

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Statement from: Councillor R G Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT**

### **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

#### **Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP)**

Fatal Collision Figures as of 17 August 2020

<b>Year</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Fatalities</b>	28	38	28	25	37

Following the suspension of all National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme classroom courses due to Covid -19 (March 20) as an interim measure LRSP launched online courses. To date LRSP have delivered online road safety education courses to over 6,000 road users that committed road traffic violations.

Prior to the summer break, LRSP reintroduced School Crossing Patrols at schools where a specific need was identified. LSRP have reintroduced the full service this September. Also working on the national BikeSafe course delivery changes during COVID-19.

LSRP are currently working on changes to the delivery of 2Fast2Soon theatre production to comply with schools COVID-19 plans, as well as working on providing new online content for schools so pupils do not miss out on essential safety messages due to Covid-19.

Progress is being made with Lincolnshire's DfT Safer Road Fund. A right turn lane is currently being constructed on the A18 at the Barton Street (Pond House) junction. Resurfacing works are programmed to start on the A631 on the stretch between Market Rasen and North Willingham. Consultation on speed limit change will follow.

Community Speed Watch activity has resumed following it's suspension due to Covid-19. LRSP continue supporting Lincolnshire Police in delivering a national road safety awareness campaigns being led by the NPCC and Fire Chiefs Council. A new average speed camera system is now present and awaiting sign off on the A52 between Haltoft End and Butterwick. This has replaced two older style spot speed wet film units. All roads policing enforcement including static speed cameras and mobile speed cameras has resumed.

#### **Major Projects/Advanced Design Block**

##### **Lincoln Eastern Bypass**

Work has continued on the construction of Lincoln Eastern Bypass. The Coronavirus Pandemic caused some initial delay as new working methods were introduced to ensure guidelines on social distancing were observed where

possible. All operations have now recommenced but the above has resulted in additional cost pressures. The improved spring weather has allowed substantial progress to be made on completing the major earthworks; this is now all but complete. A new drainage sub-contractor has been engaged to improve progress on drainage installation.

As works near complete at the end of 2020 various activities are taking place across the whole site, including:

- Carriageway surfacing, including final surfacing in places
- Completion of drainage connections
- Backfilling behind the abutments to the Witham Bridge
- Completion of the Washingborough Road roundabout
- Completing of final surfacing to all the roundabouts
- Installation of Bloxholme Land and Greetwell Road Footbridge
- Removal of the temporary bridge across the River Witham
- Top soiling and landscaping

### **Grantham Southern Relief Road**

Phase 1 from the B1174 running towards the A1 is already complete.

Phase 2 consists of tunnelling underneath the A1 while keeping the running lanes live to create a new grade separated junction with the A1 south west of Grantham. The main works commenced in September 2019 being constructed by Galliford Try. The Coronavirus Pandemic introduced some initial delay as new working methods were introduced to ensure guidelines on social distancing were observed where possible. All operations continued but the project has experienced additional cost pressures as a result.

Details of on-going works include:

- Bridge beams on the west side of the A1 are complete
- Concrete deck pour has been completed on the west side
- Continued earthworks to the western and eastern roundabouts and slip roads.
- Started drainage works for both the eastern and western roundabouts
- Piling platform has been constructed on east side

The next main sequence will be having the A1 traffic running on the new western section while the eastern underpass bridge is constructed.

Phase 3 will be the final phase of the project and is the largest and most complex to deliver. It consists of a five span viaduct carrying the road over the East Coast Mainline railway and the River Witham. The viaduct will be in excess of 10m above the River Witham. The phase is programmed to commence in spring 2021 and take approximately three years to complete. Galliford Try have been selected to provide the initial Early Contractor Involvement. Early land access agreements have been signed which allowed for enabling works to commence in February, including: vegetation clearance, ecological works, archaeological works, fencing and topsoil

strip. Work is on-going with the contractor and designers to further develop the Value Engineering options to either decrease the price or mitigate further risk.

### **North Hykeham Relief Road**

The Outline Business Case for the project was completed and the bid document was submitted to the DfT, via Midlands Connect in February 2019. Since then a number of tranches of question have been posed to LCC, which have been answered, with the last tranche received in early August 2020. The DfT intend to now forward the bid assessment to ministers and treasury with the intention of a resolution by the end of 2020.

### **Spalding Western Relief Road**

Section 5 (Northern Connection) – In February 2018 SHDC in collaboration with LCC were successful in securing £12m from the HCA for delivering this section of the SWRR. Since then a further £8.13m has been sourced from the HCA. Enabling works have commenced on site, which includes archaeology investigations, some vegetation clearance, utility diversion preparation and property demolition. Detailed design for Section 5A is complete, including agreement of Departures from Standards and Stage 2 Road Safety Audit.

Detailed designs of Section 5B are progressing and due to be completed by the end of 2020. This includes a re-design of the bridge and embankment to reduce costs following input from the contractor (ECI). Main works planned to start in early 2021 following land transfer agreements and signing the bridge agreement with Network Rail.

### **A46 Dunholme/Welton Roundabout Improvement**

The A46 Dunholme/Welton roundabout improvement consists of constructing a roundabout and improving visibility at an existing 'T' junction. LCC was successful against the NPIF Tranche 2 bid for £2m. Planning approval was granted in February 2018 and detailed design is nearly complete. Legal orders were published in May 2019 and the project received two statutory and three non-statutory objections. Following extensive discussions all objections were removed and the Public Inquiry was cancelled. The DfT have subsequently confirmed the orders.

A target cost was agreed with the contractor, Eurovia and the works commenced July 2020.

The following progress has been made:

- Topsoil stripped to the entire working area for the site
- Planed out the old A46 through the hill, approx. 400mm depth of material
- Excavated the whole of the Market Rasen leg up to 3m deep
- Laid geotextile membrane along Market Rasen leg and geogrid in areas of poorer ground conditions
- 300mm of sub-base laid and compacted along 200m of Market Rasen Leg ready for surfacing contractor to complete
- Started filling the area north of the compound to finished road level
- Started excavating for drainage along the Market Rasen Leg

### **A46 Lincoln Northern Roundabout Improvements**

The A46/A158 Riseholme Road Roundabout project on Lincoln's Northern Bypass attracted SLGF to a value of £2.4m. The project entails enlarging the size of the roundabout and increasing the number of lanes both entering and exiting each leg of the roundabouts. This will reduce congestion at this pinch point and improve journey time reliability.

Works started in February 2020 but were suspended by Breheny due to Covid19 impact. Breheny returned to site in May with revised working practices to comply with social distancing guidelines where possible. The contractor has largely completed two quadrants of the roundabout and is working on the remaining two. Works are due to be completed autumn 2020 with traffic management restrictions increasing to complete the final surface course.

### **Rugby Club Junction, Sleaford**

Works were due to start in late March; however the contractor suspended the commencement of any new projects and furloughed their staff. Since then however, the contractor commenced the works on 13 May with the works planned to take 5 months. The majority of works on the north side of the A153 are complete with the focus now switching to the south side widening. To date the works have gone well however, a risk remains regarding the performance of utility providers. Works are due to be complete autumn 2020.

### **Holdingham Roundabout, Sleaford**

This project was originally to follow on from the Rugby Club, but this will put the earthworks into the autumn and winter months which presents too great a risk of delays and financial costs. The decision has been made to postpone the start of work until the middle of February 2021. Detailed design is complete and the tender package has been submitted to the contractor for pricing. This is expected back in September 2020 providing sufficient time to scrutinise the target cost.

### **Corringham Road Junction, Gainsborough**

The project entails improving the existing Thorndike Way/Corringham Road junction to a traffic signal layout with two running lanes in either direction along Thorndike Way. The improvements will provide additional safety and capacity to accommodate predicted Local Plan growth in the area.

The detailed design is complete, albeit with some minor drainage amendments to resolve. The works tender package was submitted to Balfour Beatty in July, with tender prices expected back in mid-August. Works are expected to commence September 2020.

### **Roman Bank, Skegness**

This project entails reconstructing a section of Roman Bank in Skegness which is in a very poor state due to the concrete road slab. A funding bid was submitted to the DfT which was successful in securing £3.6m towards the project. The tender package was submitted for pricing, with Breheny being successful. Works are to commence in September 2020 with a programme duration estimated to be 7-8 months. Businesses have been liaised with and the Chamber of Commerce have been consulted.

The project will be subject to a full closure, however, the actual works will be broken down into smaller pieces of work, so that no one business will be adversely affected for an extended period of time.

### **Lincolnshire Coastal Highway**

Following the announcement of a Coastal Highway Budget allocation a programme or works are being developed over a number of years. Approximately £6.5m has been allocated to date, towards various improvements along and around the Lincolnshire Coastal Highway. This includes carriageway reconstruction, carriageway resurfacing, guard rail replacement, white lining and new/improved pedestrian facilities.

### **Boston Distributor Road Scoping Bid**

A project scoping report was produced by LCC and submitted to Matt Warman MP for lobbying to central government for funding to progress a Boston Distributor Road Outline Business Case. The DfT responded stating that there were insufficient funds at this time.

### **Highways Works Term Maintenance Contract**

The new Highways Works Term Maintenance Contract, implemented in April 2020 has led to various benefits, despite the challenging mobilisation period during the initial nationwide lockdown due to Covid-19. Productivity of our reactive gangs increased between 54% and 184% gang to gang in the first quarter of the financial year, which also led to an improvement in performance with regards to response times with 71% of all faults repaired within default response times, a figure which is still increasing to the aspirational performance of 98.5%

Since the start of the new contract in April, we have completed the following reactive repairs:

- 15,743 carriageway potholes
- 825 footway potholes or trips
- 199 broken or missing gully grates or covers
- 406 footway slab replacement jobs
- 209 sign repairs
- 447 lining jobs
- 289 kerbing jobs

This increase in performance was in part down to recurring performance workshops which the Highways Works Term Contractor held with their own managers, supervisors and gangs. On the back of this, Local Highways Management ran joint workshops with the Contractor to look at the end-to-end performance from public report to repair on the ground and are exploring ways to improve the efficiency of the service together.

Since re-balancing the Local Highways areas in April 2020 to align with the new contract, and introduction of tablet devices for on-site tracking of public enquiries and ordering of work at time of inspection, the Local Highways teams have been subject to tighter targets and performance measures which the new contract has given us

the tools to track. Currently, there are only 844 outstanding pothole enquiries across the County. 650 of these have a job raised for repair within our contractual timescales, leaving only 194 reports across the County in need of assessment, about the amount which are reported in a week at this time of year. For some context, in June 2018 we had around 7000 outstanding pothole enquiries. As of September 2020, there are only 4926 outstanding enquiries across all highways teams including street lighting, with us receiving around 3000 per month during summer.

## **Highways 2020 Implementation**

### **Mobilisation Update**

On the 1 April 2020 LCC reached a major milestone in relation to service provision for Highway Works, Traffic Signals and Professional Services with a starting date for three new contracts that were awarded following a strategic commissioning exercise. This event meant that LCC have a new provider for Highway Works (Balfour Beatty Group Ltd) and Traffic Signals (Colas). WSP retained the Professional Services contract.

The mobilisation phase is now coming to an end as the contracts transition into normal service provision. All aspects of the service are being delivered with a variety of different social distancing measures in place to mitigate the impacts of Covid 19.

### **Next steps**

The service is working through a roadmap of future improvements and is implementing them in partnership with the new providers. Social value initiatives, member engagement applications, introduction of innovative technology and recycling initiatives are being progressed in line with normal service provision.

A new set of challenging performance indicators have been introduced as part of the Highways 2020 contract. These measures have raised the bar in terms of service provision. The recently reported Quarter 1 data will be analysed and initiate improvement plans across the service.

### **Depot Improvement**

Depot improvements continue at five strategic sites within the Highway Works contract: Lancaster House, Willingham, Horncastle, Pode Hole and Sleaford. These works will improve current facilities so the workforce is better equipped to deliver a higher quality service.

Improvements and installations being made to welfare facilities, drying rooms, visual training and increasing the ability for staff from Balfour Beatty and LCC to co-locate in the future.

### **Fleet & Compliance**

With significant impact on the inspection team, all inspection activity was stalled as the majority of local bus and school transport services were suspended. Also, backlogs in Pupil, Route and Stop Risk Assessments; Driver/PA vetting and Training; Independent Travel Training for SEND pupils; and School/Classroom Max Respect sessions are all being addressed in the recovery phase.

Inspection Team has been used, to meet new government instructions for every bus shelter (875) to have social distancing posters displayed. Continued fleet input into the specification and procurement of a range of TSP, TSG, Library and Lincs Lab vehicles. The Covid outbreak has however impacted on timescales for acquiring some vehicles due to vehicle manufacturers (domestic and abroad) being closed. In some cases this would have extended delivery dates by a year. In these scenarios pre-owned vehicles have had to be sourced as an alternative.

### **Client Services**

Usual tender deadlines for school transport services were passed whilst awaiting national steer for September schooling arrangements, transport requirements and guidance on associated protection measures. Alternative procurement via contract extensions and negotiated contracting arrangements has been authorised by the Leader.

Significant amount of scenario planning and joint working with Children's Services on all of the challenges presenting in relation to Home to School Transport during Covid. Transport provided for 1280 scholars during the final term of the last school year.

Late timing of Govt. guidance now means that transport for all entitled scholars (17-18k) has to be organised in about 3 weeks, this will be almost impossible. Staff are putting in an incredible effort and working extremely long hours in rising to the challenge.

Slippage within the IT programme for replacing the time expired SEATS software means go live is now Dec 2020 at the earliest, this further exacerbates the challenge of this year's summer peak.

## **IT**

### **Lincolnshire Broadband Programme**

The Lincolnshire Broadband Programme has now upgraded 172,363 premises under Contracts 1 & 2 and 20,324 of which were completed in Contract 2. Both contracts are now fully completed.

Improvements in broadband coverage since we started the first contract can be seen below.

- Lincolnshire Superfast coverage at March 2013 – 43.3%
- Lincolnshire Superfast coverage at March 2016 – 86.9%
- Lincolnshire Superfast coverage at August 2020 – 94.7%

Current levels of customer take up remain very positive and well above projected. At this point, take up is sitting at a 72% of all premises enabled under this programme. This in financial terms will release clawback from BT of circa £13.5M, although it should be mentioned that we have previously received £4.65M in order to increase the size of Contract 2 and BDUK might insist that 50% of remaining clawback needs to be returned to them. On-going communication with parish councils and District

partners continues in an effort to further increase clawback revenues and we will work closely with Openreach to drive this further.

Customer takes up:

- March 2015 – 15.6%
- Sept 2016 – 34.08%
- Jan 2018 – 46.6%
- Nov 2019 - 64.1%
- July 2020 – 72.12%

The Invitation to Tender for Contract 3 has been closed and Quickline Communications have been awarded the contract to provide at least 100Mb/s download speeds to circa 8K rural premises as a first phase of this contract. At the time of writing, BDUK are going through their final approvals prior to formal signatures to the contract. This tends to be a rather lengthy process with BDUK and we expect to sign the contract shortly. This first phase will utilise £4.5M with a further £6.5M to follow in the second phase of this contract.

In terms of potential additional funding; we are aware of an announcement by DCMS that they have further money to invest (circa £5bn), specifically in the more rural areas. We have held preliminary meetings with BDUK to establish their strategy for this deployment. It is very early days at this point as we are unlikely to see any deployment in the UK under this scheme until October 2021. It will then continue for several years after that date.

Openreach has recently announced their intention to upgrade circa 51K rural premises to full fibre connectivity over the coming 18 months. They have focussed on a number of telephone areas, specifically, Sleaford, Bourne, Stamford, Leasingham, Horncastle, West Ashby and Gainsborough. This is a welcome addition to the work on-going in the county and will be fully funded by Openreach.

In addition to this work, Openreach are carrying out a 'retro build' exercise where they are going back over recent housing developments and upgrading them to full fibre. This will be an on-going deployment, again, fully funded by them. In the initial tranche, they will upgrade a little over 4K premises before year end. We expect these numbers to increase next year. Initial areas are Birchwood, Bourne, Washingborough, Welton, Wellingborough and Market Rasen.

There has been some interest from potential private investors in providing full fibre within the county. At this stage, discussions are at a very sensitive stage. Non-disclosure agreements are in place at this point.

### **IMT Support Services**

LCC IMT have been actively working on a number of enhancements and new functionality during the second quarter. Below is a roundup of some of that work:

### **LCC Modern Workplace**

IMT created the LCC Modern Workplace SharePoint site as a hub for all things Microsoft Teams. Here you can access training materials, guides, and FAQs.

### **Public Access Devices**

LCC IMT together with an external delivery partner recently installed public access devices into a number of Lincolnshire's family centres which allowed our service users to participate in family court proceedings online, without direct supervision from LCC colleagues. This was an urgent requirement of the family service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and was implemented within 2-3 weeks.

### **Improved internet speeds**

Approximately 60 LCC sites now benefit from improved internet speeds, as a result of a programme of work and investment which commenced last year, one that will continue for some months to come. This work had the objective of improving users' experience and access to the LCC network, Windows 10 equipment and essential business applications.

### **Remote working technology**

Always on VPN technology was barely known by LCC users at the beginning of 2020, yet is now an essential part of our daily lives, as we rely on this for our connection to the LCC network and many applications. Whereas prior to March we were seeing up to 600 daily remote connections to the LCC networks, we now regularly see up to 4000.

Whilst we were already building the IT infrastructure that this technology relies on in February, the speed at which Serco worked to bring us the initial version of Always on VPN, ready for staff to use, was phenomenal. IMT and Serco continue to work with our partners to make further improvements.

### **Investment in Wi-Fi**

LCC IMT has made a significant investment in hardware that will replace existing wireless access points in LCC offices in the coming months. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down our implementation of this newer technology, we are now looking at how to move forward with the installation of this equipment.

### **Service Desk Stats**

The Lincoln IT Service Desk has taken an unprecedented amount of phone calls with a 75% increase and tickets raised via the Portal since lockdown.

#### **1 March to 10 Aug**

Phone calls into the IT Service Desk = 31,821

Tickets created (Both Incidents and Requests) = 29,973

We have made significant improvements to the IT Portal (Service Now) enabling staff to self-help or capture the relevant information freeing up agents to work on incoming calls.

Whilst the Service Desk has worked tirelessly to get the backlog down we still have a significant backlog of Service Desk tickets. Microland are assisting the Service Desk to free up agents so they can tackle the backlog.

### **FreshService implementation for Business World**

FreshService is being implemented by LCC IMT to manage IT queries and requests for a number of critical business application. Over the last few months, we have been working with the Business World team to set up FreshService to manage all Business World issues and requests, and this was successfully implemented at the beginning of June for Finance, HR and Payroll teams. The plan now is to extend this to all LCC staff in the final months of this year.

### **SAP Legacy Data**

SAP is an old solution which needs to be decommissioned, but LCC must retain the information held in it to meet our legal obligations around a variety of different HR and financial requirements.

We have been working with Serco to design and develop a solution that meets the needs of LCC, providing a safe and secure way to hold the information outside of SAP and also enable colleagues, with a defined business need, to access it when necessary through a user interface. Once finalised, this will allow LCC to decommission SAP, something which has been our priority from the outset. User testing is starting in August with the remaining user interface development and data extracts continuing in parallel.

### **O365 project progress**

Completing review and migration of outstanding users and shared mailboxes in the next couple of weeks. 230 users migrating across this week, with 1700 shared mailboxes moving the week after. The work to bring LFR into the LCC world starts in two weeks with the provisioning of their new user and email accounts.

Users will also be getting the O365 web applications within this time period, meaning that Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and OneDrive will be available to all LCC employees on the internet. The project to rebuild our Windows 10 experience and deploy M365 desktop applications is progressing at pace. Technical trials have highlighted a much improved user experience that we were aiming for initially.

### **Swopout Service**

Together with Serco during the initial months of lockdown we managed to prepare and deploy 394 laptops out to the business that were either without a device or were using shared devices at work.