

Service Delivery for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste: In-Year Briefing

Briefing Paper by the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

1. Introduction

This report provides an in-year briefing on service delivery within Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste.

2. Current Position Statements

2.1 Highways and Traffic Management

Following the winter of 2017/18, the County like most other parts of the country saw many more potholes appear than have been seen recently. This directly impacted on the performance of the service as the level of potholes being either reported or identified soared to over 12,000 in a month. This meant that operatives were diverted from programmed work to pothole filling, impacting on programme delivery. For October 2018, the number was back to a more normal level of 3435. From the lessons learnt during the early part of 2018 and in considering what matters to customers a trial has taken place in East Devon working with Skanska and looking at an alternative way of dealing with potholes reported by the public. This has involved introducing a “triage” service, where a trained inspector visits the site and identifies whether:

- It is a safety defect and needs to be dealt with in accordance with the policy timescales
- It is not a safety defect, however there is a problem which needs to be dealt with but in a less reactive way
- No action is required.

The outcomes of this trial are currently being considered, however, it is very likely it will be rolled out across the County, albeit not to the very lowest end of the network.

The Dragonpatcher has arrived in Devon, and is also helping in dealing with potholes by some targeted intervention.

The annual highway maintenance programme of works is progressing well. Some welcome additional funding towards the beginning of the year from both Council and the DfT make this our highest value year ever with over £86M programmed. The scale of this programme has put pressure on our resources providing a challenge to identify and design at a faster pace. We have also used our extensive supply chain using a number of highway contractors in addition to Skanska to enable



delivery. There is recognition that communication of accurate programme information is an area for improvement and we are working on how to address this.

With the lessons learnt from the first year of service delivery, Skanska has accelerated the gully cleansing programme, to give more resilience for reactive works during the winter months.

The general condition of minor roads remains a concern and the audit team are currently helping us to review that the current approach, minimises the corporate risk to the authority. The new highway code of practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' came into force last month. It advocates a risk-based approach to highway service delivery and is something we have been working towards for a number of years.

The additional £6.5m revenue money that was given to the service has been targeted at drainage (both routine and cyclic), additional patching and safety defects, including the triage trial mentioned earlier.

For volunteers wanting to assist we have so far this year:

- set up 49 new road warden agreements, bringing the total in place to 60
- trained 50 representatives from 33 parish and town council's in chapter 8 training and are now starting to receive more interest in the one-day traffic management for special event course
- introduced the Highway Safety Awareness e-learning course at the end of last year and 42 have signed up so far
- 14 Parish and Town Councils have received pothole repair material to repair non-intervention potholes in their communities
- supported 168 parishes in the P3 scheme - held workshops; issued grants and trained volunteers to help maintain the prowl network.

We have received 72 Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund applications of which a total of 61 applications have been approved. The total number of approved grants is approximately £91,000.00 and will help to fund projects worth over £222,000.00.

The three-year project to upgrade over 25,000 main road, high wattage lanterns with low energy LED technology is nearing completion with only 300 lanterns to be completed by Christmas.

We have been investigating the adoption of a Roadworks Permitting scheme across Devon and this work is nearing completion and will be consulted upon in the coming months. Typically, such schemes result in a reduction in network disruption from roadworks by up to 10%.

The Civil Parking Enforcement service has recently been named the winner of the Best Overall Report at the PATROL PARC Awards (Parking Annual Report Awards by Councils); the Best Report Award being judged on how helpful it is to the local community, the policies, scheme design, the quality of the information provided as well as the overall presentation. The CPE service continues to seek opportunities to allow other Authorities to benefit from the economies provided through our in-house service, 2018 has seen a fully managed service launched for Cullompton Town Council's off-street car park, and provision of all processing services supporting Exeter City Council's Off-Street Parking service.

It is with some sadness to report that the threat of Ash dieback is becoming a reality. The number of cases identified on the highway network for the whole of 2017/2018 totalled 91,

so far this year the number of cases has risen to over 400. Due to the speed of progression in the rate of deterioration of trees a decision was taken in April to increase the frequency of tree inspections from once every 3 years to 2 years. However, on a positive note the Stover and the Grand Western Canal country parks have retained their prestigious Green Flag awards; have improved the parks in many ways – this year by establishing a new popular play area at the Grand Western Canal and have put in a bid for HLF funds at Stover.

2.2 Infrastructure Development

The Infrastructure Development service is delivering a large programme of capital funded schemes including highway (roads and bridges) schemes, schools maintenance and new schools projects.

Following the successful bid to Department for Transport for the improvements to the A361 North Devon Link Road between South Molton and Bideford, work has continued in preparing the scheme and has culminated in a planning application being submitted in October. Works to the southern half of the new Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension junction also on the A361, were completed in July and work continues on the Modbury flood risk management scheme.

October saw the A379 Slapton Line re-opening, following the damage caused during Storm Emma in March. To have re-opened the road in less than 8 months, in an area of huge environmental importance and with the need for planning permission, is a massive achievement. Work continues on site with the environmental mitigation and sea wall strengthening. In the north of the county the £1m joint replacement work at Torridge Bridge is nearing completion, and work has been completed on a number of retaining wall and embankment strengthening schemes, with more works in the pipeline.

There are currently 92 schemes within the schools' maintenance programme of which approximately 61% have already been delivered in year. The schools basic need programme saw the opening of Loddiswell Primary school on a new school site in April, and the completion of Westcliffe primary school new six class block.

In addition to these schemes the teams continue to progress a pipeline of projects including, Sherford High Street, Dinan Way, the widening of the A382, the Wray Valley Trail, and the Alma Footbridge in Sidmouth.

Work is also progressing on determining the Transport and Engineering Professional services future delivery model, for presentation to this Committee in January 2019.

2.3 Waste Management

A number of new Contracts have commenced this year including glass recycling, paper recycling, leachate treatment, Mid Devon organic waste haulage, and South Hams organic waste treatment

Construction commenced on the Brynsworthy Waste Transfer Station which will serve North Devon and Torridge and is going well and to programme. The new Ivybridge Household Waste Recycling Centre won the 2018, National 'Civic Amenity Site of the Year' Award in May 2018.

Behavioural change campaign work over the summer has included:

- food waste prevention project "Guilty Food Waste Secrets" which provided helpful tips and advice on reducing food waste

- promoting less use of single use plastic with “Refill Devon” where retailers/cafes sign up to offering free water fill ups for those with their own water bottles, thereby reducing plastic bottle usage.

The Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC) funded Waste and Recycling Advisors (WRA) contract has focussed on talking to householders’ face to face to assist them to improve their recycling habits. Over the last 18 months advisors have spoken to more than 7000 people, given out more than 5000 recycling boxes and there has been a 3% increase in people’s confidence levels in what they can put out for recycling.

Schools Waste Education continues with the new workshops on marine litter being very popular with schools during the summer term, with 23 workshops being delivered in primary schools across Devon. A New Litter Pack has been made available to schools on <http://zone.recycledevon.org/lesson-plans>. The results of some of this work include Uffculme Primary School increasing their recycling and composting rate from 11% to 84%. Additionally, 351 children and 151 adults have visited the Exeter Energy from Waste plant as part of the schools and community work.

The end of Phase 1 of Ecowaste4food a 4-year EU funded project aimed at reducing food waste in the supply chain is approaching. Phase 1 has been about exchanging and sharing knowledge and experience of innovative ways of reducing food waste from ‘farm to fork’ with our 6 EU partners. The partners visited Devon in April and we held a Food Waste Conference in September showcasing the best innovations to a variety of stakeholders.

The Devon Reuse Project has focussed on organising 6 Repair IT events over the summer – where people bring their broken electrical items for mending at locations across Devon including libraries.

The DCC Plastics Strategy and Action Plan was adopted in June 2018 and is making good progress.

The final 2017/18 data showed a welcome reduction of 1.3% in waste arisings but a small drop to 54% for the recycling rate. This was in part due to low quality wood having to be reclassified and sent for recovery, however Devon is still well placed at 6th best in the league table of Waste Disposal Authorities.

3. Budget Update - Revenue Expenditure Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

- 3.1 Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste is forecasting a break-even position at Month 6.
- 3.2 Highways service managers remain confident that all planned maintenance programmes will be delivered during the financial year and that pressures associated with safety defects caused by adverse weather conditions at the end of last year are currently manageable. This will continue to be closely monitored and may be impacted by seasonal variations later in the year.
- 3.3 Waste tonnages continue to be close to budgeted levels resulting in a forecast spend in line with approved budget.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes
Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis
Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services:
Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil

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