

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

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

1. Summary

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

As the Committee is updated regularly through the Highways Dashboard reports, the in-year briefing only covers those areas not previously reported this year.

The Highways and Traffic Management Team continues to work hard to transform itself into a more community focused service. The Doing What Matters project has led to the development of a series of Local Area Capital Programmes, which have been co-designed by the Asset Team and the Neighbourhood Team with communities given the opportunity to input their priorities. Some of the learning from this work suggests that the engagement with communities has raised their expectations, when the Service continues to have inadequate budget to maintain the current condition of the network.

Following the successful delivery of a record Capital settlement in 2019/20, the service has been given opportunity to get ahead of programming and design with much reduced funding this financial year. The work programme and preparations for next year are further ahead than in recent years, providing opportunity to carry out weather sensitive works at a preferred time of the year.

The most recent carriageway condition surveys have reported a 4% (22% to 18%) drop in the length of the unclassified network condition that is considered as 'needing immediate work'. After five years with no discernible change in the surveyed condition, this is a significant result and indicates that the more flexible approach to repairs, along with the injection of funding via the Pothole Action Fund, is having a benefit to the network.

The team continue to challenge the current approach and look for better ways of spending the limited budget. A review of the procedures for cleaning drainage features is ongoing and includes scrutiny of our policy. New delivery approaches are being trialled with 'walk, talk and build' potentially offering a more agile and reactive approach to delivering lower value works.

The management of safety defects continues to evolve. In the first six months of the financial year, the service has triaged nearly 13,000 public pothole reports and ordered in excess of 1,300 service patches – prior to this the 1,300 potholes would

have been classified as not meeting our criteria and disregarded until they deteriorated further.

There have been difficulties in delivering the programme of lining and road markings associated with changes to waiting restrictions and disabled bays. By working with the supply chain, this backlog of requests is being cleared but is taking longer than either the contractors or ourselves expected.

The Public Rights of Way network continues to experience increased levels of public use and the team has done a great job of managing the pressures this has placed on the network. Both of our Country Parks were delighted to retain their Green Flag status.

One of the overriding challenges this year is associated with the lack of tolerance in our communities. This issue is acute within the Civil Parking Enforcement team, who are experiencing increased levels of verbal and physical abuse as they go about their role.

2.2 Infrastructure Development

Over the last 12 months delivery has been slightly affected by supply chain issues and associated industry price increases. This is being closely monitored and includes ongoing discussions with The Civil Engineering Contractors Association and others to gain as much knowledge on the issues as possible. As an example supply of bridges requiring fabrication using steel due to associated industry price increases, has had some limited impact to date. Another risk that is being closely monitored on projects is the increase in fuel costs from April 2022 due to the changes to the use of red diesel on construction plant.

The staffing of the North Devon Link Road scheme has taken a number of DCC staff from their normal work, and as a consequence more works are being delivered this year through our professional services contract with WSP.

A new Minor Engineering Works Framework covering the period between 2022 and 26 has just gone out to tender with a start date of 1st April 2022. This will be used to procure a significant proportion of DCC's future infrastructure programme and will likely see spend in excess of £40 million across the 4-year term.

Bridges and Structures

There are several major projects currently being delivered, along with a sizeable structures maintenance programme of just under £10 million. It is worth noting that 30% of the maintenance programme is now associated with retaining wall strengthening.

Marsh Barton Station is progressing well on site although a few late technical approvals have delayed the programme by several weeks, but the opening is still anticipated for autumn 2022.

A379, SW Exeter Footbridge has been designed and the tender returns are currently being evaluated. The statement structure over the A379 will be a bow spring arch with ornate artwork on the parapets. It is intended that the bridge should be completed by July 2023, before the date of the school opening.

Shutterton Bridge, at Dawlish is a scheme being promoted by Teignbridge District Council as part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund. Detailed designs are being discussed with Teignbridge District Council and planners in November.

Highways

The DCC design team and our partner consultants have a total of 580 active schemes, including not only major highway projects, but more smaller scale improvements, large maintenance schemes and improvements to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

The site team for the main part of the A361, North Devon Link Road improvements has been established and the early works are progressing well on site. Works at the Westleigh Junction were completed in May, and design work continues on the Heywood Junction for starting in 2023. The Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension is currently out to tender with a start date of September 2022.

For the Safer Roads Projects the works at Lynton Cross to provide a new unlit roundabout are currently on site and due to complete in December, and works to provide a new roundabout at Modbury Cross have been completed, with Kitterford Cross improvements starting shortly.

The Houghton Barton Link Road, Newton Abbot is on site with the groundworks well advanced and due to complete in spring 2022. The photograph below shows the works looking east towards the A382.



Various cycle schemes are being progressed including,

- Newton Abbot East to West Cycle facilities, which are currently on site, due to complete December
- Cycle improvement scheme on Burnthouse Lane in Exeter
- Ludwell Lane, Exeter cycle route is due to start shortly

- The planning application for the Teign Estuary Trail was submitted in May 2021
- Design work for the Sidbury to Sidford Cycleway scheme is progressing to planning application stage.

Schools' estate

Approximately £3.5 million of maintenance work has been completed over the first 6 months of 2021/22, including the completion of a major re-roofing project and additional campus improvements at Tiverton High School.

Successful completion of the expansion project at Bidwell Brook, was handed over in September 2021 along with the successful completion of the new teaching block at Marland Primary School, completed in October 2021. Works are currently progressing on-site at Orchard Manor with the new teaching block and infrastructure works and it is intended that before this Committee the contract for the new school in Okehampton should have been awarded.

2.3 Waste Management

Devon experienced overall waste growth of 3% in 2020/21, the first time in over 4 years of sustained waste reduction, and waste arisings continue to grow this year. This is thought to be as a result of the pandemic impacting on residents' behaviours (working from home, internet shopping, etc.), resulting in increased waste generation. Devon's recycling rate also reduced to 55.3% (from 56.6%) but it is still one of the top performing authorities nationally.

Devon won an award for the 'Best New Idea' at the recent Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) Celebration Awards with our Shared Savings Scheme. Working in partnership with our District Councils, this has enabled 5 District Councils to invest in improved kerbside collection schemes confident that the County Council will share back savings that their new schemes generate in cheaper treatment / disposal costs and/or a reduction in waste arisings. Over £6.8 million worth of savings have been generated over the previous 4 years, with £3.4 million shared back with East Devon, Teignbridge, Mid Devon and Torridge District Councils and North Devon Council.

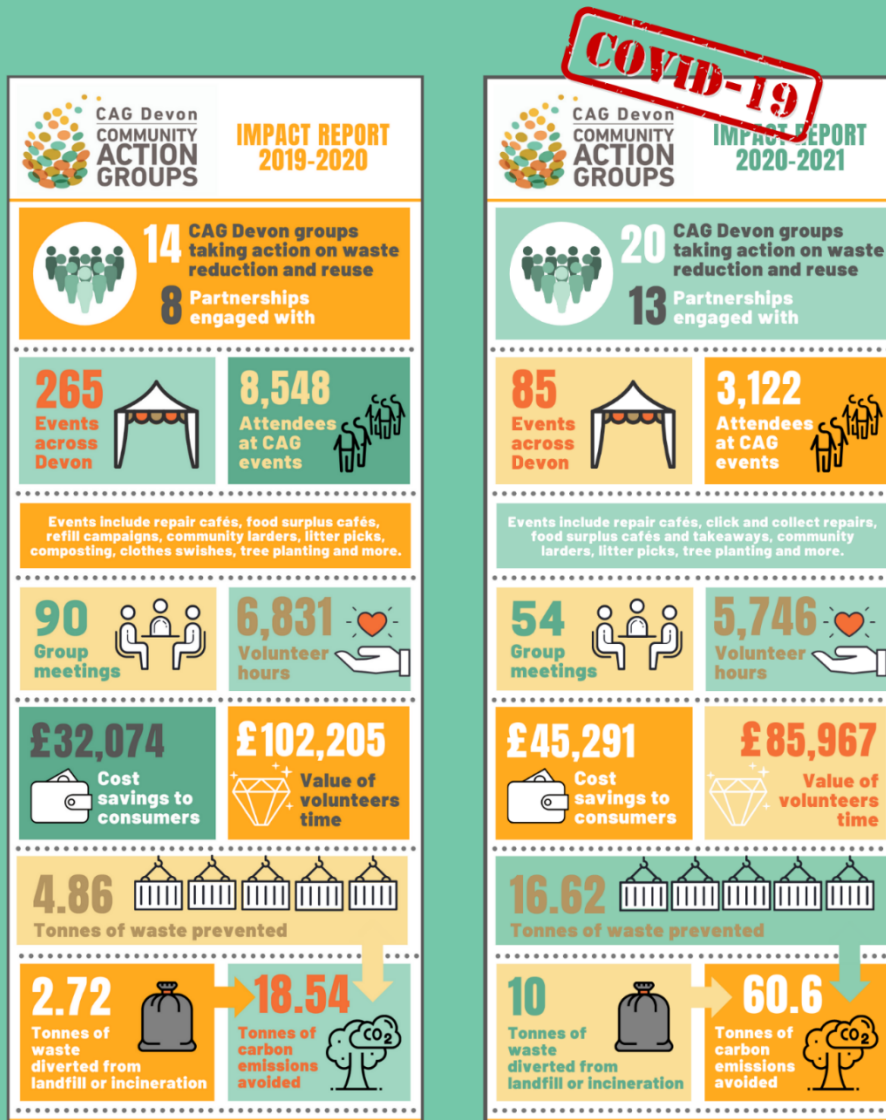
The pandemic and driver shortages have continued to impact on waste collection services over the previous 6 months, with some District Councils missing collections or working Saturdays to catch up. Garden waste collections were temporarily suspended by some District Councils, but all are now reinstated, except for one District Council that has suspended its garden waste service until next year.

Community Action Groups Devon (CAG Devon)

The [CAG Devon project](#) has continued to grow despite the many and varied impacts of Covid on our local communities.

Below is an infographic of what has been achieved over the previous 2 years

CAG DEVON GROUPS IMPACT



WWW.CAGDEVON.ORG.UK

CAG Devon Highlights for April – September 2021 include:

- Ashburton Climate Emergency (ACE) launched their community fridge in April 2021
- Silverton Community Fridge launched 1st May
- The Blackdown Hills Repair Café has provided a click and collect service throughout the lockdown and is now restarting in person events.
- Transition Newton Abbot were awarded “Plastic-Free-Community” status by Surfers against Sewage (SAS) in May 2021 after a two year campaign.
- Sustainable Tiverton took part in the DCE Crowdfunder event in July, and the money raised will be used to help them develop a Sustainability Hub in Tiverton.
- Abbotskerswell Repair Workshop has now raised £17K towards purchasing a community building and continue to offer a very popular click and collect repair service.

- Dawlish against plastic have resumed their regular monthly litter picks and are working with business in the town to use reusable cups.
- ReRooted surplus food café resumed their sit down lunches in September but have continued the take away option used during lockdown.
- CAG Devon have continued to provide one to one support for groups and run a number of online events including 'Getting back to it – running events safely', a Plastics Collaborate group and a Repair café collaborate group.

Waste Education Project

The Schools Waste Education Project has continued to deliver a range of popular covid secure outdoor workshops throughout the Spring and Summer term focusing on litter, plastics, composting and recycling of materials from home.

The Education Team spent part of the Spring and Summer term developing a new World War 2 pack; a set of primary curriculum-linked activities highlighting the importance of materials during the Second World War and how they were recycled, reused and repaired during times of scarcity. The pack is due to be launched during the autumn term. A new series of teaching resources, The Science of Materials, are being developed. The topics of [food](#), [glass](#) and [textiles](#) have already been completed and released on '[The Zone](#)' website. Further materials worksheets will be released each half term over the coming year.

The Recycle Devon Girlguiding badges was launched in February 2021; since then 805 badges have been awarded to 44 different groups of Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

Recycle Devon Marketing and Communications

The Recycle Devon brand heads up waste marketing and communications on behalf of the County Council and 9 partner authorities across Devon.

Achievements for the first 6 months of this year include:

- 7 County-wide Reduce, Reuse or Recycle campaigns taken place
- Over 2,000 more people following Recycle Devon social media channels (26K in total)
- 525 Compost bins sold saving £10,000 disposal costs for this year alone
- 86 out of 100 accessibility rating for Recycledevon.org
- 4 partner authorities given specific support
- Funding support gained from WEEE Compliance Fees to promote electricals recycling
- On-street Market Research carried out to measure and track levels of awareness, attitudes and behaviours

Devon Food Rescue Project

The waste team were awarded £190,000 in May via the National Lottery 'Reaching Communities' fund for a field to fork food waste prevention project; 'Food Rescue'. Over the next three years, Food Rescue will increase the amount of surplus food from across the supply chain that is redistributed to communities in order to reduce food waste, save households and businesses money and build community capacity in the process. Food Rescue will achieve this by facilitating ten communities to set

up [Community Fridges](#), develop a Devon [Gleaning Hub](#), promote the use of the free, food sharing app, Olio and deliver community cooking events to promote the project and make surplus food available to all.

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

Overall Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste is currently forecasting an underspend of £214,000 but this is as a result of additional income from the design team of Infrastructure Development.

Waste tonnages have increased significantly during the year, but this element of the service area is currently expected to outturn to budget. Highways and Traffic Management is on track to fully deliver planned works programmes within budget, although this could be impacted if extreme weather is encountered over the winter period.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport: Councillor Andrea Davis

Cabinet Member for, Public Health, Communities and Equality: Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		

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