
Annual report of the Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services

Executive Member: Executive Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services,
Councillor Richard Wilkins.

Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: ALL

Executive Director: Executive Director for Communities Place and Economy, Chris
Hall

Executive Summary

The report is the annual report for the Executive Member for Transport and Waste
Services.

Recommendations

It is recommended that The Council notes the progress made to address highways,
transport and waste issues.

Reasons for Proposals

The Executive Lead Member is providing an annual report to the Council.

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Background and purpose of report

1. The Executive Member for Transport and Waste Services takes the lead on all the services that sit within the Infrastructure and Transport directorate, and Waste Services.
2. This includes a wide range of activity including agreeing new transport policies and programmes, securing funding, developing and implementing transport schemes, dealing with the transport and highways implications of new development, maintaining a safe road network and associated assets, managing traffic using the roads, promoting active travel and road safety, coordinating streetworks undertaken by third parties such as utilities, coordinating and managing events, managing on and off street parking, and waste collection and disposal.
3. Details of progress made across these services is set out in the detailed appendix to this report with some of the highlights summarised below:
4. **Highways and Transport Policy and Strategic Planning**
 - **Local Transport Plan (LTP):** Near completion of a draft focusing on decarbonisation, expected to guide future investments.
 - **Rail Partnerships:** Progress on business cases for projects like Wellington Station (currently under review by the Government) and Taunton to Bishops Lydeard rail service.
5. **Development Management and Development Engineering**
 - **Active Travel Measures:** Implementation in key sites like Monkton Heathfield and Staplegrove.
 - **Gravity/Agratas Site:** Progress on the Compliance One application and securing sustainable travel measures for employees, including a Village Enhancement scheme for a cycle connection between Woolavington and Puriton.
 - **Transport Assessments:** Implementing a vision-led approach which moves away from 'predict and provide' recognised by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport Awards.
 - **Place Making Principles:** Adoption to guide developers in creating connected, active travel-friendly schemes.
6. **Active Travel and Safety Schemes**
 - **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs):** Completed for Chard, Burnham, Highbridge, and Wellington.

- **Active Travel Projects:** Significant projects like the A38 Bristol Road footway widening, A39 Dunster to Minehead cycle route, and the Strawberry Line project supporting new links around Shepton Mallet.
- **Upper High Street Crossing:** Upgraded crossing facility between Taunton town centre and Vivary Park, funded by Active Travel England and Future High Streets Fund..

7. **Safety Schemes:** Key projects like the Miners Arms junction realignment to address collision hotspots.

8. Bus Service Improvement Plan and Passenger Transport

- **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP):** Updated and submitted, with successful fare cap in Taunton starting at £1 and raised to £1.50 due to its success.
- **Park and Ride Service:** New contract with Stagecoach, enhancing service reliability.

9. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

- **Government Funding:** Secured £3.783 million for public charging infrastructure subject to final business case approval.
- **Zero Emission Bus (ZEBRA) Grant:** Secured £2.2 million grant and £12.5m operator investment for 25 electric buses and charging infrastructure.

10. Major Schemes

- **Firepool Development Access:** Completed new access and active travel facilities.
- **Dunball Roundabout:** Construction of an improved roundabout commenced.
- **A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dual Carriageway:** Worked closely with National Highways to enable delivery and opening of the scheme with residual work to complete in early 2025.

11. Highway Maintenance

- **Live Labs 2:** Participation in a £30 million program for decarbonising local road maintenance.
- **New Contracts:** Successful procurement and mobilisation of new highway maintenance contracts.
- **Resurfacing and Surface Treatments:** Extensive resurfacing projects, including the West Coker scheme integrated with traffic signals refurbishment, and the largest surface dressing program in seven years.
- **B3224 Embankment:** Reconstruction near Exford, including a sheet piled retaining wall to support the public highway.

- **Enhanced Highway Maintenance Pilot:** Enabling City, Town, and Parish Councils to purchase highway maintenance services directly from the Council's contractor, Kier Transportation.
- **Close working with Local Community Networks:** Through highways sub-groups.

12. Waste Services

- **Recycling Rates:** Maintained a steady 56% recycling rate, with a notable increase to 58% in the first two quarters of 2024/25.
- **Contract Negotiations:** Successful renegotiation with Suez to improve service quality and sustainability.
- **Flexible Plastics Recycling Trial:** Expanded trial due to success, involving 23,000 properties.
- **Schools Against Waste (SAW):** Reached over 4,600 children with waste-themed education.
- **Fixy Project:** Engaged over 6,500 people, diverting over 5 tonnes of smart tech items for reuse.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** Increased satisfaction with kerbside collection services and improved online transaction processes.

13. These achievements reflect significant progress in enhancing transport infrastructure, promoting sustainable travel, improving waste management, and engaging the community in environmental initiatives.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

14. The activities set out in the annual report demonstrate how the service is delivering the council plan priorities. Of particular relevance are the following priorities:
- *A greener more Sustainable Somerset:* Many of the activities are related to reducing carbon emissions and promoting more sustainable forms of transport.
 - *A flourishing and resilient Somerset:* Many of the activities are related to improving prosperity for our residents such as enabling good highways and transport connections between places to support economic growth, access to education and employment, and enabling growth and development.

Other options considered

15. No alternative options have been considered as this is a report on activity undertaken over the last year.

Key considerations for the Council

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

16. The report has not been considered by a scrutiny committee

Consultation and feedback

17. The report has not been subject to consultation.

Financial and Risk Implications

18. There are no direct financial or risk implications with Members noting this update report.

Legal and Procurement Implications

19. There are no legal or procurement implications.

HR / Workforce Implications

20. There are no HR/ Workforce implications

Equalities Implications

21. There are no equality implications as this is a narrative on activity undertaken and any activity referred to will have been subject to equality impact assessment as necessary.

Community Safety Implications

22. Many of the activities referred to have community safety benefits.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

23. Many of the activities referred to have climate change and sustainability benefits including reference to our progress in reducing carbon emissions from highways and transport activity.

Health and Safety Implications

24. There are no health and safety implications.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

25. Many of the activities referred to have health and wellbeing benefits including reference to our progress in progressing active travel.

Social Value

26. The report refers to activity undertaken to ensure social value is embedded in procurement and commercial activity.

Background Papers

27. None

Appendices

- Annual report of the Executive Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services.

Report assurance checklist

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications		
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	10/12/24
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	06/12/24
Asset Management (*)	Simon Lewis	
Executive Director	Chris Hall	
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Richard Wilkins	09/12/24
Consulted:		
Local Division Members	None	
Opposition Spokesperson(s)	Cllr Andy Dingwall	09/12/24
Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)	Cllr Martin Dimery	09/12/24