

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 MAY 2018**

**Statement from: Councillor R G Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT**

### **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

#### **Highways 2020**

The Highways 2020 project is looking to replace the existing Highways Alliance contracts which end on 31 March 2020. The three existing contracts deliver the majority of highway works, traffic signal maintenance and enable Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to access professional consultancy services.

The Highways 2020 Options Appraisal stage concluded on 5 December at the Executive meeting, where the recommended option was approved. The preferred model, supported by the Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee, is a developed iteration of the existing model that offers the most effective and efficient mechanism for delivering the Highways Service in Lincolnshire.

The current phase of work involves the preparation of contract documents to deliver the improvements identified in the selected option. During this crucial phase, the project team are continuing to meet providers to ensure that the approach taken by LCC remains attractive. An industry day has been arranged for later this month which will set out the procurement timescales and enable providers to gain a better understanding of the service. It is anticipated that the Highways 2020 procurement process will commence in June/July 2018 to allow sufficient time for a six month mobilisation period before the contracts start on 1 April 2020.

#### **Alliance Performance**

The Lincolnshire Highways Alliance has commenced its ninth year of operation. The final extension of the contract (up to its full ten year length) was awarded at the end of the seventh year, so incentives are no longer linked to contract extensions but rather to a share of the financial 'pain or gain', as well as reputation and the chance to re-bid for the next Term Maintenance Contract.

The results, per contract area, for quarter three of year eight were:

- Alliance Key Performance Indicators (LCC/Kier/WSP/Dynniq) – 62%
- Highways Works Term Contract Performance Indicators (Kier) – 87.5%
- Traffic Signals Term Contract Performance Indicators (Dynniq) – 95%
- Professional Services Contract Performance Indicators (WSP) – 85.5%
- Client Performance Indicators (LCC) – 64%

The performance achieved in quarter three suggests that the Alliance Indicators are at a challenging and appropriate level, however the results of the National Highways and Transportation (NHT) public satisfaction survey has had a significant adverse impact. Client performance has also dipped; mainly as a result of failing to have programmes of work agreed by the prescribed date. This was partly as a result of the

changes in the Future Operating Model (FOM) and partly because extra detail was included up front, which will be beneficial to the Alliance as a whole in the long term. Partner performance remains at a high level with WSP seeing an increase of 0.1%, Dynniq maintaining the same score as quarter two and Kier seeing a slight dip of 2.2%.

A new client indicator has been proposed for year nine which would measure the performance of response to public enquiries and is more relevant than ever due to the evolving nature of the service and the introduction of the web portal.

### **Winter Maintenance**

The County Council has 43 gritting routes in Lincolnshire covering all aspects of the variable geography of the County, from high traffic urban areas such as Lincoln, Boston and Grantham, to the rural flat fen lands and the hilly Wolds area. These present us with a wide range of winter weather challenges which we monitor through strategically placed weather stations. The winter of 2017/18 in general has been colder than recent years, resulting in 167 precautionary salting turnouts to date, compared with 109 in 2016/17. A total of 37,897 tonnes of salt was used over the winter season, in comparison with 13,377 tonnes the year prior.

February and March saw snow events of a severity not experienced for around eight years, which tested the resilience of the service and our incident response procedures. Kier and LCC staff worked shifts throughout to manage the event and a review of the event is currently underway to identify areas for improvement.

The severe winter weather has also had an adverse effect on the condition of the road network, creating perfect conditions for potholes to form whilst simultaneously reducing the ability to carry out reactive works to address the issues. The winter service has now been put onto low risk, with warmer conditions now expected which means that Mobile Maintenance Team (MMT) staff are able to return their focus to reactive road maintenance issues.

### **Lincoln Eastern Bypass**

This is the County Council's largest highway scheme with a budget of £99.6m and a Department for Transport (DfT) grant of £49.95m. The main contract of £53m was awarded to Carillion and a soft start was made in January 2017, with a three year contract period. In January 2018 Carillion announced that it had gone into liquidation and the elected decision was made to terminate this contract. Immediately following this a new contract was signed with Galliford Try, who are continuing with the initial critical elements on site to ensure the project stays on programme. Pricing exercises are ongoing with Galliford Try with an aspiration of awarding the remainder of the construction works package (dependent upon an acceptable price). The unexpected need to change the contractor is likely to lead to an increase in the outturn cost of the project.

The main work on site is currently focussed on providing the foundations for the Market Rasen Rail Line Bridge and diverting utilities across the whole site. In addition, works have commenced on constructing temporary bridges over the River

Witham to enable the major earthworks movement and construction of the permanent bridge over the River Witham.

A separate £15m contract was awarded to BAM Nuttall by Network Rail, on behalf of LCC, to de-risk the main contract, by creating a hole under the railway on the Spalding line near Washingborough Road. The bridge is now in place.

A separate contract was awarded to Network Archaeology and work is currently concentrated north of Washingborough Road. The extent and quality of the archaeological finds has had a significant impact on the project budget which is being assessed along with exploring ways of utilising these finds to benefit Lincoln.

### **Grantham Southern Relief Road**

This scheme is a 3.5km road with a five span viaduct carrying the road over the East Coast Mainline railway, has a current budget of £81.5m and consists of three phases. The works will be funded from a Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) grant from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) grant and developer contributions, with LCC forward funding the developer contributions.

The King 31 Phase One from the B1174 running towards the A1 is now complete.

The completed design for King 31 Phase Two, which is based on the consented planning application for warehousing, has been submitted to Highways England for technical approval. Technical approval was granted in principal on 19 December 2017. A planning application for a Designer Outlet Village (DOV) submitted on behalf of Buckminster Estates was granted by South Kesteven District Council on 6 April 2018. The owners of Downtown submitted an alternative DOV planning application for their current site on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017.

LCC have signed section six agreements with both DfT and Highways England to enable legal orders for the whole scheme to be published. The legal orders include the line orders for the Trunk Road and compulsory purchase orders for outstanding land required and were advertised on 2 March 2018.

The design for Phase Three of the Southern Quadrant Link Road is almost complete and negotiations are ongoing with Network Rail in relation to their Shared Value policy. Significant service diversions have already been carried out with Anglian Water and Western Power Distribution.

LCC have now qualified for the next stage of a bid to HCA for a forward funding Housing Infrastructure Grant.

### **Peppermint Junction, Holbeach**

This was a £5.4m road improvement scheme which replaced a T-junction at the A17/A151 interchange with a new roundabout. The project improved vehicle capacity, safety and reduced congestion in Holbeach while also providing access into a planned employment zone (Food Enterprise Zone - FEZ) and housing

development via an additional new roundabout on the A151. Additional information on the FEZ is provided in Councillor Davie's statement. The scheme was funded by SLGF grant and forward funding by LCC.

The project is now complete and the impact of the construction phase was low when considering the high vehicle flows on the A17. The highway project was completed three months earlier than proposed and approximately £500k under budget.

### **Lincoln Southern Bypass/ North Hykeham Relief Road**

An Outline Business Case is currently being prepared, funded by the Advance Design Block, to continue to progress this major scheme in preparation for any funding opportunities to enable delivery of the project. The aim was to submit a bid for funding to the DfT in June 2018, however they strongly suggested that there will not be a bid opportunity until the end of the calendar year. This month, initial community engagement is planned for updating key stakeholders on progress and ensuring compliance with the funding bid process. This road will be a key link in the Lincolnshire Coastal Highway.

In addition, LCC has submitted a Growth and Housing Fund bid to the DfT in collaboration with the LEP. This bid is for enlarging and improving the A46 Pennell's roundabout to reduce congestion and unlock early growth which will help drive the availability of development funding for the North Hykeham Relief Road.

### **Lincolnshire Coastal Highway**

LCC is investigating potential improvements to the A158 across the County from the A1 to the North Sea coast around Skegness. This will look at the options for intervention along the route. In identifying improvements to the highway, consideration will need to be given to being future-ready, building in capacity to support growth, investigating options across a range of modes and building in resilience and lower longer term costs for management of infrastructure. The Council has developed a number of potential projects and initiatives along the route and has also held four engagement events in Skegness, Horncastle, Wragby and Lincoln to gather perceptions, existing challenges and potential solutions from key stakeholders.

Current work sees the sifting of the 122 longlist of projects against assessment criteria to result in schemes which generate clear benefits and crucially are deliverable. The main output from the commission with WSP will be a 'Lincolnshire Coastal Highway Strategy' which will present high level proposals to improve access across the County and beyond to the coastal areas of Lincolnshire. This strategy will help to move potential improvements along a path to being 'bid ready' when funding opportunities become available. Where appropriate, the strategy will be multi-modal in nature, not just concentrating on the highway itself but also including measures that may encourage alternative modes of transport and reduce issues identified within the corridor. A scrutiny paper will be completed for 11 June 2018 Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee. This work is being funded by the Advance Design Block. In addition, the eventual strategy document will likely further support various other existing projects currently being progressed.

## **National Productivity Investment Fund**

LCC have secured a grant of £5.4m from DfT, based upon a number of named schemes:

- Wolsey Way/Wragby Road Improvement in Lincoln to improve flows through two traffic signalised junctions – works started in February 2018
- A17 Sleaford Embankment Maintenance defect rectification
- A16 Louth Bypass resurfacing scheme, a thin surfacing replacement package and a re-tread package programme to improve roads

In addition LCC have been successful with the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF) bid for A46 Dunholme/Welton roundabout improvement at an estimated cost £4.6m with a £2m grant for expenditure by 2019/2010. A planning application was submitted in September 2017 with permission being granted in February this year. Work is progressing on land acquisition in parallel with the legal orders process.

## **Single Local Growth Fund 3 Schemes**

The A46/A15 Nettleham and A46/A158 Riseholme Road roundabout projects on Lincoln's Western Bypass attracted SLGF to a value of £2.4m. Work continues to progress an outline design for enlarging the size of both roundabouts and increasing the number of lanes both entering and exiting each leg of both roundabouts. This will alleviate congestion at these pinch points and improve journey time reliability. Discussions will soon commence with landowners regarding land acquisition to enable these planned works.

## **Brayford Wharf East Footbridge**

This is a Network Rail owned and managed project which consists of constructing a new iconic footbridge over the rail line on Brayford Wharf East. Following an appeal process, planning permission was granted to Network Rail in January 2018. Morgan Sindall have been awarded the tender to design and build the footbridge which is expected to commence in August 2018 for a period of five months. LCC are working closely with Network Rail to drive a coordinated approach between all parties.

In March, Network Rail commenced another project in the same locality, which includes developing the area and establishing a footway between Brayford Wharf East and High Street. The current programme suggests their affect in the highway network will cease in August 2018.

## **Rail Issues**

A vastly improved Sunday service on the Lincoln to Sheffield line commenced in December 2017. This has increased the number of services from eight to 27 (in both directions). Further Northern Railways service improvements were due to begin this month however will now to be delayed due to the overrunning of the electrification project between Manchester and Preston, which in turn will delay the cascade down of the diesel trains needed to deliver additional services across the Northern franchise.

DfT have announced the four shortlisted bidders for the new East Midlands rail franchise (Abellio, Arriva, Stagecoach and First/Trenitalia). The next step will be the publication of the formal Invitation to Tender (ITT) which is anticipated imminently. This will be the first indication of the base-line level of rail services being sought by DfT for Lincolnshire. Meetings with the shortlisted bidders are being arranged.

The Secretary of State for Transport announced in early February that the East Coast Main Line franchise operated by Virgin Trains East Coast (partnered with Stagecoach) would be ended earlier than anticipated due to poor financial performance. Various options are being considered by DfT to keep the services operating through to 2020, when the new East Coast Partnership is due to commence. As yet, no further information has been released. However, in response to parliamentary questions regarding the future of improved rail services proposed in the Virgin Trains franchise, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport has stated that they "expect to provide additional services between Lincoln, Harrogate, Bradford and London from May 2019".

### **Spalding Western Relief Road**

The scheme cost over £100m and is split into five sections.

**Section 1 (Southern Connection)** – LCC and the developer have reached a financial agreement for funding Section 1 of the SWRR. LCC Legal Services have been commissioned to draft an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the agreed proportionate costs. Following the Examination in Public and adoption of the Local Plan, LCC will now submit a planning application for the road only, with an aspiration of works commencement in autumn 2021.

**Section 2** – This section of the SWRR is having options developed as part of the SWRR delivery strategy. Section 2 will be developed in tandem with Section 1 to allow a full connection between the B1172 and the A151 Bourne Road. It is important to stress that the two sections will be developed independently with an aspiration to have both schemes constructed sequentially.

**Sections 3 and 4** – These sections of the SWRR are having options developed as part of the SWRR delivery strategy.

**Section 5 (Northern Connection)** – Successful announcement of Housing Infrastructure Funding through the Marginal Variable Fund for £12m to fund a significant portion of the whole scheme costs for delivering section 5, which includes both roundabouts and the bridge over the rail line between. A meeting with Homes England on 6 April was very positive in terms of the progression of the development of the road. This funding needs to be spent by March 2021 and now sees this Section and Section 1 being completed in tandem. Planning Applications for both sections are to be completed by March 2019 along with consultation on the proposed route for Sections 2-4.

LCC are leading on the delivery of the strategic route. Traffic Modelling has been commissioned, surveys have taken place and the results will be used to inform planning applications.

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## **Broadband**

The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme (onlincolnshire) has successfully completed the upgrade of over 160,000 premises throughout the County. The result of this work now puts Lincolnshire in a position where over 93% of all premises can benefit from Superfast broadband.

Work is still continuing and the current deployment plan has an additional 13,500 premises still to complete by December 2019. This will then take county-wide coverage of Superfast broadband to circa 97%, well above what was originally anticipated.

There still remains around 10,500 premises that are without Superfast and are not in the existing plans for upgrade. To that end, The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme are going through the process of putting together a tender for a third phase of the programme, to endeavour to cover as many of the remaining premises as possible. It is felt that with the correct mix of existing and alternative technologies, we can achieve this. We expect the Initiation to Tender will be launched in late summer, with a view to awarding a contract in the autumn.

Customer take up of better broadband continues to improve and we are now at a little over 48% take up. This is well above what was expected and will result in over £10m coming back to the programme from BT for further investment into the broadband programme. It should be noted that BT has already placed £4.65m at our disposal from this fund.

The deployment to West Lindsey phase was finalised in April and it is hoped to begin upgrading areas as we get into the autumn. There are currently 3,200 eligible premises and it is hoped that the deployment plan will pick up the vast majority of these, subject to them representing value for money.

As the programme progresses, we are seeing more and more FTTP (Fibre to the Premises) being deployed to the most rural areas of the County and this is a direct result of the levels of fibre penetration into these areas that now exists.

Additionally, the programme team are also looking to put together a bid for further government funding under the Local Fully Fibre Networks (LFFN) scheme. This scheme is intended to fund the provision full fibre networks to designated areas of the County. It is considered that this might well be an opportunity to upgrade specific business areas of the County and at the same time, seek to upgrade existing connectivity between public buildings. We expect to present the bid in late summer.

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