

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, K J Clarke, R L Foulkes, J R Marriott, N M Murray, Mrs A M Newton and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: R G Davies, S F Kinch and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Alan Aistrup (Special Projects Manager), Graeme Butler (Project and Technical Support Manager), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Mick Phoenix (Parking Services Manager), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Andy Wharff, Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Brailsford and R J Hunter-Clarke.

27 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

28 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2015

Councillor M Brookes read out a statement in relation to the Highways Surface Treatment agenda item which had been considered at the last meeting, which read as follows:

During the course of the presentation by a member of the public, a statement was made that officers of the Council had instructed the acoustic consultant to deduct 3 decibels from the results.

The minutes (bullet points on page 7) record the concerns expressed by the Committee.

- The alleged deduction of 3 decibels from the results of one of the noise surveys would be followed up;
- Concerns were raised regarding the allegations against the professionalism of County Council officers which had been made by Mr Dinsdale during his

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address to the Committee. Members were assured that these would be followed up;

- Members expressed their disappointment with some of the language used by Mr Dinsdale when referring to officers and the County Council and also that the town council appears to be accusing an officer of being dishonest.

The allegation has been investigated. The manager of the officer who was the subject of the accusation checked with both the officer concerned and the consultant.

The manager spoke with the officer who confirmed that at no time did he request that any reduction was applied to the noise readings that formed part of the survey. Additionally, there was no conversation with the member of the public with regard to any deduction.

The representative of the consultant from Arcus Consulting has also provided the following response:

The officer "did not tell me to deduct 3 dB nor did I tell the resident that he had asked me to do so. As noted in my previous email, I mentioned to the resident that when monitoring in front of a façade, it is expected that noise levels will be 3 dB higher than if monitoring in a free field environment (i.e. the reflection from a façade causes an increase of 3 dB). The results that we provided in our report were exactly as recorded on site. We would be happy to provide the raw data to confirm if required".

Members were provided with the opportunity to comment on the statement, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- A member commented that it was a very good statement, and queried whether a copy had been sent to Mr Dinsdale and the Parish Council, and it was hoped that a reply and an apology would be received;
- It was noted that the statement had been provided by the Monitoring Officer;
- It was noted that no noise readings from the Parish Council had been supplied;
- It had been the correct course of action to refer this issue to the Monitoring Officer;

In relation to the minutes of the previous meeting, it was also queried whether any action had been taken in relation to the issuing of permits for the lifeboat crews (minute 18 refers). Members were advised that this issue had been taken up by the Traffic Regulation Orders and Searches Officer, and 12 permits had been issued to the lifeboat station in Mablethorpe.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to it being noted that Councillor R A Renshaw was also in attendance.

OFFICER

There were no announcements from the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT or the Chief Operating Officer.

30 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

The Committee received update in relation to the following major schemes:

Lincoln Eastern Bypass – the Public Inquiry had now taken place, and it was thought that everyone had been given the opportunity to air their views. The Inspectors report was expected in either November or December 2015.

Lincoln East West Link – this scheme was progressing well, but was slightly behind schedule due to the archaeological finds. Every opportunity to bring the programme forward was being taken. It was noted that works to future proof the road in terms of utilities (water and gas, etc.) work was also being undertaken.

Lincoln Footbridges – work had commenced on the High Street crossing footbridge and completion was expected in March 2016. Further re-design work was underway for the Brayford scheme, but it was looking more positive.

Grantham Southern Relief Road – the contract had been awarded for the first phase and construction was expected to start on site imminently.

A17/A151 – some consultation on the planning permission for phase one was taking place. The Side Road Orders should be published in April 2016, and it was planned that work would start on site in the autumn of 2016.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the updates provided, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following;

- In relation to the footbridges, it was noted that complaints were being received by councillors about the crossing gates coming down five minutes before the train arrived or departed the station. Members were advised that the gates would come down when the platform staff signalled that the train was ready to leave, however, there could be occasions when the train was delayed in the station after this signal had been given. It was also noted that as goods trains travel slower than passenger trains, this would mean that the gates appeared to be down for longer than necessary. However, it was noted that there was now a new train operator, and officers would have discussions with them regarding timing of signals;
- It was also commented that the barriers on Skellingthorpe Road always seemed to be down for a long time, whereas those in Hykeham were not. Members were advised that the barriers in Hykeham were automatic and so closed when they detected a train approaching;
- It was queried when it was expected that construction on the Lincoln Eastern Bypass if the Inspector found in the County Council's favour. Members were

