



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2021
Subject:	Performance Report: Quarter 3 – (1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020)

Summary:

This report sets out the performance of the highways service including the Major Highway Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report, the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Analysis and the Highways and Transport Complaints Report.

Actions Required:

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail of performance contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and IT.

1. Background

This report draws together performance and update information on the whole of the highway service in Lincolnshire.

This performance report contains:

- Major Highway Schemes Update February 2021;
- Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report Year 1, Quarter 3;
- NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Analysis;
- Highways and Transport Complaints Report, Quarter 3

Major Highway Schemes Update

The Authority currently has four major highway schemes:

- Lincoln Eastern Bypass
- Grantham Southern Relief Road
- Spalding Western Relief Road
- North Hykeham Relief Road

There are a number of other major highway and other infrastructure projects which are of a significant scale and may have a major impact on the County and surrounding area. All of these schemes are included in the Major Highway Schemes Update February 2021 found as Appendix A to this report.

Lincolnshire Highways Performance

Performance

Quarterly performance was reported through the Alliance management structure, with performance issues becoming the subject of an improvement action plan. A copy of the Lincolnshire County Council Highway Performance Report for Year 1, Quarter 3 can be found in Appendix B. This covers the period of October to December 2020.

New contracts for Highway Maintenance, Traffic Signals and Professional Services were awarded in Oct 2019 with the new contracts starting in this quarter.

The Alliance partners managed to achieve their targets for Quarter 3. The results per contract area are:

- Highways Works Term Contract Performance Indicators (Balfour Beatty) – 53.5%
- Professional Services Contract Performance Indicators (WSP) – 74.2%
- Traffic Signals Term Contract Performance Indicators (Colas) – 72.0%
- Client Performance Indicators (LCC) – 58.9%
- Alliance Key Performance Indicators (LCC/Balfour Beatty/Colas/WSP) – 74.4%

The scores have generally maintained as the same level as last quarter, however some measures are still low scoring.

Workshops have been arranged to focus on these areas to improve scores going into the final quarter of the year. Performance scores are envisaged to improve in Year 2.

Highway Works Term Contract

The new Highways Work Term Contract delivers a wide range of key highway services with maintaining the condition of carriageways a priority. In Q3 of 2020/21 we have repaired 10475 defects including 8189 carriageway potholes. We have fixed 170 gully grates, 385 footway potholes, 342 footway slabs, replaced 44 gully pots, as well as carrying out 312 kerbing jobs, 298 minor tree jobs and we have repaired or replaced 287 signs and refreshed the lines at 100 sites.

Carriageway Edge Works	1894
Carriageway Potholes	6295
Cleaning (Signs)	6
Contractor Identified Fault	86

Covers Gratings Boxes	170
Footway / Cycle (Flexible Surf)	4
Footway Potholes	385
Footway Slabs Stone	342
Grips (Dig)	12
Grit Bin Refill	42
Grit Bin Remove Install	14
Gully Pot	44
Hedges Trees Vis Splays	298
Kerbs Edgings Channels	312
Make Safe Furniture & Posts	42
Overgrown Verge Repairs	107
Pedestrian Guardrails	23
Road Markings - Studs	100
Signs Posts & Fixings	287
Standing Water (Signs Cleanse)	12
Grand Total	10475

To date we have cleaned out 142,148 gullies, with the remainder of the gullies in the County on schedule to be cleaned by April. The cyclic gully crews are now taking photos of any damaged assets and creating defects on the electronic system for the Local Highways Teams to address, and any blocked connections are also highlighted to inform follow up jetting or dig-down works.

In 2020 we carried out rural grass cuts covering 10,676 miles of highway verge, this was done 3 times throughout the growing season.

Urban flail (including that cut by other Councils under agreements with LCC) totalled 2,100 miles and was also done 3 times throughout the year.

Since the start of 2021, we have experienced severe weather conditions with flooding and harsh frosts/snow causing increased deterioration of road surfaces leading to potholes forming quickly, sometimes within days. This, combined with multiple gritting runs per night has put a strain on our resources so we have been trying to combat this by bringing in additional supply chain partners to try and keep up with demand.

We have now opened our dewatering bay in Sleaford. We are now able to safely remove water from gully waste without having to take it to treatment centres out of the county. The gully tankers used to deliver our service are now gradually being relocated to Sleaford reducing travelling time and improving productivity. 6 local people have been recruited to deliver the service with this eventually rising to 10.

Balfour Beatty are making progress with delivering their tendered quality promises which included,

- Retaining the mobilisation team on site for 90 days to embed new processes and culture

- Developing the right first time culture for all works where possible
- Investing £474k in depot improvements
- Connected digital display screens in main offices to enhance planning and programming
- Development of a Service Engagement App for tailored communication to relevant parties
- Introduction of an Observation App for reporting "near misses", quality concerns and positive observations in real time
- Supporting LCC to improve our NHT score from year 2 via a joint Improvement Plan
- The introduction of two volunteering days per year for each member of staff

Community Maintenance Gangs

The Community Maintenance Gangs continue to work throughout the County, delivering an additional £3.9 million of works during the 2020/21 financial year to make improvements throughout communities and the roads that link them. This work consists of minor aesthetic works, tidying of areas in poor condition, more large-scale civils works which sit out of our Asset Management Strategy, drainage investigation and repair focusing on problem sites from the 2019 floods and minor hand-lay patching work where pothole repairs are not sufficient.

2120 individual jobs have already been completed across the County by these gangs based on instructions by the Local Highways Teams fed by local and political priorities. In addition, 9695 "find and fix" jobs have been completed by the roaming community gangs picking up the more minor aesthetic works such as vegetation clearance, sign cleaning, sweeping, grip digging and siding.

Alongside the Community Maintenance Gangs we continue to operate the new internal email address, Cllrhighwaysenquiries@lincolnshire.gov.uk, which was created as a single point of contact for members with complex or on-going enquiries where the issue will be picked up and forwarded to the correct Local Highways Manager or Programme Lead for the issue area. All communications from members are being tracked and response times monitored. In 2020, 92% of communications received a full response within 10 days with the average response time being 3 days. All enquiries receive an acknowledgement straight away once they are logged, the 10 days is for a meaningful answer. There were 1029 Councillor highways enquiries in total from March to December, counting only the first email in a subject thread. Since 1st January 2021 there have already been a further 108.

Professional Services Contract

WSP continue to work alongside Lincolnshire colleagues to form the Technical Services Partnership (TSP), where of the ten Performance Indicators, three measure WSP performance directly and seven measure TSP as a whole (LCC & WSP). Schemes which completed in Q3 have fed into this reporting period, meaning that some of them commenced under the previous contract due to the timescales involved.

The overall Professional Services Partnership score for 2020 Q3 is 74.2 out of 100, slightly down on the Q2 score of 80.8

WSP are making progress in complying with their tendered quality statements, which are measured annually, along with that of their continuous improvement / innovation initiatives. One example of this is the proposed introduction of BIM (Building Information Modelling) and supporting the ProjectWise common data environment required to assist Lincolnshire County Council delivering against DfT requirements for new highway infrastructure schemes. These aspects are due to be live by the end of March 2021. Separately WSP colleagues are actively engaging with local Science Technology Engineering & Maths (STEM) activities working with students at both Lincoln College and Lincoln University.

The four measures which focus on TSP's ability to deliver highway schemes to time and cost with an average score of 7.7/10 for Q3; a reduction by 0.2 marks since Q2. There are specific items within the TSP action plan which look to improve performance in this area.

There is an opportunity to further improve performance in the timeliness of contract notifications within TSP Highway Schemes. Whilst the number of those completed to time in Q3 is 71/85 (83.72%), the agreed scoring mechanism of the new contract still results in a score of 2.0 as this is below the minimum performance threshold of 89%. This is being actively investigated and opportunities for further improvements being put in place.

Performance of ongoing highways schemes has been maintained during continued homeworking arrangements with the locally based LCC & WSP teams continuing to be integral to the delivery of highway improvements including the recent completion of Lincoln's Riseholme Roundabout and Lincoln Eastern Bypass whilst good progress is being made on the ongoing Welton A46 Roundabout. The partnership continues to progress efficiency and customer service initiatives through the annual Technical Services Partnership Action Plan.

Traffic Signals Term Contract

Q3 performance for Colas remains solid although there have been some downward movements in the PI scores. The overall score of 72 has fallen back to the level achieved back in Q1, from the 78 reported for Q2. This was largely down to a fall in number of faults fixed within contract timescales (PI 3) and also a reduction in the number of faults fixed first time (PI 7).

- 64 emergency faults (2 hours) of which 57 were attended in time
- 358 standard faults of which 354 were attended in time
- 45 requests for signals to be switched off for road works

Colas have now successfully recruited a new Senior Installer and a new Engineer, which brings the team back up to its optimum level bar the still vacant apprentice role. This will hopefully lead to a more consistent performance.

There has been a steady increase in the number of traffic signal switch offs requested and the new online portal has seen a reasonable uptake in the number of users. Existing users who use the older form based requests are being encouraged to use the new system.

The Traffic Signal Capital Programme for Q3 saw the completion of the Trinity Street / Tesco traffic signal junction refurbishment in Gainsborough. This was a large and complicated scheme which also involved the replacement of the adjacent pedestrian crossing outside McDonalds.

The signals at Horseshoe Bridge near Spalding were also refurbished this quarter, and a new Puffin crossing was installed in Wragby as part of the overall highways improvement works carried out there.

Innovation

There are a number of innovations which we are evaluating with a view to bringing these permanently into the highway service. These include:

- 3D pothole camera technology for inspections – a camera which takes 3D images of potholes to automatically measure depth and size of a repair which then helps to calculate the amount of material required for the repair
- Robocut – a remote controlled vegetation cutting system which can be used on difficult sites to reduce the risk to operatives. Recently used on the Corringham Road scheme.
- Verge overrun trials - this is a machine initially trialled by our supply chain providing a mechanised approach to stoning for verge overrun. This removes the manual element of the work and outputs are therefore higher.
- 3M ear defenders/radio & new respirators - these are new products. The ear defenders cut out background noise and make it easier for the gangs to communicate. The respirators are far easier to fit compared to undertaking face fit testing and also allow for improved communication.
- Intellicone – an intelligent road cone system which warns our operatives of vehicle incursions into works safety zones.
- App/QR code system for managing hazardous waste – an App which uses QR Codes to track the movement and storage of hazardous materials such as tar bound planings.
- Lower Temperature Asphalt – a bituminous material which can be mixed at lower temperatures than historic mixes which therefore reduces the carbon footprint of the material
- EZ Street Asphalt Repair – a new product which is expected to offer improved longevity for emergency repairs.
- JCB Pothole Pro – a development of the well known excavator which incorporates a planer and other innovations to improve the productivity of pothole and other repairs
- Sonar Inspections for Bridge Scour – undermining of bridge foundations by scouring can lead to the collapse of the structure. Diving surveys for bridge scour are being replaced by the use of a sonar device towed behind a small boat. This is a much safer operation than diving.

- Rock Bags – Where scour is detected then solutions such as underpinning or pin piling can be expensive. Early detection of scour issues is allowing us to use rock bags which are assembled on site and placed at the base of the bridge to afford protection from scour.
- Smart Button - A device to allow the contactless operation of pedestrian push button units has been identified by Colas and they are looking to select a trial site to test this new technology. The Smart Button simply allows a user to wave their hand under a sensor fitted to the push button which will latch a demand with the crossing. In the current climate, this is something that we should be giving consideration to.

NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Analysis

The Council has participated in the NHT Public Satisfaction survey since 2008 and this enables us to understand the views and preferences of a sample of residents and to compare these against other similar councils. The survey, undertaken by Ipsos MORI, is based on a sample of residents and is designed to represent a spread of customers' views of the service across the county, geographically by gender and by age.

In 2020, 109 authorities participated in the survey and data can be obtained from any of the authorities that took part.

For Lincolnshire in 2020, 3300 questionnaires were released, of those 871 were returned - giving a 26.4% return rate. This is a good response rate and will provide results which are statistically significant. The return is higher than the national average of 23.8%.

The results are disappointing given the amount of activity that we have undertaken over recent years. Most large Shire Counties encounter similar issues with their results and we are engaged nationally to understand the reasons for this and potential solutions. This national work will complement the joint work we are also undertaking with Balfour Beatty. A more detailed report on the results can be found as Appendix C.

Complaints

Customer Complaints relating to highways and transport have seen an increase from the last quarter by 29% and there has also been a 184% increase when compared to Q3 of 2019/20. The level of complaint escalations from our area has decreased from 2% last quarter to 0% of complaints escalated this quarter.

The complaints are of a varied nature, however the highest reason remains related to potholes and defects which account for 22% of complaints.

The full Highways and Transport Complaints Report Quarter 3 October to December 2020 can be found as Appendix D

2. Conclusion

Lincolnshire's Highway Service has successfully mobilised the three new Highways 2020 contracts during a global pandemic. Whilst this has had an impact on overall performance the four partners have worked hard to minimise this.

Performance on the delivery of our major schemes is good given the impact of Covid 19 and recent weather events.

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail of performance contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and IT.

3. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Major Highway Scheme Update Report February 2021
Appendix B	Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report Year 1 Quarter 3 October to December 2020
Appendix C	NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Analysis
Appendix D	Highways and Transport Complaints Report, Quarter 3

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Paul Rusted, Head of Highways Services, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or paul.rusted@lincolnshire.gov.uk