

Highways Performance Dashboard

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

1. Introduction

In response to the recommendations of the Planned & Reactive Maintenance: Potholes & Drainage Task Group presented to the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee in March 2019 an updated Performance Dashboard Report has been produced. The intention of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the performance of Devon Highways.

This report considers the following areas:

- Trials of Walk/Talk/Build approach to minor works
- Reactive works including potholes and drainage cleaning
- NHT Survey Results
- Local Area Capital Programme
- Recruitment for the future of the Service
- Development of Carbon Calculator Tool
- Review of Permit Scheme.

2. Trials of Walk/Talk/Build approach to minor works

The Service is in the process of trialling a more reactive approach to delivering low value works. Some workstreams have a disproportionate lead in time defined by the need to provide the Contractor with accurate information, in line with the requirements of the contract. The preparation of this information is often resource intensive.

By moving to a cost reimbursable model, representatives of both the client and the contractor meet on site to consider and agree potential solutions. An estimate is then approved, and the work can be programmed.

Initial indications suggest that the small increased cost of this way of working is offset by freeing up capacity for the client and increased value to the community who see a more timely response.

3. Reactive works including potholes and drainage cleaning

3.1 Gully Cleansing

The overall gully cleansing programme remains on target for completion in March 2022, currently showing 1% ahead (see Appendix 1), with 10 gangs currently deployed on this work type. Work is focused on the A Road network with the winter season looming. Our Contractor is experiencing some difficulties with recruitment and vehicle reliability issues have hindered delivery.

3.2 Grips, Easements and Buddleholes

This work type is currently 6% ahead of programme and remains on target for completion this financial year (see Appendix 1). Resources have increased from 4 to 5 gangs to maintain programme.

3.3 Jetting

Since April two jetting gangs have been dedicated to addressing non-functioning drainage assets referred by the gully cleaning gangs. More recently, a third gang has been added to help meet the demand.

4. NHT Survey Results

The National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) has recently published the results of its annual CQC (Cost Quality Customer) Report which benchmarks the cost of carriageway maintenance in local authority areas on a like for like basis. The improvement of each authority is measured, and their efficiency savings quantified over time.

NHT CQC quantifies the efficiency gains made by an authority over time (since 2013/14), expressing the savings made in percentage and financial terms. These efficiency gains are savings that result from improved effectiveness as opposed to budget cuts. They represent real improvements that have been made without loss of quality or that result in higher quality for the same spend. NHT CQC analysis is undertaken by Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds who are a leading transport research centre worldwide.

Devon's results

NHT CQC Rating (based on trend figures)

90% - This is how close DCC are to the 'Predicted Minimum Cost' (100%). The difference to minimum cost is the amount you could theoretically reduce costs without affecting quality.

Efficiency Improvement (since 2013/14)

15.6% - This is the amount by which the adjusted annual expenditure has reduced and DCC has improved efficiency through the adoption of more efficient practices since 2013/14, without loss of quality.

Efficiency Savings this year (2020/21)

£6,926,850 – This is how much the Service saved in 2020/21 through the adoption of more efficient practices and represents the additional amount it would be costing the authority if we were still using 2013/14 practice.

Cumulative Efficiency Savings (since 2013/14)

£63,596,972 – This is the total amount of money the Service has saved by adopting more efficient practices since 2013/14, it is the amount extra the authority would have paid over the period had we not made these changes.

5. Local Area Capital Programme

The work carried out under the corporate 'Doing What Matters' title is now in a key transitional year. Across 2019/20 the different approach to the allocation of capital

budgets was trialled across a small number of Electoral Divisions, predominantly in the west of County. This year has seen the trial expanded across the whole of the County with the development of a Local Area Capital Programme.

In addition to more engagement with communities to help develop priorities, the schemes that have been developed have a broader scope and attempt to address all of the issues at a location rather than by individual work type. One of the key areas of learning through this approach is the increased time required to carry out advanced investigation, testing and the preparation of designs and work packages for our contractors. We are also learning that ongoing communication remains vital as projects are impacted by delays and variations to our budgets. As the project continues to learn and evolve the focus begins to move to the next financial year and ensuring programmes of work and the works packages are prepared as early as possible to provide our contractors with the opportunity to programme for as efficient delivery as possible.

6. Recruitment for the future of the Service

Each of the groups that make up the wider Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste Service has a track record in recruiting aspiring engineers and developing them to meet the needs of the service.

The current apprentice programme which has been running since 2018 is split into 'Step In Apprentices' who are new to the organisation and 'Next Step Apprentices' who are existing employees who undertake apprenticeships.

Since 2018 there has been 42 Step In Apprentices across the service. Of the 32 that to date have completed their apprenticeship, 90% have gone on to be employed within DCC. In addition to new starters the ongoing development of our existing staff is a vital part of our succession planning. In the same time period there has been 42 existing employees that have been supported through Next Step Apprenticeships.

Prior to the current arrangement the service has seen 32 apprenticeships over a 10 year period with a 75% retention rate. When you then add in the graduate trainee programme within Infrastructure Development the service has provided 118 apprenticeships and created entry points to the service at all levels from school leavers through to university graduates.

Milestone are also aware of the need to ensure their workforce is robust and meets the needs of the service into the future. They have the following initiatives in place.

- Highways Maintenance Skilled Operative Level 2 Apprenticeship – 2 year apprenticeship available for around 4-6 apprentices each year leading to an operative appointment at the end of the 2 years.
- Kickstart Programme – Application to provide a number of kickstart roles across Milestone, with ideally 2 in Devon Highways to support the Health Safety and Environment Teams.
- Armed Forces – Targeted recruitment of ex-armed forces with an established Armed Forces Community. Milestone's parent company M Group Services has recently received the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Armed Forces Covenant Gold award. The ERS has been developed by the Ministry of

Defence and recognises businesses that pledge, demonstrate and advocate support to the defence and armed forces community and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

- Commercial Chartership – Supported programme to take employees in a commercial role through their development to allow them Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors accreditation.

7. Development of Carbon Calculator Tool

In support of the drive to achieve net-zero carbon across the County Council the Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste Service has a significant role to play.

In support of this challenge the Service has been developing a tool to accurately calculate the amount of carbon produced as a by-product of the work delivered. Working in partnership with Exeter University for just over 12 months a beta version of the tool has been developed. This tool will provide engineers with not only the total volume of carbon but a detailed breakdown which will enable further work to understand where to prioritise efforts to achieve future reductions.

Carbon is going to significantly impact the way we work in the future. Currently decisions are typically made with consideration of cost against performance/quality. We are already beginning to bring carbon into that decision making process as a third factor.

Discussions with authorities throughout both the south west and nationally indicate that this tool is as well developed as any other. We are sharing our experience and work to date to achieve buy in from others with the ultimate aim of adoption across the sector.

In addition, work continues through our Materials Laboratory in trialling lower carbon materials, whilst considering any negative impacts on the environment or durability.

8. Review of Permit Scheme

Following the successful implementation of the Streetworks Permit Scheme a twelve month review was carried out to ensure the scheme is operating effectively and efficiently. The review highlighted that the service received 60% more permit applications than the original business case estimated (33,000 vs 20,000). While the team has been able to control the backlog of permits that require processing this increase in applications has impacted the team's ability to co-ordinate activity on the network.

A proposal is being developed to create additional resilience which will in turn create the capacity to allow more active co-ordination to be carried out. Part of the consequence of having to issue more permits than had been planned is that we are currently running financially at a surplus, which legally we are not permitted to do when considered over a three year period. Although the additional staffing to create resilience can be paid for out of the surplus, it does mean that the permit fees cost will need to be reduced for a period of time, to make sure that there is no surplus at the end of the 3rd year (22/23).

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Electoral Divisions: All

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		
Highways Performance Dashboard – Final		

Appendix 1 to HIW/21/73

Gully Cleaning Programme

As of 3rd October (50% through the financial year)

	Total Programmed	Gullies Attended	Gullies Cleaned	Gullies Left to clean	% Complete
Honiton	25,518	13,658	12,437	13,081	49%
Exeter	33,664	19,030	17,795	15,869	53%
Rydon	24,024	11,516	10,263	13,761	43%
South Hams	18,551	10,432	9,345	9,206	50%
Okehampton	15,230	10,621	10,131	5,099	67%
Merton	12,231	7,202	6,537	5,694	53%
South Molton	24,490	12,131	10,580	13,910	43%
	153,708	84,590	77,088	76,620	51%

Grips, Easements and Buddleholes Programme

As of 3rd October (50% through the financial year)

	To be Cleaned	Cleaned	Left to Attend	Complete (%)	Programmed (m)	Cleaned (m)	Additional Cleaned (m)	% Complete
South	12,289	6,282	6,007	51%	43,405	30,350	8,022	51%
North	9,959	8,714	1,245	87%	27,087	25,780	1,759	87%
West	17,489	7,649	9,840	44%	62,242	43,164	14,113	44%
Torridge	23,748	11,217	12,531	47%	67,817	33,517	5,595	47%
East	44,805	21,785	23,020	49%	115,080	54,653	1,116	49%
	108,290	55,647	52,643	51%	315,632	187,464	30,604	56%