

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 20 APRIL 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, D Brailsford, K J 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, S F Kinch and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Paul Little (Network Manager North), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

66 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS'

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

67 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

There were no announcements from either the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT or the Infrastructure Commissioner.

69 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from David Davies, Principal Maintenance Engineer in relation to winter maintenance. It was reported that it had been an average winter, but that it was not quite over as the temperature was still dropping as

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low as 2 degrees. Members were advised that 24,000 tonnes of salt had been used and there had been 91 turnouts.

It was reported that the service received regarding the storing of salt reserves in Southampton had been very good, however, it was hoped that the reserves would be located closer to Lincoln, possibly Immingham, for the next winter.

It was noted that the report on Winter Maintenance – Preparations for Winter 2015/16 would be brought to the meeting of the Committee on 14 September 2015, and so the Committee would need to start thinking now if there were any changes it wanted to make to the Winter Maintenance Plan.

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

- It was commented that an excellent service had been received this year from the gritting team, and one councillor commented that this had been the first year for a long time that they had not received any complaints from the public;
- It was queried whether there were the facilities to spray salt onto the feeder roads at junctions. Members were informed that this would be possible, but it would mean that the total amount of network gritted would need to be reduced to compensate;
- The officers were congratulated as the salting had taken place exactly when it was required;
- It was suggested that there was a need, during the non-winter months for parish councils to be encouraged to take up the offers of bags of salt under the self-help schemes;
- There were some very successful self-help schemes in place in the county;
- It was noted that there was a tendency to start asking parish councils if they wanted to take part in the winter maintenance self-help schemes in the October. It was agreed that this needed to start being promoted much earlier in the summer months;
- It was suggested that with parish council elections only a few weeks away this could be a good opportunity to engage with any new members and encourage them to be pro-active in terms of thinking about winter maintenance;
- It was suggested that the two Network Managers include something within their divisional newsletter to promote the taking up of the self-help scheme;
- A concern was raised about whether it appeared that the county council was putting too much emphasis on self-help within communities;
- It was commented that the winter maintenance team had provided an excellent service this winter, with up to 43 gritters going out most nights during the winter months gritting. It was thought that this was a service to be proud of;

RESOLVED

That the update be noted and work be undertaken to encourage parishes to put winter maintenance plans in place in advance of next winter.

70 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

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

Lincoln Eastern Bypass – there were no significant changes from the March update. The Public Inquiry was still due to take place on 11 August 2015.

Lincoln Southern Bypass – there were no real changes since the previous update. Officers continued to update the estimated cost of this scheme;

Lincoln East – West Link – good progress was being made and the demolition of the majority of the buildings was almost complete. Investigatory ground works would now be commencing.

It was noted that recent traffic management works had been in place to carry out work both for the Lincoln East West Link and the Canwick Hill scheme.

Canwick Road – this scheme was progressing well. It was still due to finish at the end of May 2015 as originally planned. The works were now focussing on the resurfacing of the road, but work was also taking place on the overhead tidal flow system. As most of this work would be taking place at night, some night time disruption could be expected, but this was likely to be kept to a minimum.

Footbridges – the hoardings on the High Street were now up, and further investigatory work by Network Rail for cabling etc. would be taking place. The expected completion date was still October 2015.

The redesign for the Brayford Wharf footbridge had been completed and planning permission granted by the City of Lincoln Council. It was expected to go before the Network Rail Board in June 2015 for approval of funding. The building of this footbridge was not expected to begin until the High Street Bridge was complete.

Grantham Southern Relief Road – there was no real change in this scheme. Discussions with developers were ongoing.

Spalding Western Relief Road – again, there was no change with this scheme, it was just waiting for the developers to begin building of the houses.

Skegness Business Park – this scheme was ongoing, and it was expected that the contract would go out to tender in May/June 2015, with a start on site in September 2015.

Boston Quadrant – again, there was no major change to report as it was a developer led scheme.

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

- The Committee was informed that the authority had not received assurance that the funding for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass would be secure following the General Election;
- The additional housing set out in the Local Plan was dependent on the Eastern Bypass being built, as most of the housing would be located around the south of Lincoln. It was thought vital that the road was built in order to deliver the Local Plan;
- The main issue at the moment with progressing the Eastern Bypass was not the funding it, but that the County Council did not currently have permission to build the road, pending the Public Inquiry;
- It was queried whether there was the same situation in Grantham regarding the Southern Relief Road, but members were informed that this scheme had very different funding arrangements. Funding had been received from the single local growth fund, and the authority was very close to signing the Heads of Terms with the developer for the whole project, and the planning permissions were in place;
- The Spalding Transport Strategy had now been completed, and the request for a footbridge over the A151 to be re-instated had been included within the Strategy. It was noted that this document was for the future and aimed to provide a framework for development within the town;
- It was commented that the Canwick Road scheme had been managed very well. However, on some occasions traffic had been backed up all the way to Tesco's on Wragby Road, and it was suggested that this should be looked at in the future to examine how congestion could be mitigated. It was also commented that the information distributed via the internet and the website regarding the works had been excellent;
- It was noted that in terms of the first public inquiry for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, it was not the objections which had caused the delay, but the Inspector had had an issue with the location of the non-motorised user bridge, and felt it should be closer to the village, as well as raising a couple of small safety concerns. The orders were not refused on the basis that Hawthorn Road would be closed, as traffic would still be able to join the bypass from Hawthorn Road;
- A councillor commented that the objectors to the existing proposals for the Eastern Bypass maybe did not realise the extent of the complex traffic modelling that had taken place for this scheme, and that on balance most people would benefit from the building of the Lincoln Eastern Bypass;
- It was also commented that it was really helpful that a group of residents had come forward in support of the councils arguments and existing proposals for the Eastern Bypass, as so far the focus of the debate had been on those who were not in agreement with the plans.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

71 LINCOLNSHIRE HIGHWAYS ALLIANCE UPDATE REPORT - APRIL 2015

Consideration was given to a report which presented an update on progress with the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, an alliance between the County Council, Imtech, Mouchel and Kier. The Alliance delivered the majority of highway services through the Traffic Signals Term Contract, the Professional Services Contract and the Highway Works Term Contract.

The Committee was advised that the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance was now in the fifth year of a potential contractual duration of ten years.

Independent comparison of these services confirm that the Alliance continued to deliver class leading, cost effective, high quality highway services with improvement areas identified and work underway to deliver that further efficiency and improvement.

Members were guided through the report by the Infrastructure Commissioner, and the following points were highlighted to the Committee;

- Client performance had slipped from 81 to 73, mainly due to an issue concerning the commitment of Compensation Events. The overall Alliance score had remained at 42, which was one of the main areas for concern;
- The Alliance score reflected the subjective nature of some of the indicators such as press articles, public satisfaction and relationship scoring and the authority would continue to try to influence an improvement in the perception of the services;
- The main focus of works for the Highways Works Term Contract was to improve carriageway condition and to deliver the winter maintenance service. The relatively mild winter had meant that in the last three months, 17,000 potholes had been repaired and 40,000 square meters of carriageway patching at 300 sites had been carried out;
- A substantial surface dressing programme had now commenced with the dressing of around 3.3million square meters of carriageway, equivalent to just over 400 miles of roads, which was due to be completed by the end of August 2015;
- Work was also due to start a programme of carriageway recycling which would incorporate the use of 5500 tonnes of tar bound planings resulting in a saving of £750,000 in disposal costs;
- The Technical Services Partnership continued to be engaged in the design of the authority's major schemes, other internal and external design of schemes, traffic modelling and other consultancy work;
- The Lincolnshire Highways Alliance continued to deliver effective and efficient highway services with an improving trend since the start of the Alliance. Independent comparison by Cranfield University and through an HMEP Peer Review confirmed that the Alliance continued to deliver some of the most cost effective, high quality highway services in the sector.

Members of the Committee were provided with an 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 commented that it was good to see that a programme of carriageway recycling would be implemented, and that money would be saved on landfill disposal;
- It was confirmed that the money saved by recycling carriageway planings would remain within the highways budget;
- It was suggested that there was a preference from members of the public to have a slight delay in the permanent fixing of potholes rather than an immediate temporary fix. The Committee was advised that a report on the revised Highways Maintenance Plan was due to come to the next meeting;
- The risk of the recycled materials having carcinogenic properties was fairly low when the planings were encapsulated properly;
- The binders used in surface dressing had improved over the years making it more resilient;
- The KPI's were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they were appropriate measures for the Alliance;
- In terms of the site safety assessments, it was queried why the target number of 50 inspections had not taken place. It was noted that this had been under the old Mouchel contract, but it was a function that was moving back in-house and so in the future it was expected that the target of 50 inspections would be undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the report be noted.

72 FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing work with Cranfield University and the recent Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Peer Review of highway services.

It was reported that the Highways Service had engaged in a variety of benchmarking activity to provide assurance that it was delivering effective, efficient and value for money services. This included comparative benchmarking of tender and scheme costs, Frontier Benchmarking through the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) and a Strategic Value for Money Review by Cranfield University.

The Committee was guided through the report by the Infrastructure Commissioner and some of the main points highlighted included the following:

- The report focussed on the work with Cranfield University and the recent HMEP peer review;
- The work with Cranfield University began in 2013 with a Strategic Value for Money Assessment of the Highways Service indicating a medium-high rating

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for both economy and efficiency and identifying options for business and operating model changes;

- Current work was focussed on supporting the authority's existing move to become a commissioning council, the segregation of reactive and programmed structures and the potential efficiencies offered by a move to two divisions;
- A Peer review of the highways service was undertaken between 3 – 5 March 2015 by a team of six reviewers who were asked to focus on five main areas of the service. The Review Team fed back their findings at the end of the three day review and a copy of their feedback presentation was attached as Appendix A to the report;
- The Review Team also returned for an Action Planning day on 31 March 2015 to look at each of the areas of consideration highlighted in the review and how and when they would be taken forward. Work was still ongoing in developing this further and progress would be reported in more detail at the next scrutiny meeting.

Members of the Committee 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 noted that Councillors M Brookes, R G Davies and R A Renshaw had been fully involved in the Peer Review. It was commented that it had been found to be a positive experience, and the Review Team had been very positive in the way they had approached things;
- It was commented that it had been very useful and provided good challenge;
- The divisional meetings still took place, and the next one was scheduled for May 2015. Officers were trying to engage with members to ensure that more members were able to attend and have an input;
- Smaller unitary authorities were not as efficient in terms of highways functions as larger authorities. It was queried whether if Lincolnshire became a unitary authority if it would be sensible to have a strategic authority responsible for highways;
- It was noted that several of the large urban authorities had set up their own highways authority to co-ordinate winter maintenance;
- It was confirmed that when Lincolnshire County Council took part in peer reviews, officers did make note of anything that the inspected authority was doing well;
- Lincolnshire as getting closer to the level of funding that would allow the authority to carry out more improvements;
- Members were advised that the Highways Agency had become Highways England from 1 April 2015, it was noted that this was not just a name change, but a complete restructure and fundamental change in how it operated. It would now have 5 year funding streams and would be examining all of its existing contracts.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the report be noted.

73 SPEED MANAGEMENT IN LINCOLNSHIRE - TRAFFIC POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee to consider a draft Traffic Policy for Schools as part of the Speed Management in Lincolnshire Review. Subject to the agreement of the Committee the report would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and IT for consideration and approval prior to public consultation.

It was reported that on 9 March 2015, the Committee approved for consultation the revised Speed Limit Policy and agreed that it be consulted on in conjunction with a new policy to address speed and/or congestion issues outside schools. A policy had now been developed to enable individual school locations to be considered to improve issues with respect to speed and/or congestion.

Members were informed that the introduction of this Policy recognised that each individual school site had its own unique issues that needed to be addressed. The Policy was aimed at setting out a process to improve safety concerns which could be supported by Head Teachers, Governors and the local community which were tailored to their specific location.

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 important that schools were part of the solution, and there needed to be co-operation between the school and the local authority;
- In the policy, the measures had been put in priority order;
- Schools and parish councils would both be involved in the consultation on the policy;
- It was commented that some of the traffic calming measures could have implications for gritting routes;
- It was commented that this was a very important piece of work;
- It was felt that parking outside of schools was a very difficult issue to deal with, and generally was more of an issue than speeding;
- There was concern around how any new measures would be enforced;
- One measure which was to be piloted was the use of mobile CCTV outside of schools to tackle parking issues;
- It was suggested that schools could be encouraged to incorporate pick up and drop off points within the school grounds;
- The Policy would help schools to ascertain what the best options would be for dealing with their speeding/congestion issues, discussions would then take place regarding potential sources of funding;
- There were concerns that imposing no parking restrictions outside of schools would move the parking problem further into residential areas;

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- When new schools were built, the highways team would work with education in terms of developing a transport plan for the school, but it was acknowledged that more could be done when there was a proposal to expand a school;
- Inconsiderate and dangerous parking was more prevalent than speeding, and was a very difficult problem to solve, as more and more people were taking their children to school by car;
- It was thought that the suggestion to have mobile CCTV cameras was a good idea and would be very cost effective;
- It was confirmed that any revenue raised would go directly back into the Highways budget;
- Members supported this initiative to improve parking around schools, as this was one of the areas that generated the most complaints to councillors;
- Some of the parking problems around schools were caused by the students themselves as they would park their own cars all day from 9am until 4.00pm often in residential areas;
- There was enough flexibility within the policy to address all the issues;
- It was suggested that there was a need to educate the parents, and get them to support any measures which were adopted;
- There were some big planning applications going through and there was a need for some of the Section 106 money to go to the schools which were in affected areas;
- There was a need to make better use of the planning process;
- There were concerns regarding the amount of schools which were academies and whether they would take on board any of the suggestions for alleviating speeding/congestion issues.

RESOLVED

1. That the draft Traffic Policy for Schools, as part of the Speed Management in Lincolnshire Review be approved;
2. That the Policy be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, transport and IT for approval prior to public consultation.

74 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider its work programme for the coming year.

It was requested that a report in relation to sponsorship on roundabouts including the safety issues be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was also noted that the Highways Maintenance Plan would be considered at the next meeting on 1 June 2015, and that this report would be exempt.

RESOLVED

That the work programme, including the above addition, be noted.

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The meeting closed at 12.25 pm