



HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2018

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors S P Roe (Vice-Chairman), Mrs W Bowkett, C J T H Brewis, Mrs J Brockway, R Grocock and A N Stokes

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

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Steve Brooks (Senior Project Leader), Anita Ruffle (Group Manager - Passenger Transport Unit), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Adams, M A Griggs and E W Strengiel.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor S P Roe as the new Vice-Chairman of the Committee and thanked the former Vice-Chairman, Councillor C J T H Brewis, for his service to the Committee.

2 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

Councillor S P Roe stated that he had previously declared a pecuniary interest under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, in connection with North Hykeham Relief Road, and would leave the meeting if there was any discussion of this matter (minute 6)

Councillor C J T H Brewis requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was the Council's representative on the Board of Transport for the North and East Coast Main Line Users' Association.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2018

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 23 April 2018, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND LEAD OFFICERS

With regard to reporting faults with the highway network, Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that he had sent an email to all Members of the Council about the current arrangement for reporting faults and added that an improved method of reporting faults was being examined. In the meantime, Members were still able to contact their highways support officer.

Councillor R G Davies reported that the Council had received the Institution of Civil Engineers East Midlands Merit Award for its work on Peppermint Junction. The Chairman congratulated all those involved in receiving the Award and requested that the Committee's appreciation should be passed to all those involved in the project.

5 A15 BUNKERS HILL, LINCOLN: DRAINAGE AND SURFACING SCHEME

The Committee received a report in connection with the drainage and surfacing scheme proposed for the A15 Bunkers Hill, Lincoln. Officers stated that this was a scrutiny pre-decision report prior to its consideration by the Executive Councillor for Resources and Communications and the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 11 June and 15 June 2018.

With regard to the scheme's details, officers outlined the background, the programme of works, traffic management and the estimated cost.

Comments by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The proposed finishing time of 11pm for daily work on the scheme was welcomed as this was a quiet neighbourhood.
- It was noted that it was proposed to reconstruct the carriageway three years earlier than planned. Officers explained why it had been necessary to bring forward the reconstruction of the carriageway stating that the surface of the carriageway had already failed. Officers agreed to respond to Councillor J Brockway's enquiry on the reasons for the failure of the carriageway surface.
- Officers stated that they would respond to Councillor R A Renshaw's enquiry about the direction of the flow of water.
- Officers stated that when the new Lincoln Eastern Bypass was opened it would be necessary to examine the long term effects on the current road network including signage and the re-classification of the current A15.

RESOLVED

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

(b) That it is recommended that the Leader of the Council approves the capital scheme appraisal for the Bunkers Hill scheme.

(c) That it is recommended that the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT approves the award of contract for the delivery of the Bunkers Hill scheme and delegates to the Executive Director for Environment and Economy, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, the approval of the final award of the contract and the final terms of the contract for the works.

(Post Meeting Note: Officers had responded to Councillors J Brockway and R A Renshaw in connection with their enquiries)

6 HIGHWAYS 2020 UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report of an update on the work being carried out to replace the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance which was due to reach its full term on 31 March 2020.

Officers stated that good progress had been made since the last report, with a lot of interest being shown by buyers at an event at the Bentley Hotel, Lincoln and had established a number of working groups to progress the detailed work required.

Comments by the Committee and the responses of officers, where necessary, included:-

- The keen interest of potential buyers at the "Meet the Buyer" day held on 18 May 2018 was welcomed and, hopefully, would lead to competitive tenders being received.
- What was the procedure for dealing with those potholes that the Highways Alliance came across unexpectedly while in the process of mending other potholes in the vicinity? Officers stated that due to the sheer number of potholes from the winter 2017/18 it was necessary to rely on the knowledge and experience of the contractor. It was also necessary for the contractor follow the Council's policy for repairing the road network because the Council might be required to meet legal claims. Officers stated that the strategy was being reviewed to improve how the Council could intervene and then to ask the contractor how this could be achieved within the budget available.
- It was sometimes difficult for Members to explain the procedure for the repair of potholes to the public and there was a need to manage the public's expectations.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.

7 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 4 (JANUARY TO MARCH 2018)

The Committee received the Quarter 4 (January 2018 to March 2018) performance report which included details about the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, Major Highway Schemes update, the National Highways and Transport Action Plan and the Customer Satisfaction information.

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Comments by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- It was noted that the increase in the budget for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass from £99.6m to an expected £120m was due to half the new costs coming because of a change contractor and the remainder from additional archaeological spend, additional land acquisition costs and inflation.
- How confident was the Council to avoid a Public Inquiry in the Grantham Southern Relief Road due to the objections received from people who had not raised any previous concerns in pre-construction discussions? Officers stated that they were hopeful of avoiding a Public Inquiry.
- The reporting of potholes by telephone with the Customer Service Centre produced a better quality of repair. The Executive Councillor stated that the preferred method of communication about potholes was by the internet and the addition of a photograph of the pothole and the background was helpful for location purposes.
- Was there anyway of separating spurious complaints from real complaints about potholes? Officers stated that legitimate complaints were considered and any spurious complaints were classed as unsubstantiated.
- Could the previous Quarter's performance percentages be added to future reports to enable a comparison to be made? Officers agreed to this suggestion.
- Complaints about weeds on pavements had replaced potholes as the main problem. Officers stated that the weed prevention programme had started.
- Officers agreed to respond to Councillor Mrs W Bowkett's enquiry about the need to cut grass in Spilsby.
- Did the spreading of salt cause any problems to the road surface? Officers stated that the spreading of salt prevented the growth of weeds and did not damage the road surface. Officers stated that extra preparation was now being put in place to treat potholes before the start of the next winter.
- The Committee was informed that while there was not an issue with the availability of pothole gangs to repair potholes there was still a shortage of drivers generally.

RESOLVED

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

(Post meeting note: Officers had responded to Councillor W Bowkett's enquiry)

8 UPDATE ON LOCAL BUS MATTERS

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the implementation of the Bus Services Act 2017. The purpose of the Act was to improve bus services for passengers by providing local authorities, the Secretary of State and bus operators with a new toolkit to enable improvements to be made to bus services in their areas.

Comments by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The provision of public transport in urban and rural areas was difficult to compare because their needs were different. Such issues as sparsity of population and rurality presented their own problems.
- The number of complaints about the bus service in Long Sutton had increased since the replacement of the locally run service by a national operator. Officers stated that they were trying to set up a bus operators meeting for Long Sutton and added that anyone having a complaint about the performance of a bus service should write to the Traffic Commissioner.
- It was noted that the initial poor service provided by the Thames Ambulance Services Ltd (TASL) had improved since new management practices had been introduced. Officers stated that since the decision to re-establish the full payment of travel expenses to voluntary car drivers the number of volunteers joining the scheme had increased.
- It was noted that the mandatory requirements for bus operators and local transport authorities to be involved in open data, such as the release of information on local bus services, e.g. fares, routes, timetables and real time passenger information could release commercially sensitive information. Operators might consider some data to be commercially sensitive. Officers stated that requests for certain data would be permissible under the regulations but the Council would be sensitive to how the data was shared.

RESOLVED

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

(b) That officers be thanked for a comprehensive report.

(c) That the Committee receive reports at a future meeting on the Teckal Company and the "Total Transport" approach.

9 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report on its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm

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