

Cabinet

11 July 2019

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny of Warwickshire Major Roads Network (MRN) - Proposed Scheme Programme and Priorities

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Commissions a report that considers how the Major Road Network proposals fit into Warwickshire County Council's wider transport strategy, including how Major Road Network Projects will contribute towards meeting the goals of Warwickshire County Council's Local Transport Plan in particular to reduce climate change emissions and encourage modal shift.
2. Publishes appropriate supporting evidence for each scheme as soon as possible and if necessary re-evaluate the prioritisation of the schemes and investigate alternatives.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Warwickshire Major Roads Network (MRN) - Proposed Scheme Programme and Priorities report on 19 June 2019 after the report had first come to Cabinet on 11 June 2019. The Committee agreed to make two recommendations to Cabinet following its discussion of the report and the draft minutes of the meeting are attached as appendix A.

2.0 Financial Implications

- 2.1 Not related to this report.

| | Name | Contact Information |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Councillors Alan Cockburn (Chair of the Communities OSC), Dave Shilton (Deputy Chair), Richard Chattaway (Labour Group Spokes), Keith Kondakor (Green Group Spokes) and Jenny Fradgley (Liberal Democrat Group Spokes)

**Extract of the minutes of the meeting of the
Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 19 June 2019**

Present:

Members of the Committee

Councillors: Alan Cockburn (Chair), Mark Cargill, Corrine Davies, Jenny Fradgley, Seb Gran, Andy Jenns, Keith Kondakor, Bhagwant Singh Pander, Caroline Phillips and Dave Shilton

Portfolio Holders

Councillor Andy Crump, Fire & Rescue and Community Safety
Councillor Kan Kaur, Customer & Transformation
Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of the Council
Councillor Heather Timms, Environment and Heritage & Culture

Other County Councillors

Councillor Sarah Boad
Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
Councillor Nicola Davies
Councillor Clive Rickhards

Warwickshire County Council Officers

David Ayton-Hill, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Economy & Skills)
Nicholas Dauncey, Principal Transport Planner
Ruth Dixon, Waste Strategy and Commissioning Manager
Alan Law, County Transport Modeller
Tom McColgan, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Stephen Rumble, Transport Planning Team Leader
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Scott Tompkins, Assistant Director for Environment Services

Also in Attendance

John Brennan
James Edwards, Vectos
Roger Hollerton

9. Any Urgent Items

The Chair stated that a request had been received from a number of Councillors to consider a report on Warwickshire Major Road Network (MRN) - Proposed Programme and Priorities which had been previously considered by Cabinet on 11 June 2019 as an urgent item.

Officers introduced the report and highlighted that the schemes approved by Cabinet were vital to ensuring the road network had enough capacity to account for the expected growth in traffic resulting from development both within and outside the County. Without the additional lanes the A46 could see potentially 100 – 800 metres of queuing beyond the length of the slip lane in the morning rush hour by 2028 and 650 – 900 metres in the afternoon; rendering the A46 effectively blocked at peak travel times. This would cause issues for any emergency vehicles trying to use the route and would encourage drivers to take alternative routes through residential areas causing air quality and safety issues.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and stated that as a local member representing Kenilworth he welcomed the scheme and could see the potential benefits for Kenilworth. There had been a long held ambition for a Kenilworth to Leamington cycle route which had been delayed due to the expense of building a bridge over the river and bringing this forward as part of the A46/A452 scheme was a great step in the right direction.

Councillor Kondakor stated that there were numerous schemes outlined in the report all of which had the potential to drive modal shift but could also create more traffic. Councillor Kondakor stated that he was concerned that if schemes did create more trips it would increase pressure on other parts of the network which in turn would create the need for more road expansions. There was a need for Councillors to take a strategic view of the Major Road Network and to scrutinise schemes to ensure that they aligned with the priorities that had been identified in the Local Transport Plan 3.

Councillor Kondakor proposed two recommendations:

That the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet:

- 1) Commissions a report that considers how the Major Road Network proposals fit into Warwickshire County Council's wider transport strategy, including how Major Road Network Projects will contribute towards meeting the goals of Warwickshire County Council's Local Transport Plan in particular to reduce climate change emissions and encourage modal shift.
- 2) Publishes all supporting evidence for each scheme as soon as possible and if necessary re-evaluate the prioritisation of the schemes and investigate alternatives.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Fradgley.

Councillor Kondakor stated that the motion he had proposed was not designed to stop Major Road Network proposals but rather to ensure that the schemes were done in a way which supported the goals of the Local Transport Plan in the best way possible.

Councillor Seccombe asked if Councillor Kondakor and Fradgley would be willing to change the wording of the second recommendation in the proposed motion to delete the word 'all' and replace it with 'appropriate' as there may be some commercially sensitive and confidential information included as part of the evidence base for schemes which would not be suitable for publication.

Councillor Kondakor stated that he was happy to accept the change as a friendly amendment.

Councillor Boad stated that as a councillor representing Leamington Spa she considered herself to be a local member for the A46 scheme and yet she had not been notified of or consulted on the scheme before it went to Cabinet nor had any of the Leamington Spa councillors. Councillor Boad stated that she agreed with Councillor Kondakor's comments about a need for modal shift, she was concerned that all the proposed A46/A452 scheme would achieve was to move congestion down the road while not actually addressing any of the underlying causes.

Officers responded that the A46/A452 scheme had been developed as part of the Warwick District Local Plan and was seen as necessary to support the housing development identified in Kenilworth, without the scheme the adopted local plan would not be achievable. The A46 was part of the strategic road network and the majority of traffic on the road was generated by strategic journeys which were long distance and were not trips that could be switched to walking or cycling. The congestion on the A46 created a real safety concern in the short term that needed to be addressed. Officers stated that the evidence base suggested that the scheme would not simply move traffic further down the road as the dual carriage way would allow cars to move to the Thickthorn Island at which point traffic would begin to dissipate with less vehicles moving onto the single lane road beyond.

Councillor N Davies reiterated the points raised by Councillor Boad about consulting with local members. Councillor N Davies stated that as a Leamington Spa councillor she did not necessarily object to the A46/A452 scheme but without any briefing prior to the report coming to Cabinet she had had to join other members in bringing the report in for additional scrutiny. Councillor N Davies asked officers to provide an expected timescale for the completion of the entire length of the Leamington to Kenilworth cycle route as a few hundred metres of safe route on an otherwise perilous cycle path did not help to drive modal shift.

Scott Tompkins apologised that local Kenilworth and Leamington Spa members had not been consulted on the report prior to it coming to Cabinet and stated that he would arrange a briefing session for councillors. Stephen Rumble added that the bridge across the river was the main barrier to completing the Leamington to Kenilworth cycle route and the Council would seek to complete the entire length of the route once a suitable bridge could be delivered. Officers were mindful that the road scheme did not have a set timeframe and so were seeking to deliver an interim solution in the short term with a temporary bridge structure for pedestrians and cyclists.

Councillor Chilvers stated that he was concerned about the structure of the report as a whole as well as the specifics of the A46/ A452 scheme as a Leamington Spa member. Councillor Chilvers stated that the report laid out a series of projects for the major road network that could be read as the equivalent to a transport strategy that was being agreed without first being scrutinised against the priorities identified in the Local Transport Plan by Councillors.

Councillor Seccombe stated that she did not see any issues with the motion proposed by Councillor Kondakor coming back to Cabinet should the Committee be minded to agree it. Councillor Seccombe stated that the A426/A4071 scheme had been identified by Midlands Connect and there was a fast approaching deadline to apply for funding and she was keen to avoid any delays which would prevent the Council from securing funding for the project. Councillor Seccombe stated that for the two other projects identified in the Cabinet report the Council would be seeking to apply for funding that the Department for Transport had made available for improvements to major road networks. Councillor Seccombe agreed that it was important to drive modal shift but for strategic roads people would always chose a car or bus or rail link and it was important to look at how the strategic roads could be kept free to enable those strategic journeys.

Scott Tompkins clarified that the major road network in Warwickshire had been defined by the Government and the Department for Transport's fund was only open to schemes on the major road network that helped to bring forward housing and deal with congestion issues.

Councillor Rickhards stated that he would like to support the motion proposed by Councillor Kondakor and in particular recommendation 2 which suggested a re-evaluation of the prioritisation of schemes. Councillor Rickhards stated that he felt residents in his division and neighbouring divisions would be disappointed with the lack of priority given to the A435 scheme. There had been a long running campaign in the area to increase major road capacity and with developments in Redditch and Alcester along with an already acknowledged air quality issue in Studley there was an even greater demand now for increased capacity on the A435.

The Chair called a vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Kondakor and seconded by Councillor Fradgley which was carried unanimously.

Resolved

That the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that it:

- 1) Commissions a report that considers how the Major Road Network proposals fit into Warwickshire County Council's wider transport strategy, including how Major Road Network Projects will contribute towards meeting the goals of Warwickshire County Council's Local Transport Plan in particular to reduce climate change emissions and encourage modal shift.
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