

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY  
 COMMITTEE  
 25 APRIL 2022**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors A M Hall (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, M Brookes, K J Clarke, T J G Dyer, R A Gibson, Mrs S Rawlins, S P Roe, Mrs C L E Vernon, R A Wright and N Sear

Councillors: C Perraton-Williams and Mrs M Overton attended the meeting remotely as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Robert Close (Democratic Services Officer) and Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

John Monk (Head of Design Services), Verity Druce (Head of Transformation – Transport) and Richard Fenwick (Head of Highways Assets and Local Management Services)

Also in attendance:-

David Matthews (Resident of Lincolnshire)

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

No apologies for absence were received.

63 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

64 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH, 2022

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

65 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman welcomed Jonathan Evans to the Committee and advised Members that he had recently been appointed as Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services.

66 STREET LIGHTING POLICY UPDATE

## HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25 APRIL 2022

Consideration was given to a report from John Monk, Head of Design Services, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on a report which proposed updates to the Street Lighting Policy, including options and a recommendation for lighting on new developments, prior to a decision being taken by the Executive Councillor for Highways Transport and IT between 25 April - 3 May 2022. Members were given an overview of the Street Lighting Transformation Project, implemented in 2016/17, and the subsequent 2018 Scrutiny Review which considered the impact of part-night lighting. The funding made available for the Transformation project allowed approximately 42,000 lights to be converted to part-night operation, 18,000 to be converted to LED and approximately 850 to be switched off completely. A further update to the Policy was made in 2019, allowing precept-raising councils in Lincolnshire to fund the conversion of otherwise part-night lit lights to operate all night. The actions taken through the Street Lighting Transformation project and use of LED technology reduced annual energy consumption for street lighting by 14.3m kw/hour. This reduction, saved £2.58m per annum. The Committee were given an overview of the five options available and were reminded that, if permanent obstructions were included within the development design, all night lighting would automatically be required. Moreover, in all options where no street lighting was the outcome, it should be noted that a Speed Limit Order was likely to be required on adoption of the development road.

The Chairman invited Mr David Matthews to address the Committee as a concerned resident hoping to bring some matters to the Committee's attention:

- Mr Matthews suggested that the life cycle of 95 per cent of current street lights would not extend beyond three years after installation, therefore the Council may want to pursue a wholesale conversion to LED lights to promote long term viability and value for money.
- Concerns were raised that the replacement of the 'dusk dawn' switch for part-night lights created unpredictable timings for street lighting. He feared that the lack of street lighting in the early hours of the morning would result in emergency service vehicles, particularly ambulances, struggling to locate residents.
- He reminded the Committee that any deficiencies within the design of street lighting could result in a risk to public safety leading to investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and possible impacts to the Council's insurance liability premiums.

The Chairman invited the Head of Design Services to respond to Mr Matthews' comments:

- Part-night light safety, technical and affordability issues were considered as part of a Scrutiny Review that took place in 2018. HSE had not raised any concerns in relation to safety due to the implementation of part-night lighting across local authorities that had adopted it. In addition, converting to part-night lighting reduced carbon emissions and saved several million-kilowatt hours.
- It was explained that the issue preventing wholesale conversion to LED was up-front affordability and added that the Council were in the middle of a six-year programme to convert low pressure sodium lights to LED with the support of Salix loans. The possibility of converting existing lights back to all night operations would be prohibitively expensive, requiring a reversal of the programme completed in 2016-17. Additionally, it was emphasised that when the conversion to part-night lighting took place in 2016-17, the labour requirements effectively paused all routine maintenance other than emergency fault responses.

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

- In reference to residential placemaking lighting, Members asked if the Policy included and adopted the lights that were in situ or whether they would not be suitable in accordance with Option Five being put forward. The Head of Design Services assured the Committee that there was no change where such arrangements already exist.
- Members also asked, where precepting authorities could request to fund the lighting for placemaking purposes, whether it would be extended to larger organisations or businesses seeking for their vicinities to be lit, and if this would be included in the Policy if appropriate. One member raised concerns in relation to a particular site where some businesses operated from 4am and there were a number of workers that arrived on site on foot. The Head of Design Services explained that, although this had been considered, the risk of businesses volatility rendered such an option unviable as, where a business may shut and move out of premises, light arrangements would, by default, revert to the Council being the Highway Authority. Therefore, the decision of taking forward a proposal from a large organisation would go through the relevant Parish or District Council, and where funds were provided for this, the final decision would be taken by the local representatives of the general population.
- Noting that the £2.58m of savings, indicated in the report, exceeded the target of £1.7m, Members asked why street lights were not activated between 12am and 6am, particularly when street lighting was high priority concern for their residents. The Head of Design Services noted that the sums quoted in the report accounted for rises in energy costs since the Street Lighting Transformation Project was implemented and explained that the additional savings translated to amounts that were not required to be spent, rather than cashable savings.
- Members asked if consultation with relevant authorities gave statistical indications of the impact changes in lighting may have on accident and crime. The Head of Design Services explained that, when the Street Lighting Transformation Project was implemented in 2016-17, work was carried out closely with the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership in order to identify areas of relatively high criminal activity. Moreover, as part of the 2018 Scrutiny Review, night-time crime data was obtained from Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership and the Police from prior to implementation up to 2018. There was no demonstrable link between changes in crime levels and the changes in streetlights. The Head of Design Services suggested that the perception of crime may promote an apparent correlation, however there wasn't evidence to support this.
- Concern was raised by Members to areas with a generally older population and higher emergency service demand. The Head of Design Services explained that this was also looked at as part of the 2018 Scrutiny Review. He went on to emphasise that Lincolnshire was a wide geographical area with numerous rural remote locations where there was an absence of streetlight. Consultation with emergency services indicated that these were well prepared, equipped and trained to respond to calls across the county, including in unlit areas.
- A Member reported that, following the deactivation of street lighting columns in 2016/17, a Parish Council sought to finance the reactivation of lights in their area. The Head of Design Services agreed to discuss possible inclusion in the revised Policy in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, although he stressed there were a diminishing number of dormant columns within the County.

- The Committee were advised that Option Five allowed planners and developers to move away from traditional streetlights on new developments, transitioning from highway lighting to placemaking and footway lighting at a lower level, potentially employing bollards style lighting, creating thus a more intimate feeling of place whilst maintaining higher levels of perceived safety.

## RESOLVED

1. That the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee's support of recommendation five of the report to the Executive, made in the Policy Street Lighting Policy Update 2022 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.

67 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 3 - (1 OCTOBER 2021 - 31 DECEMBER 2021)

Consideration was given to a report from Jonathan Evans, Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service, on the performance of the Highways Service including the Major Highway Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report and Transport Complaints Report. Members were advised that the Alliance Partners managed to achieve their targets for Quarter 2 and improvement plans were in place to improve Reactive Works, Street Lighting Service Standard, Drainage Cleansing Maintenance and Contract Notifications for both Highways Works and Professional Services. In Quarter 3 of 2021/22, Lincolnshire Highways repaired 10833 faults and completed 11 miles of carriageway patching surfacing, 11 miles of footway resurfacing and reconstruction, cleansed 31,000 gullies and refreshed 80 miles of carriageway lining. Material prices, inflation, skills shortages, Covid 19 and supply chain disruption continued to disrupt service delivery. Inflation within Highways Works contracts resulted in an expected service cost increase of 16 per cent higher when compared to the previous year. New scheduling hubs in the North and South of the County were now in place. To tackle the inflation pressures on the contract, Lincolnshire Highways were looking to increase the volume of recycling within the contract. Recruitment for specialist roles within the engineering sector were proving difficult to attract and retain in the current climate particularly for Street Lighting and Drainage Engineers. The Traffic Signals Performance Indicators (PIs) remained at a high-level including emergency faults attended in in time at 97 per cent, standard faults attended in in time at 100 per cent and 46 requests for signals to be switched off for road works. The commissioning and operational fine-tuning of Holdingham Roundabout was also completed in Quarter 3. Members were given an overview of the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey Results with particular emphasis being given to the road condition being the lowest indication of public satisfaction. 0.64 per cent of contacts received entered the formal process for complaints representing a 25 per cent decrease in comparison to the previous quarter.

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

- Noting the £12.3m funding cut from the Department of Transport (DfT), Members asked when its impact was expected to be felt. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained that the funding regime referenced was likely to remain static for the forthcoming three years, however, for 22/23, the Council supplemented the funding gap within its budget. Going forward into future years, the gap in funding was yet unaddressed.

- On the issue of Red Lion Square, Members asked if the disputed use of sets or tarmac had been resolved. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service offered to communicate with his colleagues to provide a complete response to the Committee.
- Members asked, if a complaint was issued to a private bus service and then passed to the Council, was the detail of complaints available for their consideration. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained that the detail of the complaints within the report only extended to those received directly from residents to the Council. The Head of Transformation for Transport added that there was a view to bring a quarterly report to the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee which would include detail of complaints received in relation to transport.
- Referencing the suggested use of increased recycling to mitigate financial pressures, Members asked for further detail of the expected implications of such measures. Moreover, Members asked why such changes to recycling measures hadn't been applied previously. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained that, over the past six years, trials had taken place to reuse the road plannings that came from the highway and thus, in the event of bigger schemes, the recycled road plannings were turned into cold recycled bound material. This required significantly lower energy resources, compared to traditional asphalt, therefore creating efficiencies through oil and energy. The use of foam-based recycling only worked for a select number of locations within the County. Previously, little work had been done with supply chain partners limiting this operation's viability, but officers were cautiously proceeding with this process.
- In a follow up question, Members asked what the waste management implications were when disposing of road tar. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained that asphalt waste containing coal tar was considered hazardous and was disposed of in accordance with Environment Agency standards of encapsulation of cement then reused within the network thus avoiding the necessity for landfill. He estimated the authority would reduce 30-40,000 tonnes of material would be avoided going to landfill because of this operation.
- Observing a decrease of apprentices working on contact, Members asked if measures were being undertaken to increase apprenticeships. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service stated that, although the internal target for apprentices wasn't achieved, a target of nine overall was set for the next financial year and officers were confident that the volume of work planned would enable this. Moreover, the Council sought to encourage apprenticeships to support the robustness of the workforce.
- In a follow up question, Members, noting that practical vocational work experience opportunities were of particular value to looked after children, asked if any formal arrangements were in place to encourage partners to offer work experience opportunities. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service understood that some supply chain partners actively encouraged work experience across their services, however he appreciated that there was room for improvement.
- Members sought to determine the extent of the 10,500 repaired faults. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service stated that approximately 85 per cent of the Council's repairs were saw cuts. The instances were saw cuts weren't used, often occurred when the surrounding pavement wasn't in a good enough position to make a long-lasting solution and an upcoming scheme was already in the programme.
- While their appreciation of *the* Highways App was stressed, Members asked what was being done to address technical issues within it. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service was aware of the technical problems with the Highways App and was engaging with software developers to find a resolution. Moreover, Balfour Beatty were endeavouring to produce a bespoke solution.

- Noting the often-excessive growth of grass verges within some areas of the County, Members asked if there was sufficient flexibility within the contract to increase grass cutting among highly effected areas. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service stated that policy was to cut verges three times per annum, however reactive cutting would be undertaken if safety or visibility concerns were raised.
- Observing residents' dissatisfaction with road conditions, within the NHT survey, Members asked what capacity contractors had to repair other close potholes after being called out for only one. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service was aware of the frustrations of residents in these situations and stated that, within the current contract, contractors could self-identity works on the network. However, contractors scheduled works throughout the day limited capacity to an extent that there was not sufficient float to enable ad hoc works.
- Members were very impressed by the overall quality of pot hole repairs they had seen throughout the County.
- Making reference to road closures, Members asked for further detail adding that they'd had complains from a number of residents. Some Members raised examples of Anglian Water taking excessive time while roads were closed. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service stated that, as a highways authority, the Council advise utility companies on the network availability and permit the type of road works required, but often, other organisations carrying out this activity for utility companies had separate teams to arrange closures and to carry out the actual works. This often results in a time period when no activity is progressing on site. Moreover, while the works required could occasionally be completed prior to the road closures' termination, the road would remain closed until it's agreed reopening date. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service would ensure that this was communicated with the utility providers so that these sorts of occasions were minimised to ensure ongoing network availability.
- While appreciating the generally good return rate of the NHT survey, Members raised disquiet with the limited representation of some younger demographics. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained work was being carried out, in collaboration with the Communications Team, to actively engage with underrepresented demographics to give a more accurate picture of public perception.
- Members sought clarification on the rational for determining pot hole repair priority. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service explained there were a range of thresholds within the contract to meet demand but, on the whole, contractors endeavoured to find preventative solutions to mitigate damage to highways. Site visits were surveyed in line with the Council's Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, higher priority sites being regularly reviewed with lower hierarchies being reviewed once every four-year period.
- Noting the timing of the Cross Keys bridge painting, Members sought clarify on the schedule of works for similar assets. The Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Service stated that often, such structures only required involved maintenance ever 20 years. However, due to the duration of the works these often extended into busy highways periods which the Highway Service always look to minimise.

## RESOLVED

That the Quarter 3 - Performance Report be noted.

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 stated that they felt that they would benefit greatly from a briefing session on the Highways Contract that covers our intervention policy. The Scrutiny Officer acknowledged the request and endeavoured to explore its viability for the next Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED**

That the work programme presented be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.54 am