

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
16 JULY 2018**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors S P Roe (Vice-Chairman), C J T H Brewis, Mrs W Bowkett, A N Stokes, R A Renshaw, Mrs P Cooper and M A Whittington

Councillors: R G Davies and Clio Perraton-Williams attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Vincent Van Doninck (Policy and Strategic Asset Manager), Richard Fenwick (Highways Officer), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

**10      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Brockway, M A Griggs, R Grocock and E W Strengiel.

The Chief Executive reported that having received a notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors Mrs P Cooper and M A Whittington as replacement members of the Committee in place of Councillor M A Griggs and E W Strengiel respectively for this meeting only.

**11      DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

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

**12      MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2018**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2018 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to it being noted that Councillor R A Renshaw was in attendance.

**13      ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR  
AND LEAD OFFICERS**

The Chairman advised that agenda item 5 – Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, would be deferred to the September meeting to allow additional

work to be done on the report and ensure that members received it in sufficient time to scrutinise it properly.

There were no other announcements.

14 HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

As previously advised, this item would be deferred to the September 2018 meeting of the Committee.

15 WINTER MAINTENANCE PLAN - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Committee to consider a report regarding the new Resilient Network and the Grit Bin resource.

Members were informed that within the new 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' Code of Practice it was highlighted and recommended that each Local Authority should have a Resilient Network, which was described as a road network which "received priority through maintenance and other measures in order to maintain economic activity access to key services during disruptive events". The Resilient Network which had been produced by the County Council identified all the critical routes within the county which were classed as priority in severe weather incidents. This took into account connectivity to major communities, access to emergency services, links to all critical infrastructure and transport hubs, repeat weather events and additional local factors.

In terms of grit bins, members were advised that the Network Resilience Team, which was made up of three dedicated members of staff, was responsible for the managing and maintaining of all new and existing grit bins. It was noted that the County Council currently maintained 2100 grit bins around local communities at approved locations. A full restock of the 2100 grit bins was currently underway following the rapid depletion due to the cold winter experienced during the two "Beast from the East" weather events in late February and early March 2018.

Members asked questions in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was confirmed that these documents were just to formalise those procedures which were already carried out in severe weather.
- This Plan would be linking in with DfT best practice, and officers would look to see if there were any new routes which should be included in the system.
- Clarification was sought regarding gritting routes around schools, as it was something which caused a lot of concern to parents who had to drive their children to school.
- It was noted that the resilient network would only be implemented in severe weather events. It was likely that during these events schools would be closed down quickly which was why they were not included within the Resilient Network. However, schools were covered in the precautionary salting routes.

- Members were advised that in relation to precautionary salting, the policy was to grit within 500m of every school, if the gritters could get to it. The resilient network was intended to keep critical infrastructure open and the weather conditions would need to be serious to take the extreme measure to drop down to just maintaining the main routes through the county.
- It was not anticipated that the minimum network would be implemented often.
- One member commented that they fully supported the proposed approach in relation to grit bins and the scoring system was excellent.
- It was suggested whether the 'responsible body' could also include the local member.
- It was commented that it was not thought it would be difficult to get every Parish Meeting to be a responsible body.
- It was suggested that it would be useful if members could be made aware of where all the grit bins in their area were located. It was thought that it would also be helpful if responsible bodies could also be provided with this information.
- It was reported that requests for grit bin refills had been made but negative responses had been received. Members were advised that it was hoped that this new policy would put in place a very clear process of what could be expected. Priority would be given to those requests from responsible bodies.
- Members welcomed the report and the steps which were being taken.
- It was noted that Parishes had the opportunity to request a 1 tonne bag of grit at the beginning of each winter season and it was confirmed that this would still be included within the maintenance plan.
- It was queried whether there was any guidance for the public who might be gritting roads in local areas using the grit bins. It was agreed that information and guidance on this would be passed onto district communication teams.
- Members were advised that there were some useful FAQs on the website and this information had been printed out and sent to Parish Councils including guidance on safe working.
- It was noted that some Parish Councils did have emergency plans which now included lists of 4x4 drivers who were willing to provide assistance during severe weather events.
- It was commented that some Parishes had bought a grit spreader and it was queried whether they could be provided with grit as they were currently buying their own. Members were advised that they would be able to request the 1 tonne bag.

#### RESOLVED

That the report and proposals for future service decisions be supported by the Committee.

#### 16 ROUTE AND PLACE BASED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the purpose and benefits of a transport strategy to the County Council. The report also outlined the status of the

County Council's existing Transport Strategies and recommended a more robust future approach across the whole county.

Members were advised that transport strategies were key to the delivery of improvements to the transport network through the identification of policies and proposals founded on a sound evidence base. The strategy set out what a local authority intended to achieve in an area and how it would go about it presenting the authorities' proposals for improving the transport network over a period of time.

Members asked questions and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was commented that if this work was not completed then the authority would not have the evidence base to pursue funding opportunities. It was confirmed that this was correct but there was a cost to this approach of around £500,000 per year. However, it was emphasised that this was an approximate average cost, and some years could be more or less than this figure.
- Members supported this approach as it was never known when an opportunity for additional funding might come up. It was important to be objective and have schemes which were ready to go.
- It was noted that it was important to have a joined up approach with Highways England and the Dft.
- In relation to the route based work the strategy was clear that if finance was not in place there could be a mechanism to go back to DfT with evidence to show that work needed to be done.
- What was the driver to get a scheme off the ground? An example was given of the planning permission given for the Lincoln Western Growth Corridor or waiting until funding was in place. Members were advised that there had to be a need for the work to be done and work would be carried out with the districts as well and then funding for the scheme would be looked at.
- It was confirmed that costs of £500,000 for this approach was a revenue cost as it was the cost of drawing up plans, etc. In some cases it was possible to include some of these costs as capital expenditure. Any work after planning permission had been received could be included as capital costs.
- It was noted that these costs would vary depending on the volume of work carried out but would be a recurrent cost. Some of the costs would be staff costs but a lot of work would also be done on understanding the economic situation and traffic modelling. It was noted that traffic modelling was a very complex process and a lot of this modelling work was carried out for the County Council through WSP.
- The Chairman advised that officers had the support of the Committee for this approach.
- It was requested whether the Committee could have an update report annually on how this approach was developing.

RESOLVED

1. That the comments made in relation to the proposed route and place based transport strategy approach to identifying future highway improvements across the county be noted.
2. That the programme of creating and updating the various traffic models and place/route based strategies across the County as detailed in Appendix A to the report be endorsed.
3. That the Committee receive an annual progress report.

17     HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK  
PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report on the Committee's work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

The following amendments were noted:

- The Committee to receive an annual report on Transport Strategies going forward.
- The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan to go to the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September
- The A46 Welton scheme – this could go to a later meeting than September but would be confirmed.

**RESOLVED**

That the Work Programme and amendments listed above be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am