



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
18 JULY 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A M Hall (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, K J Clarke, T J G Dyer, R A Gibson, Mrs S Rawlins, S P Roe, E W Strengeiel, Mrs C L E Vernon and R A Wright

Councillors: Mrs M Overton MBE and T Ashton attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:- Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services), Richard Fenwick (Head of Highways Asset and Local Management Services), Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer and Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer)

Officers in attendance via Teams:- Helen Reek (Senior Projects Officer), Nicole Hilton (Assistant Director – Communities) and Karen Cassar (Assistant Director – Highways)

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

10 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made with respect to any items on the agenda.

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 MAY 2022

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman commended officers for their speedy responses and resolution to queries raised by members of the public at the Lincolnshire Show. Queries received were pertinent to potholes, traffic signals, public footpaths, easing of congestion and traffic calming.

The Chairman confirmed that a visit to Lincs Labs was currently being organised for Committee Members.

13 PASSENGER TRANSPORT ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director – Communities and Senior Projects Officer – Transport Services on the annual update on Passenger Transport Matters. The following matters were reported:

- Current challenges included:
 - Declining passenger numbers.
 - The Bus Recovery Grant was due to end on 4 October 2022 with no indication from the Department for Transport (DfT) that any support will be extended.
- Operators reported that passenger numbers were recovering; however, commercial fare payers were currently at 70% of the pre-pandemic level.
- Operators worked on a commercial basis, and there were limited options for the Council to consider in managing gaps in service delivery.
- Driver shortages continued to impacted services.
- The Council had applied for Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding; however, the bid was unsuccessful, along with two thirds of other Local Transport Authorities. Authorities that were awarded the funding were largely within metropolitan areas, with further developed strategic transit plans.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Rural transit made the implementation of a maximum impractical, due to the vast differences in journey lengths. Such schemes were more practical in urban areas.
- Concessionary bus passes were not paid directly to the operator – tickets were claimed.
- Members felt that early evening services were inadequate and hampered the night-time economy. It was explained that it was not viable for operators to invest capital into early evening services.
- Further feedback was being sought regarding why the Council was unsuccessful in securing BSIP funding, as initial feedback provided too little detail.
- It was known that an operator in North Hykeham was struggling to deliver services and work was underway to resolve the issue.
- The withdrawal of Bus Recovery Grant funding was being tapered down at increments of 5%.
- The operator network was working at 98%. Only 2% of services had been cancelled across the county.
- The ownership of all bus shelters was unclear, but work was underway to conduct an asset review. As ownership was unclear at this time, there was no specific budget for bus shelter maintenance. However, maintenance could be reported and reviewed via Fix-My-Street.
- Services did not always run on time, and commuters could not rely on the current service.
- Most buses did not have air-conditioning and were uncomfortable for passengers during hot weather.

- Members agreed Call Connect was offering a good service across the county with good coverage – providing routes that were not viable for timetabled operators.
- Alternative fuel busses were being investigated by operators, with larger operators pursuing national policies on reducing emissions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee's comments be noted.
2. That the Committee recognise the key challenges facing local bus travel in Lincolnshire.

14 WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services on the Council's Winter Service Plan 2022/23. The following matters were reported:

- The Council had a statutory duty to have a plan in place for hazardous snow and ice on the highways.
- There was a need for 99 instances of precautionary salting in 2020/21.
- There was a need for 63 instances of precautionary salting in 2021/22.
- The Winter Service Plan 2022/23 had procured treated salt for gritting roads, but pre-existing reserves of traditional salt were to be used until depleted.
- Red diesel had been removed from all stock vehicles.
- The average budget for gritting was approximately 60 instances per annum but overspends were permitted in order to meet needs.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Members commended Officers for a very comprehensive and detailed report.
- The Committee was given assurance that sufficient amounts of salt and grit were available across the County in preparation for challenging weather conditions this winter. Members enquired about the change in colour of the gritting material to an amber colour rock salt (mined in the UK and different to the marine salt which was white). Officers explained that this was treated salt (a molasses coating that salt granules were coated with, that helped it stick to the road) and that as motorists drove over this it still remained visible on site. Moreover, treated salt was run at a reduced spread rate.
- Members discussed engagement with Town and Parish Councils and other community groups, in terms of locally based volunteers and their willingness to clear snow within their areas and local communities; it was noted that Town and Parish Councils are being provided with bags of salt to deal with severe weather conditions (i.e., use of salt in footpaths within their areas, and in established problematic spots that were hard to reach). It was also mentioned that in some areas, local volunteers would spread grit on both the footway and small patches of carriageway. Officers

emphasised that whilst we encourage mutual aid and self-help, care needs to be given to the safety of volunteers working on the Highway and for that reason needs to be agreed in line with the requirements of the Winter Service Plan 2022, paragraph 3.14.3.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note the report and comments made.
2. That the Committee's comments be noted and passed on to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT in relation to the consideration of this item.

15 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 4 - (1 JANUARY 2022 - 31 MARCH 2022)

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director – Highways and the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services on the latest Highways Service performance data. The following matters were highlighted:

- Three major schemes were in progress:
 - Grantham Southern Relief Road
 - Spalding Western Relief Road
 - North Hykeham Relief Road
- Partners had achieved their targets for Quarter 4 – as follows:
 - Highways Works Term Contract Performance Indicators (Balfour Beatty) – 58.5%
 - Professional Services Contract Performance Indicators (WSP) – 76%
 - Traffic Signals Term Contract Performance Indicators (Colas) – 88.0%
 - Client Performance Indicators (LCC) – 76.0%
 - Key Performance Indicators (LCC/Balfour Beatty/Colas/WSP) – 78.0% (provisional)
- PI9 – Drainage Cleansing, Low Service Damages were deferred as the low performance related to a change in provider, as the original Sub Contractor went into administration.
- 13,024 highway faults had been repaired, including 10971 carriageway potholes.
- Works had been impacted by skills shortages and inflation, which had resulted in delays and high costs.
- Highway Services received a total of 20953 enquiries, of which 224 were escalated as complaints and 163 entered the formal complaints process. Customer Complaints relating to highways and transport increased from the last quarter of 39%. Complaints were varied; however, matters concerning potholes accounted for 27% of all complaints.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Nine apprenticeships were currently running with contractors. Data comparing apprenticeships with other authorities was to be circulated to Members. It was noted

that encouraging more apprentices would help increase the social value of the Service.

- Members raised a question in relation to a Surface Dressing compensation claim that had been received from a member of the public. Officers confirmed that claims of this nature were reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Council and its contractors carried out the works in the correct way. These were resolved directly with the claimant.
- Members welcomed the improvements to pothole and drain temporary cover repairs.
- The contractor backlog regarding drainage repairs was set to be cleared by the end of the month.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's comments be noted and passed on to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and IT.

16 HIGHWAYS - GULLY CLEANSING/REPAIR AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Asset and Local Management Services on highways drainage maintenance. The following matters were reported:

- In February, the subcontractor for routine drainage cleansing went into liquidation. Routine cyclic cleansing was sustained by other drainage contractors.
- A targeted approach to gully cleansing was being trialled, looking to ensure that assets were cleaned at a frequency that is based on risk rather than a default clean once per year.
- There had been reports of missing gully covers and works taking too long. This had been due to replacement ironworks being difficult to source. However, this had been addressed this by procuring a larger supply of carbon gully covers, which allowed for a quick semi-permanent fix.
- £600,000 had now been budgeted for minor drainage improvement works.
- Flooding and drainage reports had been mapped via Fix My Street for the last 10 years and had been overlaid with Section 19 data to better inform the prioritisation of works. 1123 drainage reports and 148 flooding reports had been reported in 2022 so far, which was very low for the time of year – at a 35% drop and 55% drop respectively.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Targeted works were welcomed.
- Flood event categories were becoming less appropriate as floods classed as once in a 100 year event were becoming more and more frequent.

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RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee's comments be noted.
2. That the Committee be updated on the progress of the targeted gully cleaning trial.

17 REVIEW OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN LINCOLNSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director – Highways on a proposal to set up a working group tasked with reviewing the Traffic Management Policy. The following matters were reported:

- A new Working Group was to be set up in September 2022 to inform the scope of a Scrutiny Panel review scheduled for 2023/24.
- Members were asked to identify the membership of the Working Group.
- New powers to local authorities regarding traffic offences had come into force and this offered an opportunity to review the existing Policy.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- It had been reported that the responsibilities between the Council and the Police were not clearly communicated to the public. It was clarified that the Council held responsibility for the enforcement of parking on double yellow lines and traffic regulation orders but could not enforce the blocking of paths or driveways. This matter was to be raised with the Police Road Safety Partnership.
- There were to be approximately 2-3 meetings of the Working Group. Members asked to contact the Scrutiny Officer if they wished to take part.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support setting up the Working Group.
2. That the Committee identify a membership for the Working Group.

18 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The were no changes to the Work Programme to report.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme presented be agreed.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm