

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 APRIL 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors S P Roe (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, Mrs J Brockway, Mrs A M Newton, R A Renshaw, A N Stokes and E W Strengiel

Executive Councillor R G Davies, Highways, Transport and IT and Executive Support Councillor C Perraton-Williams, Highways, Transport and IT attended the meeting and spoke

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Richard Fenwick (County Highways Manager), Karl Gibson (Senior Project Leader), Mark Heaton (Programme Leader), David Hickman (Head of Environment), Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services), Paul Rusted (Head of Highways Services) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs W Bowkett, C J T H Brewis, Mrs P A Cooper and R Grocock.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor Mrs A Newton to the Committee, in place of Councillor C J T H Brewis, for this meeting only.

70 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests at this stage of the meeting.

71 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 March, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**72 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR
AND LEAD OFFICERS**

The Chairman welcomed Tom Blackburne-Maze, Consultant Advisor, Highways who had been appointed to review the Council's highways service and its priorities for the future.

The Chairman sought the Committee's approval to the postponement of agenda item 5 (Spalding Western Relief Road) until the feasibility study had been completed of the middle section of the route. The Chairman stated that this Committee would have an opportunity to examine the proposals before they were considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT. The Chairman moved the postponement, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and this was agreed unanimously by the Committee.

Executive Councillor R G Davies paid tribute to Steve Willis's, Chief Operating Officer, service to the Council and particularly to highways following his retirement from the Council after many years of service. The Chairman also paid tribute to Steve Willis and the Committee's appreciation was placed on record for his service to highways.

Executive Councillor R G Davies was delighted to announce that the Council's Highways Management Team had been shortlisted as one of the four finalists for the Highways Management category following phase 1 of The Municipal Journal Awards 2019 judging process. The Chairman welcomed this announcement and the Committee's congratulations to the Highways Management Team were placed on record.

73 SPALDING WESTERN RELIEF ROAD

Item postponed (see minute 72).

**74 REVISION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR LINCOLNSHIRE'S JOINT LOCAL
ACCESS FORUMS**

The Committee received a report in connection with the future arrangements for the Local Access Forums in Lincolnshire which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 6 May and 10 May 2019. The views of the Committee would be reported to the Executive Councillor as part of his consideration of this item.

Officers gave a brief history of the development of the Forums which were set up in 2003 and whose main purpose was to advise the Council on rights of way in Lincolnshire. Officers stated that in recent years recruitment of new members had become more difficult and the Countryside Service had not got the resources to service two Forums which had existed in the past.

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

- The knowledge and enthusiasm of volunteers serving on the Forums was welcomed and retaining them to serve on one Forum for the whole of Lincolnshire might be an issue due to the county's geographical size. Officers agreed that this would be a challenge and the recruitment process would need to be carefully considered. The new arrangements would provide an opportunity for members to concentrate on Lincolnshire's rights of way.
- There should be a review of how the new Forum was working after one year of operation. Officers agreed to raise this matter with the Service Manager.
- What were the cost implications of the new arrangements? Officers stated that there would be a small cost saving.
- Were Parish Councils consulted/involved with the Forum? Because the geographical area covered by the new Forum was the whole county it might be seen to be too remote from local people. Officers stated that many of the current voluntary bodies including Parish Councils that got involved in the Forum were required to take a strategic view of rights of way and the Ramblers organisation was given as an example.

The members supported the recommendations detailed in the report.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the recommendations detailed in the report be supported.
- (b) That the comments made by members in connection with the report be passed to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

75 WINTER MAINTENANCE - END OF YEAR REPORT

The Committee received a report in connection with an end of year report on winter maintenance for the winter of 2018/19. Officers explained the replacement of the use of white salt by treated brown salt, the improved audit of salt bins which had led to improved maintenance of the bins and that there would be a review of the current "Precautionary Salting Network" as more roads came on line.

Comments by members and the responses of officers included:-

- It was noted that the number of requests for roads to be added to the salting network had been eight last winter which might have been due to the mild winter. Officers agreed that this might have been the reason for the low number of requests.
- Grit bins not being used could be due to the mild winter. Officers agreed to feed this response back to the Resilience Team.
- Officers stated that all schools were treated within 500 metres of their entrance during periods of severe weather. The Council was able to use smaller gritters to use on some routes where appropriate. Officers agreed to clarify this issue with the Resilience Team and respond to members.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 29 APRIL 2019

- Personal attacks on drivers of grit vehicles on social media should be countered and the Council's Communications section should be consulted on the best way to tackle this issue. Officers agreed that this was a good idea and stated that they were already in consultation with the contractor about this matter.
- Some Parish Councils had purchased their own bins. What was the position in connection with the filling of these bins? The Executive Councillor stated that the Council was able to provide ~~grit~~ bins to Parish Councils to enable them to fill their own bins. The Executive Councillor stated that grit stolen from bins was a big issue in some areas.
- Officers stated that not all bus routes were gritted and that if they were this would necessitate the removal of other routes from the network. A full review of the route network was not currently being undertaken but would likely to be required in future.
- In some cases, Parish Councils had purchased their own bins to store salt but there was the question of servicing and cost.
- Officers stated that currently it was more cost effective to purchase gritting vehicles especially as interest rates were so low and the Council was able to extend their service through maintenance. Officers added that the vehicles were only used during inclement winter weather their annual mileage was quite low. Officers stated that when the lease period came up for review this provided an opportunity to examine if the lease should be extended.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received.
- (b) That the review of the current gritting route, the need to the Council's Communications section to investigate attacks on grit drivers in social media and that the servicing by the Council of additional salt ~~bins~~ bought by Parish Councils would need to be considered in the review of the current salting network.

76 TRANSPORTCONNECT - TECKAL COMPANY UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Council's Teckal Company, Transport Connect Ltd, established in 2016, as an intervention into the market. Officers stated that the governance and management of the company had been strengthened since the company had been established.

Comments by members and the responses of officers included:-

- The report was welcomed as it was filling a gap in the market and saving the Council money.
- The satisfaction surveys were very good.
- Was the Council able to provide any assistance following the fire at one of the maintenance depots? Officers stated that the fire was caused by an electrical fault and the Council's property section was aware of the situation.

- Many of the pupils had special needs and the care taken by transport personnel was welcomed.

The Committee welcomed the success of the service which had addressed a shortfall in the market and it was agreed that the Committee would receive an annual report on progress of the company.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be welcomed and that the comments made by the Committee be passed to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
- (b) That the Committee receive an annual report on progress of the company.

77 LINCOLN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Committee received a verbal report in connection with an update of the Lincoln Transport Strategy.

Officers gave details of the implementation of the Strategy, including:-

- Phase 1- acquisition of data; understanding the current and future issues including the effects of the internet on retail shopping; increased tourism; gaps in the current market and where intervention should be concentrated.
- Phase 2 – utilising the Strategy. Results indicated that there had been a substantial increase in light goods vehicles using the highway network because of more home deliveries; bus use had continued to decline in recent years which was reflected nationally; an increase use of rail especially from North Hykeham Station; increased in tourism and leisure; housing growth had led to an increase in traffic movements and this would only be reduced if there was a reduction in growth.

Officers stated that feedback from the "drop in centres" had indicated the need for more bus services to be provided at the weekend and evenings. Officers stated that bus companies had stated that there was no increase in the use of these services when they had been provided. Concerns had been expressed that the new Lincoln Transport Hub was not large enough and that it would not be able to cope with future demand; the current cycling routes were good but needed to be improved when they got to Lincoln; cycling routes should be brought up to the level provided in the Netherlands; the ring road needed to be completed around Lincoln; links between villages needed to be improved not just links to Lincoln, this was particularly important in view of the proposed development of Scampton and concerns had been expressed about the Western Growth Corridor.

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

- How would the Council prioritise its work on the Strategy? Officers stated that the process used by the Boston Transport Strategy would be followed.

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 APRIL 2019**

- While the provision of cycling storage at the Lincoln Hub was welcomed more facilities were required especially in urban centres. Officers agreed that the lack of storage facilities for cycles needed to be addressed and the importance of seeking a balance in the provision of all transport.
- Officers stated that improved connectivity of cycle routes would be addressed and stated that Sustrans had been given £21m to spend on cycling routes. The increased use of electric bikes was welcomed.
- It was noted that the use of the internet for retail and food shopping had increased.
- Officers agreed with members that bus companies needed to improve their publicity about bus timetables.
- Had any consideration been given to the introduction of a congestion charge? Officers stated that this would be considered in the future.

Officers stated that they would submit a further progress report in two months.

RESOLVED

That the report, together with members' comments be noted and that a further progress report be submitted in two months.

78 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Officers stated that the cycling strategy scheduled for 10 June 2019 would now be considered as part of the bus strategy report.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly.

79 INFORMATION ITEM**80 A46 NETTLEHAM AND RISEHOLME ROUNDABOUT HIGHWAY SCHEME DESIGNS**

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation of plans in connection with the A46 Nettleham and Riseholme roundabout highway scheme designs. Officers explained the improvements to both roundabouts.

Comments by members and the responses of officers included:-

- Why had not the Skellingthorpe roundabout been addressed? Officers stated this belonged to the Highways Agency but the Council was in consultations with the Agency about this roundabout.

- It was hoped that the proposed changes to the Nettleham roundabout would not affect the water flow from Nettleham Beck ("Roaring Meg"). Officers stated that it was proposed to increase the size of Nettleham Beck and the existing flow to Nettleham would be reduced.
- Officers stated that the existing cycleways to both roundabouts would be maintained and the provision of larger roundabouts would also give cyclists more protection.
- Was it proposed to make the changes to the roundabouts at the same time? Officers explained how it was proposed to make the necessary improvements at the same time and to avoid too much disruption to traffic flows. Officers stated that it was more cost effective to deal with both roundabouts at the same time. It was proposed to make a start on site in January 2020 and the work would take six months to complete.
- Was it possible to extend the lanes to the A158 from the Nettleham roundabout as this would help HGVs to climb the incline on this stretch of road? Officers stated that the proposed improvements would improve the capacity of the existing highway network and the opening of the Lincoln Eastern Bypass would further improve matters. Any increase in extending crawler lanes would involve further land purchase which this scheme at present did not have the funding to facilitate.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm