

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 September 2021

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

HIGHWAYS

Major Projects

Lincoln Eastern Bypass

This is the final update to highlight that the road is complete with all remaining excess spoil removed from site and footpath connections made to the Sustrans route and the Viking Way. There will be ongoing landscaping works, including maintenance over the next few years along with any correction of defects should they occur.

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 project is nearing completion with the main bridge completed and the underpass excavated. The existing cattle creep has been filled in with the majority of final surfacing on the slip roads installed. Final works include realigning the A1 to how it was before the works commenced, street lighting, signage, final surfacing to the rest of the phase and landscaping. Planned completion of this phase is winter 2021.

Phase 3 is 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. Works commenced April 2021 and have focussed on topsoil strip, embankment preparation works, ground water management and pre-bridge foundation preparation. Planned completion of this phase is summer 2023, however there are many risks between now and then they may impact on this planned completion.



Phase 2



Phase 3



Phase 3

North Hykeham Relief Road

When complete, this new road will link the A15 Lincoln Eastern Bypass with the A46 Western Bypass at Pennells Roundabout to create a full ring road around Lincoln. The project also aims to:

- Assist the sustainable economic growth of Lincoln and Lincolnshire
- Maximise accessibility to Lincoln
- Improve journey times and road safety in Lincoln

In December LCC was informed that the project had achieved programme entry approval from the DfT, which also secured £110m towards the project from the DfT. LCC accepted the terms of the funding agreement, and the project is now being progressed with an aspirational start in 2025. Works are currently focussed on liaising with homeowners and landowners, compiling a reference design, agreeing a procurement strategy, detailed cost forecasting and key risk mitigation. These along with the detailed design are all in advance of the first milestone, being an application for planning permission in 2023.

Spalding Western Relief Road

Section 5 (Northern Connection) – In February 2018 SHDC in collaboration with LCC were successful in securing £12m from the Homes and Communities Agency 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.

A target cost has been agreed with the contractor with the remaining element to complete before main works can commence being the land acquisition. The Heads of Terms for the land is now agreed by all parties with the legal document also now drafted. LCC is awaiting a response from the landowner solicitors. Once this is agreed and sealed the project will commence immediately with an 18 months' work programme.

A46 Dunholme/Welton Roundabout Improvement

This is the final update to highlight that the roundabout is complete and operating very well. There are some minor landscaping works still to complete along with some fencing and gates, however these will be completed soon.



Holdingham Roundabout, Sleaford

This scheme will ease congestion at Holdingham roundabout, increase capacity and improve traffic flow in all directions. The project entails constructing additional lanes at each approach, widening the circulatory on the roundabout and installing traffic lights to control the flow.

The works commenced in February 2021 and are programmed to be complete by the end of 2021. The following activities took place in March:

- Drainage works on the central island are complete
- Internal widening of the roundabout has been completed and traffic have been moved on to the new widened carriageway
- Approach and departure lane works continue. It has been programmed in such a way as to minimise traffic disruption (so widen on one side and surface before switching over to do the other side, where possible) – we have one-way closures programmed for four Saturdays throughout July. This will be to complete the surfacing of the widening on the A17 (West) and A15 (South).
- The project is on programme for completion by the end of the calendar year



Corringham Road Junction, Gainsborough

This is the final update to highlight that the junction improvements are complete and operating very well.



Roman Bank, Skegness

The Skegness Roman Bank Improvement scheme will see the full reconstruction of a 550-metre section of carriageway and footway between the Burgh Road/Castleton Boulevard junction to just past Elmhirst Avenue. The works include new road lining, half a mile of new drainage facilities, refurbishing the pedestrian crossing near the junction of Roman Bank and Sea View Road and rebuilding the footways on both sides of the carriageway.

Works started on site September 2020 and were progressing well, however in February/March 2021 Cadent Gas informed LCC that they would need to divert a gas main

that they had previously informed the delivery team didn't need diverting. This caused a significant delay to the project and resulted in the works spanning Summer 2021 period. To avoid the road works affecting the summer tourism period, it's likely that the works will be postponed, with the contractor demobilising in May 2021. The contractor will then recommence the works in September and complete the project. Due to the need to accommodate Cadent Gas this has extended to programme by months which when combined with vacating the site between May and September has caused the completion date to move to Spring 2022.

In addition, Anglian Water have also insisted on a utility diversion during the works, which they previously communicated didn't need diverting. This has been resisted as LCC do not believe this main requires diverting and is instead an opportunity for betterment by Anglian Water at LCC's expense. LCC has allowed Anglian Water to complete the diversion during the summer when the works aren't progressing, however, to date Anglian Water have failed to achieve their own programme and have still not commenced works. Anglian Water also want to progress a diversion in the works area that LCC is restarting in September, but again they have failed to plan or prepare for these works and LCC is therefore carrying on with the planned works. If Anglian Water feel is necessary to divert the mains, then they will need to do so at a later time once the highway works are complete.





Lincolnshire Coastal Highway

Following the announcement of a Coastal Highway Budget allocation, a programme of works has been 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.

Further projects related to the Lincolnshire Coastal Highway are currently being considered.

Wragby Pedestrian Crossings and Mini-Roundabout Improvements

This is the final update to highlight that both the pedestrian crossing on the A158 and the improvements to the mini-roundabout are complete and operating well. These sites are subject to a 1 year maintenance period where any defects will be addressed, should they occur.

Levelling Up Fund Projects (LUF)

LCC submitted a bid to central government under the LUF initiative; this consisted of the following projects:

- A16/A151 Springfield roundabout capacity improvement
- A16 Greencell roundabout (Spalding Power Station) capacity improvement
- A16 Kirton four-way signalised junction – with associated small section of dual carriageway leading into and out of the junction along the A16
- A16 Marsh Lane Roundabout – designated north bound lane
- Boston Active travel schemes

In advance of the outcome of this funding bid LCC is progressing detailed feasibility studies for each project, which are planned to be completed February/March 2022.

Major Route Network (MRN)

Midlands Connect have announced an opportunity to bid for a small amount of revenue funds, if successful these funds can be used to progress a desired scheme to a Strategic Outline Business Case Stage. This is a rolling fund to be used over three financial years, with the intention to build-up a sizable 'pool' of credible business cases that the region can then prioritise for submission to DfT when the next MRN fund and Regional Evidence Base process is called. A date for which is unknown at this stage, but it could possibly be in 2023.

Work has commenced to identify the scheme or schemes that LCC may want to bid for.

Reactive Service

Key Data from Year 1

Around 40,000 enquiries from the public have been received despite lockdowns which vastly reduced the amount of miles travelled by the public. The Highways Work Term Contract delivers a large amount of the key highway service, with maintenance of carriageways a priority. In Q1 of 2021/22 we repaired 16610 defects (up from 15419 in Q4 of 2020/21) including 12515 carriageway potholes. We have fixed 156 gully grates, 436 footway potholes, 403 footway slabs, replaced 13 gully pots completely, as well as carrying out 155 kerbing jobs, 32 minor tree jobs and we have repaired or replaced 149 signs and refreshed the lines at 176 sites. Around 300 miles of carriageway received essential maintenance to renew, extend life and improve safety. 99 winter gritting runs were completed using nearly 30,000 tonnes of UK produced salt. Around 90,000 potholes and reactive repairs were completed. The network increased by over 45 miles. Over 1700 traffic signal faults repaired.

Highways Key Supplier Partnerships (Formally Highways 2020)

We are now past halfway through the second year of the three main highways supply contracts; the Highways Works Term Contract with Balfour Beatty, the Professional Services Contract with WSP and the Traffic Signals Term Contract with Colas. Strategic plans have been developed with all partners and are being implemented across the service which have been designed to enable the future road map for service improvements across Highways to be put in place.

Performance is carefully managed for all partners, including LCC, and targets are much more stretching thanks previous contracts to ensure continuous improvements in service. Individual performance improvements have been identified across all contracts with key areas of focus looking at the timeliness and quality of the repairs we make, together with improving the responses we give to the public.

Following the massive improvements to some of the depot facilities and the start of the relaxation of COVID restrictions, plans are being implemented to facilitate much improved co-location between LCC and contractor staff within the umbrella of the Council's Smarter Working initiative.

Balfour Beatty are underway with a major new project to significantly improve the reactive element of the service which will further increase efficiency and productivity.

Already this year we have delivered over 2.2million square metres of surface dressing with a success rate of over 98%.

Next steps

The additional and targeted funding provided by the Council is currently being delivered across the network with several more work streams about to start to deliver the commitments made to the public by Members.

Significant resource challenges are being faced by the service as a whole. Recruiting and retaining drivers for gritters, engineers, designers and supply chain partners is very difficult; coupled with shortages and large price increases in materials & equipment which are causing problems across the service and the schemes we deliver.

A revised Asset Management Strategy will be in place for the start of 2022/23 and so consultations will be happening through the autumn with Members to make sure the service delivers maximum value whilst balancing expectations of the public in an environment of uncertain future budget provision from central government.

Commencement of the delivery of some of the wider social benefits offered within the new contracts, on top of those already underway, with a focus on projects suggested directly by Members to Leverage the most from these new contracts in wider benefits for our communities.

Constant review of the way the service is delivered together with the materials and technologies used. A key focus over the next period will be to look in more detail at further recycling initiatives across the network and to focus on making sure we can reuse the materials we produce and can source locally can be used to their maximum potential without sacrificing the quality of repairs and the condition of our highways assets.

Implementation of the action plans designed to ensure the performance improvements required from all of the partners but with a particular focus on the key reactive areas of the service.

Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP)

Fatal Figures per year 1 January – 4 August:

Year	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Fatalities	25	23	34	25	35

Whilst there has been an increase in the number of collisions resulting in fatal injury in recent months good progress continues with Lincolnshire's Department of Transport Safer Road Fund.

Works on the A18 are nearing completion with the 50mph speed limit now in place. Reactive signs are imminent. Resurfacing works are complete on the section of the A631 between Market Rasen and North Willingham and more surfacing is due adjacent to West Rasen in June / July 2021. In addition, surfacing work is currently underway to improve the surface grip along sections of the A1084 and additional funding has been secured to cater for lengths within Caistor town. The new 50mph speed limit is also being installed between Caistor and Brigg.

Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership staff met to draw up plans for the proposed average speed camera system on the A631 between Ludford and Middle Rasen.

Following the suspension of all National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme classroom courses due to Covid-19 LRSP continue to deliver online classes as an alternative to prosecution for some road traffic offences. Two pilot classroom courses have now been successfully delivered in Lincoln. It is hoped that more classroom Covid stay safe courses will be scheduled soon. Online digital courses will continue as the most favoured choice into 2022.

Lincolnshire's Prince Michael International Road Safety Award Winning 2fast2Soon initiative is due to return in September.

Due to the closure of RAF Scampton, the LRSP driver training centre will also need to close. LRSP is now working towards a revised suite of training and education packages, taking into consideration our high priority user groups and the most appropriate methods of delivery linked to content and learning techniques.

The LRSP Education team is creating a training package to assist with issues relating to speed and parking issues surrounding schools. This will be linked to technology use including Tag Master devices and Speed Indicator Devices.

LRSP has successfully (and safely) delivered a number of Bike Safe courses in 2021, including bespoke events for the RAF.

LRSP has developed a digital training package to more efficiently train up new Community Speed Watch Groups. So far we have trained over 60 volunteers via Zoom with a further 6 sessions planned then 1 session per month for the foreseeable future. In addition LRSP staff are now attending the first speed monitoring session community groups undertake to provide support.

LRSP continue participating in a regional Elderly Drivers Working Group. A new mature Driver booklet has been written by LRSP and adopted by the various regions. Each region will print their own and send out to surgeries, medical centres, parishes.

TRANSPORT

Passenger Transport

The Covid pandemic has continued to impact on the activities of the Transport Services Group, with increased demands on our service area due to frequently changing scenarios, new guidance and/or obligations in relation to passenger and sustainable transport.

Public Transport Services

In March 2021, the Government launched its National Bus Strategy, 'Bus Back Better'. It sets out the Government's vision and outline plans to help post-Covid recovery and to arrest the cycle of national decline in bus usage (outside of London). £3bn has been pledged to support the strategy.

The Strategy places a significant onus on Local Transport Authorities (LTA). It requires LTAs to work with Local Bus Operators to develop and deliver a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) through a formal Enhanced Partnership or Franchising arrangement. The timescales mandated by the DfT are extremely tight with the submission of the Council's BSIP required by the end of October and formal establishment of the Partnership and delivery of improvement schemes to commence by 1st April 2022. Some of the £3bn pot has already been distributed to LTA's to help with resourcing capacity to meet these requirements.

Any LTA and/or Operator not wishing to sign up to such an arrangement will have all existing and potential future transport funding withdrawn from 01/09/2021.

The Government has confirmed that there will be some 'Recovery Funding' for the period 01/09/2021- 31/03/2022 for those Operators and LTA's engaging in the formal partnership process. The mechanism and amounts involved have yet to be declared but it is anticipated that funding will be much less than the Covid support funding (CBSSG) which ends on 31/08/2021.

The funding allocation for the National Bus Strategy pot will depend on the content of each LTA's BSIP. Details of the evaluation process are not yet known but the Government is encouraging LTA's to be ambitious in their plans.

Following cessation of the last lockdown, passenger numbers were steadily increasing and operators were starting to re-instate more of the services suspended during the pandemic. By July 2021 Adult and Child passengers had risen to around 70% of pre-Covid levels, but Concessionary Pass Holders were showing a much lower take up rate at only c.45%. There

are signs however that the rise in the Delta Variant is impacting on the rate of passengers returning and some operators are now reviewing their service level plans.

Like the HGV market, the Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) market is also facing significant challenges in relation to driver shortages. Over recent weeks we have seen a number of operators handing back contracts and/or not bidding for new work because they do not have the required driver resource.

The current exemptions for school services in relation to Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) are due to run out this year. Details are starting to emerge that the Government is likely to offer operators a further period of exemption, but this time the onus will be on individual operators to make an application.

2021 is a peak year for Concessionary Bus Passes, with 42k of the 103k passes in circulation needing to be renewed in accordance with the scheme rules.

We are re-starting roadside timetable updates and other publicity material. QR Codes at on-street bus stops where timetables are still changing frequently continue to be a useful addition.

Several App based booking solutions are being trialled for use on CallConnect. The first is currently being evaluated on the Gainsborough service and a further product will be piloted on the Stamford and Welland vehicles from the autumn.

We have just received confirmation of another external commission. We will be scheduling DRT services for Gloucestershire in the very near future.

Despite the lockdowns, the Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership has continued to champion activities and development of stations along the Nottingham-Skegness line. Activities include:- growing the number of station volunteers from 43 (pre-Covid) to 99; attaining funding to develop the former waiting room at Sleaford into a Community and Education Room; station TLC days and the creation of station gardens and allotments; various art projects including murals and a sculpture at Boston; rail safety presentations in schools; creating a promotional video to attract visitors to the line and on-going work on integrated travel opportunities.

Fleet & Compliance

The Fleet Team have continued to support various service areas with specifications and acquisition of vehicles. The team are currently reporting long manufacturer lead-in times.

We have supported bringing about improvements in the Gritter Maintenance arrangements. From June 2021 the Council's transport teckal company, TCL, took over the contract to maintain gritters deployed in the south of the county.

Our field based officers remain busy undertaking risk assessments for pick up/drop off points around the county; assessments of individual SEND/Social Care passenger needs; delivery of specialist equipment, delivering and/or organising specialist training for transport crews and on/off bus contract compliance checks.

Client Services

The Team are now fully engaged on establishing the transport arrangements for the start of the 2021/22 Academic Year. The long awaited software replacement of SEATS for managing home to school transport activity is now installed and in use.

During the last school year, we still managed to provide Moving Up sessions to 106 Primary Schools, offering advice to Year 6 pupils on how to travel safely on Home to School Transport.

On behalf of Children's Services, the team have been delivering work for the Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel to School (SMoTs) strategy. We are well on target to have supported 10 schools with their travel planning and 'modeshift' accreditation.

Under the Transformation Programme, the first phase of the Transport Review looked primarily at Home to School. A report and recommendations have been considered and a plan for next steps and implementation is now being worked on. The Government's requirement for a local bus service improvement plan has provided the mechanism for phase two of the review which has public passenger transport as its main focus.

Projects

The creation of a lease scheme has been extremely successful with the majority of local bus services now equipped with Electronic Ticket Machines. Many services, including all CallConnect, can also now accept contactless payments.

TSG continues to support smaller local bus Operators to meet the Government's requirement for Bus Open Data through a bureau facility.

Our real time passenger information (RTPI) system was successfully retendered this year and we are continuing to add sites to the junction priority facility which can give late running services a green light.

Focus on Walking and Cycling is currently sitting under the Sustainability Team as part of their work around the Council's Green Master Plan.

IMT SERVICES

Demand for the support desk remains stubbornly high and reflects a new level of demand, driven primarily by the hybrid working arrangements. The additional layers of technology that working patterns require, coupled with other factors such as home broadband and WIFI, further increase demand. The increase is somewhat structural and there is configuration change required to modernise our device management to solutions which are suitable for hybrid working. There is potential at the end of the program that some of this demand can be taken out, but it is not expected to return to pre-covid levels.

The worldwide uplift in IMT activity and spend is in part creating challenges in the retention and recruitment of technical staff across the service. This, combined with the aspiration to resource IMT engagement within the Corporate Transformation Programme, has required difficult choices to be made in how to progress the portfolio of work and the pipeline of future work.

The service continues to balance a steep increase in business demand from corporate programmes, lifecycle management and changes in services. This will also occasionally include demand imposed by vendors or partners, and the requirement to deliver the remediation program of outstanding cyber security controls.

The following work items have progressed recently:

Corporate Support Services Review (CSSR)

IMT Management, working with the Commercial Team, have spent significant time on the CSSR programme and the initial reports have been delivered to Council. After initial research, IMT have developed the outline service design for the future delivery of IMT services, which could become effective at the end of the existing contractual arrangements. The first market contact in the form of an Expression of Interest invitation has been completed and is now being analysed.

In addition, the specification for the re-procurement of the Council's Wide Area Network (WAN) has also been developed. Approval has been received from Executive for an approach that will allow an evolutionary migration away from private infrastructure where appropriate, avoiding a significant cost of change and preserving arrangements which have served Lincolnshire schools well in recent years.

This work continues and is significant.

Members' IMT

Covid restrictions required a new approach to equipping incoming new Members with their IT equipment, which centred around a booked appointment approach. Due to the worldwide shortage of laptops, other significant work to ensure we could secure enough equipment to complete the induction had to be undertaken.

Stability Upgrade to Existing Telephony

Progress includes the software build for the Contact Centre and currently the system branch sites (STD telephone controls) are being finalised. The following stage will migrate services to the new software versions.

Lincs to the Past

The Archives Service has identified and procured an upgrade to an existing System (Calm), which is currently hosted internally through the incumbent provider Axiell. The upgraded solution will be externally hosted with Axiell and will include a public web portal allowing the public to search archival records currently stored on the Lincs to the Past website. The upgrade provides the Archives Service with a modern supported platform that they can build on to develop the service in the future.

Alongside identifying a replacement system to enable the Archives Service to move away from the Lincs to the Past website, work to identify all the data needed for migration took place. This currently stands at around 7TB of data. Activity continues with Serco and Axiell on how best to migrate this data to Axiell.

The build work with Axiell is scheduled to start in late August with an estimated delivery timeframe of 8 -10 weeks. The Archives Service are working with Axiell and Serco to ensure the smooth migration of data from the Lincs to the Past website over to Axiell's, with the eventual redirection of the Lincs to the Past domain name so that there is continuity of access for the public once the data is moved to Axiell's hosting.

FaxPress

A surprising number of business services are still required to maintain Fax capabilities, which are integrated into their expert systems and have been for several years. The Faxpress project upgraded the Network Fax services to a supported version.

Enterprise Gateway

This project builds a server to manage the security permissions between our Microsoft services in the Cloud and their access to on premise resources within the LCC environment.

To embrace the benefits which come with the Microsoft services such as the Power Platform, including Power BI, Flow etc. we need to be able to maintain security of our data that sits on the local infrastructure. This gateway allows us to manage those permissions providing read and/or write permissions to certain Microsoft services according to the business need.

SQL Databases from Sungard

Some LCC systems require Hi Band access to their Data Structures or are otherwise not suitable to be migrated to the Azure Cloud hosting. This project moves a number of important Database systems away from a hosting arrangement which is being decommissioned next year into our Lincoln Data Centre.

Meeting Room VC Solution and Network Changes

A natural extension to the way we use Microsoft Teams is to equip certain meeting rooms to enable hybrid meetings. Commercial Off the Shelf meeting systems have been used to reduce cost, though special networking arrangements had to be developed to allow these Internet of Things (IOT) devices to operate in a secured network. County Offices rooms are working and Lancaster House is in progress.

Server Hardening & Legacy Operating Systems (OS)

A long running programme of work to upgrade business systems away from legacy Operating Systems and hardware to supported versions, as required by .gov.uk/PSN connectivity.

Azure Migration

The first services have been migrated to Microsoft Azure, a public cloud hosting solution that meets .gov.uk security requirements. The environment, when managed, can deliver cost savings and greater agility going forwards when building or consuming new services. The environment offers a growing number of services "As a Service" meaning they do not have to be built from scratch but simply subscribed to. Significant progress has been made after a detailed planning phase and the project is baselined to complete this calendar year which will involve moving over 200 services across.

Modern Device Management (MDM) & Office 365

The pilots recommenced after a fundamental redesign was forced by the Covid "Work from Home" directive. Several hundred devices/users have now been migrated to a hybrid cloud managed configuration, mostly remotely with some on site. The project is now steadily increasing the batches to a level our support services can deal with, as there is always some support fallout from migrations and we need to avoid overwhelming our support resources. This large migration project is baselined to complete this calendar year.

Lincolnshire Broadband Update

During Phases 1 and 2 of the Lincolnshire Broadband contract, over 170K premises were upgraded to a fibre-based Superfast broadband level. The number of premises involved in both phases equates to roughly 50% of the total premises count for the county. Current

Superfast percentage of coverage sits at 94%, slightly less than the original target, but this is primarily due to the significant increase in premises count from when the contract started and ended.

Since then, things have moved on further and LCC is now engaged in a third contract with a new supplier, Quickline Communications Ltd, who will provide 'Ultrafast' broadband (download speed in excess of 100Mb/s) to circa 8K premises in the first stage of the contract, rising by between 2K and 4K in the second phase due to complete by the end of 2022/early 2023. At this point in time, we are experiencing some planning application issues with East Lindsey District Council that, should we not be able to successfully conclude, will result in us having to move the deployment to another part of the county. This may add some small delays, but we have already concluded contingency planning.

In addition to this, a number of rural communities across the county are at various stages of a community fibre partnership funded by BDUK's Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme, where all premises within the scheme will receive Fibre To The Premises (FTTP). One such scheme has over 500 premises with several others in excess of 100 premises. LCC has written to rural Parish Councils in an effort to increase involvement of rural communities in the scheme.

Furthermore, we now have no less than 5 privately funded organisations working in the county to provide gigabit capable FTTP to over 200K of our urban/sub-urban premises. All providers are in the very early phases of their respective deployments, but this represents a massive leap forward in improving the digital infrastructure within the county. In addition, BT/Openreach has also made announcements about their plans to upgrade circa 150K premises to FTTP over the next 4 years. Although these numbers collectively look very high; just one note of caution in that there will be duplication (overbuild) by several providers in some locations, so the overall total of individual premises may not look as high as the overall numbers quoted. We are keeping in regular contact with all providers to assist in any way we can and to understand their detailed plans.

With regard to the rural areas that are in danger of being left further behind, LCC is currently in discussions with BDUK and their contractor Quickline, to identify eligible rural premises with a view to building 'Lots' of premises in groups that can go out to Tender for potential suppliers under their Project Gigabit (formally 'Outside-In') project. This data has now been provided to BDUK and we are looking for BDUK to release these potential areas sooner than planned. We hope to maximise our involvement in this scheme in an effort to cover as many of the more remote rural properties as possible. To support this, a 'prospectus' making the case for why BDUK need to allow early release of these premises to Tender has been sent by Executive Members and our Chief Executive to Matt Warman, Digital Minister and to the Chief Executive at BDUK. It is hoped that will stimulate meetings to enhance our case.

In terms of mobile coverage, we now have some 5G coverage in Lincoln from both EE and O2 and we are told this will expand as demand increases. 4G coverage is improving as a result of an agreement between all main providers to share infrastructure, thus reducing costs and speeding up deployment. At the time of writing, O2 are carrying out significant

improvements in Skegness and we are working with O2 to facilitate this work. We are hoping that should demand exist, that O2 will upgrade this area to 5G in 2022.

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