

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 14 SEPTEMBER 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B ADAMS (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors S P Roe (Vice-Chairman), C J T H Brewis, Mrs J Brockway, R Grocock, R A Renshaw, A N Stokes, E W Strenziel and M A Whittington

Officers in attendance:-

Karen Cassar (Assistant Director Highways), Paul Rusted (Head of Highways Services), Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T R Ashton and Mrs W Bowkett.

The Chief Executive reported that having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, she had appointed Councillor M A Whittington as a replacement member of the Committee in place of Councillor M Brookes respectively until further notice.

9 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JULY 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT advised that he had no specific announcements. However, he reported that the Highways service continued to be delivered well. He thanked all managers and staff, including those on the frontline for their hard work during this time.

12 PASSENGER TRANSPORT UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Transport Services which provided an annual update on Passenger Transport matters since the previous report considered by this Committee on 10 June 2019.

Members were guided through the report, and particular attention was drawn to the following sections:

- The impact of Covid-19 including the state of the local transport market
- Bus Services Act 2017
- Public bus Service changes
- Total Transport including Non-Emergency Transport Services
- Local Government Association's Special Interest Group on Public Transport Consortium
- National and Local Bus Strategy
- Sustainable Transport
- Transport Services Group's performance

Members of the Committee were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members thanked the Head of Transport Services for her report and for the work that she and her team carried out.
- It was commented that the judicial decision relating to community transport was a positive outcome and it was queried whether there was anything that individual members could do to encourage people to volunteer as community transport. It was noted work was underway across the directorates to engage with volunteers and following this work there may be opportunities for elected members to act as community champions. There were also plans for a series of publicity campaigns for both community transport and public transport, which would include promoting opportunities for people to get out and about in the county.
- It was highlighted that an update was circulated monthly to councillors which outlined any service changes.
- It was commented that the report presented was excellent and explained a lot of the problems that were being faced.
- A query was raised in relation to bus stop installation and repair, and it was noted that the highways team would deal with any specific issues around bus stop maintenance. It was highlighted that grants were available to parish councils to install bus shelters.
- It was highlighted that the people who volunteered as drivers to take people to hospital tended to be from older age groups and a lot of them had been in lockdown during the pandemic. However, it was noted that, as in other areas, the pandemic had also presented opportunities and now there may be other parts of the population who may be able and willing to take on some of these community transport roles.
- In relation to home to school transport, it was queried whether there was any data on the number of children who were now being taken to school by car, as there were concerns about crowding on buses. It was highlighted that there

was no requirement for social distancing on dedicated school transport. However, these services were monitored and daily figures of how many children were using services were received. The authority was encouraging parents to take their children to school if possible. The government had expected that a third of children would walk or cycle to school, a third would be taken to school by their parents and the remaining third would be using the local network or the local authority provided school transport. However, it was currently too early for data to determine whether this was the case. It was also noted that other measures were being introduced by colleges to reduce the amount of people arriving on site at one time such as staggering start times and start dates.

- It was commented that bus operators were facing a 'perfect storm' of different pressures, and it was queried whether any operators had indicated that they may not be able to continue operating, and what was LCC able to do to help support them through this time. It was acknowledged that some operators would struggle, particularly when the government funding came to an end or when their exemption certificates ran out. The authority was looking at initiatives to help in any way possible. There would be a need to look at the nature of public transport going forward, and there may be more disparate trips, so there may be need to move away from fixed routes to a more dynamic and demand responsive service like Call Connect.
- In relation to non-emergency passenger transport, it was queried whether there was any scope for the authority to do more to support this. Discussions were underway with health colleagues and the scope for collaborative working was being examined.
- In terms of work with schools and parents to encourage children to walk and cycle to school, it was noted that the authority was required to have a SMOTS (Smarter Modes of Transport for Schools) strategy, which had recently been refreshed. This included a wide range of initiatives including Bikeability. There was currently a lot of work coming out of Government to encourage walking and cycling, and additional funding had been received. Work was underway with highways and education colleagues to identify locations for schemes.
- It was queried whether, given the difficulties that coaching companies were facing, there were any opportunities for coaching companies to be able to provide additional dedicated school transport services.
- Members were pleased that a report was coming to a future meeting on sustainable transport.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1 – 1 APRIL 2020 – 30 JUNE 2020

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Highways Services which set out the performance of the highways service including the Major Highways Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report and the Highways and Transport Complaints Report.

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Members were guided through the report and 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:

- In relation to gully cleansing work it was queried how many could not be cleansed due to the presence of parked cars. It was acknowledged that parked cars could be a problem and part of the performance indicator included going back to those areas where cleansing had not been possible. The team was working hard to get back to the known hot spots.
- The idea of vinyl wrapping controller cabinets was supported. It was hoped that this would help to prevent some of the graffiti that occurred.
- A number of white lines were reported to be faded. Members were advised that an extensive project of renewing centre lines of major routes was underway.
- It was requested whether assurance could be given that in future major schemes there would be mitigation to prevent 'rat running' by HGV's on unsuitable routes. It was confirmed that this was always taken into consideration during the planning of major projects.
- In terms of any archaeology which was discovered during a scheme, it was queried what happened to it, and members were advised that the authority employed a Finds Officer. In relation, to what happened to it after it was discovered, this would depend on its importance for Lincolnshire. A lot of finds would be boxed up for review and cataloguing and would go to places like The Collection. Remains of structures may also be covered over again to ensure they were not damaged by the construction of the road. There were a range of interventions which could be used.
- It was highlighted that there was a regular flooding issue under the railway bridge on Allington Road as the water ran off the land owned by Network Rail, and it was queried what could be done as it was understood that there were several other sites which had similar issues. Members were advised that work was ongoing to resolve this issue.

RESOLVED

That the details of the performance contained within the report be noted.

14 WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2020

The Committee received a report by the Materials Engineer, which invited members to consider the proposed amendments to the Winter Service Plan for 2020/21, in line with the national guidance and best practice. This decision was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 01 and 05 October 2020.

It was reported that the length of the precautionary salting network would increase by 7km to 3015km to include the Lincoln Eastern Bypass and there were seven depots which now held treated salt.

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It was reported that the most significant changes to the Winter Plan, which followed national guidance were:

- The reduction in road surface temperature which would initiate salting of the precautionary network from <-1°C to <-2°C
- The reduction in the rate of spreading of the treated salt due to its improved adhesion to the road.

RESOLVED

That the Committee supports the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

15 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Scrutiny Officer which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

It was highlighted that a report on Highway Gully Cleansing, Repair and Surface Water Flooding had been considered by the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee and it was suggested that this report was also relevant to the work of this Committee. It was noted that this would be added to the work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted, subject to the inclusion of the above item.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am