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advised that it was expected that construction would commence in May 2016 and it would be an 18 month to two year project;

- A member commented that they were disappointed that Network rail were behind schedule with the High Street bridge, and also the Brayford Wharf East bridge, particularly that the bridge was undergoing another re-design as a previous design had already been approved by the City of Lincoln Council. This was a key project for the city, and there was a need for a footbridge that Lincoln could be proud of.

RESOLVED

That the updates be noted.

31 WINTER MAINTENANCE - PREPARATIONS FOR WINTER 2015/2016

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the background and preparations put in place for highway winter maintenance operations in Lincolnshire for the 2015/2016 winter season.

Members were advised that winter maintenance operations were carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures set out in this county's Winter Maintenance Plan, the latest version of which was dated July 2013 and was approved by members in September 2013. It was noted that once the restructuring of the Environment and Economy Directorate was completed there would be some rewriting of the Winter Maintenance Plan required to take account of the new structure.

Members were informed that the Winter Maintenance Plan was split into three parts. Section 1 - procedures, which includes policies and standards and required member approval. Section 2 – Winter Maintenance Contacts and Section 3 – Operational Information for internal staff use only.

It was reported that there were 250 outstanding requests for roads to be added to the gritting routes, however, the network was at capacity. However, officers were aware that road usage did change following new housing and industrial development. Therefore some minor changes to the network were possible by taking a gritted route off the network and replacing with a non-gritted route, but this had to be agreed with all affected parish/town councils. Members were informed that no changes were planned for this winter season.

Members were informed that the strategic salt store would now be located at Immingham docks for the forthcoming winter, and for the start of the winter season there were 35,000 tonnes of salt in depots around the county. However, officers advised that if there was an extreme winter, such as that of 1967, the resources which were in place would not be sufficient for the county to cope. It was reported that there was a severe shortage of heavy goods vehicle drivers, not only in Lincolnshire but also nationally, which impacted on the numbers available to drive the gritters. The authority was planning to discuss with the DfT the possibility of lifting HGV requirements for gritter drivers.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present regarding the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members were pleased that salt stocks were to be kept at Immingham;
- In the case of an extremely bad winter there would be a further prioritisation of routes to keep the network moving;
- It would be very rare to have an extreme winter across the whole of the county;
- In relation to drivers, all local authorities were in the same position, but reciprocal arrangements were in place;
- It was queried whether the contractor was doing everything possible to solve the problem. Members were advised that it was a long term contract of 10 years, and the main issue was that they had been encouraged to become more efficient, and so was now down to 135 full time staff, and of those, 90 were HGV drivers. There were no contractual penalties other than the termination of the contract;
- It was queried whether there was still an agreement in place with the City of Lincoln council to use their drivers for gritting activities. However, members were advised that this was no longer in place;
- Members were assured that there were enough resources to continue to operate the winter maintenance activities in the way they had been done in previous years.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Committee endorse the preparations for winter operations in 2015/16.

32 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - ANNUAL PARKING REPORT 2014/2015

The Committee received a report in relation to Civil Parking Enforcement for 2014/15. The adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) by Lincolnshire County Council required the Council to submit an annual report on CPE related activities and a financial statement showing the cost of the operation, including any deficit or surplus. This was in accordance with the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions. It was noted that the District and City Council's within Lincolnshire were responsible for producing their own annual reports for off street parking.

Members were advised that the annual parking report covered the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. It was a transparent document which allowed the disclosure of various statistics related to enforcement and appeals, as well as financial information on the cost of the service. The report also included details of projects where parking enforcement had helped to contribute to changes to parking schemes or the review of current parking restrictions, the report would be sent to the Department for Transport and PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London).

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Clarification was sought regarding allegations which had been made in relation to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Officers not carrying out enforcement on vehicles with foreign number plates. Members were assured that this was not correct, and there was a company which was used to track foreign registered vehicles within Europe, and a bill would be sent to wherever the vehicle owner was registered as living. It was noted that the recovery rate was about 20%, however, this was considered quite good in terms of foreign registered vehicles;
- The authority had built up a large database over the last three years of why contraventions had happened, and patterns of behaviour were looked for to determine whether the policy had been a success. It was noted that there had been a slow change in drivers' behaviour which was now started to be noticed. For example, Silver Street in Lincoln had been the number one location for parking enforcement for a couple of years, but it was now averaging a ranking of between number 6 – 8;
- Limited waiting bays were also recorded, as the aim was to generate a turnover of customers in an area. The registrations of all cars would be recorded on arrival by the CPE officer;
- Amendments to waiting restrictions had been made by the issuing of tickets;
- It was commented that the authority did not have resources to manage the efficiency of all the restrictions in the county, and it was up to council members to talk to people in the local area to see if restrictions were not working;
- It was reported that there had been improvements to traffic movements in Spalding since the introduction of the CPE scheme. However, there was a concern that there were still a lot of challenges to tickets. Members were advised that in a lot of cases the contravention did happen but the council decided to allow the appeal, as sometimes the signs were wrong, or the lines may not have been very clear. These situations help to build up the experience of the Parking Enforcement Officers;
- It was commented that the scheme had been very positive and had been very successful at addressing some of the issues in Lincoln, and has brought some order to parking in the city;
- Members were advised that the turnover levels for staff had fallen, and the more experienced staff were now able to pass on their experience to newer members of the team;
- It was commented that it was good to know that the process for challenging tickets actually worked;
- It was noted that a lot of yellow lines were there for traffic safety;
- Members were pleased that the underspend was being put back into the service, and commented that the team were doing a very good job;
- It was also confirmed that the system was working really well in Stamford, as there had been instances of dangerous parking on some streets. However, members were reminded that tickets could only be issued in locations were

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there were traffic restrictions in place, or if vehicles were double parked or parked on a drop kerb;

- It was confirmed that the County Council CPE did not operate in car parks. These were the responsibility of the district and city council's;
- It was reported that some of the smaller places had seemed to be getting a lot of visits, but these now seemed to have reduced. Members were advised that routes were regularly changed so that residents did not know when the CPE officers would be around, which meant that people would be less likely to take a chance. However, areas could be targeted if problems started to be reported.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

**33 SPEED MANAGEMENT IN LINCOLNSHIRE - REVISED SPEED LIMIT
POLICY AND TRAFFIC POLICY FOR SCHOOLS**

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Committee to consider the outcomes of the consultation on the draft revised Speed Limit Policy and the new Traffic Policy for Schools. Subject to the agreement of the Committee, the two policies would be submitted to the Executive Councillor Highways, Transport and IT for consideration and approval. Members were advised that the report outlined the results of the consultation which was carried out. There were 13 responses to the Speed Limit policy, 4 in support of it and 9 observations and 8 responses in total to the traffic policy for school, again, 4 in support and 4 observations. It was not believed that there was any requirement for any amendments to the policies, as points were made which had already been considered as part of the task and finish group process.

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was commented that both policies were very good;
- It was suggested that many of the traffic issues at schools were caused by parents, and this was not something that would go away. There was a need for a lot more co-operation from the schools;
- It was suggested that there was a need for an increased use of yellow lines near schools, particularly on corners;
- The policy made it clear that there was a need for schools to update their travel plans;
- There were some different ideas which were in discussion regarding the tackling of parking issues around schools such as no pavement parking signs, mobile CCTV enforcement;
- There was a need for more compliance with school travel plans;
- Issues also arose when two schools were closed and then all pupils transferred to one school;

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- It was confirmed that the Executive Councillors for Highways and Children's Services would hold conversations with each other to discuss extensions to schools;
- A councillor commented that they received complaints every day regarding parking, and in one village, the village hall had agreed to let parents use its car park;
- This was issue which had been flagged up to the Schools' Forum;
- The expectation of co-operation had now been written into the policy, so it was hoped that this would start to help the situation;
- There was also an issue of parking allocation with new houses, as they were often not sufficient.

RESOLVED

1. That comments made during the consultation on the draft revised Speed Limit Policy and Traffic Policy for Schools be noted;
2. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee approve the draft revised Speed Limit Policy and Traffic Policy for Schools;
3. That the two policies be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for approval.

34 STREET LIGHTING POLICY

The Committee received a report which proposed a revised Street Lighting Policy for consideration, including an option regarding the adoption of street lights on development roads. The Committee was guided through the report and the changes highlighted.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Approximately 500 new street lights were adopted through Section 38 schemes per year;
- It was commented that if there was a street lighting system that was of the Council's design, it would be a retrograde step to not adopt the lights. Particularly if the estate roads had already been adopted;
- Concerns were also raised regarding council tax paid by residents who lived in areas with adopted and unadopted lights;
- Members felt uneasy regarding the proposal to not adopt estate street lights as there were concerns that developers may stop installing them. It was also suggested that residents may not want to live on estates which did not have street lighting;
- There were a number of districts who maintained their own street lights, but in some cases the county did this on their behalf;
- There was agreement within the Committee that the County Council should continue to adopt street lights on development roads.

RESOLVED

1. That the comments made in relation to the proposed Street Lighting Policy be noted;
2. That the Committee recommends to the Executive Councillor that street lighting on new development roads should be adopted;
3. That the Committee recommends to the Executive Councillor that the proposed Street Lighting Policy should be adopted taking account of the amendment above.

35 COMMUNICATION ON WORK PROGRAMMES

The Committee received an update in relation to the programming of highways works, and officers were pleased to announce that the website was up and running. It was noted that the executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT was very keen on having an open policy regarding what work was taking place on the highway. The website would provide a forward look at what work would be being undertaken, and annual programmes would be published in advance. It was noted that the programme would change, but not greatly and would be updated on a regular basis. It was the intention to re-issue the programme every month.

Members were advised that the surface dressing programme was complete for this year. The Area Maintenance Teams would update their programme on a weekly basis as they worked on a four week plan. The expected start dates for this work were generally not finalised as they would need to be able to react to emergencies, such as pot holes.

Members were informed that they would be sent a link to the website, and the next couple of months would be used as a feedback period. It was hoped that the website would help members to answer some of the queries they receive from local residents. The link would eventually be sent to all parish and town councils as well, but officers wanted to get some feedback first.

It was commented that it was also important to let people know if work was not going to take place as planned, and the reasons why.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

36 COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2015 - 2016 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER ONE

Consideration was given to a report which informed the Committee that performance and projects data would be reported in a new style report against the Council Business Plan. It was noted that the Council Business Plan 2015-6 had been reorganised around the 17 commissioning strategies, however none of the measures in the Council Business Plan were within the remit of this scrutiny committee. Members were advised that five of the Council's major infrastructure schemes were reported through the Business Plan and were within the remit of this committee.

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Unfortunately, the infographics for these schemes were still being developed and so were unable to be reported for this quarter. However, members had been provided with an update on the schemes earlier in the meeting.

Members were able to consider the customer satisfaction information and it was clarified that the category in relation to age, related to people who was not able to access a service due to their age.

An issue was raised in which a councillor had not been able to speak directly with a highways officer, officers agreed to follow this up. However, members were reminded that there were less and less resources within highways team to deal with queries from members of the public, and so there was a need for them to be focused through the Customer Service Centre.

RESOLVED

That comments made in relation to the customer satisfaction information for quarter 1 be noted.

**37 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to consider its own work programme for the coming year.

It was suggested that a report come back in 12 months' time to look at the feedback received following the implementation of the Traffic Policy for Schools and Speed Management Policy, as it would be interesting to see if any progress had been made.

It was confirmed that item relating to sponsorship of roundabouts would come to the Committee in December.

The Chairman announced that this was the last meeting for Scrutiny Officer Louise Tyers, as she was leaving for a new job at East Northamptonshire Council. The Committee thanked her for all her hard work over the last couple of years, particularly in relation to the Speed Management Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm