

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: R G Davies, R G Fairman and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Mike Coates (Highways Assessment and Laboratory Manager), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), David Hair (Member Services Manager), Matt Jones (Parking Services Manager), Paul Little (Network Manager North), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner) and Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer)

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M G Allan.

50 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made at this stage of the meeting.

51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee held on 26 October 2015, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the word "vehicles" being added between the word "parking" and "on" in paragraph No. 5, of minute 46.

52 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

No announcements were made.

53 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on the progress of Major Schemes as follows:-

1. Lincoln Eastern Bypass (LEB) – Awaiting outcome of the Public Inquiry. The Council was working concurrently with Network Rail to deliver Spalding Line overbridge and designing A15 Sleaford R/A to protect planning permission which expired on 10 June 2016.

2. Network Rail Footbridges, Lincoln –The High Street footbridge work was continuing on site with elements of structural steel work imminent and completion of the footbridge expected in May 2016.

Brayford Wharf East-footbridge Network Rail continued to seek an alternative solution that would match the funding envelope available. Should approval be granted to any revised scheme this would be presented at a stake holder workshop in the New Year.

3. Lincoln East West Link – the scheme was currently on programme although delays had been incurred on the Tentercroft Street Bridge due to the supply of poor quality concrete, some of which will need to be replaced. Work had now started on the Heritage Building and the foundations were now complete.

4. Skegness – the Council was examining ways in which the project could be rephrased in order to reduce initial costs. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership Investment Board would need to re-examine in the light of the rephrasing and was expected that a grant funding contract would be signed shortly. An anticipated start on site was expected in Spring/Summer 2016.

5. A17/A151 Peppermint Junction Holbeach – currently consulting on planning permission for phase 1 with potential start on site in Autumn 2016. The junction improvements were covered in the draft South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, which went out to consultation on 8 January 2016.

6. Grantham South Relief Road – scheme was progressing well. Phase 1 of King 31 scheme commenced in September 2015 with expected completion in April 2016 and was progressing well. It had been agreed to partially extend into phase 2 to make use of necessary cut material as "free" fill which led to substantial savings on materials.

Following the comments made by Karl McCartney MP requesting that the Council should dual the LEB, a member stated that a single carriageway was preferable to no bypass at all adding that the A46 to its junction with the A15 and the A15 to its junction with the A158 was a more important priority for dualling.

Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that there was no extra Government money available and that if there was funding then this would require match funding by the Council.

RESOLVED

That the update and comment made by the Committee, be noted.

54 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on Winter Maintenance on the county's highways. Information was tabled showing salting callouts, salt usage and weather forecasts from the Met Office for all salting routes in the county.

The Committee was informed that with the improved and more detailed Met Office forecasts the Council was now able to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of salting. An extra weather station had been provided at Caistor. Following the floods in 2007 the Government had increased its investment in the Met Office to enable more long term predictions to be made. The latest prediction was for the mild Winter to continue but with the likelihood of colder conditions in February and March 2016.

Officers stated that following publicity about the shortage of HGV drivers there had been seventeen applications and up to six drivers had been selected for training in January 2016.

Following Committee comments, officers stated that all new drivers were subject only to medical examination as part of the normal DVLA HGV licensing process checks before they commenced their duties and that the Council was required to pay for weather information from the Met Office but this was cost effective as there were fewer call-outs.

RESOLVED

That the update and comments made by the Committee, be noted.

55 ROUNABOUT ADVERTISING

(Councillor R J Hunter-Clarke arrived in the meeting)

The Committee received a report on the current position regarding roundabout advertising within Lincolnshire. Officers outlined the history stating that following the meeting of this Committee on 29 July 2013, it was recommended that the current policy should be amended to allow the erection of advertising boards managed by local councils and funded by commercial providers. Following trials of the proposals in the district of East Lindsey two roundabouts were selected but both planning applications were refused for a number of reasons including being located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, signs too large and street clutter. Following on from this and the fact it was not possible to secure unanimous support amongst the seven local councils, it was agreed to continue with the existing arrangements.

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Committee comments and responses by officers, included:-

1. There was a need to maintain roundabouts but unnecessary signage should not be allowed as this could distract drivers.
2. Roundabouts in the City of Lincoln were well maintained compared to those in South Holland.

Officers stated that under the original proposals East Lindsey District Council as the lead authority had been unable to secure agreement from the other District Councils to implement a new maintenance agreement which would have involved attracting sponsorship.

3. The provision of larger signs funded by commercial providers might improve the maintenance of roundabouts.
4. District Councils needed to be reminded of the current policy.

Officers stated that they could write to local councils to remind them of the policy but they were already aware of their responsibilities.

5. Roundabouts in North East Lincolnshire were well maintained with sponsorship from garden centres, amongst others.
6. Responsibility for maintenance should be shared between the County and the District Councils.
7. Roundabouts should be sponsored because of their importance for tourism.
8. Signage on roundabouts in built up areas should be avoided.
9. Area Highways Officers and their staff needed to be aware of the current policy.
10. Was there a need to remind District Councils of their responsibility to maintain roundabouts and an assessment made of their progress. If that failed local councils should encourage commercial providers to maintain roundabouts.

Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that North East Lincolnshire Council financially assisted in the maintenance of roundabouts. Advertising did not meet the whole cost of maintenance. He stated that he was prepared to examine this issue further.

The Committee agreed that more factual information was required, to include whether it was the policy of the Council to regulate advertising/sponsorship on roundabouts, whether advertising covered the cost of maintenance and whether advertising could be extended to other highway land.

On motion by Councillor J R Marriott, seconded by Councillor Mrs A M Newton, it was –

RESOLVED (7votes for, 0 votes against and 2 abstentions)

That more factual information is required, including whether it was the policy of the Council to regulate advertising/sponsorship on roundabouts, whether advertising covered the cost of maintenance and whether advertising could be extended to other highway land and that a report be submitted to a future meeting.

56 SCRUTINY OF PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a report which invited it to consider the Council's new performance regime and options for how it could effectively scrutinise key performance information in the future as there were no key performance indicators within the new Council Business Plan directly relating to Highways and Transportation.

Committee comments included:-

1. The idea of a quarterly written report on Major Highway Schemes was welcomed as this would provide more transparency for the public. It was noted that there would still be a verbal report to those meetings which did not receive a written report.
2. The importance of the role of elected members in representing their electorate.

The Committee supported the receipt of a combined quarterly report and would examine further what performance information was required when it received its first written report at its meeting on 7 March 2016.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee be noted.

(b) That in addition to the standard verbal report on the progress of Major Highway Schemes received at each meeting, a combined quarterly performance written report which would include the regular Major Schemes update, the quarterly Highways Alliance report and quarterly Customer Satisfaction information, would be considered.

57 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - MID YEAR REPORT 2015/16

The Committee received a mid-year update report on Civil Parking enforcement for 2015/16.

Committee comments and responses by officers, included:-

1. Was information available for the reasons on why appeals were upheld?

Officers stated that this information was available and gave examples.

2. Were enough Enforcement Officers employed as sometimes they were difficulties in trying to contact them?

Officers stated that when this service first started there had been issues with staff turnover but this had now been resolved. Areas considered to be "hot spots" for parking problems were addressed on a regular basis and if it was possible Enforcement Officers in the vicinity could be re-directed to areas of concern. A designated hot spot reporting line was in operation, which members of the public could utilise to liaise directly with the Enforcement Team and report breaches of parking restrictions.

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3. Was it possible to use surplus money to repaint faded white lines in parking bays?

Officers stated that this was an area which could potentially be funded.

4. In certain parts of the county off-street parking was free on a Sunday but in some cases the public was confused about the policy. Was it possible for Enforcement Officers to have more discretion on a Sunday?

The Committee noted that highway safety issues and Traffic Regulation Orders would need to be considered or changed.

5. What percentage of motorists were successful at appeal against incorrect parking?

Officers explained the types of incorrect parking and stated that detailed information on the percentage of appeals upheld for incorrect parking infringements would be provided in the final report to the Committee for 2015/16. On a monthly basis, broken down by District area, the Council also published on its website the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued and the number of those challenged and rescinded.

The Committee noted that giving Enforcement Officers discretion to deal with incorrect parking would only cause more problems.

6. Why did some areas have a low prosecution rate?

Officers stated that the number of prosecutions depended on geography, demographics and the number of vehicles present but the level of enforcement needed to be consistent.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report and comments made by the Committee, be noted.

(b) That information on the percentage of appeals upheld for incorrect parking infringements be provided in the final report for 2015/16.

58 PERMIT SCHEME

The Committee received a report in connection with the proposed introduction of a permit scheme for Lincolnshire which would improve the Council's ability to manage all works on the highway network, to minimise inconvenience and prevent disruption to road users.

Officers stated that the Council was proposing to pursue the "Common Schemes" for the issuing of permits and Rutland County Council and other local authorities had expressed an interest in participating. Of the two options detailed in the report it was proposed to require permits for all roads, including minor roads, with each application scrutinised individually and fee discounts waivers applied clearly.

Committee comments and responses by officers, included:-

1. With so many highway works taking place was a permit required for emergency highway works?

Officers stated that in the event of an emergency a permit would not be required. However, if it was subsequently discovered that it had not been an emergency then a penalty fee would be incurred by the utility.

2. Was a permit required for highways works near a railway level crossing?

Officers stated that it depended on the type of works being undertaken and the effects on the local highway.

3. Was it necessary to obtain a permit for work on pavements/footways?

Officers stated that pavements/footways were part of the highway and therefore a permit was necessary.

4. Was there a scale for permit fees?

Officers stated that permit fees varied according to the size of the highway works proposed.

5. What was the situation if someone wished to install a dropped kerb?

Officers stated that the installation of dropped kerbs was not linked to the permits scheme.

6. Were permits time limited?

Officers stated that permits were time limited. There was a need for the Council's work programme to co-ordinate with a utility work's programme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that a report on the outcome of consultations be submitted in April 2016 followed by a report to the Committee in July 2016 with recommendations, before the matter is considered by the Executive.

59 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Committee received a report on the need to produce a Highways Asset Management policy prior to the development of the next Highways Asset Management Strategy following a "Peer Review" of the Lincolnshire Highways Service.

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The Committee expressed support the policy as this would help the Council to maximise the amount of money it received from the Government and to spend that money effectively.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the policy be supported and submitted to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, for approval.

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

The Committee received its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly, subject to the following:-

1. The submission of a written report on a quarterly basis on performance to include the regular Major Schemes update, the Highways Alliance report and Customer Satisfaction information to the meeting on 7 March 2016.
2. A report on the outcome of consultation on the Permit scheme to the meeting on 18 April 2016.
3. A report on recommendations for the Permit scheme to come to the meeting on 11 July 2016 before approval by the Executive Councillor.
4. A need to programme the examination the Speed Limit Policy and Traffic Policy for Schools Update in twelve months' time.
5. Officers agreed to speak to Mark Housley, Assistant Director for Safer Communities, about the Recruitment of School Crossing Patrol Staff.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm