



HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B ADAMS (CHAIRMAN)

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

Executive Councillor R G Davies for Highways, Transport and IT attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Jonathan Evans (Senior Project Leader), Joe Phillips (Policy and Strategic Asset Manager), Paul Rusted (Head of Highways Services) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs P Cooper.

The Head of Paid Service reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, she had appointed Councillor T R Ashton to the Committee, in place of Councillor Mrs P Cooper, for this meeting only.

21 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 July 2019, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

There were no announcements.

24 WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2019

Consideration was given to a report in connection with proposed amendments to the existing Highways Winter Maintenance Plan.

Officers stated that a decision was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 16 September and 27 September 2019. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Executive Councillor as part of his consideration of this item.

Members' comments and questions were as follows:-

- What was the reason for the road temperature reduction from 1°C to 0.5°C and was this based on the long-term weather prediction or due to the use of treated brown rock salt? Officers stated that the use of treated brown rock salt was preferred because it adhered to the road better and was more economical compared to the use of white salt. The change in road surface temperature was in line with the National Winter Service Research Group and the quality of the Council's improved forecasting gave confidence in the move to this temperature.
- The public should be informed that they would not be prosecuted if they kept the footpath outside of their property clear of snow and ice. Officers stated that they would publish the "Useful Tips" guide in the County News and on the various websites to advise the public on this matter.
- The Plan stated that the Council had a minimum of 25k tonnes of salt at the start of the winter season and kept a minimum of 15k tonnes of salt available at any time across the county throughout the season. Two different sorts of salt were used, i.e. brown treated out of six depots and pre-wetted salt out of two depots. As the Council needed a minimum of each type of salt in stock at any one time the Council should state the split. In the following winter 2020/21 it would not matter because the Council would be using brown treated salt out of all the depots. Officers stated that they were reducing their stock of white salt and 15k tonnes minimum of the brown treated salt would be available.
- It was noted that requests to fill grit bins was required from "responsible bodies". Last year requests to fill grit bins by the public were responded to by the Council but there was no reference to this in the Plan. Officers stated that this might have been caused by an increase in requests.
- Urban areas did not have Parish Councils to act as the "responsible body" and a member stated that in his electoral Division in the City of Lincoln he was not aware of any grit bins. Officers explained the criteria for the distribution of the Council's grit bins. The member agreed to investigate the matter further in his area and respond to officers. Officers agreed to provide details of grit bins in the member's area, agreed to circulate the criteria used to maintain grit bins and to send "The Useful Tips" guide to Parish Councils and other interested parties.
- An enquiry was made about those Parish Councils that had bought their own grit bins. The Executive Councillor stated that there was no problem in the maintenance of County Council bins but the cost of maintaining Parish Council

owned grit bins required the Council and Parish Council to have an agreement on the matter because of the cost involved.

- Had officers consulted with the team responsible for Community Resilience Plan? Officers stated that they needed to be more proactive in this area and would liaise with the Emergency Planning Officer.
- Officers stated that the figure of 73 fewer runs (individual routes not turnouts) was in regard to the amount of runs potentially reduced by route based forecasting based on last Winter (as an approximate) – if we wished to state the difference in turnouts between last Winter and the previous "more severe" Winter the figure would be 64.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in connection with the Winter Service Plan 2019 be supported subject to the following comments of the Committee being sent to him:-

- (a) Parish Councils should be provided with details of the procedure for the supply of salt.
- (b) The public and other interested bodies should be informed of the procedure for the clearance of snow and ice from footpaths outside of their property.

25 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1 – (APR 2019 – JUNE 2019)

Consideration was given to a report on the performance of the Highways Service including the Major Highway Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Performance and highways and transport complaints.

Members' and questions were as follows:-

- The removal of a traffic priority sign in the Birchwood area of Lincoln had confused motorists and despite reporting its removal the sign had not been replaced causing confusion for motorists. Officers agreed to speak to the member about this matter after the meeting.
- The removal of obstructions to road signs caused by the growth of vegetation had improved in Lincolnshire but was still a problem in other parts of the county.
- It was noted that the Secretary of State had called-in the Planning Permission for section 5 of the Spalding Western Relief Road. Officers stated that they did not expect a response from the Secretary of State until Brexit had been resolved. Officers agreed to provide details to the Committee when the Secretary of State had called in the decision together with any other information reported back by the Secretary of State.
- It was suggested that health and well-being improvements arising from a highways project should be considered. Officers stated that social value had been considered in the preparation of the new Highways 2020 Contract.
- Durham County Council had got a fully integrated Park-and-Ride service in their transport system.

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- Traffic signal technology was innovative and members expressed an interest to see more information about this area. Officers stated that signal technology was constantly being improved and that it became an issue if it became obsolete.
- What progress was being made to improve Langrick Bridge? Officers stated that they had prepared a feasibility study for repair work to the bridge but because of the timescales involved in submitting a bid for funding from the Government's Challenge Fund the matter was still being considered.
- Reference was made to a poorly maintained road in the east of the county and the Executive Councillor was aware. Officers stated that road surveys were undertaken of all roads in Lincolnshire and agreed to discuss the issues raised with this particular road with the member after the meeting.
- The performance of the current highways contract would need to be closely monitored in its last six months of operation. Officers explained that a lot of contractors used evidence from the previous contract when bidding for future work and that joint presentations had been made to contractors' staff to provide confidence during the changeover period.
- Feedback was required on the maintenance of concrete roads in Louth and how this affected similar roads in North Hykeham. Officers stated that concrete roads in North Hykeham would be examined.
- There was a need to improve communication for enquiries to "Fix My Street". The Executive Councillor stated that staff responding to "Fix My Street" required more training on the use of the application to ensure that improved information was given to the public.
- There was a raised manhole cover in North Hykeham which was a trip hazard. Officers agreed to examine and report it to the responsible utility company.
- The Executive Councillor suggested that information on the number of completed repairs in each Council electoral Division should be sent to Parish Councils.
- The Chairman stated that the number of complaints in his Division had reduced considerably in recent years and requested that his appreciation should be sent to officers.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by members be noted and actioned accordingly.

26 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to Committee's work programme.

Members' comments and questions were as follows:-

- Highways England should be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to explain how they proposed to rectify problems on the A1 in Lincolnshire. Officers stated that a seminar had been arranged for October 2019 to discuss these matters and Highways England had been invited. A report would be

published towards the end of 2019 and then this would be the opportune time to invite Highways England to attend a meeting of the Committee.

- An update of the highway implications of the Western Growth Corridor was requested. The Executive Councillor stated that he had given an update at the last meeting of the full Council adding that a revised planning application had been requested. The highway implications would not be known until this application had been submitted.

RESOLVED

The work programme be noted and updated accordingly subject to receiving a report about safety issues on the A1 in Lincolnshire and that Highways England be invited to the Committee when this report is considered.

27 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

That by virtue of Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 and/or exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Appendices A, B and C as each Appendix contains confidential information relating to tenders and the disclosure of that information is either (i) prohibited by or under an enactment, namely Regulation 21 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or is (ii) information relating to the business of bidders in a confidential procurement. That confidential information is relevant to this procurement and probably also to other procurements in the local government sector given the limited number of potential contractors in the market. The information therefore has a high commercial value. In the event that the Council fails to keep the information confidential then the aggrieved bidder may be able to bring a very substantial claim in damages against the Council to cover its losses. In these circumstances the public interest in the Council withholding the information and protecting itself from litigation outweighs any interest in disclosing the information particularly where as much information as possible has been made available to in the open parts of the report.

28 HIGHWAYS 2020 CONTRACT AWARD DECISION

Consideration was given to a report in connection with the results of the Highways 2020 contract procurement, the process adopted and the solutions arising. Officers stated that a decision on the award of the Highways 2020 Contract was due to be made by the Executive on 1 October 2019 and the views of this Committee would be sent to the Executive.

Members and officers thanked the current contractors for their service.

RESOLVED

(a) That the recommendations to the Executive detailed in the report be supported and that the following comments be drawn to the attention of the Executive:-

- The Committee recommended that the quality commitments included as part of the bids needed to be monitored as part of the on-going performance monitoring of the wider contract. Officers confirmed that the added value included in the bids would form part of the formal contract.

- The Committee recommended that robust management was put in place in relation to the timing of the transition to the new contracts arrangements. The Committee highlighted the need to maintain the levels of service as part of the end of the current contract and during the mobilisation of the new arrangements.

- The Committee welcomed proposals to implement mobile IT tablets for contractors which would enable in the field reporting through CONFIRM. Members supported using the improved real time reporting to improved customer service.

- The Committee recommended the Highways 2020 Project Board continue to meet during the mobilisation of the contract.

(b) That the appreciation of the Committee for the work carried out by officers in the preparation of the contract be placed on record.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am