

APPENDIX B

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9TH JULY 2015 QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Tom Hollis

Could the Chairman please give the Council an update on plans for gritting this Winter, what steps have the Council taken to avoid last year's debacle and what will the Council do differently this year?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

"The delivery of winter gritting and snow clearance operations last year, as in previous years, was in line with Council's policy and standards which are set out in the Highway's Network Management Plan, the Winter Service Operational Plan and the Winter Weather plan.

Weather prediction is not an exact science and the Council makes best use of weather forecast information and data from its own weather stations to inform operational decisions. However there are occasions, where weather conditions change rapidly and snow blankets the roads without warning and despite the best efforts of our teams, working in hazardous conditions overnight, it can take time to fully clear our roads. This Council is no different to any other Council in facing these difficulties and it is interesting to note that our neighbours had exactly the same problems we did, at the same time last year.

For the forthcoming winter I can report that our road salt supplies are being replenished right now so that we will have full stocks; almost twice as much as the Government recommends, this means that the risk of running out should there be any bad weather, is removed.

Improvements are being made to the location systems used in the gritting vehicles to give better information to those managing the service and investigations are taking place to allow this information to be provided more widely."

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Whilst welcoming the £77,000,000 given to the County Council by the previous Coalition Government - Can the Chairman please update the Council on how this money is being spent and where? Can he confirm how the Council are deciding how this money is being spent and that everywhere in the County is getting its fair share.

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

“Councillor Zadrozny here refers to the £77.8m allocated for Highways Maintenance over the next 6 years commencing in 2015/16.

Capital funding is allocated for maintenance of all of the highways assets – roads, bridges, signs, lighting etc.

The annual programmes are made up of schemes across the County based on evidence of need, identified through technical surveys and analysis. Value for money; as well as delivery of corporate priorities, national transport priorities, and the County Council’s local transport objectives are also factored into preparing the works programmes.

The annual capital programmes are approved at Transport and Highways Committee. Prior to approval the programmes are sent to all County Council members for comment so that each member is given the opportunity to comment on them and offer further scheme suggestions for consideration.

If the member would like further information on how or where the 2015/16 capital programmes will be spent it is detailed clearly in the 19th March 2015 ‘Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance Capital Programmes 2015/16’ Transport and Highways Committee report.”

Question to the Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee, from Councillor Rachel Madden

Whilst welcoming the new network of bus services providing connections between Worksop, Gainsborough and Retford. Can I ask what plans the Council has to replace bus services axed in the County including evening and Sunday services?

Response from Councillor Kevin Greaves, Chairman of the Transport and Highways Committee

“The Councillor will know that due to severe budget pressures we have reduced support local bus service funding by £1.8m over the last two years. To achieve this we had no option but to withdraw financial support for poorly used services and services operating in the evenings, Sundays and bank holidays. This strategy ensured that we could sustain operating services during the daytime on Monday to Saturdays thus ensuring local residents could continue to access jobs and essential services such as health. The County Council has no plans to replace the withdrawn services.”

Question to the Leader of the Council, from Councillor Maureen Dobson

As County Councillor for the Collingham Division I have been active in encouraging collaboration amongst the relevant authorities to resolve the traffic issues faced by Newark-on-Trent. Can the Leader inform us of the progress the Council has made in engaging and lobbying the Government in its project to resolve this severe traffic

situation. Once again we have had another week of horrendous traffic congestion and the residents I represent are finding it impossible to get to work and businesses are suffering.

Response from Councillor Alan Rhodes, Leader of the Council

"I share your concerns about the congestion and consequent economic impact on Newark and its environs resulting from the inadequacies of the junctions of the A46 Newark Relief Road at A616/A617 (Cattlemarket roundabout), A1/A46 and A46/A17 and the remaining single lane highway. Councillor Maureen Dobson is the only Newark County Councillor to raise these issues directly with me, the Chair of the Transport and Highways Committee and the most Senior Officers of the Highways Division. She has done so with tenacity and consistency and I admire both of these qualities.

The County Council will continue to lobby Highways England to deliver the major improvement to the A46 Newark Relief Road as set out in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy. A letter to Highways England was sent by the Corporate Director of Environment and Resources in June advising that the problems faced in Newark appear to be accelerating and intensifying since the lobby last autumn.

I was delighted to lead that lobby of the Roads Minister John Hayes together with Robert Jenrick MP, Councillor Roger Blaney and Senior Officers of Nottinghamshire County Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council. This was an excellent example of joint working between the County Council, the District Council and the Member of Parliament.

This administration is fully aware of the problems being faced by residents and businesses of Newark. We will be doing everything we can to work in partnership to address this.

A meeting with the MP, Highways England and County Council representatives is set to take place tomorrow at which we will urge Highways England to resolve the serious traffic problems as quickly as possible and will encourage interim schemes of improvement to be implemented in advance of the major scheme."