

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 8 MARCH 2021**

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: Clio Perraton-Williams and R Wootten attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Richard Fenwick (County Highways Manager), Chris Miller (Environmental Services Team Leader (Countryside Services)), John Monk (Head of Design Services), Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services), Paul Rusted (Head of Highways Services) and Vanessa Strange (Head of Infrastructure Investment).

46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies or membership changes received.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R G Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

47 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of members' interest made at this stage of the proceedings.

48 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 25 January 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

49 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

No announcements were provided.

50 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - RESOLVING OBSTRUCTION OF
THE HIGHWAYS/CREATION OF PARKING SPACES ON WEST STREET,
BARKSTON

The Chairman invited Councillor R Wootten to present his Councillor Call for Action in relation to resolving the obstruction of the Highway/Creation of Parking Spaces on West Street, Barkston.

The Committee noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had considered the Call for Action Request from Councillor R Wootten at their meeting on 28 January 2021; and had agreed to refer it to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee for further consideration and advice. Details of the advice from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were provided on pages 15 and 16 of the report presented for the Committee to consider.

The Committee was advised that a farmer and businessman in West Street, Barkston had raised concerns over the obstruction of the road by parked cars, which in turn was restricting access to his private property. The Committee was shown a series of photographs in support of this claim at the meeting. The Committee noted that the parking situation had become worse during the Covid-19 pandemic, due to increasing numbers of people following Government advice to exercise locally and that this location had gained in popularity as an area for countryside walking along the River Witham.

It was highlighted that there were no parking spaces along West Street and that the current passing point was being used for parking.

Appendix A to the report provided the Committee with a Location Plan; and Appendix B provided a copy of the Councillor Call for Action Form submitted by Councillor R Wootten.

The Committee was advised that West Street, Barkston was not regulated through any civil parking enforcement; and that the only means of enforcement was through the powers of the police concerning obstruction of the highway. The inconsiderate parking was restricting the available width of the road; which was exacerbated in wetter weather when car owners sought to avoid parking on the grass verge. It was also noted that a contributory factor of this was the unmaintained, riparian roadside ditch.

It was reported that any agreed action to the particular issue could be precedential, given that similar instances were noted across the County and especially as a response to the current pandemic. Options for the Committee to consider were shown at points (a) to (i) of the report.

Overall, the Committee were in support of the Councillor Call for Action presented and agreed that further investigation need to be carried out, that before any further action was taken.

RESOLVED

That support be given to further investigation being carried out on the Councillor Call for Action, prior to the Committee making any recommendation on a decision.

51 COMMUTED SUMS FOR MAINTENANCE OF ADOPTED HIGHWAY ASSETS

The Chairman advised that this item invited the Committee to consider and comment on a decision report, which recommended the adoption of a policy on *Commuted Sums for the Maintenance of Adopted Highways Assets*, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between the 9 and 12 March 2021. Appendix 1 to the report pack provided the Committee with a copy of the Executive Councillor report for their consideration.

The Chairman invited John Monk, Group Manager, Design Services, to present the report to the Committee.

The Committee noted that the existing policy needed updating, as currently there was a lack of clarity when assessing the need for and approach to commuted sums being charged for asset adoption.

It was reported that currently some national guidance was under preparation, which officers were influencing, but it was not expected to impact the policy itself. A copy of the updated policy was shown in Appendix A to the Executive Councillor report.

The Committee agreed that no additional comments would be submitted. However, it was confirmed to the Committee that commuted sums were designed to protect the County Council's interests. In terms of attracting investment, there were provisions in the policy, which could be applied if there was a view that the requirement for commuted sums would deter inward investment.

RESOLVED

That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendations as detailed in the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT report as set out on pages 29 and 30 of the report pack.

52 THE FIFTH LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP V)

The Chairman advised that this item provided an update on the Lincolnshire County Council's Fifth Local Transport Plan (LTP V); and that comments from the Committee were welcomed to help shape the work being carried out.

The Chairman invited Vanessa Strange, Head of Infrastructure Investment, to present the report.

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The Committee was advised that there was a statutory duty to have a Local Transport Plan for Lincolnshire, and that the purpose of the document was to establish a policy structure for local transport delivery going forward.

The Committee was advised further that there would be a number of complementary supporting documents to LTP V, including strategies for different modes of transport, such as rail, bus, walking, which would provide more depth to the strategy.

It was also highlighted that the environment would be a strong theme, and that the document would be written to complement the Green Masterplan.

It was highlighted that by using a place based approach, there was the intention to articulate the scale of Lincolnshire's ambition to outside audiences such as Midlands Connect and the Department for Transport. It was highlighted further that much of the ambition would connect to the support for the post Covid-19 economic recovery. The Committee noted that the impact of Covid-19 would impact the way people lived and worked going forward and as a result would influence the final document. An illustration on page 47 of the report pack captured some of the impact on the transport network.

It was reported that as the document was evolving, it was being shared with various partners and local transport boards to gather thought and ideas.

During consideration of the report, the Committee highlighted the need to ensure that walking and cycling provision was provided for in a safe way with more consideration being given to crossing places. It was highlighted that there needed to be more joined up thinking between Highways England and the County Council when considering road schemes.

RESOLVED

1. That the development of the Local Transport Plan be noted.
2. That the comments raised by the Committee be taken into consideration to help shape the document's development.
3. That a further report be received by the Committee as the plan is being finalised.

53 HIGHWAYS - GULLY CLEANSING, REPAIR AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING

The Chairman invited Richard Fenwick, County Highways Manager, to present this item to the Committee.

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to:

- Drainage Cleansing – It was reported that of the 181,000 drainage assets in the routine programme, 142,000 had been actioned to date with the remaining

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39,000 being completed by the end of April 2021. It was noted that 6,025 defects had been recorded, which represented 4% of those visited. The Committee noted that the council's 'Fix My Street' app was being refined to move away from previous status updates where references to cyclic grass cutting and annual gullying cleansing were used. Details of steps to be following were included on page 50 of the report pack;

- De-Watering Bay – It was highlighted that the purpose built Sleaford Dewatering facility was now fully functioning and offered alternative solutions for dealing with waste water at a local transfer centre;
- Drainage Improvements – Figure1 on page 51 provided the Committee with details of drainage funding 2020/21 and 2021/22. It was highlighted that significant progress had been made in delivering works against the variety of funds;
- Community Maintenance Gangs – It was noted that the additional three Community Maintenance drainage gangs had been responding to a variety of local issues, not covered by either the reactive or planned budgets. It was noted that funding had been made available for this to continue in 2021/22;
- Jetting works – It was highlighted that 1% of the assets had been recorded as having a blocked connection, which provided a target of clearing eight blockages a day, which was not always achievable. It was noted that due to demand on this resource, there had been a backlog of issues to solve; and
- Flooding Response Data and Section 19 Investigations – It was reported that the benefits of the Confirm Connect system had meant that Emergency Response crews attending flooding reports were able to capture photos on site and document the extent and severity of flooding, this information could then be used to inform a follow up response, as well as Section 19 investigations.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Praise was extended by the Committee to the improvements made;
- Concerns were extended to problems caused by tree roots. The Committee was advised that there had been some issues with tree roots, and that gangs had been provided with root cutting equipment to solve these issues; and that more was now being done to plant trees with roots less likely to grow;
- One member extended personal thanks to the team for their help and assistance in solving a flooding matter. It was also highlighted that landowners needed to take responsibility for riparian ditches. The Committee noted that information was being gathered to map ditches and dykes and that eventually all information would be compiled; and
- Ensuring adequate cover was provided over bank holidays in the event of a flooding incident. This was acknowledged by officers.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to the Highways Team for all their hard work.

RESOLVED

That the Highways – Gully Cleansing, Repair and Surface Water Flooding report presented be noted; and that the comments raised by the Committee are taken in to consideration.

The Committee took a break from 11.27am.

At 11.40am, a roll call was taken to confirm member's attendance at the meeting.

54 STREET LIGHTING UPDATE

The Chairman invited John Monk, Group Manager, Design Services, to present the item to the Committee, which provided an update on requests received under the protocol for converting part night lighting to all night lighting.

The Committee was advised that in the last twelve month period no formal requests had been received, despite multiple enquiries from a range of parish councils throughout the county.

Appendix A to the report provided a copy of the Street Lighting Policy – Protocol for the Reversal of Part Night Lighting for the Committee's consideration.

During consideration of this item one member highlighted a number of street lights that were switch off on the A15 near the Lincolnshire Show ground. The Committee was advised that these were part of the transformation project and that there had not been sufficient funds available to remove the columns. It was highlighted that if however the lights had been converted to LED, then the lights should be switched on.

The Committee agreed to receive future reports on an exception basis.

RESOLVED

That the update on Street Lighting be noted and that agreement be given to future reports being submitted on an exception basis.

55 PERFORMANCE REPORT: QUARTER 3 - (1 OCTOBER 2020 - 31 DECEMBER 2020)

The Chairman advised that this item provided an update on the performance of the whole of the highway service in Lincolnshire.

The Chairman invited Paul Rusted, Head of Highways Services, to present the item to the Committee.

Attached to the report were the following Appendices for the Committee's consideration:

- Appendix A – Major Highway Scheme Update Report, February 2021;
- Appendix B – Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report, Year 1, Quarter 3 – October to December 2020;

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- Appendix C – NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Analysis; and
- Appendix D – Highways and Transport Complaint Report, Quarter 3

The Committee was advised that the authority currently had four major highways schemes; and that there were a number of other highway and infrastructure projects which were of a significant scale, which might have a major impact on the county and surrounding area. Details of these schemes were shown in Appendix A to the report.

Details of the Lincolnshire Highways Performance for Quarter 3 were shown in Appendix B to the report. It was noted that the Alliance Partners had managed to achieve their targets and details of the results per contract were provided on page 60 of the report. It was highlighted that for areas where some scores were still low scoring, workshops had been arranged to focus on the areas needing improvement, to improve the scores into the final quarter of the year.

The Committee was advised that in Quarter 3, the Highways Works Contract had dealt with over 10,000 defects; cleaned out 142,148 gullies; and carried out 10,676 miles of rural grass cutting.

It was reported that Balfour Beatty were making progress with delivering their contractual commitments on quality, details of which were shown on pages 61 and 62 of the report.

The Community Maintenance Gangs were continuing to work throughout the county, delivering an additional £3.9million of works during 2020/21 financial year to make improvements throughout communities and the roads that link them. It was highlighted that over 2,000 jobs had been completed; in addition to 9,695 'Fix My Street' jobs being completed by roaming community gangs.

The Committee noted that overall, the Profession Services Partnership score for 2020 for Quarter 3, was slightly down on Quarter 2.

The Quarter 3 performance for Colas remained static although there had been downward movement in the performance indicator scores. It was noted that Colas had successfully recruited a new Senior Installer and a new engineer, which would now hopefully lead to a more consistent performance.

Details of the innovations being evaluated were shown on page 64 of the report.

The Committee noted that the council had participated in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey. It was report that for Lincolnshire in 2020, 3,300 questionnaires had been circulated and of those 871 had been returned, which had given a return rate of 26.4%. The results received had been disappointing, given the amount of activity that had been undertaken. Details of the results were provided for the Committee to consider at Appendix C to the report.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the Lincolnshire Highway's Service had successfully mobilised the three new Highways 2020 contracts during a global pandemic, and although there had been an impact on performance the four partners

had worked hard to minimise it. It was also highlighted that delivery of all major schemes had been good despite the impact of Covid-19 and recent weather events.

During consideration of this item the Committee raised the following comments: a request was made for contractors to provide help in the community by cleaning signage outside the Lincoln County Hospital; and one member highlighted issues they had encountered trying to upload photographs on to 'Fix My Street'.

The Committee extended their thanks to the Head of Highways Services and the team for all their hard work through a very challenging year.

RESOLVED

That the Performance Report for Quarter 3 (1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020) be received and noted.

56 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROADSIDE WILDFLOWER PLANTING SCHEMES

The Chairman invited Chris Miller, Team Leader, Countryside Services, to present the report to the Committee, which outlined opportunities for partnership working with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust concerning the trialling of roadside wildflower verges.

The Committee noted that since the last report on 9 December 2019, progress had been delayed in selecting suitable locations and the setting up of a scheme for trialling new roads side verges, as prioritisation had been given to the response to the global pandemic.

It was reported that in recent weeks however, work had commenced on exploring the opportunity to enter into a partnership with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, to establish a trial scheme to focus on community led natural environment and biodiversity enhancements including the potential of wildflower verge planting.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that undertaking a focussed trial would enable the Council to establish the costs and benefits of wider alternative verge management across the county.

During consideration of this item, the Committee welcomed the report and the potential benefits of such a scheme for Lincolnshire and the involvement of local communities. Some members advised of planting seen in other areas. The Committee was advised that the planting would be plants prevalent in Lincolnshire; and that plants/seeds would be sought from the Lincolnshire seed bank at Riseholme College, to ensure biodiversity and pollinators.

RESOLVED

That support be given by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee to the establishment of a partnership between the Council and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust to trial a community led scheme for natural environment enhancement.

57 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited Simon Evans, Health Scrutiny Officer, to present this item to the Committee.

The Committee was advised that there was one remaining meeting in the current County Council term, and that currently no items were listed for this meeting on 19 April 2021.

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 28 June 2021.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be noted.

58 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it was considered to contain exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

59 TRANSPORT CONNECT LTD UPDATE REPORT (1 NOVEMBER 2020 -
31 JANUARY 2021)

The Chairman invited Anita Ruffle, Head of Transport Services, to present the exempt report to the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee note the exempt update report on Transport Connect Limited.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm