

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

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, 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: R G Davies, R A Renshaw and P Wood attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Alan Aistrup (Special Projects Manager), Graeme Butler (Project and Technical Support Manager), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

36 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS INTERESTS

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

37 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT was pleased to announce two additional streams of funding had been secured. A further £5million from the capital budget would be transferred into the Highways capital spend, and an additional £9million would come from a wider needs assessment fund from central government. However, caution was needed as there were to be changes to the way that funding allocations were calculated by central government, and there would be a move to a combination of incentive fund and challenge fund bids. Incentive funds

would come from demonstrating that there were things such as Asset Management Plans in place, and Challenge funding would be allocated through a bidding process.

It was noted that Lincolnshire had a good record of successfully bidding for funding, and the teams involved should be congratulated.

It was confirmed that some of the £9million would be allocated to maintenance.

39 SPEED MANAGEMENT - BORDERLINE CASES PROVISION

The Committee was advised that the report to be presented at the meeting was a report back following the Task and Finish group which had taken place earlier in the year. When the final report was considered by the Executive, all recommendations were agreed, however, further work was requested on recommendation three which related to the level at which the borderline case criteria for mean speeds should be set. This report updated the Committee on the further work which had been undertaken.

The Chairman allowed a member of the public to speak who had been campaigning for a reduction in speed in Fulbeck. It was hoped that now new mean speed readings had been carried out the speed limit would be reviewed in line with the current policy. The Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT advised that he would follow up this issue with the local member outside of the meeting.

Members considered the report which presented the results of the investigations relating to the borderline cases provision contained within the current Speed Limit Policy in relation to mean speed and whether further relaxation was appropriate. The options put forward for consideration by the Task and Finish Group were to set the level for discretion at either +/- 2mph or +/- 3mph or maintain the current +/- 1mph.

It was reported that the new policy would go out to public consultation in Spring 2015.

(Councillor D Brailsford informed the Committee that he was a member of the Planning and Regulation Committee and so would not be participating in the debate or vote on this item, as it related to issues which could be considered by the Committee in the future)

In relation to some concerns which had been highlighted by the Executive Councillor in terms of the potential for an increased workload and cost if the criteria were revised, members were advised that it was not anticipated that a revision to this aspect of the policy would create a particular increase in workload for officers or the Planning and Regulation Committee.

It was acknowledged that there was a desire to provide a greater level of flexibility and discretion to the Planning and Regulation Committee in relation to borderline cases, but any new policy would be subject to public consultation.

Members supported the proposed changes and felt that whilst providing flexibility, they set boundaries for the discretion which could be exercised, and it was not felt

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that they would create additional work for the Planning and Regulation Committee. It was noted that when a borderline case would go to Planning and Regulation, the local member would be involved, and it would be important to make use of any local knowledge.

It was suggested that the requirement of a borderline case in relation to mean speeds be relaxed to +/- 3mph.

RESOLVED

1. That the data gathered in terms of threshold parameters for Borderline Cases be noted;
2. That the Committee recommend that the requirement for Borderline Cases in relation to mean speeds be relaxed to +/-3mph.

40 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Members received an update in relation to winter maintenance, and it was noted that there had been a slow start to the winter season. Guidance from the Met Office indicated that it would be a wet start to the season, but not as wet as 2013/14, and there was still uncertainty regarding how January 2015 would turn out. Various models were used to calculate this, three indicated a mild winter, but one showed a colder winter.

It was reported that there was still plenty of salt in stock, with 21,000 tonnes in the depot, and 12,000 tonnes on the quayside in Southampton. It was noted that the lead time from ordering additional salt was around 3 days. Officers received a 20 day forecast from the Met office so if bad weather was likely, there was plenty of time to replenish salt stocks in the county.

It was noted that Lincolnshire had the capability to store 23,000 tonnes of salt.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

41 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

The Committee received updates in relation to the following major schemes:

Lincoln Eastern Bypass – in July 2014, the DfT declined to confirm the side roads orders due to safety concerns with access on and off the Non-Motorised User (NMU) bridge. All other aspects of the scheme were determined to be sound and relevant. The plans for the NMU bridge were revised, and planning permission was granted in October 2014, the side roads orders were submitted shortly afterwards. A number of objections had been received, and these were being discussed with the DfT as they revisited the previous issues from objections. It was possible that they could

therefore be considered as already dealt with and so a new public inquiry would not be required.

Lincoln East West Link – this was a £22million scheme, and would open up opportunities for economic development as well as improved access through the city. The contract had been awarded to Balfour Beatty, and the off highway works had commenced. The highway works would commence after Christmas to try and mitigate the effects on traffic.

Canwick Road – this was a £3million scheme, with £1.7million of the cost being met by the Government's pinch point scheme funding. The contract had been awarded to Eurovia and work started on site on 10 December 2014. Prior to Christmas work would consist of site clearing, again to minimise disruption. Officers have tried to do a lot of communication work in advance of the work starting, as this scheme would have a significant impact on the city. It was planned the work would be completed by May 2015.

Footbridges, Lincoln – work had commenced on clearing the site for the High Street footbridge, and work would commence on site in January 2015. Network Rail were carrying out a redesign of the Brayford Wharf bridge (although it was noted that it was possible that Network Rail had reverted back to the original design). If the bridge was redesigned, planning permission would need to be obtained again.

Grantham Southern Relief Road – this consisted of two schemes – the Southern Quadrant Relief Road and the King 31 scheme. The Southern Quadrant Relief Road had received conditional approval in November 2014. A developer had applied for a judicial review on this scheme and that process was still ongoing. In relation to the King 31 scheme, it was expected that the tender for the work would be issued in January 2015 with work starting in March 2015.

Spalding Western Relief Road – Phase one had been designed, and phases two and three were on hold pending finalisation of the Spalding Transport Strategy.

Skegness Business Park – the scheme would include an access road and roundabout, and would be funded through the Single Local Growth Fund. Planning permission for the roundabout would be submitted in February 2015, with the plan to start work in April 2015.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information provided, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members were pleased to see that the work on Station Road in North Hykeham was ahead of schedule;
- It was queried whether a road bridge for Hawthorn Road should be considered again, in light of the number of objections which had been received from residents in neighbouring villages. Members were advised that it was not just an issue of cost that was affecting the decision regarding the NMU/road bridge debate, it was also an issue of time. If the design was to be change to include a road bridge at this stage, planning permission would need to be applied for

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again, and an environmental impact assessment would also need to be carried out, it was also likely that this scheme would receive a number of objections from residents living at the Carlton Centre. Unless planning permission and the side roads orders were in place by March 2015 it was possible that the central government funding for this scheme would be lost;

- It was requested that officers keep the pressure on Network Rail in relation to delivering the footbridge at Brayford Wharf as well as the High Street. Members were advised that officers would be meeting with Network Rail shortly to discuss the footbridges in Lincoln.
- The Greater Lincoln Traffic Plan was about moving traffic around Lincoln as well as through it;
- It was queried whether there were any plans to address the problems at the Skellingthorpe Road level crossing, and members were reminded that there were financial limitations on what could be done;
- It was noted that the majority of people living in the Glebe area did not want a road bridge over Hawthorn Road, and were happy with the existing plans for an NMU bridge. It was also commented that at the meeting which took place recently in relation to this issue in Cherry Willingham, a lot of the people present were supportive of the NMU bridge plans, and that there was a relatively small but very vocal group of residents driving the campaign against the NMU bridge.

RESOLVED

That the updates be noted.

42 GREATER LINCOLN AREA MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which informed the Committee of the planned Communication Strategy associated with the delivery of major infrastructure projects in Greater Lincoln.

Members were advised that there were currently three significant highway schemes in the Lincoln area planned for construction – the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, the Lincoln East West Link and the Canwick Road improvement scheme. A further 30 highways maintenance schemes, 11 large housing developments, numerous planned and unplanned utilities works, 33 major events and 140 smaller events were also scheduled during the same time as these schemes.

Therefore, it was considered essential that there was a co-ordinated communication plan put in place to ensure the wider community was kept informed of what was happening and how it would impact upon them. Workshop sessions had been held with invites extended to County, City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey Councillors, as well as adjacent parish councils. A range of external stakeholders were also invited including emergency services, bus operators, tourism industry representatives and members of the business community.

The website would be kept up to date, and it was the intention that it would be updated every Friday before noon, to provide people with time to make plans for the following week. It was considered important that people were informed of the work that was planned and how it would affect them on a week by week basis. It was also thought that there was a need to focus on the outcomes of the work, and the benefits and improvements that the schemes would bring to the area.

Members were 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 essential that the communication strategy was done correctly;
- The 'park and ride'/castle shuttle scheme was an economic development project. It would provide an additional 300 parking spaces, and following several studies it has been determined that this should be a sufficient number;
- The improvements would be massive, and the work would cause significant disruption, but it was thought that this was the right approach;
- Communication plans were vital for getting the messages out to the public, as the work could become quite complicated. It was important to say what was being done, why it was being done, and also why it was being done at this particular time;
- It was noted that when the traffic management system was in place for the Canwick Road improvements, they would be static during the works, which should make it easier for people to get used to it yet, whereas there were nine phases for the East West Link, and so that scheme would require an increased level of communication;
- This Plan could be used as a blueprint in the future for other schemes planned within the county;
- It was suggested that there would be a need to follow up the online updates with paper versions as not everyone had a computer. Members were advised that the messages would be distributed through social media, the website and broadcast media, so they should reach most people. People will also be encouraged to pass on the information;
- It was commented that this was an extremely important paper, as it was vital to be honest with people;
- Good advance signage was also important;
- Members were pleased that Smarter Choices and Sustainable Travel teams were to be involved and that people would be encouraged to think about more sustainable methods of transport, not only during the time the works were taking place, but also to embed them for the future;
- All members would automatically be signed up to receive the newsletter.

RESOLVED

That the planned Communication Strategy be noted.

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Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information which was relevant to the work of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that there was a time lag on the performance data, and the information presented covered the period up to the end of September 2014.

Two indicators were highlighted to the Committee as currently being below target as follows:

- Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered;
- Bus services running on time - % non frequent services on time;

In relation to the bus services, it was noted that the behind target performance had been due to some issues around road works at Teal Park, but these should be resolved by the next quarter.

It was also noted that this quarter there had been fewer complaints and more compliments for the Highways and Transport area, but it was thought that this may change in the next quarter when work on the Canwick Road improvements commenced.

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented be noted.

44 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
 PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its programme for the current year.

It was noted that the only change was that the item scheduled for the January 2015 meeting in relation to the Grantham Southern Quadrant Relief Road would be deferred to either the March or April meeting. This was to allow time for the judicial process in relation to the planning permission appeal to be completed.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.38 am