

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
11 DECEMBER 2023**

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

Councillors A M Hall (Vice-Chairman), P Ashleigh-Morris, K J Clarke, R A Gibson, Mrs S Rawlins, A N Stokes, E W Strengiel and P A Skinner

Councillors: R Davies and C Perraton-Williams attended the meeting remotely as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Clair Dixon (Policy and Strategic Asset Manager), Helen Reek (Support Services Manager), John Monk (Head of Highways Design), Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Matt Jones (Parking Services Manager), Sam Edwards (Head of Highways Infrastructure and Laboratory Services) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers in attendance remotely:-

Verity Druce (Head of Transport Services)

**13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apoloiges for absence were received from Councillors C Vernon and T Ashton.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups Regulation 1990, Councillor P Skinner was replacing Councillor T Ashton for this meeting only and that Councillor P Ashleigh-Morris was replacing Councillor T Dyer until further notice.

**14 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in proceedings.

**15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**16 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS**

There were no announcements.

17 HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to a report from Clair Dixon, Policy and Strategic Asset Manager, which provided the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy prior to a decision by the Executive for Highways, Transport and IT on 13-21 December 2023. The following matters were highlighted:

- The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy was the first level of a suite of documents that supported the Council's asset management of highways assets.
- The Policy outlined commitment to adopting the principles of highway infrastructure asset management by senior decision makers and all staff involved in related activities.
- The Policy was designed to align with the Council's Corporate Plan, vision and strategic objectives.
- Priorities of the Policy were assisting efficient service delivery and targeted resourcing, and a customer focused approach.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Members inquired about a specific point on page 24 of the policy, addressing the removal of redundant assets from the network. Officers clarified that when referring to "assets," these included various elements e.g., gully pots, drainage pipes, or sections of the highway. They explained that the intention was, going forward, to eliminate assets that no longer served an engineering purpose with emphasis placed on prolonging the investment or maintenance of assets that were technically unnecessary. Officers gave assurance that wording would be tweaked to ensure clarity that the goal was not to remove parts of the network but rather assets with no engineering relevance.
- Members inquired about a specific point on page 95 of the policy, which referenced tree inspections, and asked for clarity about action taken to address potential damage to private property. Officers confirmed that trees on the highway boundary were comprehensive inspections which included assessment of potential risk to private landowners.
- Members asked for further detail regarding improved community engagement and the development of self-service systems. Officers explained that the goal was to reduce the volume of call handling or engagements with the Highway service when necessary, ensuring public satisfaction and information dissemination. An example is the use of platforms like FixMyStreet, where information such as gritting locations and gully pot maintenance frequency was being shared with the public. Officers mentioned plans to provide details on the last and next cleansing dates for tasks like cyclical grass cutting and gully pot maintenance; this allowed the public to self-serve and avoid unnecessary interactions with the Highway service. Feedback was

monitored through the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey and by tracking the volume of calls and inquiries, with results to be presented in the next quarter's Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The document included a slight discrepancy in the network length reported on page 18. The initial reference to the network length was 9000 kilometres, but according to the HIAM Plan, the correct length is 9255 kilometres.

#### RESOLVED

1. That that the Committee support the report and agree the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That comments raised by the Committee be shared with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for consideration ahead of the decision being made.

#### 18 HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023

Consideration was given to a report from Clair Dixon, Policy and Strategic Asset Manager, which provided the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan prior to a decision by the Executive for Highways, Transport and IT on 13-21 December 2023. The following matters were highlighted:

- The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan contained strategies on overarching service themes and was a useful resource when addressing claims made against the service.
- Changes that had been made to the Plan since the last time it was updated were as follows:
  - Drainage was now a key asset and information concerning drainage volume was included in specifications.
  - Street cleansing data had been included.
  - Reference to the street lighting policy had been removed to ensure no erroneous contradictions emerged between the two documents.
  - Response times in relation to footway safety and maintenance were included.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Members expressed concerns about the drainage aspect of the plan, citing poor maintenance leading to flooding in certain areas / divisions, questioning whether the plan addressed these issues. Officers acknowledged shared concerns and explained that the targeted cleanse primarily focused on gully pots yet did not address all laterals. Funding discussions ensued, with officers expressing willingness to explore options with the team and Councillors, however officers highlighted that this would cause a budget pressure. Officers took an action to ensure enforcement efforts with riparian owners and collaboration with the Flooding Team for potential improvements in the future.

- Members, having been informed that drainage was being cleaned on a cyclical basis, remained unsatisfied with the lack of observable changes or improvements. They stressed the necessity for more effective action, suggesting increased efforts could alleviate a significant portion of highway drainage problems. Officers acknowledged the need for better enforcement but highlighted that we are only in the first 12 months of shifting to a targeted cleanse. Officers committed to investigate specific locations of concern, and pledged collaboration with the local highway manager to address issues and enhance the situation.
- The effectiveness of the targeted cleaning of gullies implemented in the last 12 months came under scrutiny, particularly regarding the varying cleaning frequency. Assurance was provided that data from the gully tanker's measurements informed the cleaning cycles. While it was deemed too early to assess the full impact, steps in the right direction included increased investment in resources like jetting, CCTV footage, and root cutting, along with potential additional funding for localised problem-solving. Officers acknowledged capacity challenges during frequent storm events, suggesting the need for discussions between Highways Officers and Councillors to address issues related to climate change and larger storm events.
- Within Lincolnshire, highway responsibility shifts between National Highways and Lincolnshire County Council across different sections. Members requested a resolution to issues, such as maintenance of assets, were being hard to resolve. Officers clarified while the council was not directly responsible for National Highway assets, they committed to addressing issues that emerged with National Highways to ensure resolution, acknowledging the impact on incoming and outgoing traffic (e.g., maintenance of signs containing crucial directions such as the one highlighted on the A46).
- Concerns were raised about the necessity for closer collaboration between the Council and District Councils to address issues (e.g., mud left by tractors on roads, solid silt in connecting drains). Members emphasised the importance of coordinating cleansing efforts to prevent recurring problems. They noted a lack of extensive discussion on riparian ownership and suggested clearer markings on cycleways and routes. Officers acknowledged these concerns, committing to a risk-based approach for response, ensuring prompt interventions for hazards. They also recognised the need for improved coordination with District partners on street sweeping and enforcement. Regarding cycleways, efforts to encourage cycling and seek funding opportunities were mentioned, with acknowledgment of room for improvement in considering markings during maintenance projects.
- Members highlighted concerns of trip hazards on slabbed paving. Officers explained that the strategy is to relay paved / modular footways where appropriate. They acknowledged the challenges of funding for high aesthetics areas such as Lincoln Highstreet and underlined efforts to coordinate activity as part of the Street Works Charter and committed to improve engagement with Districts proactively.
- Members raised a point regarding deviations from the Highways Code of Practice mentioned in the document. Officers responded, explaining that deviations could arise from well-managed highways infrastructure making recommendations, but the implementation is often delegated to each authority. They referred to the

document's Appendix B, which reviews the approaches of other authorities. Officers emphasised that the recommendation in the document positions the Council favourably in terms of responsiveness compared to other authorities (i.e., Nottinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northeast Lincolnshire). They highlighted that, despite extending the time-scale for response, the Council remained more responsive to some of our statistically comparable neighbouring authorities and concluded that a separate discussion might be beneficial for delving into specific elements of these deviations.

- Finally, Members inquired about how the HIAMP addressed the challenges posed by significant inflationary pressures on works and how resources are managed within the plan's overall priorities. Officers mentioned the County Council Medium-Term Financial Plan that has been presented at Full Council, addressing a 5% inflation pressure for the LCC budget in the next financial year. Officers expressed confidence in meeting the Strategy, Policy, and plan objectives, noting that detailed information on budgetary considerations were provided in the Quarter two performance report for Highways (debated at the same meeting).

#### RESOLVED

1. That that the Committee support the report and agree the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That the comments raised by the Committee be shared with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for consideration ahead of the decision being made.

#### 19 HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 2 (1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023)

Consideration was given to a report from Jonathan Evans, Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services, which provided the Committee with the performance data for the Highways service for Quarter 2. The following matters were highlighted:

- The partners managed to achieve their targets for Quarter 2 with all scores increasing.
- There had been positive improvements in areas that fell below the minimum performance level last quarter, such as Highways Works drainage cleansing (PI3) and Professional Services contract notifications processed within timescale (PI7).
- The refresh procedure commenced for the Highway Works / Professional Services and Traffic Signal contracts in April 2022 and was now nearing completion.
- The funding position for 2023/24 and 2024/25 had been positive and will likely result in the successful delivery of the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy goal in relation to asset condition at the next reporting cycle.
- Whilst funding beyond 2024/25 remained uncertain, the DfT announcement of additional funds was welcomed.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- The Committee was pleased to see targets being met and the improved scores.

## 6

### HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2023

- It was recognised that recent weather conditions had impacted performance in some areas.
- The use of heavy machinery was not always cost effective for use on potholes and minor defect repair jobs across a rural road network.

RESOLVED

That the report be received, and comments made be taken under consideration by the relevant officers and executive portfolio holder.

## 20 HIGHWAYS MAJOR PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from Sam Edwards, Head of Highways Infrastructure and Laboratory Services, which provided the Committee with an update since the last reporting period on all aspects of the highways major project portfolio.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Members felt that the works at the Springfield and Greencell roundabouts was progressing with minimal disruption to traffic flow.
- Assurance was given that officers were confident that funding for Grantham Highstreet would be secured.
- The Committee commended the smaller major works for helping to contribute towards placemaking.
- It was noted that housing developments around the various relief roads that were under construction meant that benefits to traffic flow may be undermined due to the increasing populations within the localities.
- Members also felt that work needed to be done to ensure cycle routes were joined up and provided an efficient network for active travel.

RESOLVED

That the report be received, and comments made be taken under consideration by the relevant officers and executive portfolio holder.

## 21 TRANSPORT QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report from Verity Druce, Head of Transport Services, which provided the Committee with the performance data for Transport Services for Quarter 2. The following matters were highlighted:

- Driver availability was becoming less of an issue and fuel costs had stabilised, however, the educational travel market remained volatile and a high cost.
- It was noted that:

- Callconnect continued to receive positive feedback.
- The Sleaford Inter Town service was being extended.
- The staff restructure within Transport Services was still underway, as recruitment to some posts had proven challenging.
- There would be more detail on the BSIP+ funding programme on public transport once it had been finalised.
- 50% coverage of the Callconnect app had been rolled out, and feedback had been positive. The rollout was due to be finalised in March 2024.
- Educational travel remained an extreme cost pressure on the service and it was anticipated to remain as such for the next three years. Recent reports by the County Council Network and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) highlighted increased costs of Special Education Needs Transport for all local transport authorities.
- Overall, the number of complaints received by the service had fallen.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Commercial providers' timetables did not align very well with school drop off and pick up times in certain areas of Lincoln, in part due to high demands placed on providers. Officers would investigate and respond.
- There was little room for efficiencies on top of the extreme cost pressures faced by the service.
- Increases in the number of subsidised passengers had exacerbated existing cost pressures.
- A collaboration between Transport Services and Childrens' Services was looking at ways to help SEND children access independent travel to help mitigate pressures on subsidised services.
- The Committee commended the Callconnect service and its new app, which granted better access to service users.

## RESOLVED

That the report be received, and comments made be taken under consideration by the relevant officers and executive portfolio holder.

## 22 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Consideration was given to a report from Matt Jones, Parking Services Manager, which presented the annual Lincolnshire County Council Parking Report. The following matters were highlighted:

- Enforcement patrols were subject to a hierarchy, as follows:
  - A – daily patrols (largely urban areas)
  - B – less frequent patrols
  - C – ad hoc patrols

- This year's penalty charges were the highest on record. Increased breaches of parking enforcement had increased in part due to new charges being in place at car parks within the costal county park. Enforcement had nonetheless proven successful and there had been high levels of compliance overall.
- All data pertaining to penalty charges were available to the public online.
- Responsibility for residential parking permits shifted depending on locality, but were largely controlled by second tier authorities.
- Not all parking breaches could be confronted, however, it was the enforcer's aim that resources be used to best effect.
- Of all appeals made against issued penalty charges, 35% were successfully upheld.
- Service costs were the highest they had ever been due to the expansion of enforceable areas.
- The service was operating at a small surplus in terms of finances.
- The parking enforcement contract was due to be retendered next year.
- Typographical errors were to be amended.

During consultation of the report, the following comments were raised:

- Parking patrols during school start and finishing times were prioritised and diverted to other high priority areas outside of term time.
- It was recognised that there was a need for more patrols around Sincil Bank since parking restrictions had come into force.
- Extra resources would be needed if parking restrictions continued to increase in the county's urban areas.
- Currently 35,000 hours per year were required by the contractor to deliver parking patrols. This was currently slightly underdelivered, however, delivery was improving.
- Underdeliver of the contracted hours was in part due to staffing issues, as there was a high turnover of staff.
- It had been recorded that parking patrol staff faced abuse from the public whilst delivering their job.
- Penalty charges had not changed since 2008 and were in need of review to properly enforce restrictions and resource the service.
- The service currently ran a ringfenced reserve of £800,000.

RESOLVED

That the report be received, and comments made be taken under consideration by the relevant officers and executive portfolio holder.

## 23 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme, which was presented by Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, and items scheduled to come to the next meeting were highlighted.



RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be agreed.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm