

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
7 MARCH 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR A M HALL (VICE-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 T R Ashton

Councillor: Mrs M J Overton MBE attended the meeting as an observer

Councillor: C Perraton-Williams attended the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Robert Close (Democratic Services Officer) and Sam Edwards (Head of Highways Infrastructure)

The following officers joined the meeting remotely via Teams:-

Steven Batchelor (LRSP Senior Manager), Liz Burnley (County Manager for Development), Karen Cassar (Assistant Director – Highways) and Richard Fenwick (Head of Highways Asset and Local Management Services)

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A Wright and E W Strenziel

It was noted that the Chief Executive, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, had appointed Councillor R R Ashton to replace Councillor E W Strenziel for this meeting only.

54 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S P Roe declared a pecuniary interest in items five and six as he owned land adjacent to the proposed North Hykeham Relief Road.

**55 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2022**

It was raised that indications of support for the inclusion of the A17 within the major roads section of the Local Transport Plan 5 were not reflected in minute 50.

Councillor Mrs S Rawlins' name would be removed from the attendance list.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

56 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Committee were advised that Richard Fenwick was recently appointed to the role of Head of Highways Asset and Local Management Services.

Councillor S Roe left the room.

57 NORTH HYKEHAM RELIEF ROAD (NHRR)

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Infrastructure which invited the Committee to consider and comment on a report that sought approval to enter into a two-stage design and build contract for the purpose of delivering the North Hykeham Relief Road (NHRR), prior to a decision being taken by the Executive on 5 April 2022. The Committee were advised that following approval to seek funding for NHRR, the Council submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) that was successful in securing a £110m allocation from the Department for Transport (DfT). It was identified that the design and build (D&B) form of contract would provide the greatest cost certainty, therefore a SCAPE framework appointment with Balfour Beatty was recommended. While a robust range of likely costs were identified, ranging from £179.3m to £212.4m, it should be appreciated that not significant factors that wouldn't normally be accounted for were not included. As a result of inflation and constraints in the construction industry, the cost estimates were from 16.1% to 37.5% higher than the cost identified in the OBC. It was stressed that various clauses were included in the contract to enable termination with no further costs or liabilities if the project's progression was untenable.

The Committee considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- Members expressed concerns that, in a period of high inflation rates, it was not clear how costings would be affected. Officers provided assurance that, although their concerns were valid, inflation, price rises, and other cost pressures had been factored into the costs presented. The cost element included for the accelerated construction inflation experienced over the last 18 months and also accommodated normal levels of construction inflation throughout the life of the project. There was also a range of variance included in the forecast cost range to account for future normal levels of construction inflation running either slightly higher or lower than expected. It was stressed that a further substantial spike in interest rates like had been seen in the last 18 months had not been factored into the price as it was too variable to estimate. Officers maintained that if the scheme forecast costs that would be regularly reported back to Members and if the Council felt the scheme has become too untenable then there were provisions within the contract to terminate at no further cost or damages and cease development of the project. The DfT were not going to increase their financial offer above what was already agreed; therefore, any cost overrun would have to be factored in through other forms of funding and funding bids that could be explored. Further assurance was provided that the benefit to cost ratio followed the Green Book basis of the business case; when DfT received the final business case which was programmed for 2025 a summary of costs (as these would have changed over the course of time as the scheme progressed) would be provided.

- Members expressed their satisfaction over the positive impact for local divisions such as Doddington, Hykeham East, North Hykeham, Waddington and the South of Lincoln and were pleased to see that this was a dual carriage way road, with cycling provisions.
- It was clarified by Officers that the commencement of the construction works was planned for November 2025, prior to this a further key decision report would be submitted to this Committee.
- Members echoed local residents' concerns in relation to the nature and conservation measures being taken before and during construction of the North Hykeham Relief Road, and also around the archaeological investigations that were being carried out and what was expected to be found as part of these in this land. Officers confirmed that once appointed, Balfour Beatty, being the designer, would appoint consultants who would on their behalf, carry out a series of activities including data collection, environmental surveys, ecology surveys, as well as preliminary design of the works to be carried out. All these would feed into the next major milestone, which was to submit a planning application, part of which was an Environmental Impact Assessment that was a legal and statutory requirement; the application would demonstrate a level of mitigation throughout the process. In terms of archaeological screening, Members were pleased to hear that the actual digging would not commence before November 2025 and that early indicators suggested that although there will be finds they were unlikely to be as significant as was found at the Lincoln Eastern Bypass. The team remained in close collaboration with Heritage team.
- A point was raised in relation to disruptions caused by closed roads as part of the works scheduled and a question was asked about communications with residents through development stages. Members received assurance that the Council had already written to residents in affected areas and that there was a robust communications strategy in place to ensure residents and landowners remained informed at all stages and that road closures would be communicated promptly. Officers were not in position to comment on where the works would begin from but confirmed that they would be taking place in more than one location simultaneously in line with works requirements; equally the scheme will open across the whole length.
- In relation to the £38m allocated by Lincolnshire County Council to the North Hykeham Relief Road project, further clarification was requested on the determining factors for allocating funding for Highways Capital Programme schemes. The Executive Support Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT agreed to pass on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

RESOLVED

1. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee - recorded its support to the Recommendations to the Executive, made in the North Hykeham Relief Road report.
2. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee agreed that the comments listed above be forwarded on to the Executive in relation to this item.

Councillor S Roe re-entered the room.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**7 MARCH 2022**

Consideration was given to a report from the County Manager for Development which invited the Committee to consider and comment on a report that sought approval to adopt and implement an Advanced Payment Code exemptions policy where a development site meets specified criteria, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Highways Transport and IT between 14 March - 18 March 2022. The Committee were advised that the Council had been operating an Advanced Payment Code (APC) process for 15 years. While some proposals were being made to legislation from Central Government, the current legislation remained dated and open to interpretation. As a result, the Council had applied exemptions for a number of years, and it now sought to formally ratify the policy of applying APC exemption of proposed developments comprising 10 or less dwellings in total. This would bring the Council's policy in line with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The Committee considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- Members were pleased to receive this report that was documenting what was practically applied until now and that the Policy was now being put in place. Officers clarified that the Policy was previously being applied to five or less dwellings which was now being changed to less than 10 dwellings

RESOLVED

1. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee - recorded its support to the Recommendations to the Executive, made in the Adoption and Implementation of the Advanced Payment Code Exemptions Policy report.
2. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee agreed that the comments listed above be forwarded on to the Executive in relation to this item.

59 ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) Senior Manager which sought to provide the Committee with an update on fatal, killed and serious injury (KSI) casualty figures for Lincolnshire. The Committee were advised that The Covid-19 Pandemic had a sustained and dramatic impact on road use throughout 2020 and 2021 which made direct comparisons between years particularly difficult. However, there was a substantial reduction in KSI casualties with 446 and 452 casualties in 2020 and 2021 respectively. 2020 saw reductions in most KSI casualties when categorised by user group with the highest reductions in child 0-16, -35.1 per cent, and pedestrians, -31.9 per cent. Whilst the overall reduction in KSI casualties was maintained in 2021, increases had been seen in a number of user groups, particularly child 0-16, 87.5 per cent, and pedestrians, 19.1 per cent. Members were offered an outline of the key data for fatal casualties in 2021. Over 1000 sites and links were assessed annually resulting in over 50 sites requiring more detailed investigation and improvement work. There were currently seven average speed, 39 static and approximately 80 mobile camera sites in the County. Static camera sites were currently subject to digital upgrade programme. Operation Snap enables the submission of dashcam video evidence from members of the public in relation to suspected driving offences. Up to the end of November, 774 submissions were received in 2021 resulting in 236 suspected offences being processed and an additional 287 warning letters being issued. The Committee were advised of a number of Education,

Training and Publicity (ETP) activities that were being offered, including delivery of 30,000 National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) courses as an alternative to prosecution during the Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- Members were surprised to find that most incidents occurred during periods of fine weather mid-day.
- Referencing the incident they were personally aware of on the A1, Members asked if they could be provided with a more detailed breakdown. The LRSP Senior Manager explained that, while all incidents were detailed within the report, he'd be happy to provide something more specific to the Committee depending on their level of interest. Members were advised that the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT led a presentation in Grantham highlighting the issues in the County's stretch of the A1.
- Relaying their own experiences, a Member provided a less than satisfactory example of reporting dangerous drivers to the Police. Moreover, Members asked if the evidence recorded by community speed watch groups could progress to prosecution or fines. The LRSP Senior Manager was disappointed to hear the Member's account, he reminded them of the Operation Snap programme which invited members of the public to submit dashcam footage, and a witness statement where necessary, to the LRSP which could ultimately lead to a warning letter being forwarded to the responsible driver. The LRSP Senior Manager agreed that it was hugely important to ensure that community speed watch groups felt their contribution to safer roads was appreciated, however he was of the opinion that the accuracy and integrity of enforcement could be undermined if it were to be expanded beyond trained professionals using calibrated specialist equipment. Moreover, conflicts with motorists were common when enforcing speed limits; to facilitate community groups' presence in such situations could lead to safety concerns. It was however stressed that other areas in the country were exploring expanded enforcement powers and their experiences would be observed.
- Members sought further information on the human cost factor, mentioned in the report. The LRSP Senior Manager explained that the human cost factor relating to collisions was a nationally agreed measure, but stated that factors included cost of emergency services, medical care, and potential loss of contribution to society.
- Noting their previous interest, some Members asked if street lighting was a contributing factor in incidents, The LRSP Senior Manager advised that, during 2017-19, in hours of darkness with streetlights present but unlit, only 11 recorded incidents were recorded. During 2020, following a change in policy, eight incidents occurred. The most common collations for incidents occurring where in daylight with street lights present and darkness with no street lights were present.
- Referencing the KSI casualties identified within the report, Members observed a spike in incidents in 2017,18 and 19. The LRSP Senior Manager advised that during the period referenced, the method of record used by Police Officers was changed to a digital system. This resulted in injuries being more accurately recorded with greater severity, which was evidently reflected in statistics. It was stressed that the overall number of collisions was broadly similar, however the classification of injury was what varied.

