

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 15 SEPTEMBER 2014**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), D Brailsford, K J Clarke, R J Hunter-Clarke, J R Marriott, R A H McAuley, N M Murray, Mrs A M Newton and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: S F Kinch and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Paul Coathup (Assistant Director Highways and Transportation), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Mick Phoenix (Parking Services Manager), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer) and Rachel Wilson

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R G Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

19 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

The Assistant Director Highways and Transportation announced that the Council had received an additional £350,000 for the LN6 Sustainable Transport Fund to extend the good works that had already been done. To put this in context, it was reported that this amount was about a third of the national pot of funding which was available. This funding would be used to try and extend the boundaries of the project.

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It was confirmed that this funding was ring fenced for use in Lincoln, however, members commented that funding for transport schemes in other areas of the county, such as Spalding, was required. Members were advised that this money was made available through a direct bidding scheme, and so the authority put in a bid for scheme that it was thought would be successful in gaining the funding. The Committee was keen to see similar projects in other parts of the county.

It was also reported that work was about to start on the Lincoln East West Link road. Tenders were being analysed, and it was expected that work would commence at the beginning of November 2014. In relation to the Canwick Road scheme, officers were currently involved in discussions with the contractors and work was scheduled to start on 27 October 2014.

Members were advised that difficulties remained with the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, the problems were mainly administrative and were in relation to not getting the Orders approved, and were taking longer to resolve than anticipated. The new location of the non-motorised bridge was going to the Planning and Regulation Committee for approval in October. Following this, the Orders would need to be re-published. It was noted that the members of the Planning and Regulation Committee would be undertaking a site visit to Hawthorn Road prior to the meeting.

It was commented that there had been a lot of media coverage in the south of the County in relation to the East Coast Mainline and the closing of level crossings, Tallington in particular. It was noted that two alternative schemes had been put forward for Tallington, but they had not been supported by the County Council. There was a programme of work being undertaken by Network Rail to remove as many level crossings on the East Coast Mainline as possible. The County Council was working with Network Rail to find a solution which was suitable for the local community. However, members were advised that Network Rail could use rail powers to push through the works process and do what it thinks is suitable, it would be their scheme, and not the County Council's.

It was clarified that the start times of the works on the East West Link and the Canwick Road schemes had converged as the East West Link scheme was broadly on target, and funding for the Canwick Road scheme had been awarded as a pinch point scheme. As the first scheme on Newark Road had been completed quickly, there was an opportunity for a second bid to be submitted for part of the remaining funding which was put in quickly. Acquiring the land had taken slightly longer than anticipated, but the scheme had been designed so it would minimise the impact on roads before Christmas. It was hoped that the road would be finished by May 2015.

A query was raised regarding the recent works on Rookery Lane in Lincoln, and it was confirmed that the contractors had paid for all the remedial works to be carried out. It was noted that this had been a tendered contract and was not carried out by the Highways Alliance.

In relation to the problems with the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, concerns were raised regarding whether the funding for the project was in jeopardy. Members were assured that the Department for Transport had stated that they would do everything

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possible to ensure that the funding remained in place. However, it was noted that there was a general election scheduled in May 2015.

It was noted that there had been a lot of lobbying from pressure groups in the surrounding villages regarding the closure of Hawthorn Road. Members were informed that the inspector had concluded that there was nothing wrong with the proposals for access. It was commented that the new proposal for the bridge was good, however, it had not been considered previously as the original proposed design was cheaper, neater and more accessible. Officers were in contact with all the affected parish councils.

Members were reminded that for the most up to date information in relation to roadworks, they should access the Roadworks.org website, which could be set up to provide an individual member with updates on works which would be affecting their area.

The Assistant Director Highways and Transportation informed the Committee that this would be his last meeting, as he would be retiring from the County Council on 17 October 2014. Following the Senior Management Restructure, Andy Gutherson was the County Commissioner, Paul Rusted would be the Infrastructure Commissioner and there would be two Network Managers. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Assistant Director for all the work he had done for the Committee and the Authority over the years, and wished him all the best for the future.

Members were informed that there would be a more detailed presentation at the next meeting in relation to the Council moving into a more commissioning and delivery mode. It was important to ensure that the officers were serving the Committee correctly. However, it was noted that Highways had been operating under a commissioning model for some time through the Highways Alliance. The Energy from Waste facility was another example of a project which had been commissioned by the County Council.

22 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE - 1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2014

Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information relevant to the work of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee. It was reported that this performance information was for the first quarter and covered 1 April – 30 June 2014.

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Members were guided through the performance information presented, and were provided with the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the information contained within the report. Some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was the responsibility of the bus operators to deliver the bus services on time. However, it was noted that this was only possible if the buses could get through the roads;
- Highways officers were congratulated for the works which were going on in and around Lincoln, and it was commented that people should be grateful that the work was continuing when the authority was facing budget reductions;
- In relation to the full data sets for the complaints which had been received, it was noted that they could be provided to members if required.

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented and associated comments be noted.

23 WINTER MAINTENANCE - PREPARATIONS FOR WINTER 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the background and preparations put in place for highway winter maintenance operations in Lincolnshire for the 2014/15 winter season. Members were advised that there had been no changes to the winter maintenance plan for this winter.

It was reported that the normal bi-annual tender exercise for salt procurement had been carried out earlier in the year by ESPO and had been awarded to National Gritting Supplies (NGS) based in Southampton following a technical and financial evaluation. Members were informed that this was the first change of supplier since Salinity UK won the contract in 1999. The County's reserve stock of 12,000 tonnes of salt would be stored on the quayside at Southampton. There was now 23,000 tonnes of salt in depots throughout the county for the start of the winter season.

Members were advised that some of the underspend from the winter of 2013/14 was being utilised to begin work on the process to build a new salt barn at Willingham Hall. Once this was completed, this would only leave Horncastle with salt not stored under cover as recommended by national standards.

It was also reported that the installation of a new weather station at Caistor Top was completed late in last season and so would be fully operational for this season.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within in the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Most of the strategic supply of salt had been stored at the docks in Immingham, but the replenishment stock would now be stored on the docks at Southampton;

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- The news regarding the new supplier of salt was welcomed. It was confirmed that the contract would be in place for one year with an option to extend to two years;
- It was suggested that further update on resilience would be useful at some point;
- It was queried whether some of the bigger parishes would be able to have more than one 1 tonne sack under the self-help scheme? It was thought that this may be possible if there was a good reason, but it would be investigated;
- If there were roadworks on a gritted route, the diversion would be gritted;
- It was noted that it did not add value to put signs on all the non-gritted routes;

RESOLVED

That the preparations for winter operations in 2014/15 be endorsed.

24 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - ANNUAL PARKING REPORT 2013/14

It was reported that the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) by Lincolnshire County Council required the Council to submit an annual report on CPE related activities and a financial statement showing the cost of the operation, including any deficit or surplus. This was in accordance with the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions. The Committee was invited to consider and comment on the contents of the report.

Members were advised that the annual parking report covered the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. It was a transparent document that allowed the disclosure of various statistics related to enforcement and appeals, as well as financial information on the cost of the service. The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained in the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- The whole purpose of CPE was to discourage people from parking illegally. The most important aspect was whether this was working rather than whether the service was in surplus or deficit;
- It should be noted that the operating surplus of £156,000 was relatively modest when it had an operating cost of £1million. There was a possibility that the service would start to run into deficit in the future;
- Any surplus produced by this service was ring fenced and could only be spent on things such as the service itself, supplying and making good parking facilities, transport projects, temporary park and ride schemes or environmental schemes. If it was felt that none of those schemes were required, the surplus could be set aside for up to five years for future operating costs;
- Officers had been working hard to identify more efficiencies, and had examined how to reorganise patrols for category C locations (small towns and villages) to enable more manpower to be sent to the 'hot spots';
- It was possible there would be a need to increase the minimum staff numbers from 20-25 to 25-30 enforcement officers;

- Members commented that generally it had been a success, there were several areas within Lincoln that were 'hot spots'. A lot of calls regarding appeals had been received, and it was pleasing to see that people could successfully appeal;
- Civil Enforcement Officers had very little discretion when patrolling at street level. The discretion rested with the appeals part of the service;
- Officers would only enforce what they had to enforce, for example if there was a development in an area and the contractor had spoken to the relevant highways team, permits and waivers for the area could be set up. Mick Phoenix agreed to e-mail the details of this to Councillor Murray;
- It was commented that CPE had made a massive difference in Stamford;
- There was a need for clarity, when this report was published on the website, regarding where and how the surplus could be spent;
- Members were pleased that the service was not operating at a loss, and the planned increase in patrols was welcomed;
- It was approaching two years since the County Council had taken over this service.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee endorse the publication of the report on the Lincolnshire County Council website;
2. That the Committee continue to receive 6 monthly updates.

25 SPEED MANAGEMENT IN LINCOLNSHIRE SCRUTINY REVIEW - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a report which presented the Executive Response and draft action plan in response to the nine recommendations arising from the Speed Management in Lincolnshire Scrutiny Review final report.

Members were reminded that the final report had been approved by the Committee at its meeting in June and then been considered by the Executive on 1 July 2014, where it had been well received. All recommendations were accepted, except for one which was only partly accepted.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was reported that the Executive requested for some additional work to be carried out in relation to the recommendation which was only partially accepted. A detailed report would be brought back to this Committee when the work had been completed;
- It was hoped that the policy would be finalised in April 2015;
- It was requested whether an update could be received following implementation of signage in school safety zones, to look at whether they had been successful;

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- A toolkit would be put together for schools so they could determine what the best option would be for them as one size would not fit all. Part of this would include officers visiting schools and working with them to find the right solution;
- Concerns had been raised regarding a school in Caistor where parents were regularly parking in no parking zones. It was noted that signs in the area had been repainted, and the situation had been improved;
- An important recommendation which was made was that schools needed to be involved in any road safety solution;
- It was commented that sometimes there could be a problem persuading the governing body that there was a problem with parking. There had to be a zero tolerance approach;
- The Executive Councillors for Highways, Transport and IT and Adult Care and Health Services, Children's Services did work together on school safety issues;
- Any significant changes to a school would require planning permission.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the Executive Response and draft Action Plan in response to the nine recommendations from the Speed Management in Lincolnshire report be noted:

26 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
 PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year.

It was noted that the following would be added to the work programme:

- A presentation on the new management arrangements – 27 October 2014;
- Additional Civil Parking Enforcement update – 15 December 2014;

It was noted that an issue had been raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee regarding whether Network Rail had a protocol in place with the County Council when they wanted to temporarily close a level crossing, and it had been requested that this Committee have a more detailed look at this. Members were informed that the County Council worked closely with Network Rail to try and minimise any disruption, but Network Rail had their own powers to do things in an emergency. However, they did always try to inform the authority in these cases.

The Committee was provided with an update in relation to the foot bridges over the level crossings in Lincoln at Brayford Wharf East and High Street. It was reported that the authority had been working closely on the two DDA compliant footbridges. It was noted that it had been planned for the bridge on Brayford Wharf East to be built first as planning permission had been received, and the traffic regulation orders had been processed. However, early site work revealed uncharted statutory plant, which

meant investigations had to be undertaken and work had to stop on site while this was underway. Progress was being made on buying the property for the High Street Bridge, and it was now planned for the two bridges to be built simultaneously. However, difficulties had been experienced in buying the High Street property for the right price, and so Network Rail were trying to re-engineer the bridge design in order to make savings. Officers were pleased that discussions were still taking place and that there were still plans to provide the two footbridges. Network Rail were in discussions with County Council planners to determine whether any changes to the planning application were required. From a local perspective, it was considered important that the bridges were both aesthetically and structurally pleasing as they could be in place for 100 years.

RESOLVED

1. That the additions to the Committee's work programme be noted;
2. That the update in relation to the two footbridges over the level crossings in Lincoln be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am