

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26 OCTOBER 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR B ADAMS (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: R G Davies and Clio Perraton-Williams attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Karen Cassar (Assistant Director Highways), Jason Copper (Transport and Growth Manager), Sam Edwards (Head of Highways Infrastructure), Matt Jones (Parking Services Manager), Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Philip Watt (Project Officer) and Jayne Wingad (Rail Policy Officer)

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

None received.

17 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None received.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

(Note: Councillor Mrs J Brockway arrived in the meeting)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2020, be approved as a correct record, subject to the fourth bullet point of minute 13, being amended to read – "It was confirmed that this was always taken into consideration during the planning of major projects".

19 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

Executive Councillor R G Davies reported that the Council's Parking Enforcement Team had won the prestigious "Patrol Parking Award" for its report on parking

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enforcement and that the report had been mentioned by the Chair of Parliament's Transport Select Committee. The Chairman requested that the congratulations of the Committee should be passed to officers and the management team for winning this award.

20 RAIL FRANCHISE UPDATE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH NETWORK RAIL
 AND MIDLANDS CONNECT

(Councillor M Whittington left the meeting during this item)

The Committee received a report in connection with an update regarding changes to rail franchising and the impact of COVID-19 from the Department for Transport (DfT), East Midlands Railway (EMR), Network Rail and Midlands Connect and for them to outline their current rail proposals for Lincolnshire.

(a) Eddie Muraszko, (DfT)

He outlined four issues:-

- (1) The short term-effects, including the severe reduction in patronage when the lock down started in March 2020; the introduction of emergency timetables; the effects of absenteeism; and that franchisees should only provide services they were able to deliver.
- (2) The medium term-effects including delays to infrastructure; the suspension of driver training; the prioritisation of services that worked and on-going work with Network Rail and train operators.
- (3) The massive financial impact to revenues; the need to ensure social distancing on trains; the increased managerial role of the DfT; the use of Emergency Measure and Emergency Recovery Agreements; the increased role and responsibility of the Department and increased co-operation of rail operators would lead to simpler fare structures and better co-ordination of services.
- (4) The implementation of certain parts of the Williams Review, particularly the reform of fares; future demand uncertainty; the need for flexibility by train operators and the uncertain financial outlook facing the country.

Comments by Members included:-

- The improved service to Gainsborough was welcomed.
- There was a need to improve services on the joint-line between Peterborough and Doncaster.
- To get patronage back to the levels of pre-Covid-19 it was essential that the service was improved so much not to make people use their cars.
- "Building Back Better" was welcomed.
- There was a need to improve connectivity for passengers on the Nottingham to Skegness line at Grantham.

Eddy Muraszko stated that it was hoped to improve regional services but he was unable to give a precise date when these would take place, agreed with the

comments about increased patronage adding that train operators had been working on marketing campaigns for 2020 to increase patronage before the Covid-19 crisis and that the new arrangements would allow train operators to improve connectivity for passengers.

- (b) Max Taylor, East Midland Railways referred to the reduction in patronage due to Covid-19 but that patronage had slowly increased in recent months; a 97% restoration of the timetable in recent

months; the withdrawal of 37 services because of self-isolation by train crews; the protection of middle of the day services; the need to run a reliable service; outlined improved services for 2020 with the 2021 timetables still being examined and that it was hoped to respond to service provision when the new contractual arrangements were in place.

Comments by Members included:-

- The proposed improvements on the joint-line in Peterborough would help to improve services for the southern half of Lincolnshire.
- Reliable services were important.
- There were many small towns and villages in South Holland and rail and bus services were poor. The Peterborough to Lincoln service going via Spalding had been welcomed by local residents as it allowed people to get to Lincoln County Hospital. It was noted that this service had been removed due to the Covid-19 crisis despite highway services still being provided and this rail service needed to be restored. Max Taylor explained the reason for the reduction in this service and stated that the Member's comments would be considered in the 2021 timetable consultations.

- (c) Paul McKeown, Network Rail, Eastern Region

He highlighted the effects of Covid-19 on the workforce adding that after four/six weeks it had been possible to resume work and good progress was being made on the operational sites; referred to devolution of Network Rail to the regions and closer to passengers and stakeholders; stated that the Kings Cross was Network Rail's largest project with February 2021 planned for the final phase and referred to the on-going work to complete the Wellington interchange in 2021.

Comments by Members included:-

- An enquiry was made about the life expectancy of the East Coast mainline electrification. Paul McKeown stated that there was a programme of renewal of the wires only and that because of the increase in the electric fleet on this line funding was being sought from the DfT to increase the power supply.
- Reference was made to the upgrade of the old shared joint Great Northern and Great Eastern route running from Peterborough to Doncaster via Spalding and Lincoln with space being left for electrification which would help the eastern part of Lincolnshire.

(d) Andrew Clark, Midlands Connect

He highlighted the on-going work with Network Rail to examine an increase in the speed and frequency of trains between Newark to Lincoln; referred to the on-going work with Network Rail to examine an increase in speed between Nottingham and Newark and thanked the local authorities for the contribution towards the improvement of both these lines.

Comments by Members included the need to examine the speed of rail traffic north and east of Lincoln. Andrew Clark stated that they were only able to examine the business case for trains on those railway-lines mentioned and agreed that the wider rail corridor needed to be examined.

The Rail Operators were thanked for their presentations. Members requested that they should receive a six monthly update on rail matters during the current Covid-19 crisis, welcomed the likelihood of a more co-ordinated approach amongst rail operators in the future and welcomed the contribution by other local authorities in the area.

Officers stated that while it might not be possible to get all the operators to attend on a six monthly basis a progress report could be produced for Members. Officers stated that work was on-going to produce Local Transport Plan 5 and the commissioning of reports into maximising service improvements and infrastructure on the railways were also being examined.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the presentations by Rail Operators, and the comments of Members, be noted.
- (b) That the Committee receive a progress report in six months.
- (c) That a progress report be submitted to a future meeting in connection with the outcome of consultations into improvements to the rail service on the Peterborough to Lincoln railway-line by East Midlands Railways.

21 CYCLING STRATEGY 2020/30

(Note: Councillor B Adams, Chairman, left the meeting and Councillor S P Roe, Vice-Chairman, chaired the meeting)

Following consultations with the Chairman, Andy Porter, Acting Secretary of the Minster Fields Community Group, addressed the meeting in connection with the need

for improved walking and cycling access across the A158/A46 junction/roundabout, which was currently being improved by the Council. He stated that the route formed part of Sustrans Cycle Route 1 and that people of all ages used the route with many children from the estate attending the school in Nettleham, which was already suffering parking problems because people considered the junction unsafe for walking and cycling. He stated that footbridge was required.

The Chairman stated that the letter submitted by Andy Porter had been circulated to members before the meeting and thanked him for his presentation.

The Committee received a report in connection with the Cycling Strategy being developed by the Transport Services Group. The report provided an overview of the emerging Cycling and Walking Network Plans and other activities relating to cycling and walking. The Strategy aligned with the area based Transport Strategies and was being developed alongside key policy work including: the Fifth Local Transport Plan, the Green Master Plan and the Tourism Action Plan.

Officers added that the aim of the Strategy was to make cycling a regular form of transport.

Comments by Members included:-

- Andy Porter's comments, on behalf of the Minster Fields Community Group, were supported and many letters had been received supporting the Community Group.
- Saxilby Parish Council had requested that it should be recorded in the minutes that they had not received a response from the Council in connection with the problems of the completion of a short section of cycleway between Lincoln and Saxilby funded by the Access Lincoln Project, had requested details of the timetable for the delivery of the project and that this Committee should regularly monitor the project. Officers apologised for not responding to the Parish Council and stated that the cycle route from the A57 to a walkway in Saxilby would be completed to create a route to Lincoln. Officers agreed to keep the Parish Council informed of progress.
- The proposal to complete a link between North and South Hykeham was welcomed and it was requested that progress of this scheme should be reported to this meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments by Members be noted and actioned by officers, accordingly.
- (b) That the Committee receive regular updates of progress of the Cycling Strategy 2020/30.

- (c) That the comments by the local Member for Nettleham and Saxilby, in connection with the issues raised by Saxilby Parish Council about the Access Lincoln Project, be noted and actioned by officers accordingly.

22 REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND LIAISON
ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received progress report in connection with the implementation of the Highways Customer Engagement and Liaison Strategy and Implementation Plan. The report documented what the department had done against what the department had said it would do.

Comments by Members included the increased confidence on reporting highway issues, improved customer feedback, details of a particular incident involving the erection of a highway's sign warning of work about to start and the sign subsequently being removed and no work taking place. Officers requested that the Member send details of the removal of the highway's sign to them to investigate.

Members stated that the improvements to the "FixMyStreet" App were welcomed as it was important for the public to be kept informed.

Members agreed to review progress of the Liaison Strategy and Plan on an annual basis.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments by Members be noted, and that the Liaison Strategy and Plan be reviewed annually.

23 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2019 TO 2020

The Committee received the Annual Report on Civil Parking Enforcement related activities and a financial statement showing the cost of the operation, including any deficit or surplus in accordance with the Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions.

Comments by Members included:-

- Irresponsible parking outside of schools at certain times was still a problem. It was suggested that by the use of local intelligence poor parking could be reported to the Council.
- South Holland District Council welcomed working with the Council in connection with their own car parks.
- An enquiry was made about "nuisance" parking and vehicles blocking private driveways. Officers stated that nuisance parking covered anything that was none-compliant, e.g. a vehicle irresponsibly parked in a disabled bay. With regard to the blocking of private drives action could be taken but the written authority of the resident was required before the Council could take any action.

Members thanked officers for an informative and transparent Annual Report and congratulated officers for winning the "Patrol Parking Award".

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments by Members be noted.
- (b) That the Annual Report 2019/20 be noted and be published on the Council's website.

24 ANNUAL UPDATE ON LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO TRAFFIC MODEL AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS

The Committee received a report and presentation in connection with the Transport Strategy, its purpose and benefits for the Council, the progress made since the last report in June 2019 and the further developments planned in the coming year.

Officers outlined the completed strategies, new ones being proposed, including the A15/A17 and A52, the role of local Transport Boards and the process for bidding for funding from the Midlands Connect Development Fund for projects.

Officers gave an example of traffic modelling in Boston and the effects of improvements to vehicle flow when certain traffic measures were put in place.

RESOLVED

That the report and the planned transport strategy developments for future years be noted and supported.

25 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

It was noted that the report in connection with "Roadside Nature Reserves and Wildflowers" would now be considered at the meeting on 25 January 2021.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly.

26 DANIEL STEEL, SCRUTINY OFFICER - LAST MEETING

The Chairman stated that this was Daniel Steel's, Scrutiny Officer, last meeting before taking up a new post in the Council. The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked Daniel for his service to the Committee and wished him well in his new post.

The meeting closed at 12.44 pm