Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: R L Foulkes, S F Kinch and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Andy Gutherson (County Commissioner for Economy and Place), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Dave Simpson (Technical and Development Finance Manager), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N M Murray.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors G J Ellis to the Committee, in place of Councillor N M Murray, for this meeting only.

46 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

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

47 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the last bullet point of minute 41 being amended to read:

***'A Councillor commented** that the majority of people living in the Glebe area did not want a road bridge over Hawthorn road, and were happy with the existing plans for an NMU bridge. It was also commented **by another councillor** that at the meeting which took place recently in relation to this issue in Cherry Willingham, a lot of the people present were supportive of the NMU bridge plans, and that there was a*

relatively small but very vocal group of residents driving the campaign against the NMU bridge.'

Councillor I G Fleetwood was in attendance and was permitted to speak in relation to the comments made relating to the Lincoln Eastern Bypass. He commented that whilst he disagreed with the statements which were made in relation to Hawthorn Road and the meeting in Cherry Willingham, after speaking to the Democratic Services Officer he was satisfied that the comments made at the meeting held on 15 December 2014 had been accurately minuted, and he was happy with the proposed amendment to minute number 41.

48 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND IT AND THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

There were no announcements from the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT or the Chief Operating Officer.

49 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Principal Maintenance Engineer in relation to winter maintenance. It was reported that so far it had been an average winter, and the authority still had 26,000 tonnes of salt available. Salt was being very quickly transferred from the stocks in Southampton. In response to a question, Members were advised that between 200-400 tonnes of salt would be used on each gritting run. This translated to having approximately 40 days of salt.

It was noted that if there was an urgent need for more salt to be delivered from the stock in Southampton it would arrive the day after requesting the salt.

It was commented by a member of the Committee that it had been a pleasure to drive on the A46 that morning after it had been gritted and it had felt very safe.

50 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

The Committee received updates in relations to the following major schemes:

Lincoln Eastern Bypass – the Department for Transport (DfT) had confirmed that a further public inquiry was required, and discussions were taking place with the DfT to identify a Planning Inspector and then finding a suitable date. It was expected that this date would be in May 2015.

Lincoln East – West Link – work had commenced, and the contractor, Balfour Beatty, had been on site since November 2014. There had been some difficulty in removing the final tenant from one of the properties, but this had been resolved. Progress with the scheme was good.

Canwick Road – work on this scheme had now commenced, and Eurovia, the contractor, was now on site. The carriageway works had commenced earlier this

month following an extensive publicity campaign. Members were advised that the disruption had been less than it could have been, and good progress was being made. The expected completion date was still May 2015.

Footbridges, Lincoln – work was expected to commence on the High Street bridge on 9 March 2015. The Brayford bridge was still undergoing a redesign.

Grantham Southern Relief Road – in relation to the King 31 aspect of the scheme, this was progressing well and discussions with the landowner were underway. The authority was ready to progress with this element of the scheme.

Skegness Business Park – planning permission for this scheme was expected to be considered in February 2015.

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

- A member thanked officers for the speedy completion of the work on Station Road, North Hykeham, as the work was originally due to be completed in March 2015;
- It was queried whether the relief road project was still going ahead in Boston, and it was agreed that an update on this project would be included in future major scheme updates;
- It was queried whether the public inquiry for the Lincoln Eastern Bypass would be specifically examining the objections received in relation to the Hawthorn Road closure. Members were advised that the conduct of the inquiry would be a matter for the Inspector, and it would consider the objections to the side roads orders and compulsory purchase orders. It was expected that a pre-inquiry meeting would be held which would make clear to all participants how the inquiry would proceed. It was noted that the inspector's report from the previous inquiry would be a key part of the considerations for the new inquiry;
- The authority would be presenting a case for why the scheme in its entirety was an effective scheme and met the required objectives;
- The current planning permission did not allow for a dual carriageway, therefore the Lincoln Eastern Bypass would remain as a single carriageway scheme at this stage;
- It was commented that the Central Lincolnshire Plan was dependent on the Lincoln Eastern Bypass scheme going ahead as it would unlock development land, and any delays to this scheme could have an impact on the Central Lincolnshire Plan;
- In relation to the closure of level crossings on the East Coast Main Line, particularly the one at Tallington, it was commented that meetings had been taking place between Network Rail and residents, and there was a perceived assumption that Lincolnshire County Council was going to link up the highway to a new road bridge. It was thought that there was a need for the authority to be involved in these meetings as these highway schemes were likely to involve a great cost to the County Council. Members were advised that the County Council did attend these meetings, when it was invited to do so, but it

had tried to establish better links with Network Rail and meetings were taking place;

- It was noted that the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT and the County Commissioner for Economy and Place had attended meetings with residents and Network Rail regarding level crossing closures and it was important to manage the aspirations of the local community. However, there was currently no financial obligation for the County Council at this time;
- In relation to the traffic delays being caused by the Canwick Road improvement works, it was noted that officers were not aware of any patterns which had developed in relation to times or lengths of delays. It was also reported that no particular issues had arisen in relation to the alternative routes that people were being asked to use.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

51 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report which described the Councils budget proposals arising from the Local Government Finance Settlement which was announced on 18 December 2014, and the implications for the Highways and Transport services.

The Committee received a presentation on the budget proposals which provided more detailed information in relation to the following areas:

- Current Budget Strategy;
- Priorities Consultation;
- Autumn Statement 2014;
- Provisional Local Authority Finance Settlement;
- Reduction in Government Funding;
- Spending Power Explained;
- Provisional Revenue Budget for 2015/16;
- Revenue Budget – Service Area Impact;
- Council Tax;
- Capital programme – 2015/16
- Consultations;
- Proposed Highways and Transport Revenue Budget 2015/16;
- Proposed Highways and Transport Capital Budget;

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

- It was queried why there had been 3 public consultations with only North Kesteven District Council, and Members were informed that NKDC had invited the County Council to carry out these consultations in the district;
- It was confirmed that if the Council had chosen to increase council tax by 2% for the past three years instead of accepting the government council tax freeze grant the county council would have gained an additional £12m in income;

- It was not known for certain how many other county councils were in the process of putting up their council tax instead of taking the Freeze Grant. A survey was being carried out by the Association of County Treasurers which should provide this information at a later date;
- It was commented that the level of the proposed council tax rise should be affordable to most families. It was noted that the proposed 2% rise equated to an increase of £20.25 for a Band D property (or 39p per week);
- Members were advised that there had been 66 responses to the consultation on priorities through the Citizens Panel and 80 responses online;
- It was reported that the LEP received half of the allocation for the integrated transport fund. It was noted that the LEP would create its own priorities, and decide how it wished to use the funding;
- It was noted that there was a proposed reduction of £470,000 to the Area Maintenance Teams (AMT). Concerns were raised regarding the reduction of the Area Management Teams however, there would still be quick response teams in place. It was noted that officers would try to make efficiencies within the Area Maintenance Teams. Members were also advised that a review of the Area Maintenance Teams would be carried out by two network managers;
- It was commented that if a problem was reported, there could be a risk of injury if it was not fixed immediately. Officers acknowledged that this was a risk, and work would be undertaken to minimise this risk;
- The Committee was informed that the authority had performed well recently in relation to successfully bidding for additional grants and funding from central government such as the additional funding for repairing pot holes;
- The DfT was looking into how it could incentivise local authorities to be more innovative and effective. However, there was a need to have the staff in order to produce these bids. It was thought that the building blocks were in place for the authority to make good bids;
- In relation to the Challenge Fund, officers were expecting to submit bids by 9 February 2015;
- The additional £9m that the authority had been allocated for Highways Asset Protection was the second highest allocation in the country, even though Lincolnshire did not have the second longest network;
- In relation to the pooling of business rates with six of the district councils, it was noted that South Holland was the only district not to be involved. Members were advised that there were still issues to be clarified before South Holland could be included in this arrangement;
- It was confirmed that concessionary fares accounted for half of the transportation budget, and funding was protected. Members were advised that this was approximately £7m;
- It was noted that the authority paid just over £1m per year for third party insurance. Members were advised that the premium was linked to the highways maintenance plan, and the amount of planned preventative work which was carried out rather than reactive work;
- Members were advised that there was a 1.4% reduction in the budget for Highways and Transport and that this would have an impact somewhere within these services;

- It was noted that there had been a move to a two divisional model – the south and west divisions had merged and the north and east divisions had also merged;
- Growth should encourage investment;
- Schemes could bid for funding from the £15m capital development fund. This would be open for bids from all areas of the authority;

RESOLVED

1. That the contents of the report and presentation be noted;
2. That concerns regarding the proposed reduction of funding to the Area Maintenance Teams be passed on to the Executive prior to its meeting on 3 February 2015.

52 LINCOLNSHIRE HIGHWAYS ALLIANCE UPDATE REPORT - JANUARY 2015

The Committee received a report which provided 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. The Lincolnshire Highways Alliance was now in the fifth year of a potential contractual duration of 10 years.

Members of the Committee were guided through the report by the Infrastructure Commissioner and some of the points highlighted included the following:

- Overall performance of the Highway Works Term Contract had declined from 84.3 to 78.5, but this was still considered to be acceptable performance;
- It was noted that performance for the Traffic Signals Term Contract and Client performance had both increased;
- The Highways Maintenance Efficiency Plan Peer Review which had been planned for October 2014 had been rescheduled for 3- 5 March 2015;
- The Alliance continued to work with Cranfield University to follow up the Strategic Value for Money Assessment as part of the Future Highways Project;
- Work was underway 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;
- A number of major schemes were progressing towards the construction phase. Lincoln East-West Link and Canwick Hill had started, and a tender to start the construction of an element of the Grantham Southern Relief Road;
- The design of Phase 1 of Spalding Western Relief Road was now complete and the detail design of Grantham Southern Relief Road was progressing well;

The Committee was 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:

- It was noted that the 30,000 square metres of patching which had been carried out included resurfacing work;

- It was difficult to convert the amount of patching into miles, as it depended on the size of the pot hole, the width of the road etc.. Officers agreed to try and provide some averages for the next report;
- In relation to site safety assessments, it was noted that the performance was a concern as it had reduced from 100% last quarter to 86.96% in the current quarter. Members were advised that the inspections were carried out by Mouchel, but they would be transferred back in house to the County Council when the contract with Mouchel ended on 31 March 2015. The inspections were carried out independently through the corporate contract, and there had been some issues around resource availability which had led to the reduced number of visits which had been carried out;
- Following the submission of a petition to the Council meeting on 19 December 2014 regarding the noise resulting from the surface dressing used on the A158 at Burgh le Marsh, Members were advised that a request had been made for noise surveys to be carried out. However, this was a nationally recognised treatment and had been used in a number of other locations in the County. It was acknowledged that a complaint in relation to one other site had been received;
- A key element of the Asset Management Plan was demonstrating a move towards preventative maintenance, and so far approximately 2.5million square metres of surface dressing had been carried out in the County each year.

RESOLVED

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

53 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were no changes to work programme at this time.

It was clarified that the Draft Speed Limit Policy update was a follow up on the review carried out by the Task and Finish Group in 2014.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.47 am

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