- Members observed that adults aged 25 to 59 accounted for the majority fatal casualties despite common perceptions of younger and older drivers being higher risk. The LRSP Senior Manager suggested that the drivers aged 17 to 24 and over 60s were likely the most affected by the Pandemic which was reflected in the casualty statistics. Nevertheless, as perceived vulnerable groups, LRSP's resources were targeted at them in the endeavour of decreased collisions.
- Members asked what package of resources were available for local communities hoping to deter speeding. The LRSP Senior Manager stated that the DfT 0107 guidance document was observed when implementing speed cameras to avoid death and injury. Where criteria were met, speed cameras were offered. Community speed watch could still purchase passive signs, speed indicators and enhanced signs.
- Refencing a previous fatality, a Member indicated their dissatisfaction with the County Council's response upon a request for speed enforcement. The LRSP Senior Manager agreed that all appropriate steps to reduce the likelihood of a collision should be explored. However, stressed that Lincolnshire's Road network was one of the largest in the UK so resources needed to be directed to areas most effected by speeding.
- Noting that the highest contributory factor defined by Stats19 data was careless, reckless, or in a hurry, Members asked what percentage that collisions that made up. The LRSP Senior Manager explained that 15/40 (37.5 per cent) fatalities resulted from careless, reckless, or in a hurry driving.
- Observing the underspend in the 21/22 budget, Members asked if that could be used to provide additional signage around the County. The LRSP Senior Manager that any underspend was ringfenced into the Road Safety Partnership. Signed was installed within the County, indicating year on year loss of life as a result of road traffic collisions.

RESOLVED

That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee note the Road Safety Partnership Annual Report.

60 HIGHWAYS - GULLY CLEANSING, DRAINAGE REPAIR SCHEMES AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING

Consideration was given to a report from the County Highways Manager which set out the reactive, cyclic, and planned aspects of highways drainage maintenance including low-level flooding response. The Committee were advised that 135,000 drainage assets had been cleansed in the routine programme, 12,500 had defects and required follow up work, 3,500 had damaged ironwork and required follow up work, the remaining assets were planned to be cleansed over the coming months. There were 12,000 assets requiring specialist traffic management. The Council was adapting its automatic reporting so that a "works are complete" message didn't go out after the works were finally completed as the message could be misleading. The funding for 2021/22 was increased from £300,000 to £600,000 to complete a variety of works including replacing sections of damaged highway pipes, installing additional gullies and manholes where ponding occurs, increasing the size and capacity of the drainage system over small lengths and repairing bank or ditch slips. Since April 2020 Ajet crews had attended and dealt with 365 sites, with a further 144 designed and scheduled for the rest of the year. Works had been programmed to the value of £1.4m on various minor drainage schemes across the County from the £2.2m invest to save bid approved in 2020/21. The remaining budget was planned to be spent in early 2022 on larger and more complex schemes. So far

in 2022 only 284 drainage reports were received and 33 flooding reports for the whole county, which was very low for this time of year.

The Committee considered the report, and during the discussion the following comments were noted:-

- In relation to the 12,000 assets requiring specialist traffic management, Members asked if gullies along bypasses, particularly the A17, were included within that. Moreover, Members suggested that officers may want to consider additional gully cleanses in the annual cycle. The County Highways Manager explained that most A roads required specialist traffic management because the cyclic works, often done under stop and go boards, weren't appropriate for roads with such heavy traffic. Some ditch clearance works for highways works were scheduled to start imminently. In addition, communication was underway with district councils to ensure effective sweeping to avoid gullies getting clogged. Cleanses currently took place at least once a year, but a focus of future endeavours was to undertake a targeted cleanse of gullies.

RESOLVED

That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee note the Highways - Gully Cleansing, Drainage Repair Schemes, and Surface Water Flooding Report.

61 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report from the Scrutiny Officer which enabled the Committee to comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focussed where it could be of greatest benefit.

Members were advised that, due to time frame restrictions, the pre decision Bikeability report, originally scheduled for the 25 April meeting, would now be considered at the 24 March meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Members of the Committee raised the issue of advertising on roundabouts as a potential source of future investigation. The Scrutiny Officer acknowledged Members' request.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am