

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
24 OCTOBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A M Hall (Vice-Chairman), T R Ashton, K J Clarke, T J G Dyer, R A Gibson, E W Strengiel and R A Wright

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

Officers in attendance:-

Chris Miller (Head of Environment, Client and Contract Management), Clair Dixon (Policy and Strategic Asset Manager), Helen Reek (Senior Projects Officer, Transport Services), Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director – Communities, Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer) and Verity Druce (Head of Transformation Services),

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Austin, Mrs Rawlins and Mrs Vernon.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups Regulation 1990, Councillor Ashton was replacing Councillor S Roe until further notice.

28 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this point in proceedings

29 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR AND LEAD OFFICERS

No announcements were made at this point in proceedings.

30 HIGHWAY SERVICE - INFLATION OPTIONS PAPER

Members considered a report by the Head of Highways, Client and Contract Management in regards to the key risks that rising inflation was having on the construction sector and the potential impact on service delivery. The report was considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 16th and 20th September. The following matters were reported

- Impact of inflation on the construction sector was above those experienced in wider society, especially regarding oil and gas prices.
- Mechanisms had been in place to address inflation but given the economic environment the money allocated was no longer enough; monthly rate of inflation from April to June was 3%.
- A decision was taken for the Council to apply a mid-year uplift from 1 August 2022 to selected areas of the contracts that target the small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) working for the Tier 1 providers and which would target the most acutely affected providers.
- higher network activity for street works were recorded despite budgetary pressures.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Some areas and materials had experienced over 50% inflation in a week which made it difficult to plan projects
- There were expectations of the Government to provide funding. Given its geographical size, Lincolnshire received disproportionately less funding, and there were calls for Government to provide further funding for Lincolnshire.
- In terms of its financial position, Lincolnshire County Council was well equipped to deal with rising inflation.

RESOLVED:

That the report and comments be noted.

31 HIGHWAY SERVICE – WINTER MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AWARD

The Committee received a report from the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management on the Highway Service Winter Maintenance Contract Award. This item was considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 16th and 20th September 2022, and the decision was taken to award TCL, owned by the Council, on 20th September 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32 HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2025

The Committee considered a paper from the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management regarding the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy. The

decision was considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 31 October to 8 November 2022. The following matters were reported:

- The Strategy was an essential requirement of annual 'self assessment' from the Department of Transport (DoT) in order to receive £4.3 per annum in funding.
- Defined current asset position and aspirations from 2022-25.
- Comparisons of Lincolnshire's highways were drawn with 26 other rural authorities with large road networks.
 - Lincolnshire's road conditions fared well with A B and C category roads.
 - Unclassified roads fared badly compared to the average rural county.
- It was recommended to maintain a 'steady state' for all asset groups except for the unclassified carriageway.
- Stakeholders cited highway conditions as their biggest concern.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Comparisons drawn with the 26 authorities were broad, and Lincolnshire experienced specific challenges caused by recent droughts.
- Despite DoT allocated funding based on road length, the road quality was not high enough to receive the maximum amount of funding.
- The recommendation focused on unclassified roads due to the large amount in the South of Lincolnshire.
- Closing down unclassified roads was a last resort, and the best approach would be to make incremental changes in efficiencies.
- Members were reassured that unclassified roads were improving overall.
- The strategy aimed to acquire funding for unsafe slabbed pavements, and actions would be taken if there were insurance claims made.
- Funding was received to introduce on-street charging points for electric cars.
- Any road needing urgent improvements was still a primary focus.
- Surface dressing was an important part of extended the life of roads at low cost and industry standard. With reference to protecting cyclists and motorists from harm, risk mitigation could be built into the design going forward to ensure well-placed signage.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the report to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in relation to this item.

33 HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022/23

The committee received a report from the Policy and Strategic Asset Manager. This decision was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 31 October to 8 November 2022. The following matters were reported:

- Policy documents would change in appearance to ensure compliance with accessibility laws.
- Drainage would always be a key asset. A targeted approach to gullies and offlets now ensured that they were washed on an annual, biannual or biennial basis.
- The Management Plan defined the approach to obtaining condition data, safety and service inspections, managing risks and response times, and enabled works delivery programmes, inspections and data capture.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the report to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in relation to this item.

34 RE-PROCUREMENT OF HIREBIKE SCHEME

The committee received a report from the Head of Environment in regards to the Hire Bike (Bike Share) Decision to Tender. This decision was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT between 25 October 2022 and 1 November 2022. The following matters were reported:

- The original scheme introduced in 2013 was no longer fit for purpose and performance was lower than other authorities.
- Market testing indicated an interest for a more modern and lighter fleet.
- Companies were to be consulted on the specific challenges Lincoln faced regarding a bike scheme.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted

- Using providers in the market as a soundboard was beneficial and would bring their specialised knowledge into Lincoln.
- Market engagement would determine new places to establish docking stations outside of Lincoln; new technology of 'geofencing' for e-bikes, which could expand where bikes could dock.
- Demographic information of those who used the hire bike scheme would be circulated to the committee.
- A case could be made to introduce different size bikes in the future to encourage children to make use of the scheme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the report to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in relation to this item.

35 HIGHWAYS QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 APRIL 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2022)

Members considered a report from the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management regarding the performance of the highways service, including the Major Highways Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report and Highways and Transport Complaints Report. The following matters were reported:

- 3 Major schemes were making good progress:
 - Grantham Southern Relief Road was anticipated to open Phase 1 in the coming months. Phase 3 of the road was experiencing challenges, and was projected to finish in 2025.
 - Spalding Western Relief Road was still set to finish as programmed, at the end of 2023.
 - North Hykeham Relief Road – works were to commence in 2025.
- All of the Alliance partners had managed to achieve their targets for Quarter 1.
- Improvements Plans were underway for 2 performance indicators (PIs):
 - PI3: Tasks completed within timescaled - reactive works
 - PI8: Street Lighting Service Standard
- Inflation within the Highway Contract meant that the costs of service were 13% higher in April 2022 than April 2021.
- The number of live jobs in the reactive service had decreased from 8200 to approximately 1826 in March 2022.
- There were retention challenges, especially in professional roles. Work was ongoing with William Sale Partnership Limited (WSP) to remedy this problem.
- During Quarter 1, the Highway Service received a total of 20,099 fault requests and enquiries, of which 233 contacts to the Customer Relations Team resulted in individuals wishing to give feedback – 179 initiated a formal complaint process, an increase of 29% from Q1 2020-2021.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Attempts were being made to lobby a joint funded scheme to introduce new dual carriageways in Lincolnshire to reduce traffic caused by accidents.
- Complaints regarding staff conduct and attitude applied to the Council and its contractors.
- The Councillor Volunteering Scheme was receiving less applications
- Apprenticeship numbers within the contract were down in Quarter 1, this was because the academic year started in September so the Q2 performance report would capture movement.
- Work was ongoing to introduce care leavers into the service.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in relation to this item.

36 TRANSPORT QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT (1 APRIL 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2022)

The Head of the Transport Service delivered a report which provided the Committee with the first of what will become quarterly performance reports in relation to passenger transport and the Council's Transport Services. The following matters were reported:

- Transport Services were under new management.
- Adoption of the Local Transport Plan, Green Masterplan and the Bus Services Improvement Plan.
- Achievements were reported on Educational Travel Transformation Programme; high demands from public and noted that the needs of children had become more complex.
- The transport industry was experiencing pressures due to inflation and staff shortages on a national scale.
- Passenger numbers for public busses had not returned to pre-covid levels.
- External recruitment drives would be undertaken once the internal staff restructuring project commenced on 1 February 2023.
- A comprehensive bus network review was being undertaken to meet demands of residents.
- Category Management Plan for Transport Supplier Market introduction had led to the appointment of a Category Manager to work in partnership with the Commercial Team and Transport Services.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Lack of public transport was an issue in Lincolnshire for residents and visitors. Call Connect's services were being investigated as part of the transformation work in terms of satisfying consumer demand before commercial viability.
- Complaints had been received about the number of Stagecoach bus cancellations. Reassurance was given as the public/commercial bus network operated on a separate contract to Council transport. Staff shortages were widespread, and the pandemic had played a role in cancellations.
- Complaints received regarding Stagecoach's communication of cancellations. Residents had been notified on twitter, which was inaccessible for some. All parties agreed that use of twitter not satisfactory and had contributed to a negative cycle where people disregarded bus travel as an option. Work was being undertaken with the Council to review the bus website, and make it the avenue of communication for passengers.
- Lincoln City bus shelter provision was required improvements.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support the recommendations of the report to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.
2. That the Committee endorse the key priorities outlined in the report.
3. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

37 TRANSPORT CONNECT LIMITED (TCL) - TECKAL COMPANY UPDATE REPORT

A report was delivered by the Senior Projects Officer and the Managing Director of "Teckal Company Limited" (TCL), which provided an update on the activities and performance of the TCL since the previous report was considered in December 2021. The following matters were noted:

- Teckal Company Limited was owned by the County Council.
- There was a priority to provide the south of the county with reliable transport, especially to children with additional needs.
- Changes had been made to the management structure and roles.
- TCL continued to support the Council to meet its statutory obligations in relation to Education Travel.
- Driver recruitment and fuel prices were a significant challenge.
- Vehicle numbers had increased from 50 to 80 – facilitated by a replacement vehicle plan.
- Improvements could be made regarding the environmental sustainability of vehicles.
- External accountants had complete audits, and TCL had received praise for their clear audit in 2021.
- Diversification of maintenance was expected to increase the income and resilience of the service.
- TCL would continue to provide LCC with high quality and cost-effective services.

It was noted that TCL has been a great benefit to LCC and had been adaptable to various needs whilst ensuring its independence was maintained.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee endorse the report.
2. That the Committee's comments be passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

38 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The following items had been added to the work programme since the time of publication:

- Permit Schemes – street works, road works and activities in Lincolnshire

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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2022

Members requested that the following matters be added to the work programme:

- That a report on Anglian Water emergency road closures be presented at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.
- That a mid-Winter update be presented regarding the Winter Maintenance Contract as well as the programmed update in July.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be agreed subject to the amendments above.

The meeting closed at 12.39 pm