

Place Scrutiny Committee

Highway Asset Management Plan Spotlight Review

October 2016

1. Background

The Place Scrutiny Committee received a Report at their meeting on 20th September, outlining proposed changes to the Council's Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan. The Council's approach to highway asset management was being refreshed to reflect recent national guidance and changes to Department for Transport funding formulas.

In light of the complexity of the subject matter and to provide an opportunity for all non-executive Members of the Council to contribute, the Committee resolved to hold a standalone Spotlight Review meeting to:

- consider the Council's revised Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan;
- consider how the Council should measure the performance of its Highway Assets in the future against the levels of service set out in the asset strategy;
- make recommendations to Cabinet on the key performance indicators to be used in the Highway Asset Management Strategy and Plan.

The Spotlight Review meeting was held on 13th October at the Devon Travel Academy, Westpoint.

2. The Council's Asset Management Approach

Good asset management takes a 'whole life' approach to determine how to invest limited resources, to get the most efficient and effective maintenance of the asset. In practice this means that roads which appear to be in good condition are surfaced dressed, preserving them for the long term, at a much smaller cost than it would be to repair them once their condition had visibly deteriorated. Due to diminishing capital funding over a number of years, and previous strategies which did not follow the asset management approach, some roads have deteriorated further and are in visibly poor condition. These roads are costly to fully repair, and therefore due to financial limitations, some roads may at this time only be patched, in order to make them safe for users.

Members were supportive of the Council's asset management approach and the proposed levels of service, however emphasised the challenge in explaining this approach to members of the public and suggested that the Council could do more to promote public understanding.

3. Measuring the Performance of our Highway Assets Recommendations to Cabinet

Measuring the performance of the Council's Highways Assets is key to understanding whether the Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan is operating as it should. The Council is looking to develop around 10-15 key performance indicators (KPIs) which will give a clear understanding of how each asset is performing.

Members considered proposed KPIs for a number of highway assets (as attached). It was felt that KPIs should be clear and meaningful and able to be understood by the public, and should focus on monitoring the key assets which keep the county moving, including drainage systems. Monitoring the way that the Council works with communities, the support offered and the uptake of community support schemes was also felt to be important.

In light of this, the Spotlight Review group makes the following Recommendations to Cabinet:

- (a) That the proposed indicators and measures for Carriageways, Footways & Cycleways, Structures, Highway Lighting and Public Rights of Way be supported;
- (b) That one or more KPIs be created to monitor the performance of gullies and drainage systems;
- (c) That a KPI be created to monitor the Council's engagement and work with communities in respect of self-help schemes, road and snow warden schemes and in other areas such as grass cutting and/or wild flower verge planting.

4. Membership

The Spotlight Review was chaired by Councillor Ray Radford, Chairman of the Place Scrutiny Committee. Councillors Rufus Gilbert, Robert Vint, Jonathan Hawkins, Chris Clarence, Gordon Hook, Kevin Ball, Richard Edgell, Jeremy Yabsley and Claire Wright all attended and contributed to the review.