

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 13 JUNE 2016**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, D Brailsford, C J T H Brewis, K J Clarke, R L Foulkes, Mrs A M Newton, Mrs J M Renshaw and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Richard Hardesty (Senior Project Leader), Ian Kitchen (Transport Manager - Policy and Orders), John Monk (Group Manager (Design Services)), Mick Phoenix (Regulation Services Manager), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Jasmine Sodhi (Performance and Equalities Manager), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Andrew Thomas (Principal Accessibility Planning Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Development Services) and Steven Batchelor (Senior Manager)

91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors C J T H Brewis and Mrs J R Renshaw to the Committee, in place of Councillors J R Marriott and N M Murray, respectively, for this meeting only.

92 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None declared at this stage of the meeting.

93 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee held on 18 April 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to "Councillor R A Renshaw, Shadow Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport" being added to the list of those in attendance at the meeting.

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

None.

95 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 4 (1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2016)

The Committee received a report on the performance of the highways service including the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, major highways schemes update and customer satisfaction information for the quarter 1 January to 31 March 2016.

The Committee also received a presentation on performance infographics which would shortly be appearing on the Council's website. The infographics would allow all Members, the public and the press to view performance statistics relating to the Council's services, including highways and transport.

Discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

1. The new system of presenting the performance information was easy to understand.
2. Was it possible to provide an index page to assist people to find what they were looking for on the website for the performance infographics? Officers stated that they would examine this request.
3. Could technical words and phrases used on the performance infographics be explained? Officers agreed to examine this request.
4. It was noted that complaints from customers had increased during the last quarter but it was noted that customer complaints had increased across all of the Council's services.
5. While the various projects in Lincoln were welcomed improvements to the Doddington and Skellingthorpe Roads level crossings were required because of the effects on economic development in these areas. Officers stated that both crossings were being examined and efforts were on-going to try and get someone from Network Rail to attend a meeting of this Committee to speak on this matter.
6. It was noted that the percentage of Compensation Events committed within two weeks was quite low. Officers stated that this was due to the current number of personnel vacancies in this area which would improve when the new operating model for highways had been finalised.
7. It was noted that there were few highways projects taking place in the north of the county compared for example to Lincoln. Officers stated that it should be borne in mind that many of the highway projects taking place were linked to economic growth and much of the funding came from private developers. The days of the funding of, for example, road schemes out of the public purse no longer existed.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by the Committee on the performance information and the infographics be noted.

96 STREET LIGHTING TRANSFORMATION PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee received a progress report in connection with the Street Lighting Transformation project. Officers stated that the county wide project was slightly ahead of programme and was currently due for completion by March 2017, from when it would deliver the proposed benefits of saving £1.77m per annum, reduce light pollution, reduce the Council's carbon footprint and reduce maintenance needs. Officers stated that all relevant people had been informed of the Transformation project including, amongst others, MPs, District Councils, the public through the County News and the Council's website.

Officers stated that the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport, following concerns expressed by some of those affected, had agreed to revise its plans and leave all 'part-night' lights on until midnight. The authority had initially planned to turn-off some at 10pm. The Committee noted that this would require the Executive Councillor to make a further Executive decision to implement this change.

Officers stated that they had been working in consultation with the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership and the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership on the implementation of the Transformation project.

Mr Darryl Smalley, a member of the public, presented a petition to the Committee entitled "Don't Leave Lincoln in the Dark". He outlined the reasons behind the submission of the petition including, amongst others, the lack of communication with the public about the project, the effect on vulnerable people particularly those suffering from mental health issues and the elderly, crime, people's quality of life, evidence by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the need for an appeals process to allow members of the public to request that certain street lights were kept on.

Questions from the Committee to Mr Darryl Smalley and his response included the following:-

1. Did the decision of the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport address the concerns raised in the petition. Mr Darryl Smalley stated that the decision of the Executive Councillor did address some of the concerns in the petition but there were still issues with people with mental health and anxiety problems.
2. Were all of the 4,000 names on the petition from Lincoln? Mr Darryl Smalley stated as the petition was an on-line petition the majority of petitioners were from Lincoln and surrounding villages in Lincolnshire but a small number were from out of the county.
3. The Council had had to make and still had to make some difficult decisions on its finances in recent years and in the future. If you were in charge of the Council's finances where would you make savings? Mr Darryl Smalley stated that he was unable to suggest where any savings could be made in the Council's budget at the current time and added that the setting up of an appeals process would not be too difficult to implement to help vulnerable people on a case by case basis.
4. Were the signatures on the petition obtained before the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport had made a decision to leave all 'part-night' lights on until

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midnight? Mr Darryl Smalley stated that most of the signatures had been obtained before the Executive Councillor had made his decision to leave all 'part-night' lights on until midnight.

Officers addressed the various points raised in the petition including the following:-

1. With regard to the lack of communication with the public a copy of the Spring edition of County News was distributed to every household in Lincolnshire. This contained a comprehensive article about the Street Lighting Transformation project and how residents could find out more. Further publicity was given to the project on the Council's website and proactive press releases.
2. Within the overall project street lights had been left on in accordance with exception criteria listed on the website. Members of the public were already able to contact the Council if they felt that their location met one of the exceptions with a view to all night lighting being maintained. Members of the public were able to email/contact the Council if they had an enquiry about street lighting at any time.
3. Many local authorities had already implemented similar projects to that being carried out by the Council from as early as 2007.
4. There was a significant reduction in vehicle movements after midnight.

The Chairman and members of the Committee thanked Mr Darryl Smalley for his petition and presentation and proceeded to give consideration the report and the petition.

Discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

1. In view of the need for the Council to save £140m what action was being taken to get the Government to increase its funding to the Council? The Committee noted that the lobbying of the Government to increase its funding to the Council was taking place.
2. What monitoring of the project was in place? Officers stated that it was proposed to receive data from the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership and the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership on an annual basis and this would allow the Council to monitor the effects of the project on accidents and crime. Officers stated that a significant night time increase in crime was generally linked to the night time economy.
3. What method was used for checking appeals and were members able to check? Officers stated that each appeal was checked in accordance with the exception criteria and it would be possible for members to review the appeals process.
4. There did not appear to be any pattern why some street lights were left on and others switched off and some routes used by emergency vehicles had had their street lights switched off. Officers explained the street lighting policy and added that only emergency facilities were lit otherwise it would mean having to light every route to these locations which would defeat the objective of saving money by reducing the amount of street lighting. Officers stated that Lincolnshire Police had not contacted the Council to report any increase in crime as a result of the measures and added that street lights could assist burglars.

5. What was the breakdown of the savings between the use of LED street lights and part night lighting? Officers stated that they did not have this information readily available and would send it to the Committee as soon as possible.

(Post meeting note -

What is the split of projected savings between LED and Part Night Lighting/Switch Offs?

- Proposed LED Lantern conversions – approximately £1,000,000 savings
- Proposed Part Night / Switch Offs – approximately £700,000 savings

Both figures include a reduction in ongoing maintenance needs)

6. Sometimes residents requested that street lights were switched off and in the event of an emergency vehicle having to attend a residential property it was usually common practice to leave the house lights on.

7. There was sometimes confusion on the lighting of footpaths and streets. District Councils generally had responsibility for the former.

8. What was the situation in connection with street lighting in a cul de sac which had 40 houses? Officers stated that these lights would go part lighting and be switched off at midnight. Officers stated that intermittent lighting (alternate lights switched off) could cause problems for the partially sighted in that they created pockets of darkness.

9. There was more economic activity at night in urban areas.

10. The use of LED lighting was welcomed but why had not the Council converted all lamps to LED? Officers stated that this had been considered but the costs of upwards of £18m had been deemed prohibitive. Officers stated that other Councils had introduced all LED lighting but were now considering part night lighting too, as LED conversions alone had not made sufficient savings.

Officers stated that during the period of the transformation project the Council would focus on installing the new equipment required for the project. The majority of minor faults would therefore be addressed when personnel visited the particular column to either convert this to LED or install the part night lighting photocells. However, the Council would still respond to emergencies and it was appreciated when the public continued to report faults so that appropriate action could be taken in due course.

The Committee's positive comments in connection with the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport's decision to change the Council's policy and leave all 'part-night' lights on until midnight, instead of 10pm, were noted.

RESOLVED

(a) That the petition be noted and passed to the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport for a formal response to be sent to the petitioner.

(b) That the Committee's comments made on the petition, the progress report and the responses of officers, be noted.

97 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Committee received the annual report on Civil Parking Enforcement 2015/16 in accordance with the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on Civil Parking Conventions. Officers explained that the surplus figure in the report of "£293,584" should read "£308,495" and that the annual report would be amended to reflect this change before it was placed on the Council's website.

Discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

1. Clarification about the statistics for the number of days patrolled by Civil Parking Enforcement officers as it appeared low for busy areas. Officers stated that it was calendar days covered in a year per location, rather than the number of man-days patrolled. It was agreed to provide statistics for the next report that would show the number of patrols, per location, per year.
2. Should not Civil Parking Enforcement be cost neutral? Officers stated that while it was the intention for the service to be cost neutral this was difficult to achieve in view of the contract requirements and the nature of the service being provided.
3. An example was given of a vehicle that was covered, its registration number unable to be seen and had been parked illegally for some time. Officers stated that these scenarios presented a problem to the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers as they were not allowed to touch other people's property and were only able to observe.
4. Illegal parking on Dickson Street, Lincoln should be investigated as illegal parking was common.
5. A case of a parked vehicle in Sleaford which had been there for a long time was given and in this particular instance it appeared to be an anti-social problem and therefore the responsibility of the District Council.
6. An example was given in Lincoln where the yellow lines had faded and needed renewing. Officers agreed to investigate this case and get back to Councillor Mrs J M Renshaw.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses by officers on the report be noted.

(b) That the Annual Report for 2015/16 be supported and published on the Council's website.

98 PARKING ON FOOTWAYS/PAVEMENTS

The Committee received a report in connection with the problems caused by footway parking, the legal issues that surrounded it and the Council's powers to deal with them.

Officers stated that due to the complex nature of parking regulations and the fact that the matter had been raised in Parliament the processing of a Bill to address the issue had been withdrawn following a commitment by the Minister for Transport to discuss the problem of parking on footways with all interested parties.

Discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

1. As there was no legislation a Working Group as recommended in the report was not required at the current time and the Minister's decision to have round table discussions with interested parties to discuss this matter was noted.
2. It was accepted that this was a difficult area and that there would be a need for exemptions if legislation was enacted.
3. Officers stated that driving on the footway was a criminal offence and therefore enforceable by the Police.
4. What was the view of the Local Government Association (LGA) on this matter as it was useful to have one voice for lobbying purposes?
5. Examples were given of specific cases of parking on the footways including one incident of a builder's lorry being parked during building work and damaging the pavement. With regard to this specific incident it was suggested that District Planning Authorities should ensure that any planning approval was conditioned to prevent this happening. Officers agreed to speak planning colleagues about what action could be taken on this matter and stated that the Police could consider prosecuting someone for obstruction if a vehicle was blocking the carriageway.

The Committee agreed that the Chairman, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport, should draft a letter to the Minister of Transport, to give the Council's support for the round table discussions with interested parties, on the problems of parking on footways. The Committee also agreed not to support the establishment of a Working Group to examine this matter at the current time in view of the decision by the Minister to arrange round table discussions at a national level to discuss this matter.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, be noted.
- (b) That the recommendation to establish a Working Group to review the issues surrounding pavement parking not be supported at the current time in view of the decision by the Minister for Transport to set up round table discussions with interested parties at a national level to examine this matter.
- (c) That the decision of the Chairman, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport, to write a letter to the Minister for Transport, in support of the round table discussions with interested parties at a national level, be supported.

