

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 7 MARCH 2016**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), D Brailsford, K J Clarke, J R Marriott, Mrs A M Newton, A H Turner MBE JP, R G Fairman and R A Renshaw

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

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Satish Shah (Network Manager South), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Development Services)

70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

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

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors R G Fairman and R A Renshaw to the Committee, in place of Councillors R Foulkes and N M Murray, for this meeting only.

71 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

72 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2016, be agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor R A Renshaw's name being added to the list of attendees at the meeting.

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

Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that the Side Roads and Compulsory Purchase Orders in connection with the Lincoln Eastern Bypass had been confirmed

by the Secretary of State following the Public Inquiry in August 2015, thanked all those involved for their hard work at the Public Inquiry and welcomed the outcome of the Inquiry which good news for Lincolnshire.

The Committee concurred with the sentiments of Councillor R G Davies and placed on record their appreciation to everyone involved.

74 PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 (1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2015)

The Committee received a report on the performance of the highways service including the Highways Alliance, Major Highway schemes, the condition of the road network, the public perception of the services through the National Highways and Transportation Survey and service specific complaints and compliments.

(a) Major Highway Schemes

Issues highlighted by officers since the publication of the report included:-

1. Brayford Wharf East Footbridge – an alternative design and planning application was being discussed between Network Rail and the City of Lincoln Council.
2. Street Lighting Transformation Project – a new project in which it was proposed to save £1.8m revenue costs through switching lights off, part lighting and the use of LED lighting.
3. Grantham Southern Relief Road – the Judicial Review in connection with the Southern Quadrant Link Road had been dismissed.

Officers' responses to comments made by the Committee included the following:-

1. The reduction in the number of "lots" and the number of contractors within each "lot" in connection with the Select List Framework would simplify the system and for those contractors who successively gained a place on the framework would be better placed to competitively win more work.
2. Network Rail had £750,000 to invest in the Brayford Wharf East Bridge with the outcome resting on discussions and a planning application with the City of Lincoln Council.
3. A Communications Strategy would be in place to address the implementation of the street lighting transformation project.
4. There was no current proposal to change the traffic layout at the High Street footbridge. It was proposed to pedestrianise the High Street in the vicinity of the railway crossing from money provided by the Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership and once this had taken place it was proposed to install a barrier to prevent traffic from using this crossing.
5. The necessary infrastructure was in place in case the Lincoln Eastern Bypass was dualled in the future.
6. Any proposal for a Lincoln Southern Bypass was linked to future developer discussions.

7. It was necessary to follow the Select List Framework rules when choosing a new contractor for the highway network and the current contractor would not be excluded from the selection process.

8. A full risk assessment would be undertaken before any changes were made to street lighting.

9. Only actual costs incurred in connection with a Judicial Review for the Grantham Southern Relief Road could be claimed back. Costs incurred due to time delays were not refundable.

10. It was not possible to change the Street Lighting Policy to accord with any objections raised by a Parish Council as this would be impractical. The complete switching off of street lights would only take place mainly in rural locations with part lighting and dimming taking place in residential areas.

11. It was noted that there could be confusion as District, Town and Parish Councils had responsibility for some amenity street lights whereas the County Council was responsible for most street lighting and the Communications Strategy would address this issue.

(b) Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Performance

Issues highlighted by officers since the publication of the report included:-

1. The Council had received an additional £9m for local highway maintenance capital funding and assessed itself as a Level 3 Authority which was the top level and if the Council could maintain this level then it would continue to receive the maximum allocation.
2. The Highways Alliance was progressing the Council's registration with the British Standards Institution for BS1100 Collaborative Business Relationships and if this was obtained this would help to get more funding in the future.
3. There was a lot of new technology associated with traffic lights development.

Officers' responses to comments made by the Committee included the following:-

1. There were still on-going problems with obtaining the necessary information from Aggresso.
2. Staffing issues would be addressed in the new delivery model for highways.
3. The County Council was aware of the issues caused by the on-going diversion arising from a highways scheme in North Lincolnshire including its effects on the local highway in Lincolnshire and these issues would be addressed in accordance with the Council's policy and priorities for highway maintenance.
4. The mowing of verges policy was explained. District Councils were responsible for amenity cutting and the County Council restricted itself to cutting verges when there were highway safety issues. The Council would be communicating with Parish and Town Councils about the maintenance of verges in the future.
5. Following the Council Election in 2013 and as part of the Councillor Development programme Members had been given an opportunity to visit the traffic lights control room.
6. Urgent repairs were carried out on cracked flagged footpaths which presented a safety hazard and a more permanent solution being found was found at a later date.

7. Surface dressing was an issue especially where parked vehicles prevented this taking place. The performance of the maintenance of the "A" road network had improved but there was a need to demonstrate efficiency in this area.

8. There was a need to examine the decline in performance of skid resistance measures.

(c) The National Highways and Transport Network Survey

Officers stated that many local authorities informed the public of what action was being proposed in connection with a highways scheme whereas this was not always common practice in Lincolnshire. This issue was being examined by Communications.

Officers stated that the Committee had received a lot of performance information and overall the Council was performing quite well.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers be noted.

75 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal report in connection with the latest situation of winter maintenance on the Council's highways. Statistical information in connection with winter maintenance salt usage, callouts and salting turnouts was tabled.

Officers stated that the Met Office's prediction of a colder February and March had proved accurate.

Officers compared similar winters to 2015/16 and drew attention to the usage of salt. It was noticeable that due to more efficient technology and salt application the amount of salt being placed on the highway had decreased by 20% with a considerable reduction in costs.

The Committee welcomed the information on winter maintenance being sent to all Members on a daily basis and this was particularly welcomed by those Members living in rural areas.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

76 TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR GRANTHAM - PROGRESS REVIEW
REPORT

The Committee received a report on the progress review of the Transport Strategy for Grantham together with the review of the walking and cycling routes.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 MARCH 2016

Officers stated that due to the development of the Grantham Southern Relief Road and the effects of the National Planning and Policy Framework meant that the Strategy would need to be reviewed and there was a need for discussions with local Members and South Kesteven District Council.

The Committee noted the latest situation and that a new Strategy would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee when drafted following completion of the Grantham Southern Relief Road.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the progress report be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for his approval.

(c) That a full review of the Transport Strategy, with potentially developing a new Strategy, will be required to take account of the significant changes that may occur as part of development planned for Grantham, be noted.

77 ENHANCING OUR USERS' EXPERIENCE

The Committee received a report on progress on "Enhancing Our Users' Experience" with regard to highways and transport services.

Officers reported progress on the various actions detailed in the report as follows:-

1. Communications Strategy – work was on-going and of the 271 media enquiries 93% were recorded as positive or neutral, compared to 91% for the second quarter, which exceeded the benchmark of 88%.

2. Major Urban Area Web Pages – further examination of this area with Communications was required.

3. LAGAN (Lincolnshire Citizen Portal) – on-going issues needed to be resolved in conjunction with Serco.

4. Highways Alliance 60 – this would be addressed as part of the Communications Strategy.

5. Highways Alliance Customer Excellence – information cards would be issued to the public to inform them of progress with highways' schemes and it was also proposed to improve highways signage for the public. Satisfactory progress was being made in this area.

6. Works Programme – a monthly programme of Highways Alliance Planned Works Programme would be published from April 2016, on the Council's website and issued to Councillors.

7. HMEP Peer Review – customer engagement was important and this would be actioned as part of the Communications Strategy.

Officers stated that they would submit a progress report in six months.

The Committee welcomed the various developments taking place and stated that communication with the public and Councillors on progress of highways schemes on the internet and on site was important.

RESOLVED

(a) That the progress report be noted.

(b) That a further progress report be submitted to the Committee in six months time.

78 ROUNDAABOUT ADVERTISING UPDATE

The Committee received a report which provided further information regarding roundabout advertising in Lincolnshire. The report detailed the regulation of advertising/sponsorship on roundabouts, whether advertising covered the cost of maintenance and whether advertising could be extended to other highway land.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. Non-conformity with the guidance in connection with the size of signs.
2. Support for the current arrangements for roundabout advertising as detailed in the guidance with the exception to the sign having to retain any reference to Lincolnshire Green.
3. The County Council should take responsibility for the whole process of roundabout advertising was supported.

The current arrangements for roundabout advertising and the need to ensure that the size of signs conformed with the requirements of the County Council's guidance on this matter were supported by the Committee.

On a motion by Councillor D Brailsford, seconded by Councillor J R Marriott, it was –

RESOLVED

That the guidance outlined in the Highways and Traffic Guidance Notes (HAT 63/1/10) in connection with the approved policy for sponsorship of highway planting, be supported, with the exception of the need to make any reference to Lincolnshire Green.

79 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report in connection with its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted subject to a further progress report in connection with "Enhancing Our Users' Experience" to the meeting on 12 September 2016.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm