



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
23 JANUARY 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR

Councillors A M Hall (Vice-Chairman), T R Ashton, Mrs A M Austin, K J Clarke, T J G Dyer, E W Strenghel, Mrs C L E Vernon, R A Wright and P Ashleigh-Morris

Councillor C L Perraton-Williams attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Darrell Redford (Network Resilience Manager), Jonathan Evans (Head of Highways, Client and Contract Management), Keith Noyland (Head of Finance – Communities), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Matt Jones (Parking Services Manager), Nathan Whitfield (Principal Engineer – Drainage), Sam Edwards (Head of Highways Infrastructure and Laboratory Services) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic services Officer),

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Gibson.

It was reported that, under Regulation 13 of the Local Government Committee and Political Groups Regulation 1990, Councillor P Ashleigh-Morris was replacing Councillor M Brookes for this meeting only.

In absence of the Chairman, Vice Chairman Councillor A Hall chaired the meeting.

50 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared at this point in proceedings.

51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2022

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD
OFFICERS

Members and officers expressed their condolences regarding the sad news that a Highways colleague had recently passed away.

53 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Finance – Communities on the budget proposals for the next financial year 2023/24, prior to finalisation by the Executive. The following matters were reported:

- Proposals anticipated a 4 percent pay increase for employed staff for the following year.
- Transport services face a cost pressure of £4.196 million, which was offset by the £2 million savings brought by the transformation programme.
- Inflation was a significant pressure on the Council's budgets, with labour and material costs seen to be £500 million above previous budgets for projects as well as increased energy prices.
- An additional £35.9 million had been budgeted for the North Hykeham relief road project.

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

- In relation to the increased funding allocation for the North Hykeham Relief Road, Members sought assurance that despite funding pressures, the NHRR was still being delivered as a dual carriage way bypass. Officers explained the increase of funding in further detail and gave assurance that the NHRR was still planned to be delivered as expected, adding that the next key milestone was in September 2023 (Executive and Planning). Further, in relation to cost increases, Officers clarified that costs are bound by contract frameworks and changes in terms of repricing were being considered by the Executive for a key decision prior to contractual agreements being signed with contractors. Increases in figures emerged due to inflation, and price increases within the construction market which were outside LCC's control.
- Members pointed out that delays in the delivery of schemes may incur increased costs owing to inflation and other cost rises. Assurance was sought that LCC was not delaying the construction and delivery of planned schemes and projects. Officers explained that projects required a design process, which included the capture of data, ground investigations, geophysical surveys etc. Following the design process the procurement and delivery mechanisms commenced. Successful contractors are incentivised to expedite delivery to avoid unnecessary spending.
- In reference to point 1.27 of the report, Members enquired what the likely spend pattern entailed and asked for some tangible examples where rephasing was considered. In terms of re-phased project budgets, Officers clarified that budgets for some projects (e.g., Spalding Western Relief Road Section 1, were being put back to future years to allow the capital allocated to that to be re allocated towards increases in other areas such as the Grantham Southern Relief Road.
- Impact of decline in the price of diesel on budgets and whether that was considered already was queried by Members. Officers explained that in regard to passenger transport the impact of the price fall depended on the particular contract model in

place and the indices that were built in around fuel; which is currently being reviewed. Overall the price decrease was anticipated to have a positive long-term effect if it continued. Officers emphasised that fuel prices were not the sole driver of cost increases in the market, with other pressures including wage rates, driver shortages and vehicle shortages.

- Members raised questions around whether future plans included the improvement of other highways in the region (e.g., Hykeham Roundabout and Skellingthorpe Roundabout) and were informed that those raised in particular by Members came under National Highways and therefore fell under the National Highways' decisions on network expansions; nevertheless, Officers gave assurance that they actively canvassed for opportunities.

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse the report and that comments be shared with the Executive for their consideration ahead of decisions to be taken on the 7th February 2023.

54 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

Consideration was given to a report from the Parking Services Manager on the Council's annual parking report. The following matters were reported:

- Options had been evaluated and it was concluded that the parking enforcement service would be retendered with the current Parking enforcement contract due to expire in late 2024.
- The Council's online nuisance parking reporting tool had received in excess of 2,500 reports last year.

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

- Misunderstandings persisted between the Council and the Police regarding enforcement against nuisance parking and obstructing parking. It was clarified that incorrect parking in permitted areas was overseen by the Council, whilst obstructions were enforced by the Police.
- Camera enforcement was not appropriate in all locations.
- Parking patrols were being targeted in hotspot areas that were particularly problematic in order to make best use of resources.
- Parking issues could still be reported via phone as well as via the online tool.
- Currently, there was no scheme that allowed parking waivers for carers.
- It would be fed back to the contractor that greater focus was needed around mandatory bus stops in villages and school keep clear markings, regarding problematic parking.
- The two worst areas for problematic parking were Silver Street, Lincoln and Market Place, Boston. These areas experienced high evening traffic and were in close proximity to shops.

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- Members stated that parking pay and display tariff information restriction signage was not clear in Market Place, Boston and improvements would help stop problematic parking. This was to be fed back to Boston Borough Council who maintain the pay and display machines.

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse the report and comments be taken under consideration by the relevant Officers and the Executive Portfolio Holder.

55 ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE APPROACH TO TRANSPORT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Infrastructure on progress made on the Council's Transport Strategy since the last report in October 2021. The following matters were reported:

- Transport Board meetings had been well attended and a good level of joint working had been established.
- Transport Strategies for Sleaford, Skegness and Grantham had now been completed, and strategies for Boston and Stamford were underway as well as the Lincoln traffic Model.

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

- Census data had an insignificant impact on findings, as highways users did not necessarily live in the area that they were driving through. Traffic modelling provided more reliable data.
- Local Plans were separate to the Local Transport Plan and focused on planning matters under the local district council. However, Members noted that both plans had to be sympathetic to each other in order to be effective
- It was recommended that Transport Strategies be reviewed every 4-6 years. However, this was only a guideline and available resources would ultimately impact review dates.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the progress reported.

56 HIGHWAYS - GULLY CLEANSING, DRAINAGE REPAIR SCHEMES AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Asset and Local

Management Services on planned aspects of highways drainage maintenance including low-level flooding response. It was reported that there had been varied weather impacts which had impacted street cleansing.

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

- Cleansing was undertaken by both tankers and hand crews.
- There was uncertainty regarding responsibility for drainage issues associate with fallen leaves. Officers clarified that this was the responsibility of the Highways authority and that tree lined streets were a priority for cleansing.
- Damaged Anglian water assets impacted Highways assets in terms of damage and the perception from the public that these matters were a Council responsibility.
- High ground tater tables fluctuated. Highways maintenance was undertaken when natural spring damages were reported.
- Members reported that works at Kirton had appeared to have resolved flooding issues.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the report and comments be recorded and taken under consideration.

57 WINTER SERVICE – INTERIM REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Highways Client and Contractual Management Services on an interim report on winter service provision, as requested at a previous meeting of the Committee. The following was reported:

- There had been 27 precautionary gritting runs so far this season.
- A rout optimisation analysis had been undertaken to make highways gritting more efficient.
- 12 new gritter vehicles had been introduced, which were directly owned by the Council, and 13 more gritter vehicles were to be purchased in 2023. The new gritters were being rolled out to replace aging assets.

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

- An asset map of all grit bins had been created and digitised and was available to the public.
- Parish councils and members of the public helped monitor grit bin supplies, and low supplies could be reported via the FixMyStreet website.
- Chainbridge was a principal depot and there was no plan to close operations.
- Gritter vehicles, on average, lasted 10 years before needing to be replaced due to mounting maintenance issues. The vehicles were subjected to harsh conditions and were prone to corrosion and failure of complex mechanical and electrical parts.

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RESOLVED

That the Committee note the report and comments be recorded and taken under consideration.

58 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted that the Lincolnshire Traffic Management Working Group was meeting and would report back to the Committee in March 2023.

It was clarified that Grantham Future High Street Public Realm Improvements report was not due to come to the next meeting and was not exempt – it would be presented to the Committee at a subsequent meeting as an open report.

RESOLVED

That the work programme presented be agreed subject to change above.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am