

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 13 DECEMBER 2013

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

Lincoln Eastern Bypass

Orders to acquire land, amend existing highways and allow navigation under the Witham crossing published in July, followed planning permission for a single carriageway scheme. As a result of a number of objections to the Orders, a Public Inquiry is expected to be held in February 2014. Design work is ongoing and the procurement process is underway with tenders due to be sought in January 2014. The scheme is still on programme to start in late 2014/early 2015, with expected opening by the end of 2016.

East/West Link

Orders to acquire land and amend existing highways published in July, followed planning permission for Phase 1 (High Street to Pelham Bridge). As a result of a number of objections to the Orders, a Public Inquiry is planned to be held in February/March 2014, but work is ongoing to acquire the remaining properties and remove the objections. Design work is ongoing and a procurement strategy agreed. The scheme is still on programme to start in late 2014 with completion two years later.

Lincoln Canwick Road Improvements

This scheme forms part of Phase 2 of The Lincoln East West Link and was submitted as a Local Pinchpoint bid for grant to reduce congestion. The Secretary of State announced on 27 September 2013 that Lincolnshire County Council had been successful in securing a £1.734M DfT grant for this scheme.

Design work is progressing, and Orders to acquire land are being prepared to be submitted to the Executive for approval in January 2014. If all goes well the scheme could start on site late 2014.

Whisby Road Improvements

The scheme to improve Whisby Road between Doddington Road and the new Teal Park Development commenced on site in October. The £3.2M scheme includes widening the road to current standards together with the provision of new footway/cycleways. The scheme is funded through a number of sources including Access LN6 grant, Integrated Transport Block and developer contributions, and will provide a much improved link which has been sought after by the local community for many years. Due to the large number of utility companies' infrastructure that has to be diverted, and the programme complexity, this work will take 12 months to complete.

Spalding Western Relief Road

The County Council is continuing with design work for Phase 1 of the relief road. This work will ensure that the infrastructure constructed as part of the Holland Park development will meet the future requirements for it to serve as the relief road.

Work on potential routes for Phases 2 and 3 is continuing. Route options are being further developed to ensure they will support the requirements of the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Work has also commenced on the Spalding Transport Strategy, with a stakeholder workshop held in November. The workshop sought views about the travel problems in the town now and in the future. A similar public consultation exercise is also commencing through the press, website and social media.

Consultation for the relief road is now programmed for May 2014, to avoid conflict with planned Network Rail level crossing closures, which could skew the consultation responses. Re-programming will also now enable the results of the transport strategy to be consulted on at the same time.

Grantham Southern Relief Road (GSRR)

A planning application for the SCLR section of the southern relief road, submitted to South Kesteven District Council in March 2013, was considered and approved by them on 19 November 2013.

The GSRR requires the connection to the A1 (King 31) to be in place on completion of SCLR. Discussions/negotiations are taking place with landowners and developers considering various options to secure a way forward to achieve the GSRR. This may require some additional forward funding provision by Lincolnshire County Council.

Work is currently underway to prepare Orders to acquire land and amend existing highways rights.

Site investigation procurement and detailed design has commenced and procurement options to the scheme are being explored.

Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership

The number of people killed or seriously injured on Lincolnshire's roads up to the end of April 2013 was 101. This is 26 less than for the same period in 2012 and represents a reduction of about 20%. The number of fatal casualties that have occurred to date is 16, which is one less than for the corresponding period last year. These reductions are welcome and mean that the downward trend is continuing.

I accompanied Lincoln's Member of Parliament, Karl McCartney on a tour of the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership on 7 June. Mr McCartney visited the Life Skills Academy at North Kyme and then the LRSP Headquarters in Lincoln. I am pleased to inform Councillors that Mr McCartney was very impressed with the multi-agency approach to road safety and intends to invite the other Lincolnshire MPs to visit LRSP. Any councillors who also wish to visit the LRSP would be very welcome and should contact me in the first instance.

Many councillors will be aware of the '2Fast 2Soon' Education and Driver Training Programme, comprising three 'Phases'. The theatre production (Phase 1) has recently been redeveloped to make it more accessible to young people, and this means it can be delivered to almost any school. Statistical data on road fatalities in young drivers provides encouraging evidence of the success of the scheme, and LRSP have received interest from other areas including Nottingham, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Northern Ireland.

Road Maintenance

A Value for Money Strategic Review of the Highways Alliance has been undertaken by Cranfield University, which indicates that the Alliance provides industry leading value and effectiveness within the current structural constraints of the service.

We have completed a successful surface dressing programme of around 2.4 million square metres. We have also patched 1,900 roads with 90,000 square metres of patching and fixed around 30,000 potholes.

Recycling works have been completed in South and West Divisions, offering a very cost effective treatment solution and we have treated around 15 miles (25km) of network. This is an innovative treatment which reduces the need to dispose of materials to landfill and saves the cost of disposal.

Work has now begun to identify sites for preventative surface treatments next year, so that patching and preparation can be undertaken in advance. Further recycling sites have also been identified for treatment next year.

Work has been completed on the replacement of tungsten halogen traffic signals with LED lights at 100 sites, which will produce energy savings of around £50K per annum, and reduce maintenance and disposal costs by removing the need for an annual bulk lamp change. Further new technologies are being developed in the traffic signals field to lessen operating costs by reducing power consumption and maintenance requirements.

Transportation

In October, the Department for Transport (DfT) published the prospectus and pre-qualification documents for the replacement Inter City East Coast rail franchise due to commence in February 2015. A short-list of applicants will be announced in January and an Invitation to Tender (ITT) will be issued in February 2014. We will continue to lobby DfT and the shortlisted applicants for the inclusion of improved Lincoln-London services within the new franchise.

We also continue to lobby for improvements to the services from Grimsby through to Nottingham seeking the best options for the people of Lincolnshire as well as attracting visitors.

The LN6 project is progressing well:

- the hire bikes have proved popular
- works have started at Hykeham Station

In December CallConnect will be operating on Sundays to give people greater access to their local facilities.

Winter Maintenance

Winter maintenance operations for 2013/2014 continue to be carried out in accordance with the councils *Winter Maintenance Plan issued July 2013*. Lincolnshire started the winter season with 28,000 tonnes of salt in stock and an additional 10,000 tonnes delivered in early December. As of the 25 November, 2,100 tonnes of salt had been used on 11 county-wide salting runs, which is equivalent to the 25 year long term average. The gritter fleet has been serviced and prepared for the new season, a programme of training has been delivered for drivers and for client duty officers, and 14 new replacement gritters have been added to the fleet.

Information Management & Technology

Arrangements for future services from 2015 are progressing through the Future Delivery of Support Services Programme (FDSS). Competitive dialogue is underway with three suppliers.

A revised operating model is currently being implemented to deliver £1.3M savings this year, and in future years from base budgets that have been underwritten by our current supplier Mouchel.

Information security is very important to us now and will be critical to us in the future as we seek to work more closely with other public agencies including Health. So I am very pleased to report that we have now achieved compliance with national requirements for the Public Service Network.

Final arrangements for procurement of the council's new Case Management System were, at the time of writing, due for decision at Executive on 3 December. The recommended system will significantly increase efficiency in both Children's Services and Adults Services and also reduce costs of ownership.

Summary

Across the highways, transport and IT portfolio further work is underway to find financial savings and service improvements, particularly around response and communications.