

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

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

LINCOLN EASTERN BYPASS

On 8 July the Secretary of State issued his decision to not confirm the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road as a result of concerns over a non-motorised user (NMU) crossing of Hawthorn Road, and its proximity to the bypass. As a result, the Council have reviewed provision in this area and have decided to relocate the NMU bridge to the south of Hawthorn Road in order to address this concern. A revised planning application was submitted on 26 August, and is due to be considered by the Planning and Regulation Committee at its meeting on 6 October. Subject to these Orders being successfully processed, it is hoped to start construction in 2015. Discussions are ongoing with DfT regarding funding of the scheme.

LINCOLN EAST WEST LINK

The final elements of the tender assessment are being completed, and pre contract award meetings are being arranged. Much of the work in respect of land assembly, relocation of business and other agreements have been completed, and the construction phase is due to start in November – a welcome culmination to some eight years of hard work.

WHISBY ROAD SCHEME

With the scheme now nearing completion, cyclists are already putting to good use the new links to Teal Park and Kingsley Way employment areas. In addition, the Access LN6 project has secured additional funding for a footway /cycleway link along Station Road from North Hykeham to join up with the new facilities on Whisby Road. Construction on this link should commence soon, significantly improving the accessibility of North Hykeham to these employment sites.

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

The proposed scheme from South Park Avenue to Hall Drive will provide for a four lane carriageway on the B1188, with an improved off slip from Canwick Road on to South Park Avenue, two lanes extending from the tidal flow through South Park Avenue junction, as well as a revised junction at Washingborough Road. Given the impact that these works will have on those approaching the city from the south, the works are programmed for completion by May 2015 in order to avoid disruption to major planned events in Lincoln next year. To achieve this, a start date in October/early November is required.

BRAYFORD WHARF EAST FOOTBRIDGE

Due to significant cost escalation, Network Rail (NR) has had to postpone these works whilst they investigate ways of reducing costs. NR is currently negotiating with individual stakeholders to see what is achievable through alternative designs, construction materials and value engineering. We have been informed that NR is still committed to the delivery of this scheme to improve accessibility and remove the risks to pedestrians in relation to the operation of the level crossing.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Following a very successful workshop with key stakeholders back in July, a communications strategy has been developed to deal with the consequences of the forthcoming works and events programmes.

In summary, the programme of works and events planned over the next few years will present a significant challenge for all who seek to deliver them, and for those whose daily life will be affected by them. Therefore, it is essential that an effective communication network is set up and maintained throughout the duration of these works. These measures need to be flexible and adaptable to meet the frequent situation changes that will inevitably occur throughout the programme. The provision of clear, concise and accurate information to the wider community is essential if we are to minimise the impacts of the construction phases on the normal routine functioning of the City.

In order to achieve this, sufficient resources must be made available and all parties must be committed to delivering first rate information and data. We will encourage as many organisations and individuals as possible to register with us in order to receive the information direct via a range of digital formats.

People will be informed and encouraged to consider alternative travel and / or work patterns in order to reduce 'normal' traffic levels to enable those with essential journeys to be able to travel in and around the City with the minimum of disruption.

SKEGNESS COUNTRYSIDE BUSINESS PARK ACCESS

Securing £4M funding from the Greater Lincolnshire LEP has enabled preparatory design work to commence for a new roundabout on the A52. This new roundabout will allow direct access from A52 into the proposed Countryside Business Park, and provide the connection point for a future western relief road for Skegness.

GRANTHAM SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD (GSRR)

Grantham - Southern Quadrant Link Road (SQLR)

Design work on the SQLR is progressing, incorporating the changes as a result of the Design Review. The Judicial Review challenge over granting permission continues, and the Appeal Court Hearing is set for 30/31 October 2014.

Grantham - SQLR link to A1

The landowner/developer for the A1 distribution park (KING31) has secured his planning permission by satisfying the pre-commencement conditions. LCC has been requested to act on their behalf to progress the design and procurement of the link road, together with its connection to the A1. Discussions have commenced with Highways Alliance to ensure the best plan is developed with regard to cost effectiveness and delivery timescale.

SPALDING WESTERN RELIEF ROAD

Work seeking to identify potential routes for Phases 2 and 3 is continuing to ensure they will support the requirements of the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan. Public Consultation for route options for Phase 2 and 3 of the relief road is anticipated late 2014, in parallel with the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan consultation.

SPALDING TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Development of the Spalding Transport Strategy is nearing completion following stakeholder and public consultation in July 2014. The final strategy document will be put forward for consideration and adoption by the county and district councils later this year.

EXTRA MONEY

The Council has received two additional grants: £3.3M additional S31 grant, and £5.4M pot hole grant. These grants will be used to carry out a combination of patching, resurfacing and recycling works. This is in addition to the £6.451M grant received for 2013/14 and 2014/15, which we supplemented with £2M of additional council funding. Almost £7M of this original funding was spent last year carrying out much needed repairs to potholes and damaged roads.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

The county has 23,000 tonnes of salt in stock, following the average winter last year. A new contract is now in place with NGS Sustainable Salt Solutions, based in Southampton, who will be providing a further 12,000 tonnes of salt initially, with further top ups as the winter progresses. We have 44 front line gritters, serviced and prepared, ready for the new winter season.

HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

We have developed a new Highways Performance Dashboard which will supplement our existing performance management activity. This is externally focused and includes details of our road network condition, on street parking enforcement, safety, finance, contractor performance and customer activity. The performance of the Highways Alliance continues to improve.

ACCESS LN6

This project continues to deliver successful travel initiatives across the LN6 area, and was recently given an extra £350,000 – this was approximately one third of the total extra money available across the country.

RAIL SERVICES

Together with other authorities and LEPs, we have agreed to contribute £50,000 towards improved rail services between Nottingham and Lincoln.

LINCOLNSHIRE ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (LRSP)

I am pleased to inform you that it was agreed to roll out the community speed watch programme on a countywide basis. All councillors should have received details, but I would take this opportunity to emphasise that the scheme is open to all community groups that wish to participate.

It gives me pleasure to report the number of fatal casualties on our roads continues to fall – 19 to the end of August, compared to 23 for the corresponding period last year. This is very good news indeed, as councillors will recall that last year's figure was the lowest ever recorded

The number of killed or serious injury casualties recorded to the end of July is slightly higher than for the corresponding period last year, but is on track to be below the target set for 2014.

LRSP is in the process of inviting tenders to upgrade 10 safety cameras from wet film to digital. This is the first of a programme of planned upgrades that should ultimately future proof all cameras as wet film cameras and parts become obsolete. The tender will also include the provision of an average camera system on a 3.5 km section of the A15 at Metheringham Heath between Greenman Wood and Dunston Pillar junctions. This will be jointly funded from the County Council's Local Safety Scheme budget since it should reduce the number of collisions that continue to occur despite numerous engineering interventions.

Finally, councillors should be aware that the overhead costs required to run the LRSP are currently funded by contributions from the organisations that make up the Partnership, which includes the County Council. However, the LRSP is currently developing a business model to become self-financing over the next three years. This is a very welcome development particularly in this period of economic restraint.

IT

A new IMT strategy is currently being developed that underpins initiatives across the council, as a key enabler, supporting commissioning strategies by ensuring that the Council can get the right data, to the right people, in the right place at the right time.

This approach reduces administrative activities and streamlines interaction between service areas, as well as rationalising the systems that are in place and improving

the way we work with third party organisations – ultimately, doing more for less whilst delivering service improvements to the citizens of Lincolnshire.

Working with Serco

The council signed a new contract with Serco in April 2014 which includes the delivery of IMT Services. The timetable for the transfer to Serco includes a transition year prior to service take-on, allowing for a number of transformational projects to be developed prior to April 2015.

Improving services to our citizens

As part of the improvements to support the Customer Service Centre, Serco will be implementing new customer relationship management software which will provide significant benefits to the citizens of Lincolnshire. This system will be linked to the new case management system (Mosaic) to ensure joined up information for citizens. The high level designs for this supporting technology have been signed-off and the detailed level technical designs are now underway to support the improved business processes being developed.

Working more efficiently

Serco are introducing 'Agresso' on 1 April 2015 to replace SAP, providing the opportunity to standardise and simplify our existing business processes. Agresso will be linked to the new case management system (Mosaic) to improve efficiency for managing the provision of care packages.

The move to Mosaic is a key part of the Council implementing the Care Act 2014, and will be operational from April 2015. Careful joint working on these projects will ensure that all three systems share information seamlessly improving efficiency for staff and citizens.

The use of new technologies to provide mobile computing, without compromising security, is in development to make it easier for staff to be productive when working away from the office. This reduces the burden of office provision, supporting the Council's Property Rationalisation Strategy, but also allows staff to be sited where they are needed. Changes to core infrastructure have commenced and high level plans for the security model have been completed.

Business intelligence

Providing a corporate Business Intelligence solution will enable the Council to leverage the wealth of data it holds to support informed decision making and break down internal silos, supporting the restructure of the Council and development of commissioning strategies. Improved analysis will enable the Council to focus budgets on targeted problem areas, and accurately assess the impact of the initiatives undertaken. High level designs have been completed with Serco, and detailed plans are now being prepared to include the migration of existing systems and the development of a support function.

Secure information sharing

The implementation of an improved identity management solution will allow the Council to improve the way it securely interacts with the public and third party

organisations – supporting the Commissioning Council agenda. The ability to securely share data and systems is a key objective to working with other organisations, including district councils and the NHS - this will help drive the move towards the sharing of public buildings with partner organisations. High level plans for the necessary technology have been completed with Serco, and detailed level design work is currently underway.

Data centre relocation

The new contract with Serco includes moving to off-site data centres. This will provide improved resilience, whilst significantly reducing the capital investment costs that were originally anticipated. Benefits received from improvements to the Council's IT resilience and capacity management will ensure better availability of key systems. Discovery work is underway, and a plan is currently being developed to ensure minimal impact to services whilst this work is carried out.

LINCOLNSHIRE BROADBAND PROGRAMME

The main BT project has now delivered 150 upgraded roadside cabinets, which is 27% of the overall project total and passed 36,369 premises. This excellent progress is a direct result of the good work of BT and the invaluable and ongoing assistance of Highways and District planners and coordinators.

The ERDF funded 'Fixed Wireless Project' being delivered by AB Internet, a Lincoln based company, is now complete and over 12,500 premises are able to take advantage of the faster broadband this scheme has successfully delivered.

Secondary funding under the Government's 'Phase 2' delivery programme has now been formally agreed with BDUK. Lincolnshire has been allocated a further £2.35M and this will be match funded by LCC and other EU funding sources, and utilised to push fibre based broadband coverage to at least 95% of Lincolnshire's premises, in line with the Government's 2017 target.

Overall, we remain confident that the programme will hit the delivery targets and that Lincolnshire's businesses and residents will continue to benefit from the improvements being delivered.