by utility providers and other contractors who need access to services within the highway. The Streetworks Team received xxxxx notices from utility providers and contractors between xxxx and xxxx, and the team works hard to minimize these disruptions to the travelling public.
- 4.4 In terms of major schemes, spring 2018 saw the completion of circa £13m infrastructure improvements to Junction 16 to facilitate future phases of the Wichelstowe development. Three phases of bus corridor improvements have been completed at Mannington, with a further phase programmed for April 2019. Significant enhancements to bus facilities and public realm were completed in the summer at Regent Circus, Bus Corridor improvements will be completed soon at Pipers Way and further corridor improvements are planned for next year at Cricklade Road/Moonrakers.

Highway Maintenance

- 4.5 A significant change to the Council's approach to highway asset management took place last year following the introduction of a new Code of Practice (CoP), "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" that came into being in October 2018 as a means to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to the management of highway infrastructure assets.
- 4.6 The individual budget allocations set out in LTP Implementation Plan are influenced by a range of factors that have been refined as a result of the now CoP predicated on a risk based approach to asset management including the Performance Management Framework, a comprehensive review of asset data, consideration of lifecycle planning scenarios and customer feedback, in support of the Highway Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in October 2015 and reviewed and updated in 2018.
- 4.7 The Performance Management Framework and The Carriageway and Footway Management Plan which were both introduced in 2018 to reflect this new approach are included in Appendix 2 and 3. Officers also continue to track a number of historic indicators relating to highway assets in order to monitor trends and examples of these are shown in Appendix 4. Following the move this year to adopt a risk based approach to gully cleaning, performance is now tracked using handheld technology as shown in Appendix 5.

During 2018 we received 901 pothole reports. We repaired 5474 carriageway potholes, 608 footway potholes, 897 carriageway patches, 613 footway patches

- 4.8 Insurance claim data is also tracked to ensure consistency with our asset inspection hierarchies.
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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 4.9 Officers commission an annual public satisfaction survey on key highway and transport themes including highway maintenance. The 2018 survey summary reports showing Swindon's results and the comparison with the national average of participating Authorities is included in Appendix 6 and 7. The overall public satisfaction score for highways maintenance from the 2018 public satisfaction survey is slightly lower than last year (49% v 52%) however remains consistent with the national average of 49% and in the upper quartile in comparison with other South West Highway Authorities.
- 4.10 It is worth noting that the Council's capital grant settlement includes the maximum amount for authorities rated Level 3 through the DfT's Local Highways Maintenance Incentive Fund. The authority has improved its asset management approach, processes and documentation over the last 2 years, successfully moving from Level 1 (lowest rating) in 2016, to Level 2 in 2017 and on to Level 3 (highest rating) in 2018. The value of the Incentive Fund element is £473k in 2018/19.
- 4.11 The Council received an additional (one off) £1.241m Highway maintenance allocation in 2018 from central government linked to the budget statement. This additional budget was allocated to a programme of resurfacing of residential roads, pothole patching, street lighting cable upgrades and subway lighting improvements and will be substantially complete this financial year.
- 4.12 In terms of the base maintenance allocation, the single largest scheme successfully completed this year was reconstruction of a significant length of Upham Road, circa £430k, using an innovative method to convert a rigid concrete base into a semi-flexible construction avoiding more costly traditional re-construction and minimising the removal and disposal of excavated material.
- 4.13 The Council has approved a separate £7.2m project for the conversion of all street lights to LED. The specification and tender documentation for this project is currently being developed with a view to starting work on site in November this year. This covers replacement of lanterns only. The street lighting allocation in the LTP Improvement Plan will be used to replace defective concrete or steel lamp columns as part of the conversion programme.

Winter Service

- 4.14 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that snow or ice does not endanger the safe passage along the highway. The Winter Service Plan 2018/19 is included in Appendix 8. The recent adverse weather and snow conditions tested the robustness of this plan, but I am pleased to report that the all staff involved, with specific mention to the Highway Operations team at Waterside, responded admirably to the challenge in keeping disruption to the

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

network to a minimum, as evidenced by the numerous positive comments from members of the public.

- 4.15 The implementation of the revised gritting routes as approved by Lead Member was successful; the reduction in route length resulted in a calculated cost saving of 23% in the service. Importantly, the reduced treatment time has resulted in a reduction of lost working time due to driver's resting periods of 35%. The 2017/2018 season was a particularly cold year with more treatments than any since our detailed records began in 2005, with treatments undertaken on 57 nights of the 182 nights monitored, that works out as action on 31% of the nights. There were 3 significant snow events in the season. Following this season a small number of minor changes were made to the routes, particularly the addition of The Ridgeway which had previously been deleted and the addition of bus routes within two new developments. The season for 2018/2019 began exceptionally warm with only 9 treatments from the start of the season until the end of December; December, January and February to date have resulted in a further 23 night's treatment including the recent snow event. Overall, we have carried out treatments on 25% of nights. For the 2018/2019 season, the recommendations of the NRSWG regarding spread rates have been taken into account which should result in a reduction of salt use.
- 4.16 In 2018 we renewed 19,789 concessionary bus passes and 2114 vouchers as part of the Swindon Borough Concessionary Travel Scheme as part of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. It is now over ten years since the English national Concessionary Scheme was introduced. This year In April 2019 we will be renewing 3907 passes and 1205 vouchers. We have arranged meetings with the major care and residential homes this year in order to prepare fully, the auto renewals of travel vouchers for mobility impaired and disabled residents. This is a new measure in order to reduce paper and time taken to renew 1500 travel vouchers. Customers can approach us now in a new way as we have put our forms online and this enables individuals to access the Council website and apply for transport reducing the use of paper forms.
- 4.17 We have rekindled the public interest in park and ride within the Borough by using the Wroughton Park and Ride site for additional park and ride operations aimed at STEAM events and reducing traffic congestion in the Rodbourne area by taking shoppers to the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet to see how this could become permanent in the future.
- 4.18 We are working with parish councils and individual members of the public to meet their requests for improved bus infrastructure facilities whether this be

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

hardstanding, a new or resited bus stop or a new bus shelter. New bus shelters were installed in Regents Circus as part of new development in that area of town and the existing bus shelters were then relocated to other bus stops in the Borough which did not have a bus shelter. This is a regular plan to recycle existing bus shelters rather than dispose of them.

- 4.19 Financial support through Bus Service Operators Grant and Section 106 Development funding has enabled the present level of bus services to be maintained. Meanwhile Swindon's Bus Company and Stagecoach West continue to maintain and develop their bus services. We will be increasing service provision with Badbury Park and Abbey Farm housing developments soon to be receiving new services. For example the Stagecoach Goldbus branded Service 66 operating between Swindon and Oxford has been upgraded again since its initial introduction in 2012 and is known as the S6. Modern buses have USB points and WiFi facilities now as they become upgraded services or receive new buses.
- 4.20 Buses operating around Swindon contribute to the clean air initiatives by having greener engines as well as naturally each replacing a number of individual cars, so reducing the congestion pressure on the highway.
- 4.21 The Council has now decided upon replacing the existing bus station with a Bus Boulevard concept which will have the buses operating in one area as opposed to two sites like currently with the existing bus station and Fleming Way. Bringing all bus services and coaches to one operational area with a new passenger facility will create a new gateway to the town for the bus passenger and showcase Swindon as a place to visit, either to shop, eat or relax making use of the many leisure activities on offer in the future.
- 4.22 Community transport in the form of dial a ride and community shopping services will continue to be supported and provided as they remain a key factor to enable individuals to maintain their independence at home and not need to go into residential care.
- 4.23 Financial pressures remain a common theme in the current climate of local government and within the area of education transport we are looking at achieving a target of £460k of savings. This process is already under way as we have moved more mainstream school entitled students onto local bus services rather than contract transport. This will encourage students to continue using public transport in the future.
- 4.24 We have reviewed the number of students entitled to free school transport to special needs schools and found a number of them do not meet our distance

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

criteria. If this transport entitlement is withdrawn on a transitional basis for example when the child changes school this could produce a saving of £125k.

- 4.25 We must try and improve our current market for the tendering of all passenger transport contracts particularly education and social care. Therefore we are currently working on the introduction of a Dynamic Purchasing System which will aim to encourage more transport operators to bid for our contract routes and increase competition in the Borough. A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) will give the Council more flexibility for current and future tendering of Passenger Transport Contracts. This will form part of the Swindon Programme Strategy in trying to provide savings and reduce financial pressure on the budget caused by an increase in demand to transport in particular students with special education needs or disability. As part of the Swindon Programme the demand pressures and costs of education and social care transport are part of a Swindon Programme project group on demand management being put together to review transport processes and expenditure. A DPS provides a list of suppliers who have met the minimum criteria required to be awarded on to the DPS for Passenger Transport from which the Passenger Transport team can conduct a mini e-competition for tenders.
- 4.26 At the same time we are looking at buying new software to improve route planning and scheduling within the Passenger Transport Team which will enable existing routes to be reviewed and planned more efficiently in future. We have also changed the way customers can approach us as we have put our forms online and enables individuals to access the Council website and apply for transport which replaces paper forms.

StreetSmart

- 4.27 A key focus for StreetSmart is to maintain the standards of service delivery of front line environmental services with the combination of growing demand (additional housing and streets) and increasing budgetary pressures
- 4.28 StreetSmart can be seen as providing both *front facing* services such as waste and recycling collections, street cleansing, the management of grounds parks and open spaces and Enterprise Works, as well as *enabling* services, ie those functions that enable other SBC services, such as fleet and vehicle workshops, stores and the management of the Waterside Depot
- 4.29 Reshaping the StreetSmart service in line with improved service efficiencies and the ongoing requirement for Borough-wide cost savings has resulted in the commencement of the following restructure to be completed by Autumn 2019:
- 4.29.1 Combining the Waste and Recycling services with the parts of the Cleansing Service that do not carry out cleansing on behalf of Parishes
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Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

(largely the town centre cleansing operations) to give a more streamlined operational structure

- 4.29.2 The development of a bespoke Parish Service Delivery model for all Parished services to be delivered through one mechanism to the four Parish Councils SBC work on behalf of (West Parish, North Parish, Central Swindon South Parish and St. Andrews Parish Councils). This combines the grounds, parks and open spaces maintenance with the cleansing operations to deliver greater management and operational efficiencies for the Parish Councils
- 4.29.3 Removing Footcare from Enterprise Works and transferring Community Meals to a more suitable operator. This streamlines Enterprise Works as a whole to further develop the service and give a firmer financial and operational footing when considering options for the future of Enterprise Works whilst continuing to support existing staff and adhere to SBC's Supported Employment Strategy
- 4.29.4 Reshaping the Fleet and Vehicle Workshops to appropriate levels in line with the introduction of new fleet, including Electric Vehicles via the Vehicle Replenishment Programme.
- 4.30 The restructure is being carried out in conjunction with the implementation of the Waterside Depot Improvement Plan. There is around £500k being spent on works which aim to improve the physical working environment of the StreetSmart (and other Waterside-based) staff. The programme of works has been in the planning since the summer of 2018 with core samples taken to understand the nature of the substructure of the depot. Work will see the following improvements around Waterside Depot and is due to commence in March 2019:
- Major resurfacing / reconstruction of the main roadway around the depot
 - The introduction of protected pedestrian walkways
 - The introduction of site rules (site rules card) for all staff and visitors
 - Works/ private vehicle car parking segregation
 - The introduction of new cycle shelters
 - Separation of smoking shelters from cycle shelters
 - Improved lighting and LED lighting
 - Improved CCTV coverage
 - Improved housekeeping regime
 - Improved security arrangements

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

Waste and Recycling Collection Services.

- 4.31 For Waste and Recycling the standards for refuse and recycling collections is around the 50 missed collections per 100,000 properties (industry standard target). The current run rate for refuse is 40 misses per 100,000 whilst recycling is 52 and Plastics Collections is 35. However this is not the case for Garden Waste collections where the figure is 100 misses per 100,000 properties (double the industry standard). This will be a focus for the 2019-2020 season
- 4.32 In 2018 the background to this performance were extremely hot summer months with additional collection tonnages generated by a “BBQ Summer” and the Football World Cup. There was also a local Class 2 Driver shortage which affected the Service’s ability to run with a full complement of crews. This saw a July 2018 peak of 342 requests for service / complaints (Total Jan-Dec 3,062; average 255 per month)
- 4.33 During business as usual the Waste and Recycling Management team worked on the 10 year Waste Strategy which was presented to December Cabinet and subsequent Scrutiny. The details of the Strategy can be accessed on the website and is attached as an appendix to this document
- 4.34 The aim of the Strategy is to reduce the overall tonnage of waste arisings per household and to increase Swindon’s recycling rate to over 50% by 2020. The Strategy links the Borough’s waste management aspirations into the adherence to the Waste Hierarchy and links with the National Government’s recently published Waste Strategy, “Our Waste, Our Resources; A Strategy for England. The immediate methodology is to improve education and communications to Swindon residents as well as the appointment of Waste Wardens to assist with this. Following this the Strategy is:
- Predicated at capping the increased waste tonnage arisings from an anticipated c. 20,000 additional properties over the next 5 years to flat-line current levels of c. 45,000 tonnes per annum (kerbside)
 - Year 1 emphasis is around greater information / education to Swindon residents to adhere to the Waste Hierarchy
 - Introduction of charging residents for additional and replacement boxes
 - Introduction of additional waste streams
 - Closer working with PPS to shape the future of Waterside facility and disposal technologies in line with the Strategy. This could include palletisation of waste to enhance SRF) and the purchasing of RT7000 plastics sort machine

Cleansing, Grounds, Fleet and Stores.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 4.35 For these elements of the StreetSmart Service reductions in the workforce in previous years leaves the team with minimal critical mass, with risk of unscheduled overtime spend or diminished service standards. However there is an ongoing analysis of working arrangements to reduce reliance on overtime and review digital opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness, specifically in the Town Centre
- 4.36 The Car Park Structural Cleansing Programme recommenced in January 2019 after a Christmas break. The programme recommenced in Brunel West and has moved on to Brunel North and then John Street. The programme runs annually from April to June, then again from September to November and delivers a comprehensive cleansing of town centre car parks
- 4.37 The Parish model for services was first introduced in 2017 has presented the opportunity for certain StreetSmart services to be transferred to some Parish Councils. For those Parish Councils that opted for continued service delivery by SBC, a new Parish Service Delivery model is being initiated. This next phase of Parish Service delivery is aimed at improving all services being delivered to the Parish Councils by offering a single point of contact for all Parish concerns with a dedicated Service team familiar with the unique requirements of the Parish and a dedicated Service Manager for closer control of the various functions of the Service
- 4.38 The implementation of the Vehicle Replenishment Programme has commenced with the procurement of new vehicles including the introduction of electric vehicles in place. The delivery of the first tranche of vehicles likely to be in Spring 2019. The development of a longer term vehicle commissioning strategy to ensure a more cost effective approach to procuring vehicles is being written which will have a greater emphasis on alternatively fuelled vehicles including electric vehicles and hybrid engines.
- 4.39 Savings around stores procurement through the consolidation of suppliers has resulted in a saving of c £74k this year compared to previous year. There has also been the introduction of a call-off approach to reduce stock and additional handling
- 4.40 The improvement of the financial position of Enterprise Works continues at pace with a greater understanding of the costs, income, productivity and business performance of each part of Enterprise Works (Timber Workshops, Timber Retail, Signage and Assembly) and to explore more trading and business opportunities for further improvement.
- 4.41 Income for Signage has increased by 52% for April to February this financial year, compared to the same period in 2017-18. For the same period Timber

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

income has increased by 7% and Assembly income increased by 40% whilst operating costs and overheads continue to be managed. This has resulted in a circa £85,000 improvement in the trading position compared to the previous financial year and the work to further improve the position continues irrespective of the future delivery model / ownership of Enterprise Works

- 4.42 The expansion of SBCs Trade Waste Service continues with the appointment of a Trade Waste Administrator and the separation of the service from the domestic waste service. The remit of the standalone service is to grow and expand the customer base, including the Traded Services offering and to maximise route efficiencies and improve the profitability to build on previous years c. £40k trading position
- 4.43 Garden Waste Services continues to grow and the customer numbers improved by an additional c 2,000 subscriptions this year. Also the introduction of the bin sticker proof or subscription has resulted in many non-participants who may previously have had collections signing up to the service.
- 4.44 EnviroCrime - The reported incidents of Fly Tipping for 2017-2018 of 1,578. We are currently running at a rate of 1,295 for 2018-2019 (April to December) which would equate to an estimated 2018/19 annual total of around 1,726 which represents a slight increase. Fly tipping varies year on year as there are numerous reasons for this and the root causes are not always identifiable.
- 4.45 The EnviroCrime team has been under-resourced with the Senior EnviroCrime Officer leaving in 2018. This issue is being addressed this year. Prosecutions for Fly Tipping are difficult due to the ability in many cases to identify the culprits, which is also the case for issuing Cautions and Fixed Penalty Notices. The EnviroCrime team has had some success in identifying suspected offenders and obtaining clear ups by residents which has resulted in fly tipping being removed. Limited evidence means that residential clear ups are more appropriate than court action and results in these instances of waste removal without additional cost to the council.

Building Works

- 4.46 In the past year we have built 63 new Council homes at Hawthorns, the former Royal British Legion site, in Cranmore Avenue and Bembridge Ave and Linden Avenue. In addition, we have also built and sold on the retail market 7 new homes in Euclid Street to generate revenue for the Council.
- 4.47 We are currently completing 13 new homes at the former United Reform Church site in Penhill.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 4.48 We are soon, subject to the successful relocation of Bats, to demolish the empty George Gay Gardens buildings in readiness to begin the regeneration of Queens Drive.
- 4.49 We have completed the following:
- 3 separate and large phases of work to replace buildings at Crowdys School, including the construction of a new Primary school
 - the extension at Plas Pencelli including refurbishing the kitchen
 - a number of condition works at a range of schools
 - new nursery at Chiseldon Primary school
- 4.50 We are currently on site building the new William Morris Primary school, with partial completion programmed for September to enable intake of pupils and final completion due in November 2019 and will be providing a new nursery at Bridlewood Primary School.

Cleaning

- 4.51 We tendered for a new 5 yr cleaning contract for the Council's operational buildings, implementing the new contract on 2 January 2019. This tender process resulted in a saving to the Council of £416k over a 5 year period.

Security/CCTV Operations

- 4.52 The Security Team have now successfully incorporated the Homeline Control Room into their team and are all now co-located with Community Safety and The Police in the Plus One building, creating a central, efficient service. Security services are being marketed to schools and the wider community to generate income.

5. What would you do differently?

Highways and Transport

- 5.1 Communications and Project Governance are two areas that I have been working closely with officers on to ensure that key stakeholders are kept informed of progress of short-term disruption or planned works to the highway network. There have been a number of practical improvements in terms of scheme signage and social media updates, however I will continue to support officers in these areas to ensure members, residents and local businesses are kept informed with up-to-date information. The Corporate Director for Communities & Housing now chairs the Highway Programme and Delivery Board, comprising senior officers across a number of teams that meets monthly to plan and review the impacts of roadworks and major highway works across

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

the Borough, dovetailed with regular reports to members and wider communications with the general public.

- 5.2 I am also conscious that the management of utilities and other contractors is of concern to the public and Council members, however I am confident that the proposed planned move to manage streetworks activities through a Permitting Scheme next year will encourage better planning in this area.
- 5.3 Currently within passenger transport we are making many changes to improve our services to the public and at the same time deliver financial savings targets for the Council.

We therefore need to change the public perception of bus services and stop the decline of rural bus services and passenger numbers in general. Therefore we should look at additional funding to provide initiatives whether they be bus services or improved bus priority measures and provide these working in conjunction with bus operators.

StreetSmart

- 5.4 An adherence to high Service standards is built from within and there will be an emphasis on the following plan across all services as outlined below. The objectives of this plan are to improve the Service as a whole by working with the front line staff who deliver the services in order to achieve better results.
- 5.5 Changing working culture is important for the Service and we aim to raise service standards by being supportive and collaborative with staff, clearly explaining what standards are expected and encouraging staff to embrace transformational change whilst tackling poor performance through measuring and monitoring our standards.
- 5.6 Underpinning this approach will be an emphasis on maintaining good standards of Health and Safety, a greater adherence to cost controls, improvements in staff welfare and placing a greater focus on customer satisfaction and operational efficiencies.
- 5.7 With the introduction of the ten year waste strategy there will be a greater emphasis on engagement with residents around waste reduction and improved recycling rates by way of a comprehensive communications and educational campaign, the details of which can be found in the Waste Strategy (see attached appendix). A budget of approximately £1 per household for communications has been set aside for this in line with the Waste Resources and Action Programme's (WRAP) recommendations. Swindon Borough Council's Waste Strategy is aligned with the recently published National Waste Strategy – *Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England*

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 5.8 The introduction of Waste Wardens as well as training for Collection Staff will also improve in the way waste is segregated into recyclables and presented in the prescribed manner in order to meet waste and recycling targets
- 5.9 Swindon Borough Council will lead by example and StreetSmart will work with the Facilities Department to phase out single use plastics across the Council and to ensure all Council buildings are recycling as a minimum paper/card, glass and tins/cans
- 5.10 There will be a comprehensive review and reroute of the Garden Waste collection rounds to eliminate some of the collection issues experienced last season and to bring the missed collections down to below the Waste and Recycling industry collection standards of <50 missed collections per 100,000 collections made
- 5.11 Fleet procurement represents an opportunity to produce a long term fleet commissioning strategy where the longer term priority is to develop a vehicle replenishment programme to avoid the lease/ hire mistakes of the past as well as the introduction of sustainably fuelled vehicles such as Electric Vehicles and the required refuelling / charging infrastructure
- 5.12 Linked to this is the requirement for high standards of Transport Compliance both in terms of driver compliance and standards of fleet maintenance. To this end the Fleet department aim to achieve the best compliance through DVSA Earned Recognition Accreditation Scheme which will subject Swindon Borough Council's fleet and driver compliance to the safety standards of the National government executive body
- 5.13 EnviroCrime - During 2019 we will be identifying hot spot locations for fly tipping and looking to monitor and investigate these locations and wherever enforcement action is appropriate then we will continue to take such action. In support of this, Swindon is increasing the size of it's EnviroCrime Team so that more staff are available to tackle what is unfortunately a national problem. Coupled with this is a more proactive approach by working more closely with community organisations, introducing CCTV where appropriate and also distributing educational literature, for example the promotion of SBC's Bulky Household Waste Collections

6. What are the Challenges and Priorities facing your Portfolio?

Highways and Transport

- 6.1 Given current and future budgetary pressures, prioritisation of service provision will need to focus on its statutory responsibilities and those areas which are

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

most able to deliver the needs of our community as recognised through the Council's vision and priorities.

- 6.2 In terms of making the best use of our resources, I will be supporting officers in taking a Systems Thinking approach to delivering our services focussed around the customer. There are a number of digital based system improvements currently in motion in support of this approach, including the procurement of a new asset management system with associated mobile working capability and a central management system linked to the street lighting LED replacement programme which will allow remote monitoring of lighting levels and faults as well as reduce maintenance costs.
- 6.3 Highways and Transport relies on a significant amount of technical support from external consultants through professional service contracts, I remain keen to review the balance of internal/external resource to ensure cost effective service are delivered internally as far as possible and developing that capacity through apprenticeship programmes where appropriate.
- 6.4 As far as the condition of highway assets is concerned, I am conscious that there is a gap between current levels of capital investment and the estimated levels of investment required to keep the whole network in good condition. Although this is to some degree recognised in the risk based approach taken in the Performance Management Framework, I recognise there is a backlog of capital maintenance work that will potentially have knock on effects to routine minor repairs and hence the revenue budget. I will continue to work with officers to maintain the highway network efficiently as possible with the resources available and seek support from colleagues to recognise the value of investing in the highway network in the context of the Council's vision and priorities.

Transport Strategy and Congestion

- 6.5 Servicing the levels of growth and the perception of congestion hotspots will remain a key challenge. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the principal means of delivering the Council's transport programme. The current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was approved by Cabinet on 9th March 2011 and it is crucial that our Transport Strategy is fully up to date and aligned with the Council's Vision, Priorities and Pledges. To that end I will be supporting officers on a comprehensive refresh of the LTP targeted for completion in the latter part of 2019/20, with particular focus on reducing the negative health impacts of the transport system both in terms of road safety, air quality and the wider health effects of transport.
- 6.6 One specific location that officers are looking at currently is congestion in the Rodbourne Road area predominantly linked with the Outlet village. I am very

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

aware of the tensions between this successful commercial enterprise as a regional attractor with knock-on benefits for local employment and the economy as a whole, but am conscious this needs to be balanced against the impacts to local residents. To that end officers are working with ward members, residents and local businesses to produce an agreed Action Plan to mitigate these impacts.

- 6.7 England's Economic Heartland is a strategic collaborative partnership stretching from Swindon to Cambridgeshire and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire. It brings political and business leaders together with a shared commitment to realise the economic potential of the Swindon – Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge corridor and surrounding areas. I represent Swindon on the Strategic Transport Forum which forms the basis for a future statutory Sub-national Transport Body. The Forum's work to put in place an overarching Transport Strategy to deliver shared ambitions for improved connectivity will be used to make the case for additional investment in support of business investment and economic growth

Traffic Management

- 6.8 Swindon Borough Council is committed to making sure our roads are safe and fit for their purpose and we therefore have an evidence based approach to road safety interventions.
- 6.9 Wiltshire Police provide data on all traffic collisions which result in personal injuries. Every year officers undertake a review of all reported injury accidents that have occurred in Swindon in both the last 12 months and over the last 5 years in order to identify emerging patterns in collisions borough wide or at specific sites where multiple collisions have occurred.
- 6.10 Injury accident data is examined in tandem with a variety of other data such as:
- traffic speeds and volumes
 - road surface skid resistance levels
 - qualitative input from Wiltshire Police.
- 6.11 Using this holistic approach to road safety, officers seek to identify locations and trends for which effective solutions may be identified and which can be delivered to offer maximum improvement in road safety for Swindon's road users. If the data showed evidence of injury accidents taking place in a particular location then the causation factors would be examined in order to inform potential engineering measures that could be implemented.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

- 6.12 The Traffic Team continue to receive a high level of requests from Councillors for minor schemes in their Wards. There is no specific staff resource or capital funding budget to deal with minor works requests. The team is prioritised to deliver Corporate Pledges and priorities around -
- Growth and regeneration
 - Primary roads
 - Dealing with locations with a history of injury accidents
- 6.13 There is an agreed process for dealing with Ward Member requests. However, during the last 12 months it has not been possible for the team to take forward any of these requests due to other priorities. It is recognised that Ward Members need to have a route through which those issues raised by their constituents can be addressed. To provide greater clarity on how officers will deal with such requests we will be providing additional information at Cabinet in March when the annual "LTP Implementation Plan" report is submitted. This will include details of the ways different types of requests are treated, how the list is reviewed twice a year and the criteria that is used to assess requests.

Passenger Transport

- 6.14 In terms of public transport our challenges are changing the public perception of public transport, increased demand for special needs transport and creating a public transport vision of fast, frequent and rapid transit bus services. Co-ordinating the balance between the contracted and commercial bus network will also be a focus together with integrating new developments, residential and employment into the bus network and give them a sustainable base from day one. I look forward to supporting the Passenger Transport team in addressing these issues in the year ahead.

StreetSmart

- 6.15 As with wider Local Authority the financial position remains the priority focus with the ability to continue service delivery within a balanced budget. Further reductions in resources adds to the challenges of delivering quality services. A different approach is to give greater focus to the generation of external income and this represents the greatest opportunity to reduce financial pressures and preserving current service resources

Making use of current roles and using the assets, experience, knowledge and skillsets of the available workforce to make a difference allows StreetSmart services to grow and expand its income base. It also puts the Service fully in control of its own destiny.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

Areas within StreetSmart that have or will benefit greater adherence to commercialisation are:

- Trade Waste and Recycling and the expansion of this Service
- Enterprise Works and the requirement to establish a firmer financial footing for the business to stabilise and maintain its position as a provider of employment opportunities for people with disabilities and care leavers
- Arboricultural service to include private and commercial work as well as that of Parishes
- Commercial car parks and road sweeping services
- Graffiti removal service
- Other commercial offerings for Grounds Maintenance, particularly within Traded Services to schools and educational establishments (LEA and Academy), private Housing tenants, Housing Associations (EPDs) and private estates (eg. the Police Station at the Link Centre)
- The development of Coate Water Country Park:

6.16 Performance of the Waste Strategy

The waste and recycling performance of the Borough is largely subject to the shifting behavioural patterns of the residents of Swindon and the way in which they respond to the educational programme and campaigning currently being undertaken by the Council

There are real benefits associated with the Swindon Borough residents changing their waste and recycling behaviour by reducing the overall amount of waste they throw away and transferring as much of the recyclable materials as possible from the residual waste bins and into the recycling boxes. The benefits not only mean Swindon Borough Council achieving its targeted recycling rate but also has real cost benefits

Therefore the challenge to the Service is to ensure that the residents of Swindon reduce and segregate their waste.. To this end we are employing Waste Wardens to engage with and educate the public

6.17 EnviroCrime

With the introduction of new Waste Wardens there will be a greater emphasis on tackling Envirocrime, particularly fly tipping where there will be a focus on preventative measures and deterrence measures as well as the reactive clean up requirements

6.18 Vehicle replenishment Programme

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

The aging fleet represents both a challenge and an opportunity for StreetSmart. The old vehicles are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain in order to make roadworthy as well as being a poor advertisement for Council as a whole

As an enabling service, the challenge for Fleet services is to effectively replenish whole vehicle fleet and manage expectations against a minimal budget. There has been good interaction with the services to seek their requirements as well as promote the future use of sustainably sourced fuels and the introduction of Electric Vehicles for StreetSmart and other services, for example Housing.

Financial investment in the above will make immediate savings against current hire/repair costs

6.19 Transport compliance

This will be achieved through adherence to the conditions of the DVSA Earned Recognition Accreditation Scheme and directed by the Transport Compliance Manager who is now able to dedicate full responsibility to this due to restructure in 2018. This includes driver compliance, vehicle roadworthiness and vehicle accident management

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 The Committee can choose not to operate a Cabinet Portfolio Question and Answer session system

8. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 8.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act requires every local authority to establish an overview and scrutiny function to hold the Executive to account, undertake policy development and review, monitor, and improve performance.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 8.3 There are no other direct implications arising from this report. Any further implications will be identified when a topic is reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and in any recommendations made by it.

Cabinet Member Question and Answer Session

Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment

Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th March 2019

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 8.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required at this stage. Any DIA that is required during review of topics included within the work programme will be identified at the appropriate stage.

Risk Management

- 8.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage. Any risk management issues will be identified at the appropriate time when a topic is under review by the Overview Scrutiny Committee and if it makes any recommendations.

9. Consultees

- 9.1 The author has consulted appropriate Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 LTP Implementation Plan 2018/19
- 11.2 Appendix 2 Performance Management Framework
- 11.3 Appendix 3 Carriageway and Footway Management Plan
- 11.4 Appendix 4 Highway Asset Indicators
- 11.5 Appendix 5 Gully Performance Indicators
- 11.6 Appendix 6 Public Satisfaction Survey 2018 (Swindon)
- 11.7 Appendix 7 Public Satisfaction Survey, comparison with other Local Authorities
- 11.8 Appendix 8 Winter Service Plan 2018/19

Please note that the above appendices have been made available to councillors and can be found on the Swindon Borough Council website at:

<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=619&MId=9597&Ver=4>