

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	<b>Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>27 October 2014</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Update Report - October 2014</b>

**Summary:**

This report presents an update on progress with the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, an Alliance between the County Council, Imtech, Mouchel and Kier. The Alliance delivers the majority of highway services through the Traffic Signals Term Contract, the Professional Services Contract and the Highway Works Term Contract.

The Lincolnshire Highway Alliance is now in the fifth year of a potential contractual duration of ten years.

Independent comparison of our services confirm that the Alliance continues to deliver class leading, cost effective, high quality highway services with improvement areas identified and work underway to deliver that further efficiency and improvement.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report.

**1. Background**

Introduction

1.1 The Lincolnshire Highways Alliance is an Alliance between the County Council, Imtech, Mouchel and Kier. The Alliance delivers the majority of highway services through the Traffic Signals Term Contract, the Professional Services Contract and the Highway Works Term Contract which all started on 1 April 2010.

1.2 The Alliance contracts are now well into year 5 of a potential 10 year term. The commissioning exercise was an early example of the Council's recent

commissioning model which followed the analyse, plan, do, review commissioning cycle. The appropriate allocation of risk, the use of target cost pricing and open book accounting resulted in an initial reduction in cost of 18% over the previous delivery model for highway works. This equates to a saving of around £9million per annum or £90million over the potential 10 year term.

## Performance

- 1.3 The quarterly performance report is reported through the Alliance management structure, with performance issues becoming the subject of an improvement action plan. A copy of the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Performance Report for Year 5 Quarter 1 can be found as Appendix A. This covers the period of April to June 2014 and demonstrates improving scores for the Alliance in some areas but a decline for Signals, Client and Alliance scores.
- 1.4 Overall performance for the Highway Works Term Contract has increased to 84.3 and has stabilised for the Professional Services Contract at 80.1. The Traffic Signals Term Contract has reduced to 87, Client performance to 78 and the overall Alliance score has further declined to 42.
- 1.5 Whilst there has been a reduction in some performance scores, this should be taken in the context of the increased performance since the start of the Alliance. Areas of technical performance will continue to be addressed within the three contract areas and the client. The significant drop in the Alliance score reflects the subjective nature of some of the indicators such as press articles, public satisfaction and relationship scoring. We are engaged in national work through Cranfield University to develop a better understanding of our ability to influence perception of our services. We are also introducing additional participants in the relationship scoring exercise to replace those that have left since the start of the Alliance. This should help to provide more consistency to that measure.
- 1.6 A recent internal audit, focussing this time on the Traffic Signals Term Contract has reported substantial assurance of the service with no concerns. Further work is being undertaken with the Council's Performance Group to develop the Highways Performance Dashboard with a focus on improved financial information.
- 1.7 The Highways Maintenance Efficiency Plan Peer Review planned for October 2014 has now been rescheduled for March 2015 to accommodate the changes brought about by the Senior Management Review, the move to a Commissioning Council and the potential changes from the Council's Fundamental Budget Review. We continue to work with Cranfield University to follow up the Strategic Value for Money Assessment and as part of the Future Highways Project. We also continue to work with Leeds University to refine and develop the frontier benchmarking of highways services. The work with Cranfield has informed the change to the divisional structure, our work on improved planning and programming, the move to the proactive

delivery of services and the re-use of material by recycling. All of this work, when completed, will be the subject of further report to this committee.

#### Traffic Signals Term Contract

- 1.8 The installation of Phase 1 of the innovative new traffic signal system has been completed at the junction of Dixon Street and Boultham Park Road in Lincoln. This uses "smart" technology to enable the development of a traditional traffic controller which will reduce the cost of the overall scheme, remove the need for extensive cable and ducting infrastructure and therefore minimise congestion and disruption for road users.
- 1.9 The Remote Lamp Control System (RLCS) is a new development for the long-established PTC-1 traffic controller. This moves elements of the traditional traffic controller from a separate cabinet into some of the signal heads. This has reduced on-street cabling and related infrastructure work with a resulting reduction in traffic management, civil engineering and cable works. It is expected that this will result in a typical saving of 30% over a traditional signal installation. We have been experiencing sporadic issues with the inability of the RLCS system to automatically recover from certain power outages. We have been working on a software update for the Remote Lamp Unit (RLU), which changes the current threshold within the units to improve the system reliability. This change has also improved the overall reliability of the RLCS system and its ability to withstand additional electrical noise and disturbance. The software and hardware are being developed further to improve the level of confidence in the new system. Being allowed access to a complex multi-system installation within Lincolnshire for the national trial has greatly assisted the development and evaluation of the system.
- 1.10 Imtech and the Traffic Signals Team continue to trial new above ground detection systems and have recently installed the TrafiCam detector. The key feature of this product is the ability to provide multiple detection zones from a single unit. This reduces the need to install loop detectors, causing less disruption to the road users and improves safety and ease of maintenance operations.
- 1.11 We are currently working on a joint Alliance project to upgrade the existing BT private wire circuits to ADSL broadband at the 100 Urban Traffic Control (SCOOT) installations in Lincoln, Boston and Grantham. We are replacing the existing old wired transmission units which will be unsupported after 2018 with new programmable digital interfaces and routers.

#### Highway Works Term Contract

- 1.12 The surface dressing season has now been completed with the delivery of over 2.4 million square metres of dressing. Surface dressing is an integral part of the preventative maintenance strategy agreed as part of the Transport Asset Management Plan. We expect to increase the coverage by

this treatment as part of the strategy with a programme of preparatory patching underway at the moment.

- 1.13 Cyclic environmental works such as grass cutting and weed control are reaching the end of their season. Gulley and catchpit emptying will continue throughout the year. Further targeted cleansing is being driven by the data that we now capture through a GPS facility on our equipment. This data is now captured within our Asset Management system Confirm, which allows for the automated issue of works orders to rectify faults and for payment to be made against electronic returns.

Grass cutting consists of a number of different operations:

Amenity Mowing – grass areas typically in a village and town location which are cut seven times a year by either a pedestrian controlled or ride on rotary or cylinder type mower. The grass should be cut to leave a maximum length of 25mm and each cut should be completed within two weeks of the instructed start date. The majority of amenity grass cutting in the county is carried out under agreement by district, city, borough or parish councils. The district authorities also carry out their own cutting either by direct delivery or private contractors.

Flail Cutting – all highway verges are cut three times a year to a width of 1.1m by tractor mounted flail cutters. Visibility splays are cut at junctions and on bends to improve highway safety. Cutting starts on the higher category 1, 2 & 3 roads first usually in April/May. These include mainly the A, B and some C Class roads, followed by the remainder of the network. The grass should be cut to leave a maximum length of 75mm and each cut should be completed within five weeks of the instructed start date. There are further additional programmes of work for high profile events such as Lincolnshire Show and the Waddington Air Show.

Vegetation Cutting on Public Rights of Way – a number of public rights of way are cut twice a year by strimmers and mowers. The frequency of cutting was reduced from three as part of the Core Offer Review. Public footpaths are cut to a width of 1m and Public Bridleways 2m. The grass should be cut to leave a maximum length of 75mm

There are further packages of work for strimming and the mowing of protected roadside verges.

- 1.14 A roll out of Digi-Pens continues to all Area Maintenance Teams (AMT). This allows automatic, electronic details of the work completed by gangs to be sent to client officers which is proving to be beneficial to the management of performance.
- 1.15 We have completed our preparations for winter with the recruitment of additional drivers and a full training programme for all drivers. The gritter

fleet and other equipment has been prepared and salt stocks have been replenished.

- 1.16 Work continues on the introduction of the Primavera programming system, which will co-ordinate the programming of all highway schemes, not just Alliance work, from conception through the design phase to construction. This will allow a clearer understanding of the impact on other programmed works, which results from sudden changes to priority. Links to [www.roadworks.org](http://www.roadworks.org) will provide up to date information on the latest proposed scheme delivery dates.
- 1.17 Kier are in the process of procuring the replacement of 50 Alliance vehicles. It is expected that these vehicles will be multi-functional to allow for greater flexibility in delivery.

### Professional Services Contract

- 1.18 The Technical Services Partnership continues to be engaged in the design of our major schemes, other internal and external design of schemes, traffic modelling and other consultancy work.
- 1.19 A number of major schemes are now progressing towards the construction phase with East-West Link and Canwick Hill starting this year and Lincoln Eastern Bypass now likely to start next year.
- 1.20 The design of Phase 1 of Spalding Western Relief Road is now completed and the detail design of Grantham Southern Relief Road is progressing well.

## **2. Conclusion**

- 2.1 Highway Services, delivered by the Lincolnshire Highways Alliance, are of a high standard with an improving trend since the start of the Alliance. The performance culture developed within the Alliance is a consistent driver for improvement in very challenging times for local government services. Independent comparison confirms that the Alliance continues to deliver some of the most cost effective, high quality highway services in the sector. Improvement areas are identified with work underway to deliver further efficiency and improvement.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

#### **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire Highways Alliance Performance Report Year 5 Quarter 1: April to June 2014

#### **5. Background Papers**

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

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