

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT  
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
 14 JULY 2014**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)**

Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), M G Allan, D Brailsford, K J Clarke, R J Hunter-Clarke, R A H McAuley, N M Murray, Mrs A M Newton and A H Turner MBE JP

Councillors: C J T H Brewis, R G Davies (Executive Councillor Highways, Transport and IT) and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Gary Billington (Mouchel), Chris Briggs (Head of Transportation), Paul Coathup (Assistant Director Highways and Transportation), Lee Rowley (Senior Project Leader - Major Schemes), Paul Rusted (Head of Highways Client Services), Brian Thompson (Head of Highways West), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J R Marriott.

The Chief Executive reported that having received a notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor J R Marriott as a replacement Member of the Committee in place of Councillor N H Pepper until further notice.

11 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Councillors interests at this point in the meeting.

12 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2014, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

The Executive Councillor Highways, Transport and IT reported that following the public enquiry for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass, the Planning Inspector had not authorised the side roads orders. Members were advised that that this was not related to the plans for the non-motorised bridge, but related to the safety of cyclists accessing Hawthorn Road from the bridge. It was noted that provision had been made for a crossing, and it was an issue which had been noted by the Inspector during the Enquiry.

Members were also advised that the Inspector had agreed that the revised plans for a non-motorised user bridge did not present any impediment to the residents of the area. The main issue was how cyclists would join with the rest of the carriageway.

The side roads orders would need to be re-issued and if there was a need to go through the full process again, this would cause a significant delay.

It was noted that officers were aware of the issues surrounding the slipway and had already begun working on ways to mitigate these issues. Members were informed that the issue itself would be easy to resolve, but the process of getting the orders approved could be more lengthy.

The Assistant Director Highways and Transportation reported that the Orders for the Lincoln East West Link had been confirmed as well as those for the Canwick Road Improvement Scheme.

Members were also advised that the County Council had been awarded an additional £5.4m for road surfacing from the Government, and it was noted that this sum was more than the authority would normally receive when awarded through formula. It was also noted that the Executive had agreed to match this sum from the Council's underspend. However, this would need to be approved by Full Council.

It was also reported that £16.9m of funding had been received through the SEP to be used for the Grantham Southern Relief Road, and this should start the scheme off shortly. Members were advised that this scheme had two sections, and the total cost of providing both sections would be approximately £55m.

14 LINCOLNSHIRE HIGHWAYS ALLIANCE UPDATE REPORT - JULY 2014

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an update on progress with the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, an Alliance between the County Council, Imtech, Mouchel and Kier. The Alliance delivered the majority of highway services through the Traffic Signals Term Contract, the Professional Services Contract and the Highway Works Term Contract. It was reported that the Alliance was entering its fifth year of a potential contractual duration of ten years.

Members were advised that this commissioning exercise was an early example of the Council's emerging commissioning model and resulted in an initial reduction in cost of 18% over the previous delivery model for highway works. This would equate to a saving of around £9m per annum or £90m over the potential 10 year term.

Members were guided through the report, and some of the main points highlighted included the following:

- Overall performance for the Highway Works Term Contract had increased to 82, and to 80.3 for the Professional Services Contract;
- There was continued internal review of the Alliance, with a further internal audit taking place which focused in the Traffic Signals term Contract;
- Further external reviews were taking place, specifically through the Midland Highways Alliance, Highways Maintenance Efficiency Plan peer review which was planned for October 2014 and continued work with Cranfield University in relation to the Strategic Value for Money Assessment;
- Phase 1 of an innovative new traffic signal system had been completed at the junction of Dixon Street and Boultham Park Road in Lincoln;
- There were continued efforts to improve on the way that tar bound materials were disposed of, following the increase in cost from £40/tonne to 3120/tonne;
- The annual budget for gully and other drainage cleansing was approximately £1.6m. It was planned to carry out one cyclic clean, with further targeted cleansing which would be driven by data captured through a GPS facility on the equipment;
- Following a successful trial of Digi-Pens which two Area Maintenance Teams (AMT), it was planned to roll out to all AMT gangs from August 2014;
- Street lighting inventory increased by 600 lighting units during the year, however, a 640,000Kwh reduction in energy consumption had been achieved. It was also noted that Kier had reduced their delivery structure and reduced operational staff from 24 to 15, without a reduction in performance;
- Work continued on the Primavera programming system which would co-ordinate the programming of all highways schemes;
- The Technical Services Partnership continued to be engaged in the design of the authority's major schemes, internal and external design of schemes, traffic modelling and other consultancy work;
- A number of schemes were progressing towards the construction phase with the East West Link and Canwick Hill schemes proposed to start in 2014;

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- The Highways Alliance was performing as well as or better than other authorities that had not adopted this model;
- There was an issue in relation to how work was programmed and keeping local members informed, but the new system would allow members to see the full process;
- An issue had been raised at Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee regarding the quality and timing of the verge and amenity grass cutting. It was reported that the grass verges were cut three times per year. However,

partnerships had been entered into with other organisations who took over responsibility for the grass cutting for some of the districts. It was acknowledged that there had been some problems in some of the districts regarding the quality of the cutting that had been carried out;

- In terms of grass cutting, it was reported that three weeks earlier, it had broadly been on target. It was commented that it was thought that some contractors had been very ambitious in terms of their time schedule and pricing for amenity cuts;
- It was reported that the benefits of the system which was installed at the junction with Boultham Park Road was that the installation was more cost effective and efficient, which reduced the delays. The improvements were not intended to solve the congestion issues on Dixon Street, but once the East-West Link was in place, there would be the potential to reduce the traffic flows on Dixon Street;
- There was ongoing work to ensure that the Alliance was providing value for money, including benchmarking and regional comparisons;
- Members welcomed the approach of reusing the tar bound materials rather than paying to dispose of them;
- Concerns were raised regarding the intention to carry out one cyclic gully and drainage cleanse per year, but members were assured that targeted cleansing would be carried out as required following GPS data which would be captured. It was noted that dependent on data received, some areas could receive 3-4 cleans per year;
- It was queried whether there would be any commercial opportunities in relation to the receiving and re-using of tar bound materials from other neighbouring authorities as disposal costs had risen from £40 per tonne to £120 per tonne. Members were advised that the authority was focusing on managing its own waste at the moment. It was also noted that these materials could only be re-used on roads that already contained tar based materials, and so there was a need to ensure that there were enough places where the authority could re-use its own material;
- It was confirmed that no RIDDOR incidents had been reported during this quarter.

#### RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the report be noted.

#### 15 UPDATE ON RAIL ISSUES

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Committee on recent developments in the Rail sector and the potential effects on Lincolnshire. The changes were outlined in the context of the Government's rail policy. The report set out the position that the County Council had taken on these issues and suggested how the Council could use its influence to seek the best outcomes for Lincolnshire.

Members were advised that the major role for the County Council was a campaigning one, specifically for more direct train services between Lincoln and London, including better services from London to Lincoln in order to improve tourism. It was noted that Lincolnshire County Council was the authority on the East Coast Main Line to submit a fully worked up business case to the Department of Transport in anticipation of the re-franchising process of the East Coast Main Line (ECML).

It was reported that the MP for Lincoln had arranged a presentation in Lincoln for all three of the bidding companies to hear the case for improved direct services, which was attended by key stakeholders from Lincoln. Members were informed that this was a good event and the benefits of rail companies of having services to Lincoln were made clear. Tenders had now been submitted and an announcement would be made in autumn 2014 of the successful bidder.

In terms of the East midlands franchise, it was reported that East Midlands Trains would continue to run the service until 2015, however negotiations to run the service until 2017 were taking place.

In relation to the upgrade of the Joint Line, it was noted that this would mainly be used by freight traffic, however, it would divert these trains from the ECML, freeing up space for more passenger services.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- There had been a lot of lobbying in relation to the closure of the Tallington level crossing. It was noted that the County Council had not yet been consulted on this, but the authority would not support any scheme that would require houses to be demolished or did not take into account local views. It was also noted that the County Council had not agreed to pay for a road and a scheme such as this had never featured in the capital programme. It would be the responsibility of Network Rail to provide a solution;
- Members were pleased to note that all authorities on the East Coast Main Line were meeting at regular intervals;
- In relation to the joint line upgrade, even though it had not been electrified, it was positive that the bridges had been built so that there was enough clearance for electrification to take place at a later date;
- It was suggested that there was a need for the line to be electrified between Peterborough and Doncaster via Lincoln;
- It was important to have realistic expectations in relation to schemes which could be brought forward;
- It was reported that Network Rail had allocated some funding towards addressing the flat crossing at Newark;
- Hull Trains had been approached regarding running direct London services through Lincoln. However, no response had been received, but officers would continue to make approaches. It was suggested that they may be hesitant to divert services through Lincoln as it would mean giving up a slot on the East Coast Main Line, and it would not be guaranteed that they would get it back in the future;

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- A problem with electrifying trains through Lincoln was likely to be that the platform crossings were not high enough at the station to allow the cabling to go underneath;
- It was noted that the government had commissioned the building of dual fuel trains, which would come into use in 2020.

#### RESOLVED

That the issues presented in the report be noted.

#### 16 SLEAFORD TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Committee to consider a report on the Sleaford Transport Strategy which was due to be considered by the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT on 16 July 2014.

It was reported that there were significant plans for the expansion of Sleaford over the coming years, and a Masterplan had been produced for the town, as well as a Parking Strategy which was being implemented. However, the town did not currently have a Transport Strategy which assessed the transport implications of the proposed expansions and set out a range of measures to resolve any resulting issues and take account of opportunities which would be presented.

Members were advised that the County Council continued to work with the district council.

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Concerns were raised regarding the proposals for the junction with Mareham Lane as it was a very narrow road, and also the changes to the operation of King Edward Street Level Crossing;
- It was acknowledged that the long term strategy for the crossing was to make it a two way carriageway. However, it was suggested that this was something that needed to happen as soon as possible;
- Members were pleased at the progress which had been made on this strategy, as preliminary discussions had taken place the previous month, and now there was an emerging transport strategy;
- It was commented that the only way in which traffic flows through Sleaford would be managed would be through traffic restraints;
- The importance of traffic modelling when producing the Transport Strategy was highlighted;
- Concerns were raised regarding the level of public consultation which had been carried out for this Transport Strategy. However, members were informed that North Kesteven District had carried out consultation on this Strategy. It was also noted that the Sleaford Regeneration Group met on Monday nights, and the Town Council had been involved in this;

- It was acknowledged that not everyone would be happy with a proposed scheme, but the aim was to deliver a scheme with the most benefits to the majority of people. However, it was commented that the authority tried very hard to consult, as it did not want to deliver a scheme which would be the wrong solution for the majority of people;
- It was noted that a similar process was taking place in Spalding, and a lot of consultation had taken place, including a number of public meetings. The local councillor for the area had sent out a newsletter to inform people about the public meetings. It was commented that it was part of the role of a local member to inform residents of consultations which were taking place;
- Members were reassured that the local member would be consulted on in relation to proposed schemes in their areas;

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee support the recommendation to the Executive Councillor set out in the report:
2. That the concerns of the Committee in relation to the Mareham Lane Junction and the King Edward Street level crossing be noted.

17 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which enabled the Committee to consider its work programme for the coming year.

It was reported that the work programme was up to date, however, it was noted that the item on Commissioning in Lincolnshire which was scheduled for the September 2014 meeting, would not be going to that meeting, and would need to be rescheduled.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am