

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING 16 MAY 2014

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

LINCOLN EASTERN BYPASS

A Public Inquiry in respect of the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road orders took place in early March. There were a number of objections to the scheme put before the planning inspector during the enquiry. The Inspector's report has now been completed with recommendations due to go to the Department for Transport (for a final decision to be made by the Secretary of State) in the coming weeks. At this time we have no reason to suspect that the outcome will be anything but favourable, and officers are currently considering the tenders recently received for the construction of the works. Subject to confirmation of the Orders, and final approval from the DfT, the contract is scheduled to be awarded late summer with an expected start date for the major elements of construction in late 2014 to early 2015. The work is expected to take approximately two years to complete.

LINCOLN EAST WEST LINK

The Public Inquiry in respect of the Side Road and Compulsory Purchase Orders required for this scheme took place in late March. There was only one outstanding objection from National Grid Gas to the proposals, with other 'objections' resolved by negotiation prior to the date set to hear the representations. Whilst we still have to await the Inspector's recommendations and subsequent decision by the Secretary of State, it is highly likely that the Orders will be confirmed in due course. Tenders are expected to be invited in May using the Midland Highway Alliance Framework Contract and, subject to the confirmation of Orders, construction should commence late 2014.

WHISBY ROAD SCHEME

Work to improve Whisby Road began last October, and are now quite visible to the passer by, including a widened carriageway to 7.3m with combined footways and cycleways on each side, new pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities, and improved street lighting.

BRANT ROAD NEWARK ROAD (LOCAL PINCHPOINT FUND)

The £2.1M improvement scheme to reduce congestion on Newark Road/Brant Road/Rookery Avenue is now complete, and has resulted in a significant improvement to traffic movement in this area particularly in the afternoon peak period.

CANWICK ROAD SOUTH PARK TO HALL DRIVE (LOCAL PINCHPOINT FUND)

Preparations are underway to deliver a second congestion easing scheme for Canwick Road, and work is expected to start early in the New Year. Lincolnshire

was the only Authority to be successful in two bids for this tranche of government funding.

BRAYFORD WHARF EAST FOOTBRIDGE

Network Rail were due to commence work on a new footbridge over the railway on Brayford Wharf East on 6 May. However, this has been delayed by some 12 weeks following the discovery of gas utility infrastructure not previously highlighted. This will require the closure of Brayford Wharf East to vehicular traffic for the duration of the works, except for access to the NCP car park. The design of the bridge includes lifts to comply with accessibility requirements and, when complete, will afford a new perspective across the Brayford towards the Castle and Cathedral, as well as the University. Network Rail's programme is for the bridge to be open before the Christmas Market.

HIGH STREET FOOTBRIDGE

Planning Consent has been granted by City of Lincoln Council for a new Network Rail footbridge on the High Street. Construction is due to commence in January 2015, with completion expected in the summer. The Brayford Wharf bridge and the High Street bridge are estimated to cost in the order of £10M, fully funded by Network Rail

All the above schemes represent a major investment – some £160M - in Lincoln's infrastructure, and must be recognised as a positive for the City and for the County as a whole. However, this work will cause some disruption to the normal movement of traffic in and around the City, and Highways Officers are working closely with partner agencies to minimise the inconvenience to the road users and to business' during this time.

GRANTHAM SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD (GSRR)

Design work is progressing well with this scheme. The continued judicial review challenge over granting permission for the SQLR has again been rejected by the Courts at oral hearing. The developer has lodged an appeal to the High Court.

The Landowner/Developer for the A1 distribution park (KING31) has until August 2014 to secure his planning permission, and we are working with him to offer support and advice.

ALFORD BUS INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Improvement works to the bus stop and surrounding area have now been completed, to include a vastly improved streetscape and new pedestrianised area, a bespoke bus shelter, street furniture, information board, and cycle parking.

CONCESSIONARY FARES

A new two year capped scheme has been reached with bus operators, enabling the Council to have certainty on expenditure for the reimbursement costs.

ADDITIONAL GRANT

The Council has received a further £3.3M to improve the condition of our road network. This is in addition to the £6.451M grant received for 2013/14 and 2014/15, and supplemented with £2M of additional council funding. Almost £7M of this total was spent last year carrying out much needed repairs to potholes and damaged roads.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Due to the mild winter conditions, some 20,000 tonnes of salt remain in our depots for use over winter 2014/2015.

LINCOLNSHIRE ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

To the end of March 2014, there have been 80 KSI casualties – two less than for the corresponding period last year. The number of fatal casualties to the 22 April 2014 is 10, which is three less than the corresponding period last year. Members will recall that the number of people killed on Lincolnshire's roads last year was the lowest on record, so this is a very encouraging start to the year.

LRSP priorities for 2014 will be young drivers between the ages of 17 and 24, car drivers with emphasis on business users, riders of two wheel motor vehicles, pedestrians and pedal cyclists.

As part of their commitment to reduce the number of motorcycle rider casualties, in April 2014 the police re-launched Operation Octane – a campaign focussing on both low and high powered motor cycle riders. The campaign combines education and enforcement interventions, and is supported by police casualty reduction officers based within the LRSP. In addition, temporary signing – 'Shiny Side Up' will be displayed on 'biker routes' having a high incidence of motorcycle collisions.

A variety of driver training courses are now being run from the Life Skills Academy at North Kyme all designed to improve driver safety. These include fleet, mini bus and taxi driver training and corporate driver courses. In addition, it also provides driver certificate of professional competency courses for light goods and public service vehicle drivers.

Transport for London (TfL) is near completion of a programme to move from wet film to digital cameras for speed and red light violations. In order to reduce our own maintenance costs, and to maximise the life of the existing stock of wet film cameras, LRSP are currently in negotiations with TfL to try and obtain the surplus Gatso camera units.

Working closely with the Speed management Task and Finish group, LRSP have developed a Lincolnshire version of Community Speed Watch recently piloted in Ancaster. The outcome of the pilot will be reported back to Task and Finish group in May.

IT

The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme is making excellent progress, with over 1,000 premises per week being able to take advantage of faster broadband, and the added benefits it brings.

The main project with BT has currently delivered 70 upgraded roadside cabinets, against a target of 53, and has passed 17,800 premises against a target of 11,750 until 31 March 2014.

The ERDF funded 'fixed wireless project' in the east of the county (AB Internet) has now provided coverage to the 4,500 homes in the original 'intervention area' with incidental coverage now able to provide faster broadband to over 10,000 premises – which will soon increase to over 12,500 premises.

We remain confident that the excellent progress will be maintained across the summer months, and we are actively engaged in putting together our bid for secondary Government funding to push Superfast Broadband coverage to over 95% of premises within the county.