



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 MARCH 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M BROOKES (CHAIRMAN)

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

Councillors: R G Davies, S F Kinch and R A Renshaw attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Graeme Butler (Project and Technical Support Manager), Dave Clark, David Davies (Principal Maintenance Engineer), Mick Phoenix (Parking Services Manager), Paul Rusted (Infrastructure Commissioner), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R J Hunter-Clarke and J R Marriott.

The Chief Executive reported that having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors W J Aron and R L Foulkes as replacement members on the Committee in place of Councillors J R Marriott and R J Hunter-Clarke, for this meeting only.

55 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

56 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

The Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT reported that there was a developing issue in relation to scrutiny, and he was keen to explore how this Committee could develop its scrutiny of issues prior to policies becoming finalised. It was noted that this would fit in with the review of scrutiny as a whole which was already taking place. It was felt that it would be useful for this Committee to also explore this issue.

It was also reported that the LGA HMAP Peer Review had taken place, and when the action day had taken place, a further update would be brought back to this meeting on 20 April 2015.

58 WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from David Davies, Principal Maintenance Engineer in relation to winter maintenance. It was reported that at the start of the winter it was expected that this would be a colder than average winter, and this had been the case. December 2014 had been average in terms of temperature, but January and February 2015 were slightly colder. There were 13,000 tonnes of salt still in stock, with a further restocking order for 20,000 tonnes.

A Member queried whether there was a need for the graphs which were produced for the Committee, as winter maintenance was a statutory requirement, there was confidence that if snow or cold weather was forecasted, then the road network would be gritted. It was suggested that it would be more efficient to just produce the reports by exception.

However, other Members commented that they found the information which was produced for this update to be very useful as gritting was one of the most controversial topics when discussing highways. This information was also often shared with parish councils as well, as Members were challenged on these issues. It was noted that this data was collected on a nightly basis as it was used regularly by the winter maintenance team, and the time taken to collate the information into charts for the Committee was minimal.

The Chairman stated that he was happy for the Committee to continue to receive these reports.

59 MAJOR SCHEMES UPDATE

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

Lincoln Eastern Bypass – the date for the Public Inquiry had been confirmed as 11 August 2015, and it was noted that this was a lot later than hoped for. There would be a need for a lot of hard work prior to this to ensure that this did not cause delays to the scheme.

Lincoln Southern Bypass – this was a scheme which had not been pursued for some time, but preferred route status had been confirmed in 2006 by the Executive, and some properties had already been purchased due to blight. The estimated cost in 2006 for this road to be a dual carriageway was £67million, which was significantly less than what it would cost to deliver now.

Lincoln East-West Link – this scheme was making good progress, despite some slight delays around demolition of one of the buildings. However, demolition had now started. This would be a lengthy scheme due to the need for rebuilding work, but the expected completion date was still October 2016.

Canwick Road, Lincoln – this scheme was on programme, but was causing some disruption. There had been publicity around the use of alternative routes. Completion was still expected to be May 2015.

Footbridges, Lincoln – works had been completed over the weekend in relation to the re-phasing of the traffic lights for the start of works for the High Street footbridge. The scheme appeared to be on target, and was still expected to be completed some time in October 2015.

There was still no start date for the works for the Brayford Wharf footbridge at this time.

Grantham – King 31 – some initial site clearance had commenced, and the authority was in discussions with the landowners and it was expected that the scheme would be starting soon. Discussions had commenced regarding the Section 73 changes for the Southern Quadrant Link Road, it was noted that these were classed as major changes and so a 13 week consultation would need to take place.

Spalding Western Relief Road – discussions had now commenced with the district council and developers in relation to progressing phases 2 and 3. The Spalding Transport Plan had also now been completed, which it was hoped would help this scheme to progress.

Skegness Business Park – Planning permission for the roundabout was granted in February 2015. Both aspects of the scheme would be tendered together in May 2015. It was hoped that work would commence on site in September 2015.

Boston – Quadrant scheme – this was a developer led scheme which included a link road between London Road and the A16. Planning permission had been granted for this scheme and discussions with the developer were in progress for a start date. It was noted that this scheme would be market driven.

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

- It was queried whether the issues around the Judicial Review for the Grantham Southern Relief Road would affect the progress of the scheme?

Members were advised that this was not expected to influence the work at the moment. The focus was currently on the King 31 aspect of the scheme;

- A corporate response to the letter that had been received by all councillors from the developer in relation to the Judicial Review was being prepared;
- The Brayford Wharf footbridge was a Network Rail project, and it was being funded by them. It was believed that the funding for this scheme was still secure. Officers would be meeting with Network Rail later in the week and would challenge them on this issues;
- There was a new design for the Brayford Wharf footbridge which would be submitted to the City of Lincoln Planning Committee shortly.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

60 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE - 1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 2014

Consideration was given to a report which provided key performance information relevant to the work of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

Members were guided through the report and the performance data, and reminded that there was a three month data lag for the performance indicators. The Committee was asked to consider the value of the annual indicators which were presented as most of these activities were on four year programmes.

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;

- Officers were currently working with Kier regarding the possibility of fitting sensors to vehicles that could assess the condition of the roads, as a cost effective option. The sensors could be fitted to Kier vehicles as well as buses;
- Officers were confident that the school complaints included those that had been received in relation to parking around schools;
- It was noted that those complaints reported in the customer satisfaction information were those that had gone through the formal complaints process;
- Reports which were received regarding issues such as the condition of footpaths or potholes would initially be treated as service requests, and then allocated for repair, if they were not repaired properly or to time then they would go through the formal complaints process. It was noted that over 80,000 service requests were received every year.

RESOLVED

That the performance information presented be noted.

61 TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF LEVEL CROSSINGS BY NETWORK RAIL

Following a request at a previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, consideration was given to a report which set out the legal framework and procedures for the temporary closure of Level Crossings by Network Rail to undertake maintenance or improvement works.

The Committee was guided through the report and 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 County Council informed the emergency services as soon as it became aware that a closure would be taking place;
- It was not a statutory requirement to notify the emergency services of temporary closures to level crossings. However, the County Council provided this service as a good will gesture on behalf of Network Rail;
- Network Rail were charged a fee by the County Council for processing these requests following completion of the works;
- It was commented that there was a need for the notification of emergency services to be a statutory requirement;
- One councillor commented that they received regular information regarding crossing which were going to be closed every month, and this information was then passed on to the appropriate parish council;
- It was commented that the system which was currently in place seemed to work well;
- It was requested that at the next update meeting that officers had with Network Rail, the message regarding the importance of good communication at a local level should be reinforced;
- It was acknowledged that a number of issues had arisen due to a breakdown in communication between Network Rail and the County Council, however, these occurrences were rare.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made be noted.

62 SPEED MANAGEMENT IN LINCOLNSHIRE REVISED SPEED LIMIT POLICY

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Committee to consider the draft revised Speed Limit Policy as part of the Speed Management in Lincolnshire Review. Members were reminded that it was recommended that a relaxation in the Borderline Cases to +/- 3mph be supported and subsequently be included in the new revised Speed Limit Policy. It was noted that this had now been included as part of the draft Policy, and the opportunity had been taken to review the format of the policy document along with other changes to bring it up to date and make it more user friendly.

The changes to the draft Policy were highlighted to the Committee and it was noted that subject to approval, the next step would be to carry out a public consultation on this policy. The Committee was asked to consider whether this consultation should be carried out in conjunction with the consultation for the School Safety Policy. A report on this would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

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 changes which were proposed were the points suggested by this Committee as part of the scrutiny review;
- It was suggested that the two policies should be consulted upon at the same time, as a lot of the issues regarding speed management were linked to school safety;
- There were concerns regarding the enforcement of restrictions around schools;
- It was commented that the policy was an extremely good document, but it was queried whether there was a way to condense it to the main points so it could be sent out to parish councils?
- This was still a draft policy, and it could only be formalised once it had been out to consultation;
- In relation to the action plan, sending the policies out for consultation together in April was still in line with the action plan;
- Parking appeared to be more of an issue around schools than speeding was;
- It would be part of the criteria for school travel plans, that the school itself was involved in the process;
- The school safety policy would have a menu of options, as each school site was different.

RESOLVED

1. That the draft revised Speed Limit Policy, as part of the Speed Management in Lincolnshire Review, be approved;
2. That the revised policy be submitted to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT for approval prior to public consultation;
3. That a policy relating to School Safety Issues be considered at the next meeting, and that subsequently, it be consulted upon in conjunction with the draft Speed Limit Policy as part of the overall Speed Management Review.

63 CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT - MID YEAR UPDATE 2014/15

The Committee received a report which contained a mid-year update for statistical information and developments related to Civil Parking Enforcement from 1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015.

Members were advised that APCOA currently employed 28 enforcement officers, 4 supervisors, 1 manager and 2 office staff in Lincolnshire and also were currently recruiting staff to bring the total number of enforcement officer positions up to 30.

This increase was a result of continued demand from the public relating to ongoing inconsiderate parking issues in their communities.

It was also noted that close co-operation between the Council's Parking Services Team and APCOA management had led to the development of new methods of delivery for the service. These changes were now delivering efficiencies for the contractor and better enforcement coverage for the Council.

The Committee was informed that the County Council Parking Services and APCOA had entered the British Parking Association's annual parking awards 2015, in the category for Parking Partnerships. Although, the entry was a finalist, it did not win.

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:

- Coverage for outlying areas had been increased;
- It was noted that it was possible that there could be a surplus of £100,000 at the end of this financial year. However, this level of surplus could not be guaranteed every year;
- The service was still on target to be cost neutral to the tax payer;
- 30,000 tickets had been issued by the end of January 2015, and approximately half of these were issued in Lincoln;
- Approximately 10% of all Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) issued were appealed, and of those approximately 50% were successful;
- In terms of contraventions, there had been no real change of pattern since 2012;
- There had been a lot of positive feedback regarding enforcement in villages, and the team was still getting requests for visits to villages, and officers would try and respond as quickly as possible to these requests;
- The Committee congratulated the Parking Services Team for being a finalist in the British Parking Association's awards. It was an achievement to be selected;
- Members were receiving fewer complaints from parish councils regarding not getting visits from enforcement officers;
- Either a barrister or higher level lawyer would make up the panel for Tribunals. All councils were levied 60p for every PCN issued which go towards the cost of the tribunals. It was noted that the barristers and lawyers who sat on the tribunals would give their time for free;
- Complaints were being received regarding the abuse of Blue Badges. Members were informed that if someone without a blue badge parked in a disabled space, it was an instant PCN. However, if the person that received the ticket was a blue badge holder, but had not displayed it, the PCN would be cancelled;
- It was being considered whether some of the surplus should be used to carry out a CCTV trial outside of schools;
- The Civil Parking Enforcement scheme had been very successful in addressing a lot of the parking problems in Lincoln;

- Members were advised that the staffing turnover had now stabilised. It was acknowledged that there was still a level of turnover, but APCOA were encouraging staff retention as it built experience;
- There were issues in some areas in relation to repeat offenders who would build up a number of PCN's. However, if there were circumstances that had led to someone building up a number of PCN's, such as illness, then the Parking Services Team would work with them. It was commented that this approach had been very useful to some people who had been ill;
- In situations where people issued with PCN's become violent, it was noted that the Enforcement Officers had all undergone conflict resolution training, and would switch on their body cameras. Where officers have been threatened or been subjected to violence, the authority would use the full extent of the law to prosecute where possible. In areas which were known to be problematic, officers would patrol in pairs or with the police on standby;
- It was noted that officers receiving substantial abuse or threats would not result in that area no longer being patrolled. Additional measures would be implemented to ensure the safety of the officers;
- It was noted that blue badges belonged to the person and were not registered to a particular vehicle;
- It was reported that APCOA did not set targets and enforcement officers were not incentivised to issue tickets;
- The number of tickets issued showed the size of the problem in the county;
- Any Traffic Regulation Orders for school safety zones would need to be done individually for each school;
- All money raised through PCN's had to be put back into traffic safety projects;
- If someone was issued with a PCN and they did not pay, and all legal avenues had been pursued, then the debt would be passed to a bailiff. However, the preferred option would be to set up a payment agreement;
- The scheme did seem to be working in Spalding, as there were not as many tickets issued in proportion to the number of visits received. However, it was noted that some complaints had been received from the surrounding villages that they were not seeing enforcement officers that often.

RESOLVED

That the reports and comments made be noted.

64 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.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am

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