



HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, D Brailsford, K J Clarke, R L Foulkes, R G Fairman, N M Murray and Mrs A M Newton

Councillors R G Davies, R A Renshaw and M A Whittington attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Richard Fenwick (Highways Officer), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Development Services) and Martin Thurnell (Divisional Business Manager)

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P J O'Connor and A H Turner MBE JP.

32 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None were declared at this stage of the meeting.

33 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 24 October 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:-

(a) Minute 25, an additional bullet point to paragraph 4 as follows – "It was agreed that Members should be copied in on correspondence sent to parish councils so that they would be informed of what was said to the parishes".

(b) Minute 30, an additional final paragraph as follows – "The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Network Rail for their attendance".

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

No announcements were made.

35 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 2 (1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER
2016)

(Note: Councillor R G Fairman arrived in the meeting).

The Committee received a report on the performance of the highways service including the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, Major Highway Schemes update and the Customer Satisfaction Information, including service specific complaints and compliments.

Officers highlighted the following issues since the publication of the report:-

- The Lincoln East West Link – was now completed and opened to the public with a few minor snagging matters to address.
- Skegness Countryside Business Park - there were still some issues to be addressed.
- Go Skegness – work was due to be completed by the end of March 2017.
- Lincoln Southern By-Pass – the Department for Transport had rejected the Council's bid submitted in July 2016 for funds to develop the scheme to planning application stage. Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that he had recently met the Minister for State for Transport to discuss the reasons for the lack of progress and it was noted that officers would examine the matter further to see if any progress could be made.
- Lincoln Eastern By-Pass – the Department for Transport had announced that they had approved the release of £50m funding for the project. Network Rail would start their necessary work on the project on 6 December 2016.
- Lincoln Rail Footbridges – it was noted that the High Street rail footbridge lift had broken down again. The County Council was not prepared to accept liability for the bridge as it presented an unacceptable liability to the highway authority.
- Sutterton Roundabout – a tender submitted by North Midland Construction had been accepted for the project by the Council.

The Committee commented on the various schemes and in particular expressed disappointment to the rejection of the bid for funding for the Lincoln Southern Bypass and enquired when the Council would take on liability for the High Street Bridge, Lincoln. Councillor R G Davies stated that with regard to the Lincoln Southern Bypass the reasons for rejection were in connection with the viability and economic growth issues of the project.

Officers stated that the Council was not expected to take on liability for the High Street bridge.

With regard to the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance for year 7, quarter 2, July to September 2016, officers stated that the overall performance was good. Members commented on the need to mend street lighting which was considered essential like that provided in areas where there were large numbers of vulnerable elderly people living and whether the Council repaired footway lighting on behalf of District Councils. Executive Councillor R G Davies stated that the policy was proposed to complete the street lighting transformation project first before any repairs to street lights took place. Officers agreed to send the details of the Council's policy on the repair of broken street lights to members and parish councils and would ensure the policy was placed on the Council's website. Officers agreed to circulate the Council's policy on the repair of footway lighting to members.

In response to an enquiry from the Committee about some contracts currently performing 100% not performing well, officers stated that key performance targets were updated each year and members would be updated when they became available.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.
- (b) That the issues identified in connection with street lighting and key performance indicators be actioned by officers.

36 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2016

The Committee received a report in connection with an update on the current winter maintenance season 2016/17 and the ongoing recruitment process for new drivers.

Officers in response to comments made by the Committee explained the process of the using firefighters during snowy conditions. Officers stated that firefighters would not be used if they were on their firefighter rota with the fire service and firefighters would be paid the standard rate of pay.

Officers stated that drivers required a LGV class licence and the number of hours worked were recorded and any licence could be revoked by the Traffic Commissioner in certain circumstances if there were any indiscretions by a driver. The use of mobile telephone by a driver was classed as gross misconduct and a driver would be dismissed.

RESOLVED

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

37 HIGHWAYS FUTURE OPERATING MODEL

The Committee received a progress report on the work to develop a future operating model for the highways service. Officers outlined the history of the development of

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the model and which now incorporated the further change required to accommodate the efficiencies and savings required by the Fundamental Budget Review, Financial Challenge and the outcome of the extensive consultation exercise required for the staff restructuring required to implement the model.

Officers stated that service provision in the future would be more strategic and less reactive and it was proposed to provide a self-service model with the use of the LAGAN communication system which would allow the public to access information about highways matters on the Council's website. It was also proposed to increase the role of the Customer Services Centre to provide help on highways matters for the public.

Comments by the Committee and responses by officers included:-

- The increased importance of the Customer Services Centre was noted and the need to ensure that their staff were fully conversant with the various highway procedures before they could advise the public. It was noted that experienced highways staff were involved in the training of Customer Services Centre staff.
- Officers agreed to provide a staffing structure diagram to members when certain appointments had been finalised at the end of this week.
- Officers stated that it was proposed to arrange member briefings about the new structure and its implications for the service in the near future.
- While in certain situations a highways officer would be able to attend a site visit to help a member it should be borne in mind that there would be a reduction in the number of highway officer posts and therefore an increased use of the Customer Services Centre and the Council's website. It was also proposed to build more resilience into the service to allow this to happen.
- Officers stated that members should not expect to meet the same highways officer on each occasion at a site visit due to the various changes to the service.

RESOLVED

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

38 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received its work programme for consideration. The Committee requested a report on the operational sequence used for traffic lights and the effect on the movement of traffic at junctions.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be agreed subject to the following:-

- (a) The inclusion of an item in connection with the operational sequence used for traffic lights and its effects on traffic movements at junctions to a future meeting.

(b) The addition of an item on progress of the implementation of the Future Operating Model in six months.

The meeting closed at 11.25 am

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