

Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Woodman - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Division and Local Member: N/A

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1. Summary

- 1.1.** As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport I intend to use this report to highlight the key activities and achievements of the past year within these areas and to look ahead to what the coming months may hold.

2. Annual Report for Highways and Transport

2.1 Highways and Transport Commissioning, Strategic Planning Commercial Activity and Major Schemes

The Commissioning Team focuses on finding the best way of funding and delivering services in the future, thereby enabling operational staff to focus on the day to day running of our highway and transport services. The team works with a wide range of stakeholders to secure investment in new infrastructure. This team also works closely with operational staff and commercial and procurement colleagues to develop new models of service delivery and put in place new contracts with external suppliers to ensure that we deliver best value.

- 2.2.** Over the last year we progressed several key policy documents, including;
- Road safety strategy, setting out our aim is to reduce deaths and serious injuries due to road collisions in our County using a diverse range of tools and working in strong partnerships.
 - Somerset Bus Strategy 2018-2026 – December 2018 (replaces the Bus section of the Passenger Transport Strategy) which sets more ambitious aims for bus services whilst still reflecting the current financial realities.
 - New Highways Infrastructure Asset Management strategy and plan, and codes of practice in line with a new Government requirement for a risk-based approach. This includes a new inspection regime linked to a

new road hierarchy and highway safety inspection manual.
Implementation of revised Highway Safety Inspection Manual and risk-based inspections commenced Monday 1 October 2018.

- Undertook consultation on a rail strategy for Somerset
- Working alongside Somerset West & Taunton Council we consulted on a new transport strategy for Taunton.
- Assisted Sedgemoor District Council in the development of their emerging Transport Investment Strategy
- Working with Mendip District Council on the preparation of a new long-term transport strategy for the area.
- Our work with South Somerset District Council on the regeneration plans for Yeovil and Chard has also continued.

2.3. In addition to the continued strategic work in our county, we have submitted responses to important consultations on issues that will affect investment in our transport system, such as; the Cross-Country Rail Franchise, strategic housing plans for the West of England and the expansion of Bristol Airport. We hosted a transport roundtable event for Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, to enable him to discuss transport priorities for the South West with local authorities and stakeholders such as the LEP and business representatives.

2.4. Our work at a regional level has continued to develop. Government indicated that that groups of local highway authorities should come together to form 'sub-national transport bodies'. Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have now formed 'Peninsula Transport' to enable discussion with Government about future strategic transport investment in the area. We have jointly funded the production of a new 'Regional Evidence Base' and 'Connectivity Study' which are two key building blocks to make the case to Government for increased investment in our transport system.

2.5. At the request of Government, Peninsula Transport has also submitted a priority list of improvement schemes (costing between £20m and £50m each) on the most heavily trafficked local 'A' Roads called the Major Road Network, and some additional large local major schemes in the region (each costing over £50m) for construction between 2021 and 2025. Government will now choose some of these schemes to form a new construction programme using a £3.5bn local roads fund that they have created using vehicle excise duty. The list includes the Walton/Ashcott Bypass and Glastonbury Bypass in Somerset. Our neighbouring body the 'Western Gateway' has submitted an A38 corridor package of improvements between M5-J22 and Bristol Airport.

2.6. We continue to work with our Local Authority partners to keep the pressure on Government to deliver the three A303/A358 schemes that have currently been allocated funding, and to ensure further funds are allocated for the remaining sections in the next Road Investment Strategy period from 2020. My officers have continued to work closely with Highways England (HE) as they develop vital improvements to the A303/A358/A30 corridor. These

schemes will bring huge economic benefits to the area. HE has progressed development of three sections of the improvement at Stonehenge, Sparkford to Ilchester and M5 to Southfields. We contributed to a National Audit Office review of the schemes submitting our evidence about the wider economic benefits of these schemes for productivity and job creation in the South West.

- 2.7.** We have participated in the development consent process for the A303 Sparkford-Ilchester improvements being delivered by HE. The examination commenced on 12 December and the Council has re-emphasised our strong support for end-end improvements to the corridor, as well as making detailed representations on the proposed development consent order to ensure that appropriate controls are put in place to manage impacts on our local highway network.
- 2.8.** Along with other authorities in the South West, the Council has continued to lobby for much needed investment in rail infrastructure and services to the South West through the South West Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF). As part of PRTF we continued to make the case for investment to deliver the 20-year rail blueprint for the region.
- 2.9.** We have continued to work closely with Great Western Railways (GWR) to help them deliver enhancements to Taunton and Bridgwater Rail stations using grants and funds that we have jointly secured. Works commenced in May 2019 at both stations. Bridgwater will have the benefit of a major forecourt enhancement and Taunton will have a new multi-story car park, bus interchange, forecourt enhancement and building re-configuration as part of wider redevelopment plans. The Bridgwater work is funded via DfT and developer funds, and the Taunton project is funded via the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) local growth fund, great western franchise and a loan from Somerset West and Taunton Council. Somerset County Council will shortly be constructing a new junction on Trenchard Way to access the new multi-storey car park and the Firepool development using grant funding and developer funds.
- 2.10** We have worked closely with other Local Authorities partners in the Heart of the LEP area to progress investment in new local transport infrastructure, as part of the ongoing 'growth deal' process.
- 2.11.** Together with Sedgemoor District Council and Salamanca Group we have secured £3.9m local growth fund contribution towards a new access road to Huntspill Enterprise Zone near Puriton now branded as 'Gravity'. The developer started building the new road in June 2019.
- 2.12.** The major schemes programme has continued to progress. We have utilised a variety of funds including local growth fund, national productivity investment fund, growth and housing fund, developer contributions, our own capital and District Council funds in order to implement a number of schemes in the County. Yeovil Western Corridor which started construction in December 2017 was completed in June 2019 and is now fully operational. Colley Lane

Southern Access Road in Bridgwater commenced in April 2018 and reached a key milestone in October 2018 when the beams for the 'Somerset Bridge' were spectacularly lifted into position. The scheme is due for completion in September 2019. Improvements to Junction 25 of the M5 commenced in April 2019 and are due for completion March 2021. The works at J25 also provide access to the Nexus 25 employment site and will complement the wider A358 improvement scheme being progressed by Highways England, being completed in advance of the A358 works.

- 2.13.** During the year we consulted on 'Phase 1' of the Toneway Corridor improvements in Taunton. This scheme will enable us to upgrade the Creech Castle junction and were granted programme entry by the LEP Local Transport Board following submission of a successful business case. We are currently procuring a contractor for the scheme which will start construction spring 2020.
- 2.14.** We have worked closely with the planning authorities in Somerset to secure additional investment in infrastructure through the 'Housing Infrastructure Fund' (HIF) which unlocks new housing growth across the County. We successfully supported District Councils 'bids for HIF 'marginal viability' funding towards the Staplegrove development in Taunton (£14.2m) and Brimsmore development in Yeovil (£2m). Subject to final agreement with developers this will address significant gaps in the development finances enabling housing sites to progress into construction, subject to the usual consents being completed.
- 2.15.** Our final business case for £95.2m Housing Infrastructure Fund 'forward funding' has now been submitted to Homes England. This could lead to investment in new roads, schools and flooding infrastructure to support delivery of 10,000 homes across Taunton and Bridgwater. Government officials are currently assessing our bid in detail prior to the Minister's decision in around October 2019. We secured £100k from Homes England to contribute towards the cost of preparing our business case for these crucial infrastructure funds.
- 2.16.** In response to the coastal erosion at Blue Anchor, West Somerset, a study has been commissioned to examine options for keeping the B3191 between Watchet and Blue Anchor open for the long-term given that changes to the coastline over time is likely to affect the road at some point in the future. Stakeholder engagement with Parish and Town Councils and other bodies will take place shortly to inform the study.
- 2.17.** Work has continued on the development of new 'Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans' for our three main towns. Having these new plans in place will be essential if we are to successfully bid for future funds that may be made available by government to invest in improved walking and cycling networks, but the plans will also be very useful to inform a range of discussions about how to encourage more walking and cycling and will also

inform new development proposals. We have asked Government to consider putting in place a dedicated fund for walking and cycling improvements to enable us to fully deliver these important plans.

2.18. We undertook a considerable amount of work on new contracts to enable us to continue to deliver highways services efficiently and effectively. Of particular note, we commenced procurement processes for:

- Replacing our current traffic signals maintenance contract and putting in place a contract for new traffic signals installations.
- Replacing our current highway structures framework.
- Replacing our current engineering consultancy contract.
- Extending our street lighting maintenance contract.

2.19. Development Management

The Planning Liaison team continue to support new development in the County and facilitate the implementation of associated infrastructure. The service receives around 9000 planning applications each year for comment.

2.20. We continue to work closely with the promoters of major employment and housing sites in the County to support the progress of applications and approvals needed to commence development. This includes employment sites such as Firepool, Bridgwater Gateway, Huntspill Enterprise Zone (Gravity) and housing sites including Monkton Heathfield and Comeytrove in Taunton, Keyford and Upper Mudford in Yeovil.

2.21. The Council helped service a planning appeal into development of land at Langaller, Taunton which proved to be a particularly resource intensive process.

2.22. We completed 'Section 106 agreements' for planning obligations in respect of the Staplegrove development and Firepool development in Taunton enabling the development proposals to progress into construction and finalised an agreement for Comeytrove in Taunton subject to completion. Similar agreements for planning obligations were formed for many smaller sites across Somerset and we also undertook our ongoing role in agreeing and authorising detailed designs for estate roads along with forming associated legal agreements and licenses to enable development works to commence.

2.23. Highways Maintenance

We have continued our investment in the highway network through the structural maintenance programme as illustrated below:

Work type	Overall value	Output
Carriageway resurfacing (A and B road network)	£3,580,060	21 schemes
Carriageway resurfacing (C and unclassified network)	£3,513,371	69 schemes
Surface dressing	£8,947,500	Over 1.23m m ² of dressing laid across the county, 143 sites
Other surface treatments; Retexturing, Crack Sealing, Paco-patch, Dragon Patcher	£720,700	Various locations
Highway surface water drainage improvements	£1,268,240	46 schemes
Footway resurfacing	£1,892,500	53 schemes
Earthworks and embankments	£172,500	16 schemes
SRA schemes	£593,000	2 schemes

2.24. Late in 2018, the DfT announced they were allocating £296m as part of a pothole action fund being made available from 2016 to 2021. This funding was directed towards local highways maintenance, to be used for the repair of roads (including potholes), bridges and for the maintenance of local highways infrastructure generally, by the end of March 2019. The DfT stated it was for the authorities to decide how to spend the money to meet their local needs and priorities. Somerset County Council were awarded an additional highway maintenance capital grant of £9.98m for the 2018/19 financial year and we worked hard to develop and implement programmes of work to meet the Government's expectations for the fund. Some of the key schemes that the additional funding enabled were:

- A38 Huntworth Roundabout (Junction 24).
- A358 between Thornfalcon and Southfields Roundabout, Ilminster.
- A367 Bath Road, Ashwick.
- A361 Chilkwell Street, Glastonbury.
- A361 Frome Bypass Berkley Roundabout.
- A361 Frome Cemetery Roundabout.
- A39 East Quantoxhead.

- Admiralty Way and Creechbarrow Way, Taunton.
- A358 Hankridge Roundabout, Taunton.
- A358 Sampford Brett.
- A30 Snowden Hill, Chard.

- 2.25.** Grass cutting through 2018/19 saw a cumulative length of over 11,000km of highway verges cut and 1,800 junction visibility splays through the summer months. A further 290 sites were treated to control noxious and invasive weeds on the highway. Almost 67,000 road drains were cleaned as part of the planned gully maintenance programme. A further 500 sites benefited from more extensive drainage cleansing and jetting to ensure the drainage asset remains serviceable.
- 2.26.** 18,519 potholes were repaired between April 2018 and March 2019, a slight increase when compared with the previous year (18,315). 1,709 planned highway inspections were undertaken, 100% of which were completed within the time tolerances defined within the Highway Safety Inspection Manual. A total of 22,182 safety defects (including potholes) were identified during planned and reactive inspections of the network which is a decrease when compared with the previous year (24,121).
- 2.27.** There have been several highway maintenance innovations delivered this year:
- We undertook a foambase footway trial, deploying a new material and method of working involving hazardous tarbound material, providing environmental benefits through use of recycled material. We will evaluate the benefits of this and consider wider roll-out.
 - We trialled The Dragon Patcher, an innovative vehicle, claimed to be five times faster than a traditional patching gang and can be controlled by one operator. As well as simply filling potholes, it can also be used to treat sections of road with cracks or minor deterioration to prevent potholes forming in future.
 - As part of the A361 Chilkwell Street scheme we utilised an innovative Ground Penetration Radar survey technique to establish the location and depth of the existing utility services (gas, water, electric etc). All the information gathered was used to inform the design of the new road such as the depth of tarmac and the material type.
- 2.28.** In partnership with The Probation Service we have established a works programme for the Community Payback Service Users. Approximately 500m of footway siding out works have recently been completed on Field Road, Norton Sub Hamdon, as a result of this initiative and at no cost to SCC. Additional future works locations include:
- A370, Bridgwater Road - East Brent/Lympsham (approx. 2000m).
 - A37, Ilchester Road – Yeovil (approx. 1800m).
 - A37, Dorchester Road – Barwick (approx. 1000m).
- 2.29.** During 2016 the DfT introduced an 'incentive' element to the capital allocation of Highway Maintenance funding, which required each local authority to

evidence how efficiently they deliver highways services. Somerset County Council continues as a 'band 3' authority (the highest) which means we retain all £3.8m of the capital funding linked to our performance. This is a great achievement and Somerset continues to be ranked amongst the top highway authorities in England.

2.30. Winter and Emergency

This year it was generally a mild winter but with an early start (26 October) and late finish (10 April). There were 46 winter salting actions in total. The worst period of the winter was the second half of January and the first half of February which was cold, icy, snowy and stormy and featured widespread heavy snow across the county from 31 January to 3 February. The winter was also slightly wetter than average with 103 per cent of the norm recorded in Taunton

2.31. Wet and windy conditions were experienced at various times with "Storm Diana" on 29 November and the unnamed storms on 8/9 December and 18/19 December resulting in large numbers of out-of-hours callouts, many of which were for fallen trees/branches.

2.32. The first snow of the winter was recorded on the high ground of Exmoor and the Mendips on the 22 January. February started off with a spell of widespread snow between 31 January and 3 February.

2.33. Storms on 10 March resulted in 51 out-of-hours call outs to attend to trees and large branches that had fallen into the road.

2.34. Bands of heavy rain swept the county and "Storm Hannah" hit Somerset over the weekend of 27/28 April. There were 31 wind related out-of-hours call-outs for incidents on the highway. These comprised of 28 fallen trees and branches, two damage to adjacent property and structures and one flying debris (a trampoline!).

2.35. As part of our work to prepare for winter and adverse weather conditions, a number of old snow ploughs and snow blowers that are issued to local farmers and agricultural contractors for use in clearing deep snow from roads, will be replaced over the next few months. In addition, two of the existing stock of seven SCC owned dedicated winter weather stations will become obsolete over the next two to three years and will be replaced with modern equipment before the start of next winter. We will also shortly providing details of our winter service together with a proposal for a Community Snow Warden scheme and our plans for the provision of roadside salt.

2.36. Rights of Way

The Rights of Way (RoW) team continue to work collaboratively with Parishes and the volunteer network as part of their Community Paths Partnership. For

example, 90% of Parishes in Somerset have a Parish Path Liaison Officer. They support the Rights of Way service by undertaking annual surveys, liaising directly with the Area Wardens and logging service requests as required. Working parties continue to gather momentum with Ramblers groups being active in three of five districts. Finally, over twenty-five parishes continue to benefit from access to a strimmer scheme providing savings and added benefit to the management and maintenance of the rights of way network.

- 2.37.** The annual 'ease of use' survey undertaken by volunteers, particularly the Ramblers Association, looks at a 10% sample of the rights of way network in Somerset. The result for 2018/19 shows 82.2% a slight increase on the previous year. To support the continued access to our network, the rights of way capital programme included the following schemes:
- In partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust, Wellington Without Parish Council, The National Trust and grant funding from Blackdown Hills AONB, a significant improvement was carried out to a public footpath as part of a wider improvement project to improve access to Wellington Monument.
 - A footpath was reopened in Clapton following installation of a 10.5m footbridge.
 - A listed stone arch bridge near Rode was refurbished involving stone repairs to the cutwater foundations, vegetation removal and repointing.
 - Replacement of Nunney footbridge and re-opening a frequently used route through to the historic Nunney Castle. The new free spanning steel structure with wood cladding should last many decades and has been very well received by the community.
- 2.38.** Eleven Definitive Map modification applications were determined during 18/19, exceeding the target set. Work continues to improve processes to increase output going forward.
- 2.39** A Facebook page was launched for Rights of Way Volunteers and a video help guide at <https://youtu.be/ctuedEScXzs> on how to use the Explore Somerset interactive mapping.
- 2.40.** Bridges and Structures
- Our Structures team has continued the planned and reactive inspection programmes with 232 Principal Inspections and 601 General Inspections undertaken on structures over the year. The information gained is being used to develop the future works programme and allow long term investment in the structures stock to be targeted at those sites where it will be most effective. Information gathered also assists with the county's asset valuation obligations.
- 2.41.** The structures capital works programme saw maintenance or strengthening works carried out at a number of sites;

- Masonry and scour repairs undertaken at 3 sites.
- Site Protection undertaken at 15 sites.
- Urgent and Minor Works undertaken at 109 sites.
- 2 major schemes.

2.42. The County's structures portfolio continues to fluctuate up and down with new by-passes being built, old structures being found (for example, retaining walls) and occasionally structures being demolished. Records show eight new structures (notified as found or potential new build) and two structures removed from the portfolio.

2.43. Highway Lighting

The investment in to highway lighting amounted to nearly £715,000 over the year. This included the routine and cyclical maintenance of 14,187 street lights, illuminated signs, Belisha beacons, school crossing lights and illuminated bollards; all of which were inspected cleaned and re-lamped where applicable. A further 1,797 Illuminated bollards were routinely cleaned throughout the year. There was a total of 192 emergency responses and 12,585 repair jobs which were undertaken for faulty illuminated highway equipment during the 2018-19 period.

2.44. £645,000 was spent replacing old type lanterns and associated equipment to energy saving light emitting diode (LED) fittings. A further £600,000 of funding was invested in replacing assets past their serviceable life with LED technology. The combination of both will return significant savings on energy costs over the life of the street lighting asset. Approximately £2.2m was spent on energy for highway lighting and traffic signals.

2.45. Highway Communications

Through 2018/19 the Highways service area has worked closely with colleagues in our Contact Centre to better understand the highway service demand and quality of response. Proactively managing seasonal campaigns using the Travel Somerset website has had the effect of driving down telephone service requests and enabling the public to access information when they want it. This was particularly notable during the snow events where the vast majority of communication was channelled through social media. The use of online reporting is increasing, and further work is underway to make this the primary form of contact rather than email or telephone. To further support this initiative, the Travel Somerset website which provides a 'one stop shop' for all traffic and travel information for Somerset continues to grow and the Travel Somerset twitter site now has over 6028 followers, an increase of 1228 from last year and has doubled the number of followers in just two years. The travel website received over 576,502 views between April 2018 – March 2019. The Traffic Control and Information Centre remains operational 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and enables the team to proactively manage the highway network and provide a greater level of up-to-

date information to road users.

- 2.47** In light of the additional funding that has now been made available to support an accelerated delivery programme for SIS schemes, resources and the construction programme for 2019/2020 is being reviewed following confirmation of additional financial approval earlier this year.

2.48 Development Engineering

Current Major Infrastructure Projects being overseen by officers within the Development Engineering team include Brimsmore, Lufton and Wyndham Park developments in Yeovil, the large phased development at Monkton Heathfield in Taunton, Trial Ground Langport, development off A39 Glastonbury and Bristol Road Bridgwater. Developments at Huntspill Energy Park (Gravity), Comeytrowe and Staplegrove will be commencing shortly.

- 2.49.** We continue to provide technical/design support services to our colleagues in Planning Liaison in pursuit of their role as statutory consultee in the planning process, reacting to an ever-increasing volume of planning applications.
- 2.50.** We are currently administering 1195 road adoption agreements pursuant to new and improved highway infrastructure assets which have been collectively valued at approximately £302 Million. Of these agreements, over 571 relate to infrastructure that is currently under construction at a collective estimated value of over £155 Million.
- 2.51.** Between April 2018 and March 2019, we completed 708 technical and road safety audits of designs for new or improved highway infrastructure proposed with the county. We also completed just under 100 road safety audits post completion of highway infrastructure works.
- 2.52.** We continue to support Education and Children's Services by assessing the safety of identified walked routes to school in response to formal requests from parents. Between April 2018 and March 2019, we produced 15 Walked Route Assessment Reports.
- 2.53.** We are continuing to implement service improvement measures identified as part of the Highways Development Management Service Improvement Programme. This year we published a further Technical Advice Note, to add to our current suite of published documents, clarifying the protocol for the application of commuted sums for highway infrastructure in Somerset.
- 2.54.** We are currently working with our colleagues in Somerset County Council Flood Risk Management to develop procedures and standards by which the construction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) associated with new major residential and commercial developments can be monitored against local planning authority requirements. We are currently overseeing the implementation of specific SuDS features on two developments at the request of the relevant Local Planning Authority.

2.55. We continue to project manage the highway authority's engagement on the delivery of the highway infrastructure associated with the Hinkley Point C New Nuclear Build, National Grid Connections and A303/ A358 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

2.56. Traffic Management

Road Safety

The Road Safety team has continued its vital work to reduce the number of people killed and injured on Somerset's roads. In 2018, sadly 26 people died in fatal collisions; whilst 166 were seriously injured and 1181 people suffered more minor injuries. The number of people killed and seriously injured therefore increased by 6 over last year's figures, although the number of collisions recorded is the lowest on record.

2.57. The 2018 data is now being analysed in detail to further understand these changes and look at other trends and interventions. More details will be available in the Casualty Review document later this year. The monitoring of performance against the road safety KPI's, will also be assessed.

2.58. In Somerset, road safety has always been a priority and I have been very keen to support the transition plan to implement our new road safety strategy, driving forward our road safety efforts using the latest thinking, and ways of supporting the delivery of our road safety teams' efforts. I am very pleased that we will soon be launching the opportunity for companies to sponsor our road safety activities.

2.59. The above will support our key road safety interventions:

- Detailed data analysis.
- Public engagement, training and social media.
- Partnership working.
- Road safety engineering.

2.60. These interventions have been applied over the last financial year continuous liaison with our partners such as Avon and Somerset Police, Highways England and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS), and therefore key achievements were:

- A continued focus on child road safety through our TACS (Truck and Child Safety) sessions.
- The developing of new approaches to older and younger driver initiatives embracing behavioural change techniques.
- The engagement with and delivery of talks and training to over 28,000 people.
- 1600 pupils were trained in 'Bikeability' cycle safety training.
- Over 2,000,000 million impressions and reach recorded through our social media channels.

2.61. Events held in the last year include:

- Motofest was held at Yeovilton air museum on the 15 and 16 of September. Exhibitors included main motorcycle, car and cycle dealerships, training organisations, associated Trade Stands, DVSA, Highways England, Emergency services, plus various demonstrations.
- Bath and West show attendance promoted road safety in conjunction with other emergency services.
- The Survive the Drive military road safety presentation was launched at Yeovilton in November.
- Older driver event in Yeovil on 28 February; a multiagency day working jointly with Public Health which included a wide range of activities and several relevant topics, not just road safety. Our focus was helping people to drive safer for longer.
- Various promotions with Public Health and Zing teams to help encourage cycling within families.

2.62. We continued our work with the Avon and Somerset Police led pilot of the Office of Data Analytics, to give a greater understanding of road safety issues from broader sets of public sector data.

2.63. The Road Safety team also worked closely with the Small Improvements Schemes team to deliver road safety engineering schemes, including Taunton Station access cycle safety scheme, the A358 and B3167 around Tatworth, the A366/A362Terry Hill crossroads, the B3134/B3135 Miners Arms crossroads, and the A358 Greenway Road Taunton School safety zone.

2.64. Street Works

Street works co-ordination remains a huge challenge for us with the demand to occupy the highway network increasing. Approximately 24,130 sets of work have been undertaken in the last year. Over 5200 facilitated by temporary signals and over 2650 under road closures. 1308 Fixed Penalty notices were issued for incorrectly noticed works. It is essential that organisations who undertake activity on our highway network ensure that works are well planned, implemented safely and complete high standard. We have successfully prosecuted Statutory Undertakers for various offences under the Street works legislation as follows:

- Bristol water: 3 offences (8 December 2017 conviction) including an illegal road closure; carrying out works when directed not to and carrying out works without the correct permissions. Total fine £3000, costs of £1,130 plus a victim surcharge of £150.
- Wessex water: 3 offences (20 March 2018 conviction); carrying out works when directed not to and failure to use the correct traffic management including signs and safety zones. Total fine £3320, costs of £1,687 plus a victim surcharge of £170.
- BT: 6 offences (1 May 2018 conviction) relating to failing to comply

with statutory safety measures; carrying out works when directed not to and without authorisation. Total fine £25,000, costs of £2,696.67 plus a victim surcharge of £170.

- Vodafone: (1 May 2018 conviction) Carrying out works when directed not to causing over 4 miles of queues – Total fine £15,000, costs of £1,201.17 plus a victim surcharge of £170.
- Western Power Distribution: 2 offences (22 May 2018 conviction) relation to failing to co-operate and failing to install a safe worksite – Total fines - £6000, costs £1690.33 plus a victim surcharge of £170.
- The Gas Transportation Company Ltd (4 September 2018 conviction). Failure to secure adequate signing and guarding in the interests of safety. Fine £80,000, costs £1,463 and victim surcharge £170.
- Bristol Water (22 February 2019 conviction). 10 offences – 4 for failing to give appropriate notice of street works, 1 for failing to carry out works with such dispatch as is reasonably practicable; 3 offences of failing to provide adequate signing and guarding, 1 offence of failing to comply with directions on safety and 1 offence of failing to comply with a direction on timing of works. Total fines £21,000, costs £6,498 and victim surcharge £170.
- BT 6 offences (24 April 2019 conviction). 2 offences of failing to give adequate notice of street works, 2 offences of failing to comply with a direction on safety from the Street Authority, 2 offences of failing to use its best endeavours to cooperate with the Street Authority in coordinating street works in the highway network. Total fines £23,334, costs £2,257 and victim surcharge £170.
- Gigaclear (15 May 2019 conviction) 2 offences – 1 offence of failing to give adequate notice of street works and 1 offence of failing to secure signing and guarding of street works in the interests of safety. Total fines £8,067, costs £2,102 and victim surcharge £170.
- BT (15 May 2019 conviction). 3 offences – 1 offence of failing to use best endeavours to cooperate with the Street Authority, 1 offence of failing to comply with a direction in respect of safety and 1 offence of failing to give notice of street works. Total fines £15,667, costs £1,759.67 and victim surcharge £170.

2.65. These prosecutions are part of County Council's commitment to minimise disruption for the travelling public and sends a very clear message to anyone who works on the highway that we will not tolerate unauthorised roadworks.

2.66. Between April 2018 and March 2019, we processed over 1587 temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for road closures for works and events, which is a slight increase on last year, and approximately 82 permanent TROs and notices for various parking restrictions and speed limits etc.

2.67. We have worked closely with District Council colleagues during the year to implement new traffic restrictions in town centres as part of their wider proposals to improve and regenerate town centres. Projects at St James

Street in Taunton were progressed this year.

2.68. Parking Services

Several applications were received under the new resident parking schemes policy and progressed with communities during the year. As of 1 June 2019, progress was as follows:

- Malvern Terrace, Taunton – The Traffic Regulation Order has been sealed with the necessary signs and lines installation under progress. Once a date for the placement of the signs is known, residents will be provided with details of how to obtain permits.
- Rowbarton Area, Taunton - Information from the DVLA has been received which indicates a scheme is viable; i.e. there is sufficient capacity. An update is being prepared to propose a scheme either in part or across the Rowbarton area.
- Richmond Park, Taunton – The Traffic Regulation Order is currently being advertised to introduce a resident permit parking scheme.
- Barclay Street area, Bridgwater – The Traffic Regulation Order is due to be finalised for advertising to introduce a permit parking area.
- Wells Road (part), Glastonbury – The Traffic Regulation Order is due to be finalised for advertising to introduce a permit parking area.
- Weymouth Road, Frome - Information from the DVLA has been received to enable analysis to be undertaken to identify whether a scheme is viable.
- Galmington Road, Taunton - Petition received currently being assessed as to whether the criteria have been met.
- St Cuthberts Street, Wells – Petition received which meets criteria, initial area for consultation has been identified and agreed with local member. Consultation presently on hold pending further consultation to be undertaken by local member.
- Quantock Court, South Esplanade, Burnham-On-Sea – The Traffic Regulation Order is due to be finalised for advertising to introduce a permit parking area.

2.69. Petitions have been received from residents of the following areas requesting parking is reviewed and investigated for the suitability for resident parking. These are currently being assessed as their suitability for consultation and whether they form part of a wider review or standalone process subject to resources:

- Calway Road, Taunton.
- Clarkes Row and Clarkes Close, Chard.
- All Saints Terrace, Bridgwater.
- Vivary Gate, Upper High Street, Taunton.
- Dunstan Road, Burnham On Sea.
- Mill Street, Wincanton.
- Lambrook Street, Glastonbury.

- 2.70.** Virtual permits have now been rolled out in respect of Mendip District Council and Sedgemoor District Council car parks.
- 2.71.** We commenced a series of town-wide reviews as part of the Countywide Parking Review strategy. The first two reviews took place in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge (19 March 2019) and Frome (20 March 2019) where large scale maps were provided to enable local members to recommend ward by ward changes. Similar approaches are progressing in Minehead, Chard, Taunton and Wells.
- 2.72.** We have extended our parking enforcement services contract with NSL for a further 3 years, including measures to increase the quality and appropriateness of enforcement and protect the Council from the impact of the National Living Wage, enabling NSL to offer pay rates above the new minimum.
- 2.73.** We implemented a new mobile phone payment service with Bemrose Mobile. The new service has no service charge (replacing previous arrangements which incurred a cost of 14p per transaction) and the ability to use Apple and Android pay. We anticipate that usage of cashless parking will significantly increase as a result of the new service.
- 2.74.** Parking Service Performance Statistics to 31 March 2019 are as follows;

Penalties served	50,068
Enquires and telephone calls received	23,182
Annual visitor permits (paper)	747
Annual resident permits (virtual)	1,794
Daily scratch cards (paper)	57,520
Carer permits (virtual)	228
Items of correspondence sent by post	52,276
Responses sent by email	6,144
Penalty payments made online	26,205
	(£902,227)
Penalty payments made via automated telephone system	9,137
	(£316,162)
Challenges and representations via online portal	61%
Correspondence reply within 10 days	94%*
*further investigation to be undertaken as considered low	

2.75. Bus Gates

We have continued to implement bus gates as part of new development areas to enable bus priority and attractive journey times for bus users in line with planning conditions for the new developments. Bus gates were installed at Wyndham Park, Yeovil developments during the year. The Langford Mead bus gate is being finalised and will become operational shortly.

2.76. Transporting Somerset

Over the last year Transporting Somerset ensured around 9,000 Mainstream and Special Educational Needs pupils, who were entitled to free home to school transport, were safely delivered to and from school every day. Transporting Somerset has provided over 142,000 trips to enable individual service users to reach their care placements and health patients to attend clinics and hospitals. In addition, our in-house fleet team provided over 100,000 trips for service users.

- 2.77.** Financial support continues to be provided annually for 58 public transport contracts (which include College Transport routes and Slinky Demand Responsive bus services) which are not able to operate commercially. This financial support is provided to ensure a statutory need is met, or where on a discretionary basis the Council considers it appropriate to ensure a service is provided.
- 2.78.** Our Public Transport Team issued around 22,000 Concessionary Bus passes, both new applications and renewals and over 1700 County Ticket bus passes to students attending Further Education. A new system for online application and renewals for concessionary bus passes was implemented to reduce administration and improve the application process for users.
- 2.79.** In September 2018 we completed replacement of temporary emergency services which had been put in place when Nippybus ceased trading in 2017. The new services more closely match passenger demand and save approximately £92,000 per annum compared to the emergency arrangements.
- 2.80.** As part of our corporate financial imperative to deliver a balanced budget we worked closely with Somerset West and Taunton Council who agreed to fund continued park and ride services in Taunton for a year. The authorities are now working closely with the bus operator to develop a more commercially sustainable operational model. A new timetable was introduced in November which reduced the peak time frequency from 12 to 15 minutes to reduce operating costs, and a new brand identity and fare structure was launched in December as part of the strategy to move the service towards long term commercial viability. This was the first increase in fares for two years and was accompanied by new ticket machine technology (partly funded by Somerset County Council) to introduce contactless payments and payment through a phone app at a discount on the standard cash fare.
- 2.80.** We recruited a new Fleet Operations Manager to head up our in-house Fleet Operations across Somerset and were fortunate to attract someone with significant industry experience to drive the service forward by increasing vehicle utilisation, reducing transport costs and increasing income.
- 2.81.** We have been considering whether there is a business-case to introduce larger vehicles into our in-house fleet in order to address the current market conditions which have led to increasing contract prices, especially for home to school contracts. We have been granted an Operator's Licence by the traffic

commissioner to operate up to 25 public service vehicles from four locations around the County. Local Bus & Coach operators are aware of the granting of our licence. This also allows us to move some or all of our minibus fleet from the current Permit schemes (which are currently under review by the Department for Transport) to the operator's licence, enabling us to undertake "commercial work" with these vehicles. A decision has now been taken that we will operate services, following an assessment of the operational costs and financial benefits.

- 2.82.** Following a positive consultation response, we introduced a charge to English National Concessionary pass holders, so that they pay half of the fare on the Slinky Bus demand responsive network throughout Somerset. 83% of respondents supported the introduction of half fares on this service if it meant that service provision could be maintained.
- 2.83.** Bus Services 10/11 Minehead to Porlock and the Minehead Town Service are on track to break even in the current financial year. This is a significant achievement in partnership working between SCC and the local Town and Parish Councils, who are providing the funding. In addition to maintaining the Monday to Friday service we have been able to re-instate a Saturday service on the route during the year.
- 2.84.** We have agreed to extend the County Ticket student bus pass scheme for a further year. A price of £810 per annum has been agreed and operators have been invited to participate in the scheme for the 2019/20 Academic Year.
- 2.85.** The NHS are awarding us a further two-year extension to the contract they have with us to run non-emergency patient transport contract. This is good news and demonstrates the confidence they have in the service provided by our staff, volunteers and contractors.
- 2.86.** We have concluded user-testing for the new 'think travel' portal for travel information and booking as part of our total transport project. We are working with the website developer to address any issues and changes required. We will be working on populating the site with relevant information. Following the appropriate approval process, we hope to launch the site late summer/early autumn 2019.

3. Financial Management

- 3.1.** A range of financial savings were implemented throughout the year in line with the corporate financial imperative, and I can report that as part of this imperative the service delivered a significant underspend at the end of the financial year, including its planned medium-term financial plan savings. Whilst this has been one of the most challenging years financially that the Council has faced, I am particularly pleased to have been able to avoid further cuts to our rural bus network and to continue to deliver an extremely wide-ranging set of highways and transport services including an ambitious programme of infrastructure improvements to support growth and prosperity

across our County.

4. Background Papers

4.1. None