

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
19 JULY 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR E W STRENGIEL (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs A M Austin, M Brookes, K J Clarke, T J G Dyer, R A Gibson, Mrs S Rawlins, S P Roe and R A Wright

Councillors: attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Shaun Butcher (County Programme Manager), Karen Cassar (Assistant Director Highways), Richard Fenwick (County Highways Manager) and Anita Ruffle (Head of Transport Services)

69 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Strenziel be elected as Chairman for this meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

COUNCILLOR STRENGIEL IN THE CHAIR

70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Adams. It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups) Regulation 1990, Councillor A N Stokes was replacing Councillor B Adams for this meeting only.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor A M Hall.

71 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made with respect to any items on the agenda.

**72 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JUNE 2021**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

73 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

Councillor Davis, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, confirmed that the Executive would be proposing to the next meeting of Council that an additional £10 million be added to the highways maintenance budget on top of the £12.5 million that had been topped up earlier in the year.

74 HIGHWAYS - GULLY CLEANSING/REPAIR AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING

Shaun Butcher, The County Programme Manager, and Richard Fenwick, County Highways Manager, were invited to introduce the report to the Committee. The County Programme Manager explained that the Council were responsible for 190,000 drainage assets, and for the 2020/21 financial year, only 2,500 hadn't been attended to. This was a significant improvement when compared to previous years. He gave an overview of the types of defects identified during inspections and offered an summary of the schedules of the Council's eight tankers. Giving an account of the budget for minor drainage improvements, he noted that funding had increased from £300,000 in 2020/21 to £600,000 in 2021/22. The County Highways Manager offered an overview on the process for job prioritisation when received from the Customer Service Centre or Fix My Street. He stressed that, over the last financial year, outstanding jobs were double what they were now. ER crews attending flooding reports now had the benefit of using tablets and could take photographs of flood sites.

The Committee relayed residents' comments that, on occasion, they had been advised by drainage officers that surface water would drain away itself within a few day, they sought further clarity on the rationale behind this advice. The County Programme Manager assured the Committee that the same priority practice was applied throughout the county. The County Highways Manager stressed that the suggestion that water would drain away wouldn't follow the Council's consistent approach. If similar comments were received, he requested that they be fed back to him.

Making reference to the suggestion within the report that assistance may be scheduled shortly within the cycling programme, the Committee sought detail on exactly how long shortly was. The County Highways Manager advised that officers took a risk based approach when determining the priority of their assistance. If a puddle remained with no risk to the public, a time frame of one to two months could be expected.

The Committee felt that, generally, the officers and partners had been working together well to respond to issues throughout the County. They added that they were particularly pleased to see traffic management gangs on the A16.

Observing that 'no immediate action proposed' was a response to issues or very low priority and risk, the Committee asked if this response indicated that this particular job would be closed indefinitely. County Highways Manager explained that on the Fix My Street app, the job would be listed as closed; however, he appreciated that this may perturb residents whom had raised the job. More appropriate wording was being considered.

The Committee noted that water pooling was still a concern to residents when it affected only a small number of properties or a single property. While officers suggest working with Local Drainage Boards, the Committee felt this was limited to larger projects. The County Highways Manager felt that often residents weren't actually aware that they were in fact responsible for a water course. He added that he sat on a riparian working group which sought to engage with residents further to keep watercourses open. He stressed that, unless there was a significant nuisance, the Environment Agency didn't have the power to enforce action.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

75 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - PROPOSAL TO RESOLVING OBSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY ON WEST STREET, BARKSTON

The Assistant Director – Highways introduced the report to the Committee and explained that, following a councillor call for action, the Highways Team had drafted a proposal to address to issues raised by Councillor Wootten. The proposals included implementation of a H bar, increased signage and allocation of a passing place. She stressed that signage could merely deter parking and couldn't be legally enforced.

The Committee commended Councillor Wootten on his proactive approach to resolving issues within his division; however, they were concerned that this may set a precedent for how similar division issues may be resolved. The Assistant Director – Highways appreciated the Committee's concern but added that division issues were typically resolved without the need for Scrutiny Committee intervention.

Registering their concern that structures had been erected on the verge, the Committee queried if Lincolnshire County Council would be liable for any damage as a result. The Assistant Director – Highways explained that the Council had written to the resident, advising him to remove any unauthorised structures. In addition, a claim for damages had been received from a third party.

The Committee were concerned that the increased traffic on West Street may only be a result of the Covid-19 lockdown, adding that they only had anecdotal evidence to rely on since no actual monitoring had been carried out. They suggested that if monitoring were to be carried out, it should be done after some normality returned. In addition, they noted that other issues within the county could be much more serve; the resources allocated to address this problem may be better spent somewhere else.

While appreciating the proposal made by the Highways Team, the Committee feared that it was unenforceable and any attempt to enforce it would take away resources from other areas within the County. However, the Committee suggested that this could be used as a test site to see the efficacy of the proposals. The Assistant Director – Highways agreed that resource availability was critical to effective enforcement. She suggested that considering this site to be a test for others in the County

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could be a practical step, she recommended that, if proposal 'B' be agreed, anecdotal evidence should be sought to evaluate its efficacy.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposals within the report be supported and the Committee comments be passed onto the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That the Committee note that West Street, Barston 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.
3. That the Committee note the limitations presented local highways authority and that the introduction of the proposals outlined in this report were advisory only and not enforceable.

76 PROPOSALS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and explained that at the 17 June meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, overview and scrutiny committees were asked to identify topics for an in-depth scrutiny review. She noted that, previously, the Committee had indicated that they may be interested in looking at traffic speed management.

While acknowledging that some divisions and parish councils had their own speed monitoring systems, the Committee unanimously agreed that traffic speed management was a common issue throughout the County and a wide review was useful. They noted that this was a topic that had been considered previously; however, further guidance from central government was expected.

RESOLVED

That the Committee submit that they'd like to consider traffic speed regulation for an in-depth scrutiny review.

77 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report and explained one additional item to consider the Enhanced Partnership Scheme would be included on the agenda for the 25 October meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be agreed.

78 TCL UPDATE REPORT (1 FEB 2021 - 30 APRIL 2021)

Anita Ruffle, Head of Transport Services, was invited to introduce 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 11.56 am