

Introduction to Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Report of the Acting Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

1. Summary

This report provides an introduction to the Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste Service and identifies areas of business the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider adding to their work programme.

2. Highways

The key objectives for highways are to maintain and operate the highways network safely and efficiently for the benefit of all users. The highways network consists of the roads, footways, cycleways, Public Rights of Way, as well as the two Country Parks of Stover and the Grand Western Canal.

Maintain

In April 2017 DCC entered into a new Term Maintenance Contract for the maintenance of the highway network, with Skanska UK. In 2016 the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund was introduced. This is available in grants to Towns, Parishes and Community Groups in Devon. The fund has been created following the implementation of the Road Warden and Community Self Help schemes. Initial feedback indicated that although organisations wanted to carry out works in their communities, they often found it difficult to financially support any works or find volunteers who were able to make the commitment to both the training and future projects.

The fund aims to encourage highway community enhancement in towns and parishes by providing the financial assistance, which may be required, as well as encouraging collaborative working, where possible, between towns, parishes and voluntary and community groups. The fund is predominantly for highway maintenance and can be used to enable communities to carry out the following:

- Pothole repairs (when they do not meet our intervention criteria)
- Clearing weeds
- Cleaning signs
- Cleaning drainage (gully grating)
- Cutting grass
- Repairing finger posts
- Cutting hedges
- Set up a road closure for special events.

One of the key priorities for the service for the coming year is the establishment of the Skanska contract, and the development of the necessary contract relationships. Alongside this the other priorities are:

- Managing demand by improving our web content and increasing the amount of information published
- Working efficiently by reviewing working practices, using a whole system approach

- Working efficiently by collaborative working with other Highways Authorities and partners
- Continuation of helping communities to help themselves, through the various self-help initiatives e.g. Snow Warden, Road Warden, Parish Paths Partnership.

Operate

The main objective is to operate the highway network to enable the safe and optimal flow of traffic. This is carried out by monitoring the network 24/7 via the Highways Operations Control Centre, gathering data from systems such as CCTV, real time weather and traffic information as well as intelligence provided by the public and partners such as the Police. We work closely with Skanska to manage a timely response to incidents, network safety, emergencies and severe weather, including the dissemination of information to the media and travelling public. Similarly we seek to coordinate activity on the highway including roadworks and public events to benefit the wider economy by minimising disruption and delay on the network. We also provide an enforcement function for both roadworks and on-street parking in addition to delivering wider traffic management schemes to ensure the network keeps moving in a safe way.

The key priorities for this area in the next 12 months are:

- Parking restrictions including implementing HATOC requests
- Reviewing our approach to how we coordinate and manage highway activity
- Enforcement activities.

3. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is delivered by the Engineering Design Group (EDG) and the Built Environments Team (BET). The teams undertake a range of roles within Devon County Council and acts as an in house design consultancy providing civil engineering and project management. Areas of expertise and responsibility include:

- Delivering the capital programme for both the corporate and maintained schools estate
- Pursuing additional capital resources into the maintained schools estate. (via bidding)
- Offer premises related advice to maintained schools head teachers and governors
- Responsible for responding to maintained schools estate related consultations and implementing associated changes as required
- Managing the maintained schools estate Asset Management Plan and commission associated surveys
- Asset Management of 3215 Bridges and 1700 Retaining Walls
- Bridge and retaining wall inspections
- Delivery of major infrastructure projects such as South Devon Highway and Bridge Road
- Support the Transportation team in the development of strategic infrastructure projects such as the A30 Honiton to Devonshire Inn, the A361 North Devon Link
- Road Improvements and the A382 Improvements.
- Designing Bridges & Structures for new Highway and Cycleway schemes
- Delivery of capital schemes in line with the authority's Strategic Plan
- Highways and drainage design
- Preparation of planning applications
- Preparation of flood risk assessments
- Preparation and administration of contract documents

- Site supervision
- Acoustics
- Commissioning of Capital Works.

As part of the delivery arrangements and to ensure resilience, there is a Term Professionals Services contract to allow for the flexibility that the various programmes demand. This contract needs to be renewed for 1 April 2020. Commissioning work is likely to start on this within the next 12 months.

4. Waste

The key objectives for Devon County Council as the waste disposal authority over the next 12 months are:

- To manage the demand for waste services through promotion of behavioural change & waste education
- To work more collaboratively with partners
- To move towards more economic and environmentally beneficial methods of managing waste where practicable.

The team are working on a number of projects which fulfil one or a number of the objectives, and a number of which this Committee may wish to scrutinise further.

Manage Demand

To manage demand for the service it is important to:

- Implement the Devon Waste Prevention and Re-Use action plan working with Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC) partners
- Publish the new Waste Education Strategy and Action Plan and re-procure the waste education contract
- Manage the Devon Community Action Group Project and measure its success including investigating and developing measures for community engagement work.

Collaborative working

To work more collaboratively with partners, it is intended to:

- Work with partner authorities to progress strategic partnership working including building on the success of the new Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC) including a review of the Devon Waste & Resource Management Strategy
- Promote the Shared Savings Scheme with all District Councils including implementation and management of the savings with those who have signed up to the scheme to deliver further savings.

Better methods of managing waste

In considering more economic and environmentally beneficial methods of managing waste, the following will be progressed.

- Develop and maintain a waste infrastructure asset management plan to enable targeting of resources to ensure that the waste assets remain fit for purpose

- Procure a new provider to deliver a residual waste service in North Devon & Torridge District areas including the development of a new transfer station
- Maximise the efficiency of the Exeter and Plymouth Energy from Waste plants through managing waste deliveries to optimise performance
- Review and update the closed landfill site monitoring and maintenance plans to involve GIS mapping.

5. Areas for potential Scrutiny

The Committee may wish to consider further the following areas:

Highways

- Coordinating Highway Activity
- Use of the Community Enhancement Fund

Infrastructure Development

- In advance of recommissioning the term professional services contract, review the business model for the Engineering Design Group.

Waste

- Behavioural change work focussing on waste education & community action group
- Shared Savings Scheme
- Closed landfill site management.

Meg Booth
Acting Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes
 Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development & 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 Reference
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Nil

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