99 RAIL UPDATE

(Note: Councillors C J T H Brewis and M Brookes requested that a note should be made in the minutes that they were both members of the Public Transport Consortium)

The Committee received a report on current rail issues affecting the county including an update on the East Midlands Rail Franchise re-letting due to start later this year including a list of proposed enhancements to be sought for Lincolnshire and an outline of the recent work commissioned by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) who had engaged consultants to examine the role that rail played in the GLLEP area and the economic benefits that improvements might bring. The report also gave an update on a recent decision by the Rail Regulator which had positive implications for Lincoln-London direct services.

Discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

1. When was Network Rail going to ensure that wheelchair access was provided at Stamford Station required by the Disability Discrimination Act? Officers agreed to raise this matter with Network Rail.
2. Examples were provided of the involvement of Parish Councils working in consultation with Network Rail to improve the appearance of Stations.
3. It was noted that Network Rail had allowed sufficient room for the development of electrification of the Doncaster to Peterborough line by Lincoln. Officers stated that the issue of electrification would be covered later in the report as it was something which the Greater Lincolnshire LEP had also picked up on.
4. The need for Network Rail to consider the re-opening of old railway lines to improve timing schedules and to avoid having to change trains and in this respect an example was given of the Firsby to Grimsby line. Officers stated that this was not an issue for the East Midlands Rail Franchise which was primarily related to rail services rather than major infrastructure.
5. The issue of the need for funding to achieve the aspirations for Lincolnshire's rail services was highlighted, along with the need for more and improved rolling stock, which was a problem nationally. Officers noted that the East Midlands franchise included many subsidised services for rural areas.
6. Why was there a need to provide a direct service from Lincoln to London when the Newark to London service was satisfactory? Officers stated that direct services had been shown to be a key requirement when businesses were looking to relocate, as well as having a positive effect on tourism as changing trains was seen as a disincentive when visiting Lincoln.
7. Was it possible to have a direct link from Cleethorpes to London? Officers stated that at this point in time there were no proposals by Virgin Trains to provide such a service but this was known to be an aspiration of North East Lincolnshire Council.
8. Concerns were raised about the delays caused in Spalding and the effect on the local economy with many people driving to Bourne to do their shopping. A bridge was to be provided by the proposed Holland Park development but this was not imminent. Also, the station at Spalding was overgrown with weeds. Who was responsible for tidying up the Station? Officers stated that while the tidiness of the Station was the

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responsibility of East Midlands Trains, the train operator, Network Rail, was responsible for the ensuring the level crossing was kept tidy.

Officers stated that the Economic Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24 May 2016, had made some detailed comments on the GLLEP report on rail issues in the county and that there was nothing in the report which was detrimental to the county and that it would be a useful lobbying document going forward.

The Committee supported the comments made by the Economic Scrutiny Committee, the GLLEP report and wished to see more feasibility work on electrification. Officers stated that the Office for Road and Rail Regulation carried out regular reviews of the operation of Network Rail, were mindful of the financial impact of any proposals by Network Rail, that the GLLEP were to commission further work on the case for electrification and that GLLEP wished to promote a direct service from London to the South Humber Bank in the long term.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee and the responses given by officers, on the report, be noted.

(b) That the report by the GLLEP and the comments made by the Economic Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24 May 2016, be supported.

100 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report in connection with its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be noted subject to the following amendments:-

- (a) Total Transport Update scheduled for 11 July 2016 to be postponed to 12 September 2016.
- (b) An update on Transport Connect to be added to 12 September 2016
- (c) An update on Network Rail – to be programmed.
- (d) Parking on footways – to be programmed.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm