



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 OCTOBER 2016**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), D Brailsford, K J Clarke, G J Ellis, R G Fairman, R L Foulkes, Mrs A M Newton and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: C J T H Brewis, A Bridges, R G Davies, R A Renshaw and W S Webb attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Nicola Casburn (HAMS Manager), David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Chris Miller (Environmental Services Team Leader (Countryside Services)), Lee Rowley (Senior Project Leader - Major Schemes), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Satish Shah (Network Manager South), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Development Services), John Clark (Infrastructure Maintenance Engineer, Network Rail), Ashley Jackson (Operations Manager, Network Rail), Rachel Lowe (Communications Manager, Network Rail) and Gary Walsh (Area Director, Network Rail)

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M G Allan and P J O'Connor.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor G J Ellis in place of Councillors N M Murray for this meeting only.

21 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made at this stage of the meeting.

22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee held on 12 September 2016, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICERS

No announcements were made.

24 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on Major Schemes with the following issues highlighted:-

- Lincoln East West Link – all works were expected to be completed by the end of October 2016 and an official opening was planned for 18 November 2016.
- Go Skegness – Gibraltar Point Cycle Path Phase 3 had been successfully completed; Lumley Road Bus Stops were currently being built; Roman Bank, Ingoldmells layby extension was due to start and finish before Christmas; A52 Bus Lane Extension and Cycle Path, tender awarded and work on site was expected to commence on site on 7 November 2016.
- Lincoln Eastern Bypass – subject to a more detailed report at minute 26.
- Sutterton Roundabout – scheme was currently out to tender with an expected start in January 2017. Scheme should provide a good return on investment because of improved traffic flow.
- Grantham Southern Relief Road – Phase 1 now completed. Phase 2 involved further discussions with the contractor about costs and Highways England about the diversion of a Public Right of Way.
- Street Lighting – the project was on schedule to be completed by March 2017.

A discussion between the Committee and officers ensued in which the following topics were covered:-

- It was understood that additional traffic lanes were to be installed on the approaches to Sutterton roundabout. Officers stated that the additional traffic lanes would increase the capacity of the roundabout and improve its efficiency. Councillor R G Davies stated that the Council was examining locations in the county where improvements could be made which would have a substantial effect on traffic flow with small investment. Officers agreed to circulate the Action Plan in connection with this proposed work to all Members.
- There was a shortage of information about the Street Lighting Transformation Project in the Stamford area. It was noted that details about the project had been in the local press and the County News, it was requested that the local radio station should also be used. Officers agreed to investigate this request and would also examine if all of the Parish Councils and Stamford Town Council had been informed.

RESOLVED

That the report, comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, be noted.

25 ENHANCING OUR USERS' EXPERIENCE UPDATE

The Committee received a progress report in connection with Enhancing Our Users' Experience with regard to Highways and Transportation Services.

Officers had hoped to give a demonstration of the Highway Fault Reporting Online System (LAGAN) but there were still on-going technical issues which required resolution. Officers stated that due to changes in the Highways staffing structure the Communications Strategy had been delayed until 2017. Officers stated that many of the activities to improve customers' experience, undertaken with Kier (the Council's Highways Alliance partner) had been completed and the main issue now was the training of staff by Kier and the Council in 2017.

Officers stated that overall good progress had been made and they would notify all Members details of parish councils in Member's Electoral Division to enable them to share information about highways matters with their parish councils.

A discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

- When would the LAGAN demonstration be arranged? Officers stated that a demonstration of the LAGAN system would be arranged in early December 2016 and, in addition, consideration was being given to arranging the same demonstration to a Parish Council cluster meeting. Councillors C J T H Brewis and W S Webb offered their parish council cluster to become involved in the trial arrangements for the dissemination of information about highways matters.
- What were Serco's reasons for failing to solve the issues of access to LAGAN? Officers stated that they had not been involved directly in the contract arrangements but were aware there had been system issues which had prevented the operation of the LAGAN.
- Could a shorter URL address be provided for the public to view the Highways Planned Works Programme site on the Council's website? Officers agreed to investigate this request.
- When LAGAN was operational would the Council save money? Officers hoped that LAGAN would save the Council money when it was operational.
- Would LAGAN allow users to interrogate the system? Officers stated that as part of the development of LAGAN interrogation of the system by users was being examined by Serco.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report be noted and that the issues raised by the Committee be actioned by officers.

(b) That a further progress report be submitted to the Committee in six months.

26 THE A15 LINCOLN EASTERN BYPASS - CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT

The Committee received a report in connection with pre-decision scrutiny of the contract for the construction of the A15 Lincoln Eastern Bypass before it was

considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT on 1 November 2016. The Bypass would provide a new 7.5km single carriageway relief road that would link the A158 Wragby Road in the north to the A15 Sleaford Road in the south. The new route would be classified as a A15 on opening and would be subject to a 60mph speed limit.

A discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

- What lessons had been learnt from the delay caused by the disruptive possession of the track? Officers stated that Network Rail was required to go through a complex process before possession took place and discussions regarding possessions could not take place until a contract with the Council was in place.
- The costs estimate had increased but the possibility of a reduction in costs was welcomed.
- While accepting that the project was complex it was important that Members were kept informed as soon as possible of any potential issues that might be a cause of concern.
- Who determined the amount of compensation paid to the train operators due to track possession? Officers stated that Network Rail was responsible for setting the compensation payments and because the level of disruption was unknown at this stage this information was unavailable.
- The problems caused by track possessions were due to the fact that the rail operators were private commercial operators. If there was a derailment Network Rail would act a lot quicker to find diversionary routes. Officers reiterated that Network Rail was required to follow a detailed process in possession cases but officers agreed that there should be a quicker way of doing this or that they should start discussions earlier.
- What arrangements were in place to manage costs? Officers stated that it was proposed to set up a team on site to manage costs. Information supplied by Carillion, the proposed contractor, gave confidence that measures were in place to ensure that the project was delivered on time and on budget. The Committee would be kept informed of the progress in the Major Schemes report.
- Officers stated that they would examine arrangements for the Committee to visit the project during construction.
- Had the Council accounted for any additional work in case the By-pass was expanded to a dual carriageway? Officers stated that the Council had taken into consideration any future expansion of the By-pass to a dual carriageway. For example, all of the new roundabouts were designed to accommodate a dual carriageway, drainage ponds, etc, were able to deal with dual carriageway runoff and where possible structures were designed to incorporate the additional span for the carriageway. The only parts of the project which were not future proofed in this respect were the crossings of the River Witham and the Lincoln to Market Rasen railway line.
- Who was responsible for inflation costs? Officers stated the inflation costs were a small part of the project and had been accounted for by the Council.
- When the By-pass was completed new signage would be required to re-route vehicles, particularly HGVs, away from the Cathedral area of Lincoln. Officers

stated that the By-pass would form part of the new A15 which had been agreed with the Department for Transport and new signage would be installed to advise all traffic of the new strategic route.

- Officers confirmed that disruption during construction would be minimised where possible. The majority of the scheme would be in fields with potential disruption occurring during construction of the roundabouts.

RESOLVED

(a) That the recommendations to the Executive detailed in the report be supported.

(b) That the comments made by the Committee, responses given by officers, be noted and passed to the Executive Councillor.

27 UPDATE TO THE WINTER MAINTENANCE PLAN

The Committee received a report in connection with an update to the Winter Maintenance Plan to take into account new national guidance and the results and recommendations from the Winter Maintenance Working Group's report. Officers stated that Appendix C of the report highlighted the key changes between July 2013 and October 2016 Winter Maintenance Plans.

A discussion between the Committee and officers included the following topics:-

- What was the latest position in connection with the appointment of HGV drivers to drive the snow ploughs? Officers stated that 65 Firefighters and retired HGV drivers had expressed an interest in driving snow ploughs and the Council would pay them. Officers agreed to ask Kier if they could provide an update of the latest position at the next meeting of the Committee.
- Could information be provided at the end of the season of how many times the gritting vehicles were used? Officers stated that they would provide information on how many times the gritting vehicles were not used at the end of the season.
- Was Emergency Planning a member of the Strategic Co-ordination Group? Officers stated that along with relevant agencies Emergency Planning was also a member of this Group.
- Who was responsible for removing rubbish from salt bins? Officers stated that Kier, the Council's contractor, was responsible for filling salt bins and officers agreed to speak to them about clearing rubbish from them.
- Was there a procedure for dealing with a corpse buried in the snow? Officers stated that this was a Police matter and that the driver of the snow plough would contact them immediately a corpse was discovered.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee, the responses of officers be noted and actioned accordingly.

(b) That the recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT, in the report, be supported.

28 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY SECTIONS OF THE DE-REGULATION ACT 2015

The Committee received a report in connection with the expected effects of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) elements of the Deregulation Act 2015 and considered the implications and issues for the Council, landowners and the public from changes to the PROW process. Officers stated that the recommendation to the Committee had been amended to "that the report be noted". The reason for this was that the progress of the implementation of the regulations detailed in the report under the Deregulation Act 2015 was now uncertain.

A discussion took place between the Committee and officers and the following topics were discussed:-

- The amount of £5,000 for the publication of adverts for Orders in the press did not appear to be a lot of money. Officers stated that in terms of the budget for Public Rights of Way, £5,000 was a large amount of money in the Countryside Services' budget which had been reduced substantially in recent years.
- Could the URL address for the website to view Definitive Map Modification Orders by the public be reduced? Officers agreed to investigate this request.
- The cost to an applicant to modify a Definitive Map Modification Order was expensive. Officers stated that costs were set by legislation and that only those costs incurred by the Local Authority could be met.

RESOLVED

That the report, comments made by the Committee and the responses given by officers, be noted.

29 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report in connection with its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated as follows:-

(a) the removal of "Grantham Southern Relief Road-Phase 2" from 28 November 2016, due to the fact that a response was still awaited from the Highways Agency and

(b) a budget workshop to be arranged at the rising of the meeting of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 28 November 2016.

30 NETWORK RAIL ENGAGEMENT SESSION - GARY WALSH, AREA DIRECTOR - NETWORK RAIL; JOHN CLARK, INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE ENGINEER; ASHLEY JACKSON, OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Committee received a presentation from Network Rail which included details of their performance in the East Midlands, particularly Lincolnshire, information about train punctuality, reliability and the effects on reliability caused by major incidents such as the major gas leak in Lincoln.

Network Rail responded to questions and comments made by the Committee as follows:-

- They acknowledged the frustration caused by the lift not operating on the High Street footbridge and hoped to resolve the problem as soon as possible. It was proposed to improve the signage for the lift and correct the workmanship on the footway.
- The snagging issues were expected to be completed on the High Street footbridge by 2 November 2016. The footbridge would not be accepted by Network Rail until this work had been completed and the use of non-slip paint on the footbridge floor was being investigated.
- The possible delays caused by track possession and its effect on the Lincoln Eastern By-pass would be resolved by October 2017.
- The issues in connection with the length of time level crossing barriers at Skellingthorpe Road and Doddington Road, Lincoln and Station Road, North Hykeham would be responded to when the Committee visited the Signal Control Station, Lincoln, this afternoon.
- The procedures involved in possession of track were complicated and agreed that there was a need to keep stakeholders informed of developments at an earlier stage. They agreed to get back to the Council about earlier engagement with freight operators.
- Tenders to run the rail service franchise in the East Midlands, including the Nottingham to Skegness line, were due to be returned in March 2018. The Department for Transport would consult the Council on the proposals and agreed to send details to the Council of the internet details for this consultation.
- Disabled access at Stamford Station was not a high priority. There was a "barrow" crossing at the end of the platform but this was not suitable for disabled people. If there was a business case to provide access for the disabled then Network Rail would examine the matter further. In the meantime, disabled people should contact East Midlands Trains to arrange their journey.
- The outcome of a study into the provision of a bridge for Tallington was expected in Spring 2017 and details of the study would be sent to the Council for comment.
- British Transport Police had responsibility for enforcing the one way system at the Maxey rail crossing and Network Rail would investigate if any prosecutions had taken place.
- The repair and installation of new surfacing at level crossings was a major work activity of Network Rail nationwide and in Lincolnshire and was expensive to

undertake. Network Rail wished to invest a lot more resources in this area. They explained their approach to tackling the issue including taking a holistic approach and doing a risk assessment. The level crossing at Langworth on the A158 was on the main route from Lincoln to the East Coast and they agreed that the existing surface was inadequate and agreed to respond to the Council if they had any plans for this crossing.

- Network Rail stated that mild steel grey colour fencing had been used for the safety fence in Sykes Lane, Saxilby. Removal of the paint was expensive and agreed to investigate the options available and respond to the Council.
- Network Rail had visited the work they had undertaken just off Sykes Lane, known locally as "Tilt Lady Lane" and the damage to the verges had repaired of its own accord.
- Network Rail stated that the concerns raised about reliability of the level crossing barriers in Spalding would be addressed at the meeting in Spalding on 26 October 2016. Network Rail explained that if there was a problem with one of the barriers then this would affect all of the barriers. Concerns about the installation of modernised equipment to improve reliability would be addressed at the meeting on 26 October. Network Rail added that any upgrade of a level crossing was dependent on a number of factors including usage and traffic flows.
- Network Rail had examined the capacity of the East Coast mainline and rail traffic, where appropriate, had been diverted to the Lincoln to Peterborough line to improve capacity on the East Coast mainline.

Network Rail agreed to send written responses to the questions asked today and to those asked on 26 October 2016, to Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, and the responses would be circulated to all Members.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm