

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 27 FEBRUARY 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors M G Allan, D Brailsford, T Bridges, K J Clarke, R L Foulkes, R G Fairman, N M Murray, Mrs A M Newton and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: Mrs S Ransome and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Mike Coates (Highways Assessment and Laboratory Manager), Richard Fenwick (Highways Officer), Richard Hardesty (Senior Project Leader), John Monk (Group Manager (Design Services)), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Development Services) and David Walton (Major Schemes and Design Commissioner)

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P J O'Connor.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor A Bridges, in place of Councillor A G Hagues, for this meeting only.

49 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were made at this stage of the meeting.

50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2017, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

No announcements were made.

52 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 3 - (1 OCTOBER TO 31

DECEMBER 2016)

The Committee received a report in connection with the performance of the highways service for quarter 3 (1 October to 31 December 2016), including the National Highways and Transportation Survey, Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, Major Highway schemes update and the Customer Satisfaction information.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- How were carbon savings calculated? Officers stated that in a large county like Lincolnshire efforts were being made to reduce unnecessary travel although it was not just vehicles which were responsible for the increase in carbon levels. There was a need to achieve more accuracy in the planning of highway works.
- What was the procedure for dealing with complaints to repair street lights? Officers stated that the priority was to deliver the Street Lighting Transformation project first to achieve the necessary savings requested by the Council and then to return and repair those lights not working at the end of March 2017. The performance targets were being met for the project and emergency repairs within the context of the performance indicators.
- A number of comments were made in connection with the public rail crossing footbridges in Lincoln, Spalding and Sleaford? Officers stated that Network Rail was addressing snagging issues in connection with the walking surfaces at the High Street bridge and the County Council would not assume responsibility until the impact of weather conditions was known. Officers stated that there was no proposal by Network Rail for the bridge on the Brayford to be disabled compliant as there was already provision for the disabled at the High Street bridge. Also, Network Rail might refuse to build the Brayford bridge if the Council insisted that the bridge was disabled compliant. The Environment Agency had also objected to the planning application for the Brayford bridge due to the need for Network Rail to remove rubbish from the Brayford near the proposed bridge and if the bridge was disabled compliant this could not be achieved. Officers stated that they were in discussions with Network Rail about the bridges at Sleaford and Spalding and as soon as the walking surfaces had been addressed then the Council would adopt both bridges. The High Street bridge was the responsibility of Network Rail.
- Officers would speak to Councillor N Murray outside of the meeting in connection the reporting of highways' complaints through the Customer Services Centre.

RESOLVED

That the report, the comments made by the Committee and responses of officers be noted.

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The Committee received an update of the street lighting transformation project as at 26 January 2017. The project was designed to achieve savings of £1.7m a year following a capital investment of £6.4m. 47,815 lights had been adjusted to date and had delivered over 40% reductions in street lighting electricity usage so far. The project was due to underspend by approximately £650,000 which was, in part, due to value engineering efficiencies by the Kier street lighting crews as part of the Highways Alliance.

Officers stated that of the 12,000 faults reported 2,500 faults were still outstanding at 14 February 2017, 3% of the total. There had been a reduction in the rate of mending non-emergency lighting during the period of transformation and from 1 April 2017 following the completion of the project all faults would be addressed.

Comments by the Committee and responses by officers included:-

- The effect on crime rates since the project had commenced. Officers stated that a comprehensive report on the effects of the project would be provided for Members twelve months on from the completion of the project. This would allow for seasonal variations in crime/road traffic accidents to be taken in account. Results from those areas nationwide which had followed a similar project had seen a reduction in crime of up to 24% and up to 29% reductions in anti-social behaviour. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership's advice was sought where appropriate and officers were not aware of any increase in accidents as a result of the lights being turned off. Officers explained how the LRSP had carried out its examinations.
- A member stated that Holton le Clay Parish Council had not been consulted about the project. Officers stated that all Parish and Town Councils had been consulted before the start of the project and in the case of Holton le Clay they had been consulted in August 2016. Also, no responses had been received from those Parish Councils which had the A16 running through their area, in relation to proposed switch offs of lights on that route.
- The final report should include a cost/benefit analysis and made available to the public.
- Officers stated that street light columns that had been switched off would be left in place rather than remove them. The findings of the "twelve month on" report would be used to inform future removal.
- Had there been any medical effects following the use of LED lighting. Officers stated that no incidents had been reported. LED lighting was more directionally focused than the traditional sodium lighting but the latter caused more light pollution. Trials on the use of "warm white" LED lighting were being examined in Lincoln with the prospect of its introduction countywide as part of normal asset replacement but this was a long term project. In the meantime, any broken lighting, beyond economical repair, was considered for replacement by LED lighting and LED lighting was being installed on new developments.
- The public wanted an assurance that street lights would be repaired as quickly as possible. Officers stated that the project had been very intensive with the need to visit 58,000 lights in one year. Some local authorities nationwide had allowed a longer time to complete their transformation projects. It was the

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Council's policy that the transformation project should be completed before any repairs took place. The project was due to complete during March at which all street lighting crews would focus on fault repairs. Normal street lighting fault response times (10 working days) would be reinstated from April 2017.

- Officers explained the criteria to deal with requests for lights to be kept on.

RESOLVED

That the report, the comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, be noted.

54 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a report and presentation in connection with the Highways Asset Management Strategy. The views of the Committee were sought on the Strategy before it was considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

Officers gave a brief description of the Strategy whose purpose was to formalise strategies for investment in key highway asset groups; define affordable service standards; improve how the highways assets were managed and enable a more effective and efficient highways service to be delivered.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- £10b of highway assets was significant money. Roads were important for the economic wellbeing of the county and investment and maintenance was critical. However, highways investment in the county was low.
- The use of the Lagan system could result in service efficiencies.
- Was more funding expected from the Government because of the damage caused by HGVs to the road structure? Officers stated that funding provided by the Government was based on road length in each area.
- What measures were in place to mitigate damage to bridges? Officers stated that the Council could not monitor all bridges and measures were in place to restrict the use of some bridges. Bridges were inspected on a regular basis.
- Some footpaths were in need of repair. Officers stated that footpaths were inspected and a risk assessment undertaken out before any repairs were carried out.
- Many road signs and white lining on roads were in need of refurbishment. Officers stated that there had been a 25% reduction in the revenue budget in this area in recent years.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report, comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, be noted and that the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, be unanimously supported.

(b) That the presentation given to the Committee be circulated to all Members.

55 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received a report in connection with the Highways Asset Management Plan which set out the Council's highway maintenance policies, legal duties and standards. The Plan was due to be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for approval and the views of the Committee were sought.

The Plan detailed any deviation from national guidance set out in "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice". The policy was in need of review in 2017 due to revisions to internal operating procedures as a result of budget pressures, including grass cutting and drainage cleansing.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers included:-

- Officers stated gulley cleansing had been examined and from past practice some gulleys had been cleaned which did not need to be cleaned on a regular basis and some required more frequent cleaning.
- The effects of the reduction in the cutting of verges on the local economy and road safety. Officers stated a range of different services were being provided across the whole of the network in the county by the County and District Councils depending on local factors. The Council had a duty to ensure highway signs were clear for motorists. Safety cuts of highway verges in urban areas would take place twice a year, all Parish and Town Councils had been informed about the proposals and the Council could offer funding, in certain circumstances, to help them. Officers agreed to write to all Members about what was happening in their own area.

RESOLVED (all in favour with 1 vote against)

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

(b) That the recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, to approve the Highways Asset Management Plan, detailed in Appendix A of the report, including the removal of amenity grass cutting and revised maintenance frequencies to drainage cleansing, be supported.

56 GRANTHAM SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD - FINANCIAL APPROVAL TO AWARD CONTRACT FOR GRADE SEPARATED INTERCHANGE, KING 31, PHASE 2

The Committee received a report in connection with the award of a contract for the King 31 Phase 2 Grade Separated Interchange on the A1 for the Grantham Southern

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Relief Road, which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 1 and 8 March 2017.

In response to an enquiry in connection with the funding of Phase 2, officers explained that the £20m was fully funded by grant and Phase 3 would be funded in part by a S106 agreement from housing.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

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

(b) That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be supported.

57 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Committee received its Work Programme.

The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of the Committee in its current format and thanked Members and officers for their support over the last four years.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm