

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 9 DECEMBER 2011

Statement from: Councillor W S Webb, Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport

Winter maintenance and resilience

Following three consecutive ‘worse than average’ winters, and in particular December / January 2010/11, we have started the winter with 44,000 tonnes of salt (at the start of last winter it was 38,000 tonnes). We are, therefore, well prepared for the winter ahead in keeping clear the primary network.

However, considerable concern was raised by members of the public with respect to the condition of minor roads and footways across many parts of the County last December and January. To help address these concerns, Highways Officers have been looking at ways to encourage communities to improve local resilience through a programme of self-help and mutual aid. Consultations and workshops have been held throughout the summer and early autumn to develop a process by which we can encourage people to help themselves in times of severe weather.

Additional advice on clearing snow from footways and carriageways has been issued, and the preparation for delivery of additional salt supplies, in advance of a forecast of heavy snow, is currently underway. A comprehensive letter and information pack is being sent to every Town and Parish Council, and all other known community groups across the County, inviting them to contact their Divisional Office if they wish to participate in self-help and take advantage of the resources on offer. There are still issues surrounding public liability insurance for those participating in this programme, but this is being actively pursued by our own Insurance Manager. It is hoped that a comprehensive response, and subsequent guidance information, can be issued very soon.

Furthermore, confirmation has been received from HMRC that the use of red diesel in agricultural vehicles used to clear snow from the highway is lawful.

Lincoln Transport Strategy

The various elements of this latest adopted Transport Strategy for Lincoln are progressing as follows:

Lincoln Eastern By Pass

It is anticipated that a Government announcement will be made on the best and final offer prior to the Parliamentary Christmas recess.

Lincoln East West Link Road

The planning application for the East West Link will now be made in December 2011. The extra time taken will enable the County Council to include plans for the replacement of a number of key buildings within the conservation area. This will show the County Council's commitment to replace historic buildings with those of an

equivalent quality. Although the proposed road still follows the original alignment, it is hoped that the number of detailed but significant changes made to the consultation plan will resolve many of the issues that emerged from the consultation.

Lincoln South West Quadrant – Teal Park

Siemens have appointed Bowmer Kirkland as their contractor, who started on site on 17 October 2011. It is anticipated that both the development and A46 Trunk Road works will be completed by September 2012.

Boston Transport Strategy

Work has recently been completed at the Spilsby Road/Willoughby Road traffic signal junction, and at the nearby steps and ramp at Queens Road. These schemes have improved the flow of traffic at the junction, and provided enhanced pedestrian facilities. On Sleaford Road, improvements have been completed to the footways, cycleways, bus stops, and the traffic signals at the Brothertoft Road junction.

In January, an experimental right-turn ban from Sleaford Road into Brothertoft Road will be implemented for a six month trial period to evaluate the traffic flow at the junction.

Work is now underway in developing the final package of schemes, mostly targeted as cyclist and pedestrian improvements.

Grantham Southern Relief Road

An evaluation of the earliest delivery periods to promote the relief road has been undertaken, which shows that the shortest period would be via a planning application from development submission through South Kesteven District Council.

A1073 Spalding to Eye Improvements – now the A16

The scheme opened fully on 16 October 2011. Some landscaping works will continue throughout the winter months, but will not affect traffic on the new road. The site compound has now closed.

Spalding Western Relief Road

Results of the public consultation are being analysed, and the report will be published shortly. The results indicate a slight preference for Option 2A (the western option). A number of concerns were raised by consultees that are leading to design changes, where appropriate. Work to develop the design and planning application is continuing with ground investigations, traffic modelling and environmental assessment work all progressing. A report to HT&T Scrutiny is programmed for January, with a report to Executive Committee in March to seek approval for a preferred route, and for authorisation to submit a planning application.

Bridges

St Botolph's Footbridge, Boston - The public consultation on the three design options took place on 14/15 September. The consultation period has now closed, and a draft consultation report is being prepared. The intention is to submit a planning application on the preferred option in January 2012

Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership

Up to 7 November, there have been 41 fatalities compared to 38 for the corresponding period last year. To the end of September, 332 killed or serious injury casualties were recorded, compared to 352 for the same period last year.

I am pleased to inform you that the ‘fatal four’ campaign, that Lincolnshire participated in with five other regional authorities and the Highways Agency, has been highly commended by the Prince Michael of Kent award panel. The campaign focused on the four common factors in fatal road traffic collisions: inappropriate speed, mobile phones, non wearing of seat belts and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Running throughout 2010/2011, the campaign was funded by the DfT and involved regional radio campaigns, high profile signing, and road side workshops carried out by police officers.

During this financial year, the Accident Investigation and Prevention team expects to implement 32 local safety schemes at various locations around the County. Furthermore, it is already identifying schemes for implementation during next year. In addition, the team has carried out in the order of 180 road safety audits during 2011.

LRSP continues to carry out educational initiatives. These include driver training programmes for both young and mature road users, and an alcohol awareness campaign focussing particularly on foreign nationals. A winter driving campaign has been launched to emphasise the need ‘to see and be seen’.

Transportation

I recently met the Transport Minister, Theresa Villiers MP, together with Karl McCartney MP, officers from LCC and representatives of the City of Lincoln. We took the opportunity to discuss several issues:

- Increased direct train services between Lincoln and London, including an update on the work being undertaken by LCC in developing a business case which, hopefully, would influence both DfT and train operators to provide such services as part of the franchise renewal in December 2013.
- Better connections between Lincoln and Newark.
- Improved east – west train services.
- The problems envisaged around increased freight trains through Spalding, Sleaford and Lincoln.

I am disappointed that Network Rail forgot to inform us of their maintenance works on the East Coast Main Line, which resulted in northbound trains from London being diverted onto the Joint Line causing severe disruption, particularly in Lincoln, over a period of four weekends. A letter of apology has been sent from Network Rail’s Chief Executive to Karl McCartney MP.

We are developing a bid for £5m from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to enhance current and proposed improvements around the Teal Park/ Doddington Road area to provide for and encourage sustainable modes of transport. The bid will be submitted in February and the results will be announced in May 2012.