

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	25 April 2022
Subject:	Performance Report, Quarter 3 – (1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021)

Summary:

This report sets out the performance of the Highways Service, including the Major Highways Schemes Update, Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report and Highways and Transport Complaints Report.

Actions Required:

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail of performance contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport, and IT.

1. Background

This report provides an update on all aspects of the highways service delivery, including major schemes, quarterly performance data for the key contracts (Highways Works, Traffic Signals and Professional Services) and strategic highlights relevant to the Highways Service in Lincolnshire.

This report contains:

- Major Highways Schemes Update March 2022
- Lincolnshire Highways Performance Report Year 2, Quarter 3
- Highways Complaints Report, Quarter 3
- National Highway and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey - 2021

2. Major Highways Schemes Update

The Authority currently has three major highways schemes that are currently in progress:

- Grantham Southern Relief Road
- Spalding Western Relief Road
- North Hykeham Relief Road

There are a number of major highways and other infrastructure projects, which are of significant scale and have a major impact on the County and surrounding area. All of these schemes are included in the Major Highways Schemes Update, March 2022, found as Appendix A to this report.

3. Lincolnshire Highways update

3.1. Performance Report

Quarterly performance is reported at the Lincolnshire Highways Performance Working Group. Here performance issues are discussed and if required, escalated through the governance structure, with performance issues becoming the subject of an Improvement Plan.

A copy of the Lincolnshire County Council Highways Performance Report for Year 2, Quarter 3 can be found in Appendix B. This covers the period of October to December 2021.

The Alliance partners managed to achieve their targets for Quarter 2. The results per contract area are:

- Highways Works Term Contract Performance Indicators (Balfour Beatty) – 57.0%
- Professional Services Contract Performance Indicators (WSP) – 79.8%
- Traffic Signals Term Contract Performance Indicators (Colas) – 88.0%
- Client Performance Indicators [Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)] – 66.0%
- Key Performance Indicators (LCC/Balfour Beatty/Colas/WSP) – 78.0% (provisional)

The scores have generally maintained at the same level as last quarter however some measures are still low scoring.

Improvement Plans are in place for the following aspects of the service:

- Highway Works – PI3 – Tasks Completed within timescales – Reactive Works
- Highway Works – PI8 – Street Lighting Service Standard
- Highway Works – PI9 – Drainage Cleansing Maintenance
- Highway Works – PI7 – Contract Notifications
- Professional Services – PI7 – Contract Notifications

A great deal of effort is now focussed on these areas to improve performance and service delivery. Improvements are expected against Performance Indicators (PI) 3 and PI7 in Quarter 4 data. Both PI8 and PI9 is likely to see improvement in Quarter 1 of Year 3 of the contract.

3.2. Contract Specific Update

The delivery of the three key highway delivery contracts (Professional Services – WSP/ Highways Works – Balfour Beatty/ Traffic Signals – Colas) are now approaching the end of the second year. The linked contracts are due for renewal on the 31st March 2026 with the possibility of extension up to 31st March 2032.

3.3. Highway Works Term Contract – Balfour Beatty

The Highways Work Term Contract delivers the vast majority of highway service, with maintenance of carriageways a priority but with footways and cycleways also being proportionally addressed according to the Highways Asset Management Strategy. Minor reactive works are used predominantly to address safety issues and faults within the carriageway and footway network. The contract also delivers most of the drainage, structures and streetlighting maintenance improvement schemes.

In Quarter 3 of 2021/22, Lincolnshire Highways repaired 10833 faults, including 8946 carriageway potholes (including edge potholes). The service fixed 324 gully grates, 292 footway potholes, 339 footway slabs, replaced 19 gully pots completely, as well as carrying out 209 kerbing jobs, 72 minor tree jobs and repaired or replaced 145 signs.

During the third Quarter Lincolnshire Highways completed 11 miles of carriageway patching and surfacing, 11 miles of footway resurfacing and reconstruction, cleansed 31,000 gullies and refreshed 80 miles of carriageway lining.

Work Types	Miles	Schemes
Cycleway Improvements	1	1
Drainage Improvements		11
Footway Reconstruction	3	9
Footway Micro Asphalt	27	73
Main Line Replacement	80	22
Carriageway Patching	4	5
Residential Resurfacing	1	3
Carriageway Resurfacing	6	15
Street Lighting Replacement		4
Structures Improvements		5
Traffic Signals Improvements		2

3.3.1. Minor Works Gangs

The minor works gangs continue to deliver work slightly larger in scope than the reactive safety works covered by Series 6300, of the Term Maintenance Contract. The service continues to focus on the most beneficial aspects of this work, such as civils, minor patching, and drainage into 2022/23.

771 individual jobs of this type were completed across the County in Quarter 3 of 2021/22 and we look to replicate this volume going forwards. This included 176 tree jobs, 104 carriageway sites, 68 drainage jobs and 36 jet patching sites.

3.3.2. Challenges / Improvements

The maintenance construction sector continues to be extremely challenging as material prices / inflation / skills shortages / Covid 19 and supply chain disruption continue to hamper delivery. Inflation within the Highways Works contract means that the cost of the service is likely to be 13% higher in April 2022 than it was in April 2021. The impact of rapidly increasing oil and energy prices used in the production of fuel, tarmac, and bitumen, is adding additional cost pressures beyond the inflationary mechanisms built into the contract. Increasing inflation ultimately impacts service delivery, however LCC Highways and its strategic delivery partners are working hard to mitigate the impact of this.

One of the main focus areas of the Highway Works contract continues to be the delivery of the reactive service. The scale of demand, resource requirements and commercial pressure within the contract are challenging, but all parties involved (including the supply chain) are making the required improvements. New scheduling hubs in the North and South of the County are now in place. Co-locating the schedulers near to the operative gangs and agents, will ensure that the works are scheduled in the most efficient way. Additional resources have recently been introduced into the contract to ensure the required volume of work can be delivered.

To tackle the inflation pressures on the contract, Lincolnshire Highways are looking to increase the volume of recycling within the contract. Removing an element of reliance on traditional asphalt material availability will not only reduce carbon generation significantly, but it will also ensure consistent material availability that is shielded from inflation pressures directly linked to increasing oil and energy prices. The increase in recycling rates is being carefully considered in terms of whole life costing and is being used at specific lower risk locations on the network.

3.4. Professional Services Contract - WSP

WSP work alongside Lincolnshire Highways colleagues in the Technical Services Partnership (TSP), where three PIs measure WSP performance directly and seven measure TSP as a whole (LCC & WSP). All schemes which completed in Year 2 Quarter 3 feed into this reporting period.

The overall Professional Services Partnership score for 2021 Quarter 3 is 79.8 out of 100, up on the 2021 Quarter 2 score of 75.5

WSP are on target to achieve 9/10 of the selected Year 2 quality statements, which are measured annually, along with that of their continuous improvement / innovation initiatives. One example of this is the ongoing introduction of BIM (Building Information Modelling) and supporting the ProjectWise common data environment required to assist Lincolnshire County Council delivering against DfT requirements for new highway infrastructure schemes. WSP colleagues are also actively engaged in social value activities including the LCC volunteering schemes, whilst engaging in GLLEP careers and enterprise activities at Lincoln College, alongside mentoring three students at Lincoln University.

The four measures which focus on TSP's ability to deliver highway schemes to time and cost achieved an average score of 8.4/10 for Y2 Quarter 3, which is up on the previous quarter.

There is an opportunity to further improve performance in the timeliness of contract notifications within TSP Highway Schemes. Whilst the number of those completed to time in Y2 Quarter 3 has improved at 64/75 (86.67%), the agreed scoring mechanism is below the minimum performance threshold of 89%. This PI has been a challenge for each contract and has resulted in this measure requiring an Improvement Plan. Staff training took place in December 2021 with a view to improving performance.

Performance of ongoing highways schemes has been maintained during continued homeworking arrangements, with the locally based LCC & WSP teams continuing to be integral to the delivery of highways improvements. This includes successful delivery of significant roundabout improvements at Holdingham near Sleaford. The partnership continues to progress efficiency and customer service initiatives through the annual Technical Services Partnership Action Plan.

3.4.1. Challenges / Improvements

Recruitment for specialist roles within the engineering sector are proving difficult to attract and retain in the current climate. LCC have needed to pursue alternative routes to obtain staff on occasion to backfill hard to fill positions. The PI that monitors this element of the service has been adjusted for Yr3 of the contract to ensure that both the Lincoln based staff and remote staff are filled in when requested by LCC.

3.5. Traffic Signals Term Contract – Colas

The Traffic Signals PIs remain at a high level with an overall score of 88, a slight drop from a Quarter 2 score of 90. There had been 2 emergency faults missed under PI 3 which accounted for the lower score.

Overall statistics for Q3 are as follows;

- 71 emergency faults (2-hour response) of which 69 were attended in time (97%)
- 413 standard faults of which 413 were attended in time (100%)
- 46 requests for signals to be switched off for road works

The traffic signal switch off service is becoming an increasing part of the service provision, taking up time of the Colas workforce availability. This means that they have less time for the day-to-day maintenance works that LCC Highways require them to carry out. As we have a mandatory duty to provide this service, Colas have reconfigured the make-up of their team in order to reflect the change in workload. Instead of fielding 4 engineers and 3 installation operatives, the new structure will have 5 and 2 respectively.

The Traffic Signal Capital Programme for Quarter 3 saw the completion/commencement of the following works:

- Harmston Crossroads – refurbishment of the junction and provision of a new pedestrian crossing facility
- Wharf Road (Norton Street) Grantham – refurbishment of a Pelican crossing to Puffin standard

The commissioning and operational fine-tuning of Holdingham Roundabout was also completed in Quarter 3. The signals are working well, with positive feedback received from members of the public that use the junction.

3.5.1. Challenges / Improvements

Lincolnshire Highways are installing touchless pedestrian push button units at the junction of High Street / Wigford Way in Lincoln. These allow users to simply wave their hand under the unit to register a demand for the pedestrian crossing on St Mary's Street. If the trial is successful, we shall be using them on future sites, but not fitting them retrospectively to existing sites due to the cost.

4. NHT Public Satisfaction Survey

The Council has participated in the NHT Public Satisfaction survey since 2008 and this enables LCC to understand the views and preferences of a sample of residents and to compare these against other similar councils. The survey, undertaken by Ipsos MORI, is based on a sample of residents and is designed to represent a spread of customers' views of the service across the County, geographically by gender and by age.

A copy of NHT Public Satisfaction Survey – 2021 can be found in appendix C. The content of this report gives a general overview of the Authority's position in relation to where Lincolnshire Highways stand against last year's results. It is also possible to analyse the data for individual service areas and for geographical locations.

Lincolnshire Highways are currently investigating a number of opportunities to improve its NHT Public Satisfaction. Improvement work will be focused on communication improvements with our digital reporting platform, generation of a communications calendar that is focused on seasonal activity and service delivery improvements.

The results of the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey indicates whilst certain elements of service areas may have dropped slightly since 2020, overall satisfaction has remained at a similar level to last year. When we compare our satisfaction ratings to similar authorities in the East Midlands area, we can see that we are at a comparative level.

5. Complaints

A copy of the Highways Complaints Quarter 3 report can be found in Appendix D. During Quarter 3, the Highway Service received a total of 18037 contacts with 115 entered the formal complaints process, equating to 0.64% of all contacts received. The number of complaints entering the formal process has seen a 25% decrease in comparison to the previous quarter.

6. Conclusion

Lincolnshire's Highway Service continues to deliver a high quality and value for money highway service. External verification of this is provided by the recent Peer Review which confirms our continued position as one of the sector leaders though several key areas for improvement exist which the service is working hard to drive positive change. A number of service improvement initiatives are underway to improve NHT public satisfaction survey results.

Inflation pressures and key risks outlined within this report are impacting delivery of the service, not least the challenge around materials and resources, which is making these improvements more difficult to achieve.

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail of performance contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport, and IT.

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Major Highways Scheme Update Report November 2021
Appendix B	Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Performance Report Year 2 Quarter 3
Appendix C	NHT Public Satisfaction Survey 2021 Report Jan 2022
Appendix D	Highways Complaints Q3 Report

8. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Jonathan Evans, Head of Highways Services, who can be contacted on 01522 55222 or Jonathan.evans@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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