

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title:	Agenda																
Date:	Wednesday 25 October 2017																
Time:	4.00 pm																
Venue:	Conference Chamber West West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds																
Full Members:	<p align="center">Membership subject to approval at Extraordinary Council on 17 October 2017</p> <p align="center">Chairman Diane Hind</p> <p align="center">Vice Chairman Susan Glossop</p> <table> <tr> <td><u>Conservative Members (12)</u></td> <td>Simon Brown Patrick Chung Paula Fox Susan Glossop Richard Rout Andrew Speed</td> <td>Clive Springett Sarah Stamp Jim Thorndyke Frank Warby Vacancy Vacancy</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Charter Member (1)</u></td> <td>Diane Hind</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Haverhill Indys (1)</u></td> <td>John Burns</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Independent Member (1)</u></td> <td>Paul Hopfensperger</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>UKIP Member (1)</u></td> <td>Vacancy</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<u>Conservative Members (12)</u>	Simon Brown Patrick Chung Paula Fox Susan Glossop Richard Rout Andrew Speed	Clive Springett Sarah Stamp Jim Thorndyke Frank Warby Vacancy Vacancy	<u>Charter Member (1)</u>	Diane Hind		<u>Haverhill Indys (1)</u>	John Burns		<u>Independent Member (1)</u>	Paul Hopfensperger		<u>UKIP Member (1)</u>	Vacancy	
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Substitutes:	<table> <tr> <td><u>Conservative Members (5)</u></td> <td>Wayne Hailstone Margaret Marks Jane Midwood</td> <td>David Roach Peter Thompson Patricia Warby</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Charter Member (1)</u></td> <td>Julia Wakelam</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Haverhill Indys (1)</u></td> <td>Tony Brown</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>UKIP Member (1)</u></td> <td>Anthony Williams</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<u>Conservative Members (5)</u>	Wayne Hailstone Margaret Marks Jane Midwood	David Roach Peter Thompson Patricia Warby	<u>Charter Member (1)</u>	Julia Wakelam		<u>Haverhill Indys (1)</u>	Tony Brown		<u>UKIP Member (1)</u>	Anthony Williams				
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Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
Quorum:	Six Members
Committee administrator:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Public Information



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Venue:	West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU	Tel: 01284 757120 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Web: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:	Copies of the agenda and reports are open for public inspection at the above address at least five clear days before the meeting. They are also available to view on our website.	
Attendance at meetings:	The Borough Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.	
Public participation:	<p>Members of the public who live or work in the Borough are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.</p> <p>There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.</p>	
Disabled access:	<p>West Suffolk House has facilities for people with mobility impairments including a lift and wheelchair accessible WCs. However in the event of an emergency use of the lift is restricted for health and safety reasons.</p> <p>Visitor parking is at the car park at the front of the building and there are a number of accessible spaces.</p>	
Induction loop:	An Induction loop is available for meetings held in the Conference Chamber.	
Recording of meetings:	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>	

Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 - Public

1. Substitutes

Any Member who is substituting for another Member should so indicate, together with the name of the relevant absent Member.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Public Participation

Members of the public who live or work in the Borough are invited to put one question/statement of not more than 3 minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within 3 minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.

There is an overall limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.

4. Suffolk County Council - Highways Services

1 - 30

Report No: **OAS/SE/17/025**

Councillor Jane Storey (Substantive Cabinet Member for Highways) and Councillor Louis Busuttill (Member with Special Responsibility for Highways Operational Performance) from Suffolk County Council have been invited to the meeting, and will be accompanied by representatives from Suffolk Highways to discuss how communication can be improved between Highways and various tiers of local government for the benefit of all residents and Councillors in West Suffolk.

Part 2 – Exempt

NONE

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Suffolk County Council – Highways Services	
Report No:	OAS/SE/17/025	
Report to and date:	Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee	25 October 2017
Chairman of the Committee	Councillor Diane Hind Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 706542 Email: diane.hind@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member: Suffolk County Council:	Councillor Jane Storey Substantive Cabinet Member for Highways	
Cabinet Member: St Edmundsbury Borough Council	Councillor Alaric Pugh Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth Tel: 07930 460899 Email: alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>1) To discuss how communication can be improved between Highways and various tiers of local government for the benefit of all residents and Councillors in West Suffolk.</p> <p>2) To hear about the new Suffolk Highways Structure, which commenced on 4 September 2017, to deal with the workload and how Suffolk County Council intends to evaluate the success of the scheme and how the Borough Council can help.</p>	

Recommendation:	Having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:		
	1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet for Highways and Transport for his consideration; 2) Request further information and/or receive a future update.		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Consultation:	• N/A		
Alternative option(s):	• N/A		
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
Wards affected:	All		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Link to Suffolk County Council Website: Suffolk County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 27 July 2017		
Documents attached:	Appendix 1 – SCC OAS Presentation (27 July 2017) – Integration for Suffolk Highways Appendix 2 – SCC Scrutiny Committee: Extract from Minutes (27 July 2017)		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Background: St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1.1.1 The Committee at its meeting held on 19 July 2017, received a Work Programme Suggestion from Councillors Diane Hind and Susan Glossop regarding concerns raised with them by residents relating to various highways issues.
- 1.1.2 The Committee felt it needed to gain a better understanding of the various highways issues and to discuss how to improve communication between various tiers of local government for the benefit of all residents and Councillors in West Suffolk.
- 1.1.3 The Committee acknowledged that the Borough Council was not the responsible authority for highways and suggested that the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and representatives from Suffolk Highways be invited to a future meeting of the Committee, to listen to the Committee's concerns and to answer questions from the Committee.
- 1.1.4 The Committee resolved to include the issue into its forward work programme and invite the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to a future meeting of the Committee.

1.2 Background: Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee

- 1.2.1 On 27 July 2017, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended the Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee to listen to their Committee's consideration of progress with the development of new integrated team arrangements for the delivery of highways services across Suffolk.
- 1.2.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** to the report, is the presentation given to the Scrutiny Committee by Mark Stevens (Assistant Director – Operational Highways).
- 1.2.3 Attached at **Appendix 2** to the report, is an extract from the Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee Minute, held on 27 July 2017.

1.3 Proposals

- 1.3.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions and comment on what they have heard on ways of improving communication and the integration of the new Suffolk Highways structure, which commenced on 4 September 2017.

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Suffolk County Council

Scrutiny Committee meeting

27TH JULY 2017

INTEGRATION FOR SUFFOLK HIGHWAYS

Mark Stevens

Assistant Director Operational Highways

Presentation coverage

- Highway Transformation Programme framework and aspirations
- Components of integration
- The success of early examples of integrated teams
- The 12-month programme to deliver
- The service delivery centres
- Senior Leadership Team responsibilities

Transformation defined in Dec 2015

Good working was being done with an existing transformation programme but was being inconsistently implemented. A more robust structure to the programme was needed with different governance and levels of engagement.



Five core priorities emerged:

- Contract management (including performance management & QMS)
- Integration (including end-to-end reviews, staff & ICT matters)
- Programme management (including response timescales)
- Finance (including ordering and payments)
- Asset management (including budget allocations & programme generation)

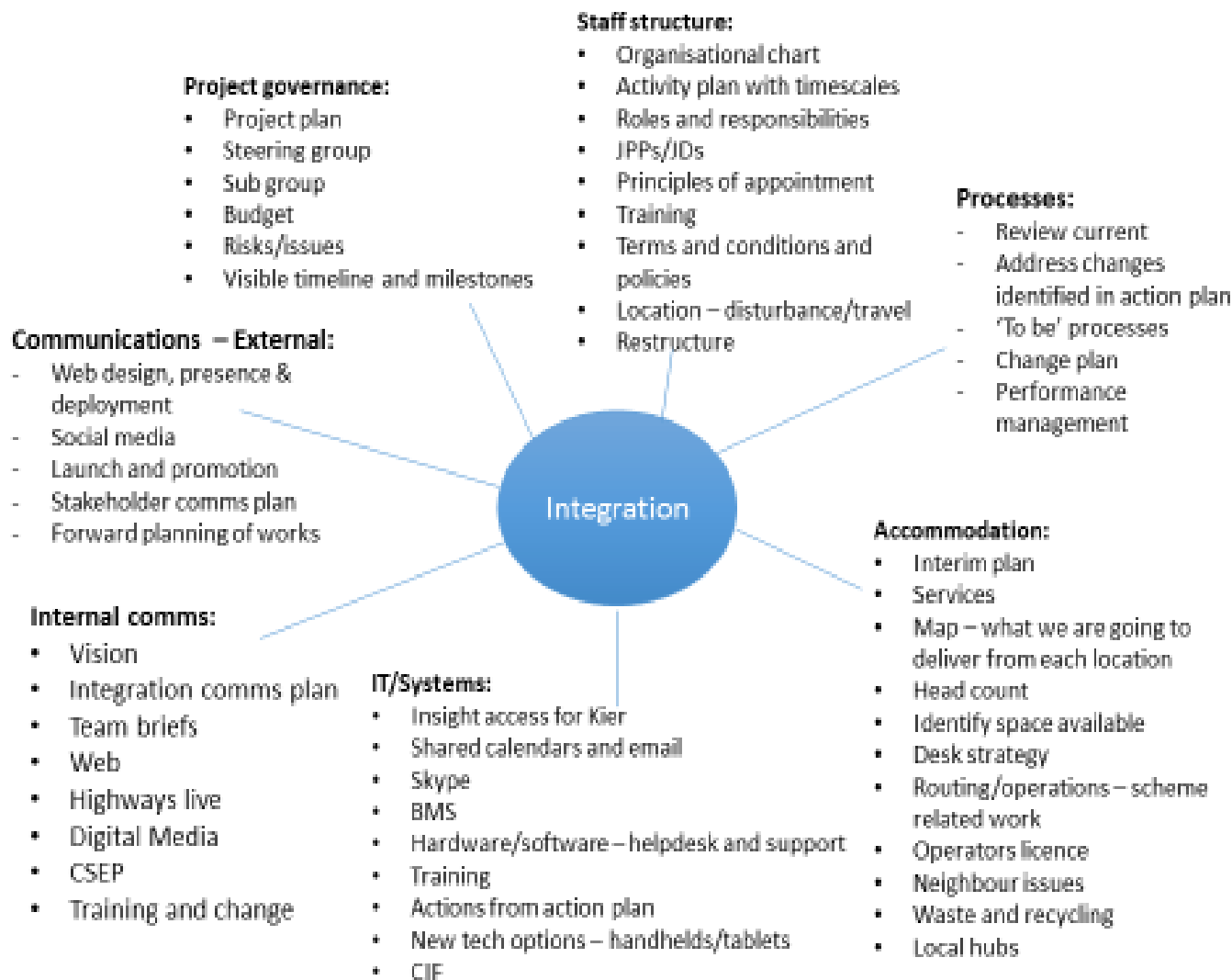
With an overarching need for significant levels of internal and external communication (including completion of the branding exercise).

Programme/Workstream Targets

The aspiration in December 2015 was to complete all elements of the Highways Transformation Programme by the end of March 2017 with some interim workstream milestones:

- Contract Management – a new outcomes-focused Performance Management Framework to be in place by the end of March 2016
- Integration – end-to-end (system thinking-driven) reviews completed by June 2016
- Programme Management – revised Highway Maintenance Operational Plan by June 2016
- Finance – closure of contract year 1 & 2 payments by end of March 2016
- Asset Management – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan in place by November 2016, focused on preventative maintenance
- Communications – substantial work completed by June 2016, including the establishment/adoption of consistent branding

The many components to integration



An alliance (Suffolk Highways) is/has...

- A collaborative and integrated team brought together from across partners and owners to deliver a programme or project;
- Shared commercial goals, aligned directly with customer or project outcomes;
- Integrated teams, developed on a best for task basis; Underpinned by a commitment to key working principles and trust-based relationships;
- An emphasis on creating the right culture and behaviours, including no blame;
- Strong, collective and unanimous leadership

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HR issues (Future Design Group – 25th April 2016)

Short/medium term:

- Integrated structure for Suffolk Highways
- Posts being filled by Kier or SCC staff – employer remains the same
- Refresh of old JPPs/creating new JPPs & evaluation of posts
- Relocation of staff from area offices/ reduction in business support
- HR Action Plan – staff savings
- Joint (Suffolk Highways) policies

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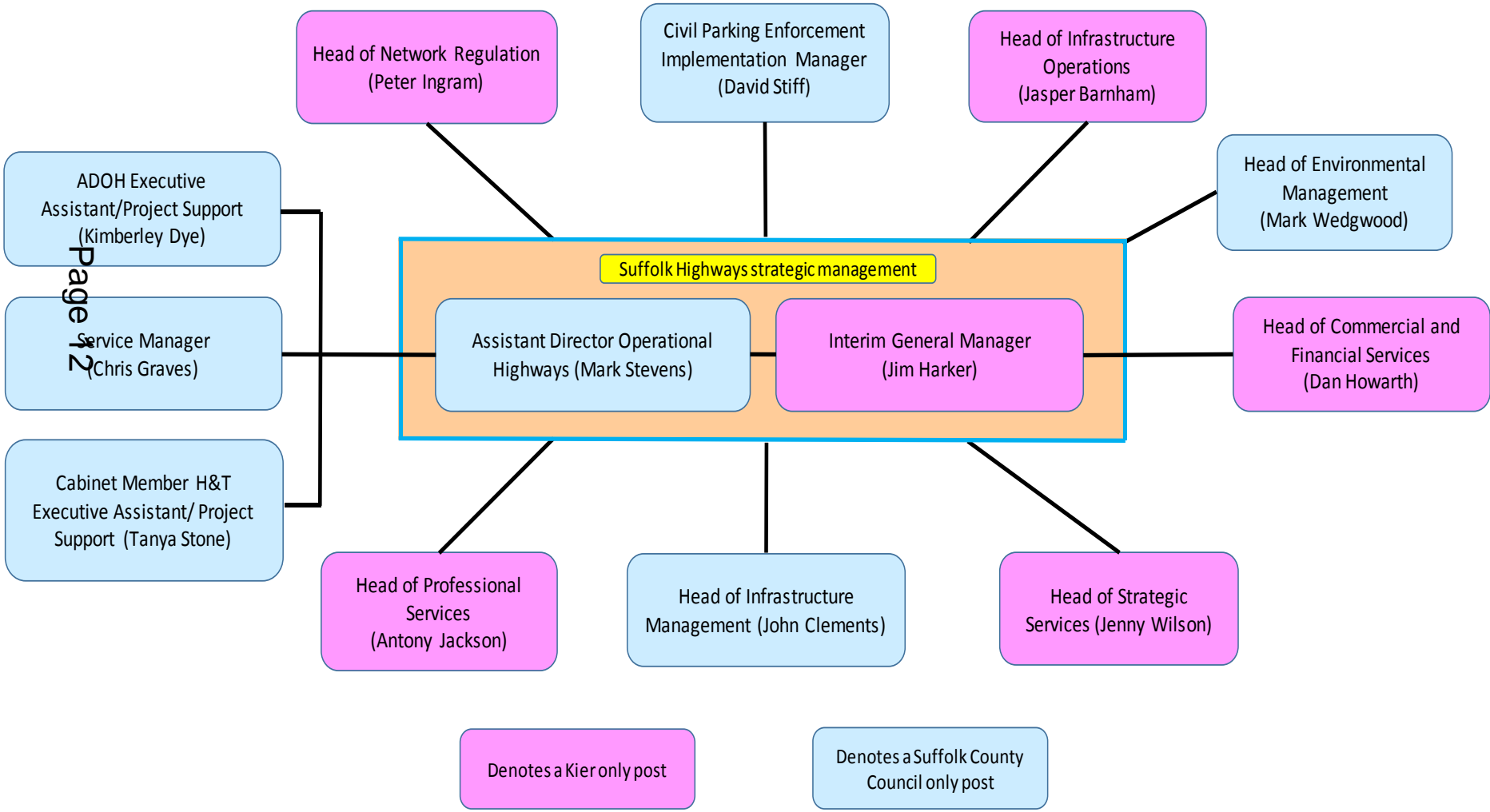
‘Line’ management

Not just Kier and Operational Highways

Longer term:

- Suffolk Highways a ‘stand-alone’ organisation? Trading capability
- Recruitment and retention
- Career progression/performance-related pay

Suffolk Highways Senior Leadership Team

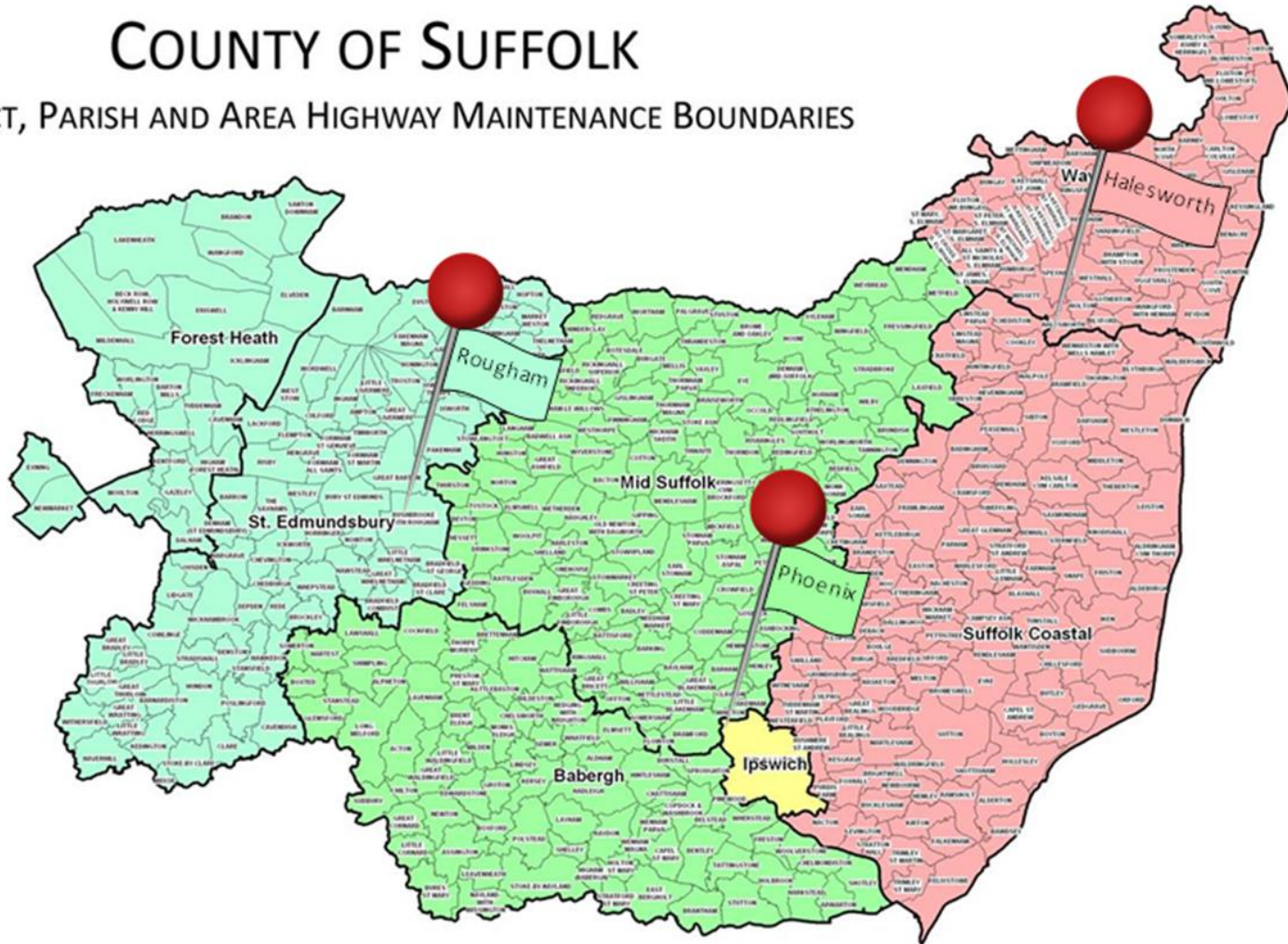


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Integrated teams at the right locations

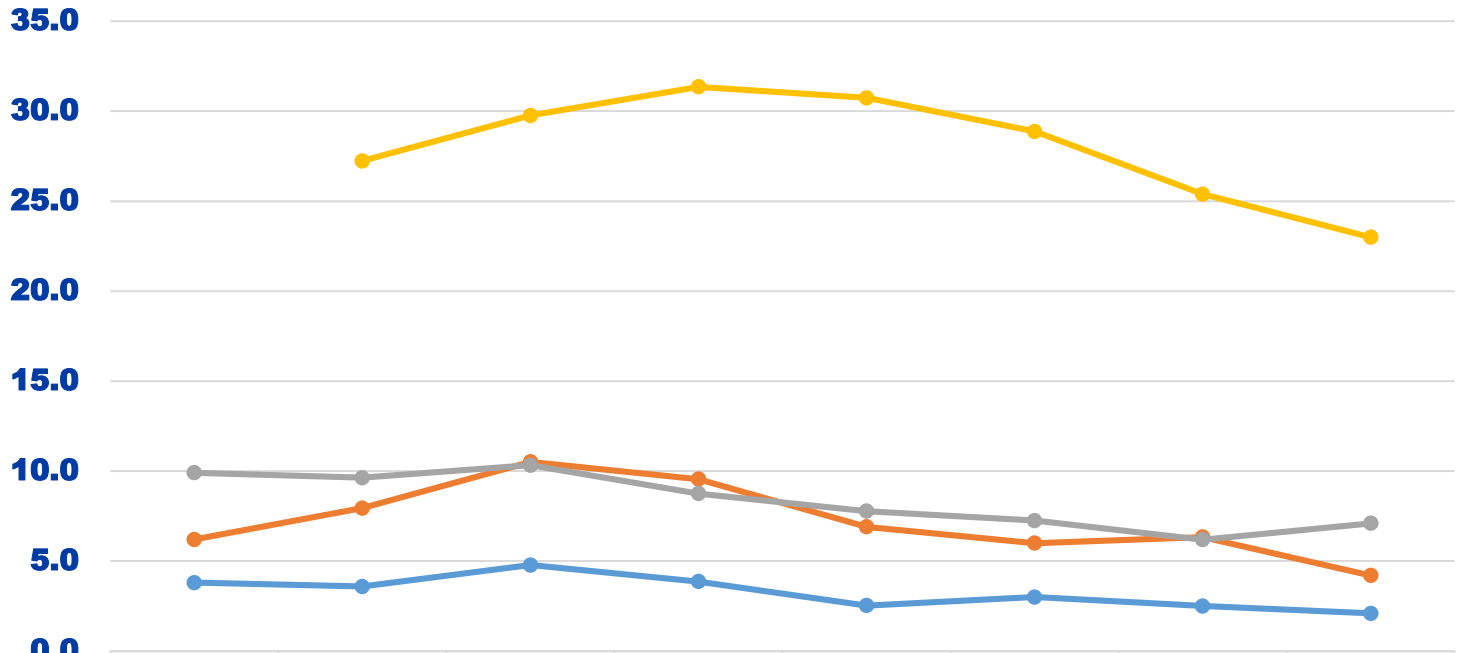
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

DISTRICT, PARISH AND AREA HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE BOUNDARIES



Surface dressing/surfacing integrated team

Percentage of roads where maintenance should be considered



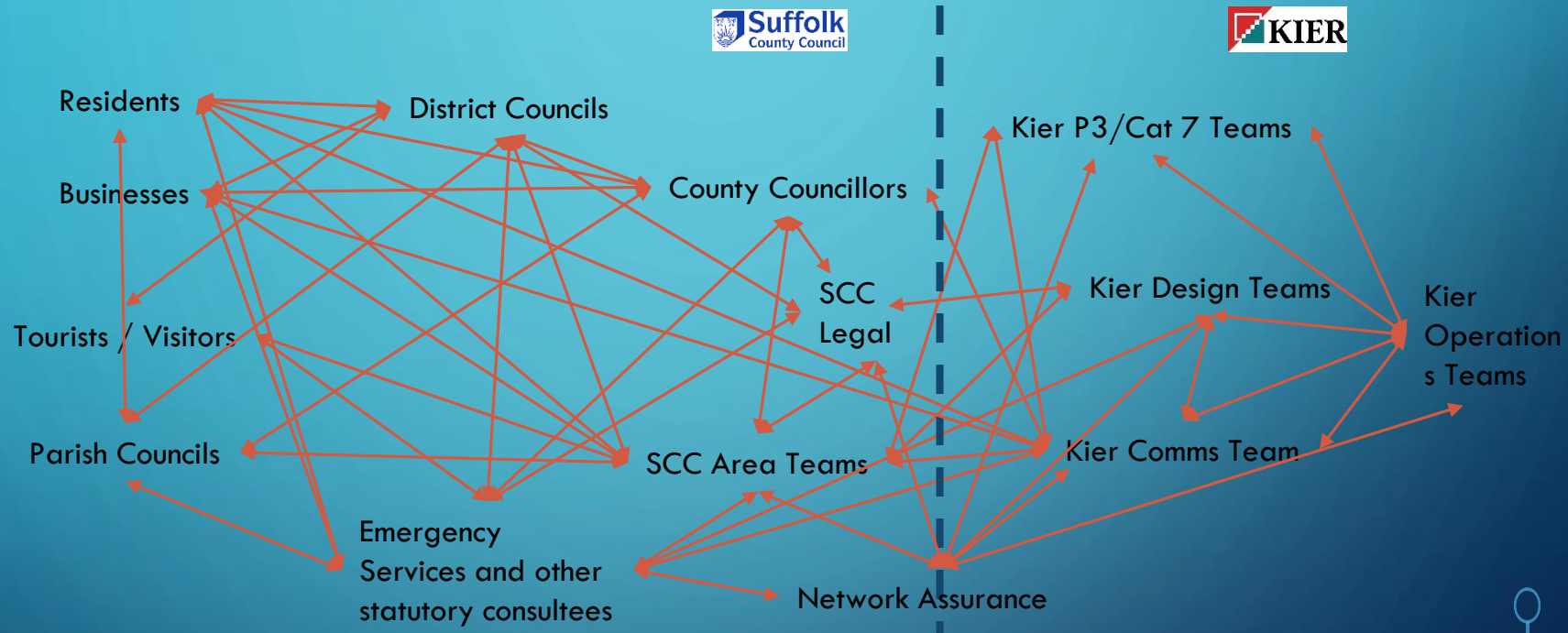
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	2008-2010	2009-2011	2010-2012	2011-2013	2012-2014	2013-2015	2014-2016	2015-2017
—●— A Roads (NI 168)	3.8	3.6	4.8	3.9	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.1
—●— B Roads (NI 169)	6.2	7.9	10.5	9.6	6.9	6.0	6.3	4.2
—●— C Roads (NI 169)	9.9	9.6	10.3	8.8	7.8	7.3	6.2	7.1
—●— U Class (BV224b)		27.2	29.8	31.4	30.7	28.9	25.4	23.0

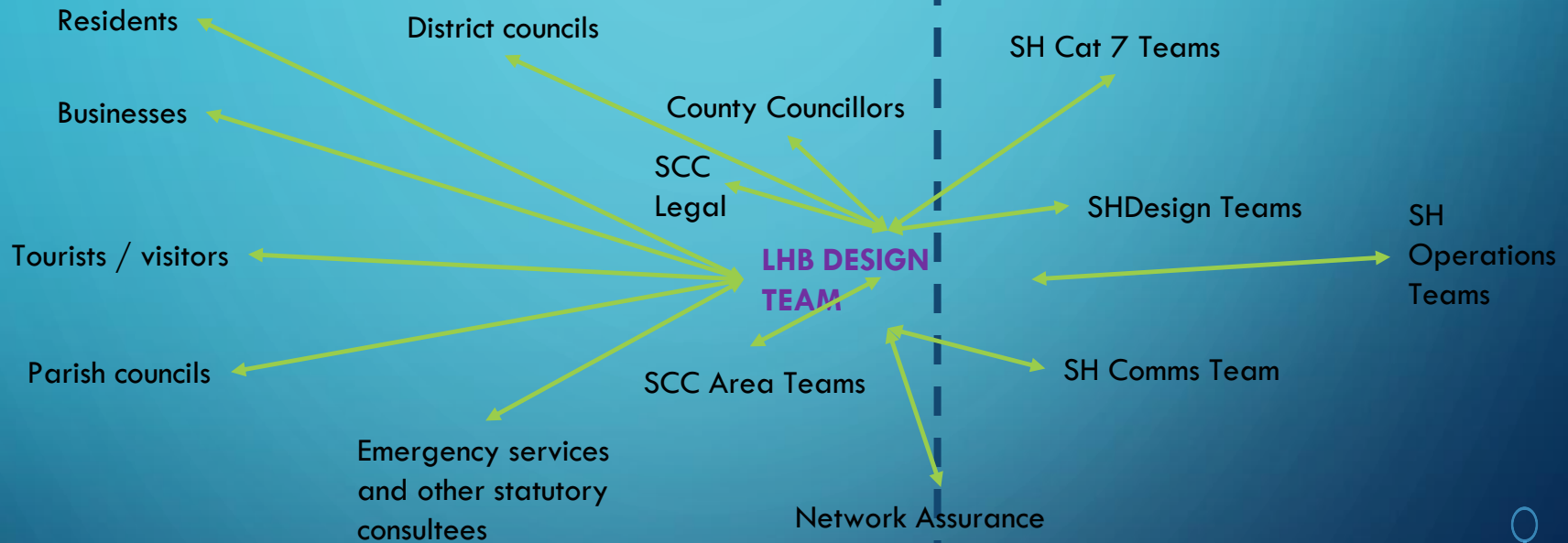
—●— A Roads (NI 168) —●— B Roads (NI 169) —●— C Roads (NI 169) —●— U Class (BV224b)

LOCAL HIGHWAY BUDGET STAKEHOLDER LINKS

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INTEGRATION OF THE LHB TEAM



Continuing progress with LHB/speed schemes

Project Status	May	June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	May
	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017
Design Ordered / Ongoing	52	42	36	43	43	39	48	49	50
Design Complete / Ordered for Construction	51	46	30	40	37	46	48	58	69
Construction Complete	0	37	72	82	101	120	145	146	192
Scheme Cancelled	0	14	15	15	16	15	16	16	16
Grand Total	103	139	153	180	197	220	257	269	327

Speed Limit Assessment Analysis

Speed limit request	Requests received but no further action	Request received and initial assessment conducted - doesn't meet criteria	With Councillor to consider estimate	Meets criteria and report prepared for Speed Limit Cases Panel	Presented to SLCP and rejected	Presented to SLCP, approved and yet to go to Cabinet Member	Presented to SLCP but referred to Rights of Way Committee	Awaiting preparation / publication of permanent TRO	All preparatory work completed and ordered	Works programmed but not yet implemented	Implemented and operational	Total
20	11		5					5			9	30
30	25		1	4	1			6			1	38
40	10	1		4				4			3	22
50	1										1	2
Totals	47	1	6	8	1	0	0	15	0	0	14	92

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A clearer picture on flooding

The situation in September 2016:

- 27 internal property flooding schemes identified by the Area Highway Offices
- An integrated drainage team being established and investigations started
- 140 schemes were all to be properly prioritised, assessed and delivered – suggesting that there was 4 to 5 years of work that lay ahead

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The situation in July 2017:

- Actually 32 internal property flooding schemes – 22 are complete or no further action needed
- 74 schemes in 2016/17 programme – 52 complete or no further action needed
- 94 schemes in 2017/18 programme – 15 complete or no further action needed
- There were **392** schemes to be tackled rather than the 140 schemes initially identified

Scheme Status	Number of Schemes
Babergh	78
Forest Heath	20
Ipswich	19
Mid Suffolk	68
St Edmundsbury	56
Suffolk Coastal	116
Waveney	35
Grand Total	392

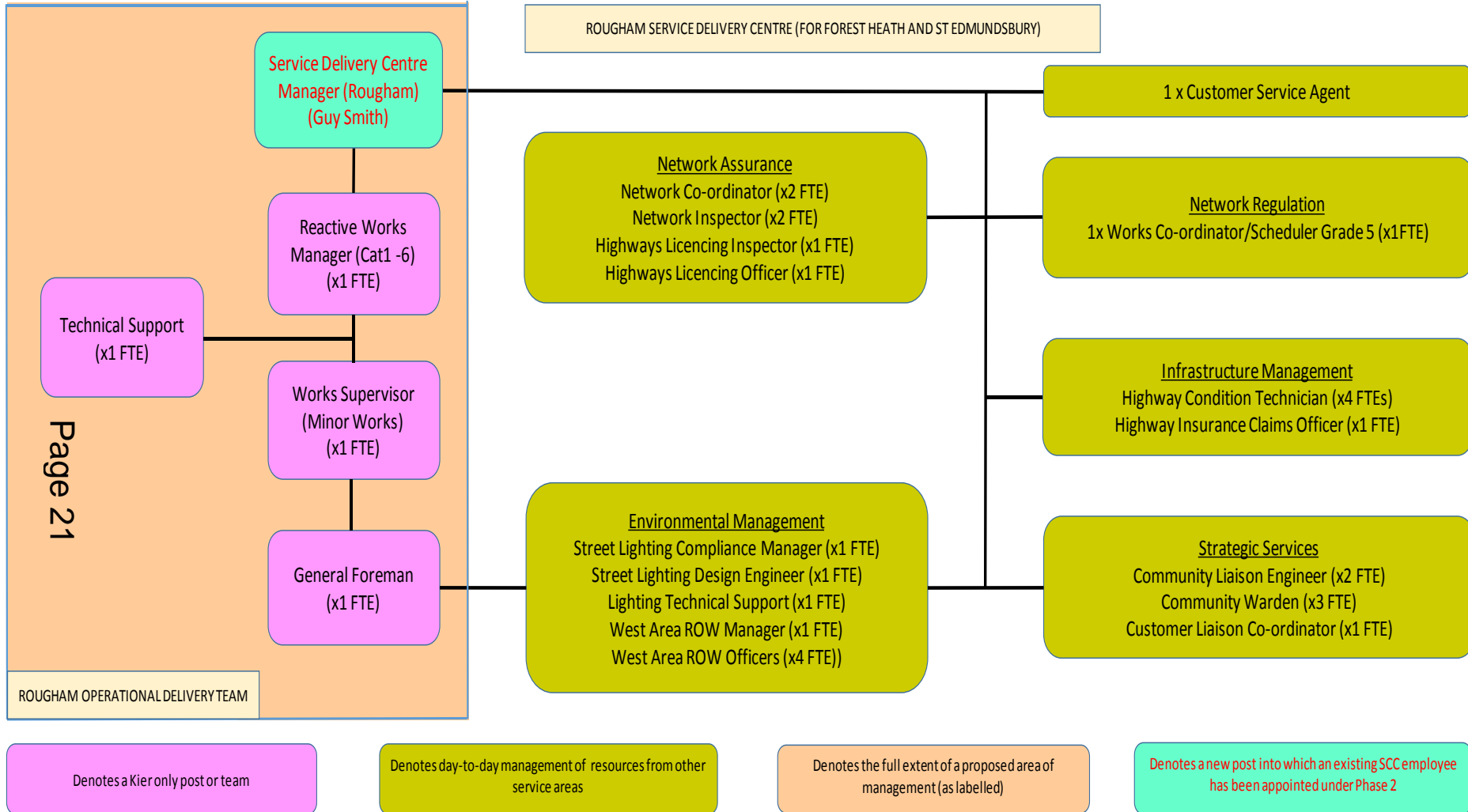
The organisational change programme

- a) Identifying senior management structure – Phase 1 – October 2016
- b) Identifying indicative underlying structure – October to December 2016
- c) Drafting 8no. (4-page) job & person profiles (JPPs) and supplementary supporting evaluation forms or ‘SSEFs’ (each being 7-8 pages of detail) for Phase 1 – early January 2017
- d) Job evaluation of ‘Suffolk Highways’ Phase 1 JPPs with new values, behaviours & 21st Century Manager roles – 12th January 2017
- e) Start of Phase 1 consultation (two weeks) on 16th January 2017
- f) Progression of consultation, selection and appointments to roles
- g) Appointments made to Phase 1 posts with effect from 6th March 2017
- h) Senior Leadership Team undertook further work on the proposed underlying structure – 6th March to 24th March 2017

The programme continued

- i) Drafting JPPs and SSEFs for Phase 2 – February/March 2017
- j) Job evaluation of 47 new and 16 revised Phase 2 JPPs – 9th March and 15th March 2017
- k) Completion of conversion of 43 existing SCC JPPs into new Suffolk Highways Phase 2 JPPs – 24th March 2017
- l) Start of Phase 2 consultation (30 days) on 28th March 2017
- m) End of Phase 2 consultation on 28th April 2017
- n) Consultation feedback to all staff (93 slides) – 19th May 2017
- o) Submission of staff preference forms – by 5th June 2017
- p) Progression of consultation, selection and appointments to roles
- q) Staff notified of appointments made to Phase 2 posts on Friday 7th July 2017
- r) The new structure will take effect from 4th September 2017

Service delivery centre resource (1)



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Service delivery centre resource (2)

IPSWICH SERVICE DELIVERY CENTRE (FOR BABERGH AND IPSWICH)

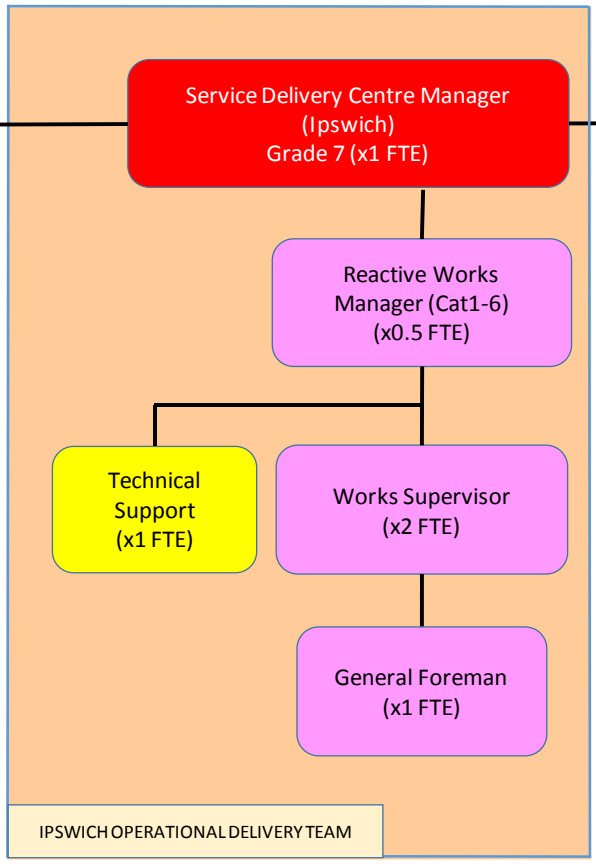
Infrastructure Operations
 Traffic Management Manager (x1 FTE)
 Traffic Management Supervisor (Schemes) (x1 FTE)
 Drainage Works Manager (x1 FTE)
 Signs & Lines Works Manager (x1 FTE)
 Depot Foreman (x1 FTE)
 Carriageway & Surface Treatments Manager (x1 FTE)
 Schemes Supervisor (x1 FTE)
 Structures Works Manager (x1 FTE)
 Construction Manager (x1 FTE)

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Infrastructure Operations
 Traffic Management Designer (Surfacing) (x1 FTE)
 Footways & Street Furniture Works Manager (x1 FTE)
 Surface Dressing Supervisor (x1 FTE)

Denotes day-to-day management of resources from other service areas

Denotes the full extent of a proposed area of management (as labelled)



IPSWICH OPERATIONAL DELIVERY TEAM

Denotes a Kier only post or team

SERVICE DELIVERY CENTRE LINKAGE TO:

Network Regulation
 1x Works Co-ordinator/Scheduler

Infrastructure Management
 4x Highway Condition Technician
 1x Technical Support Officer

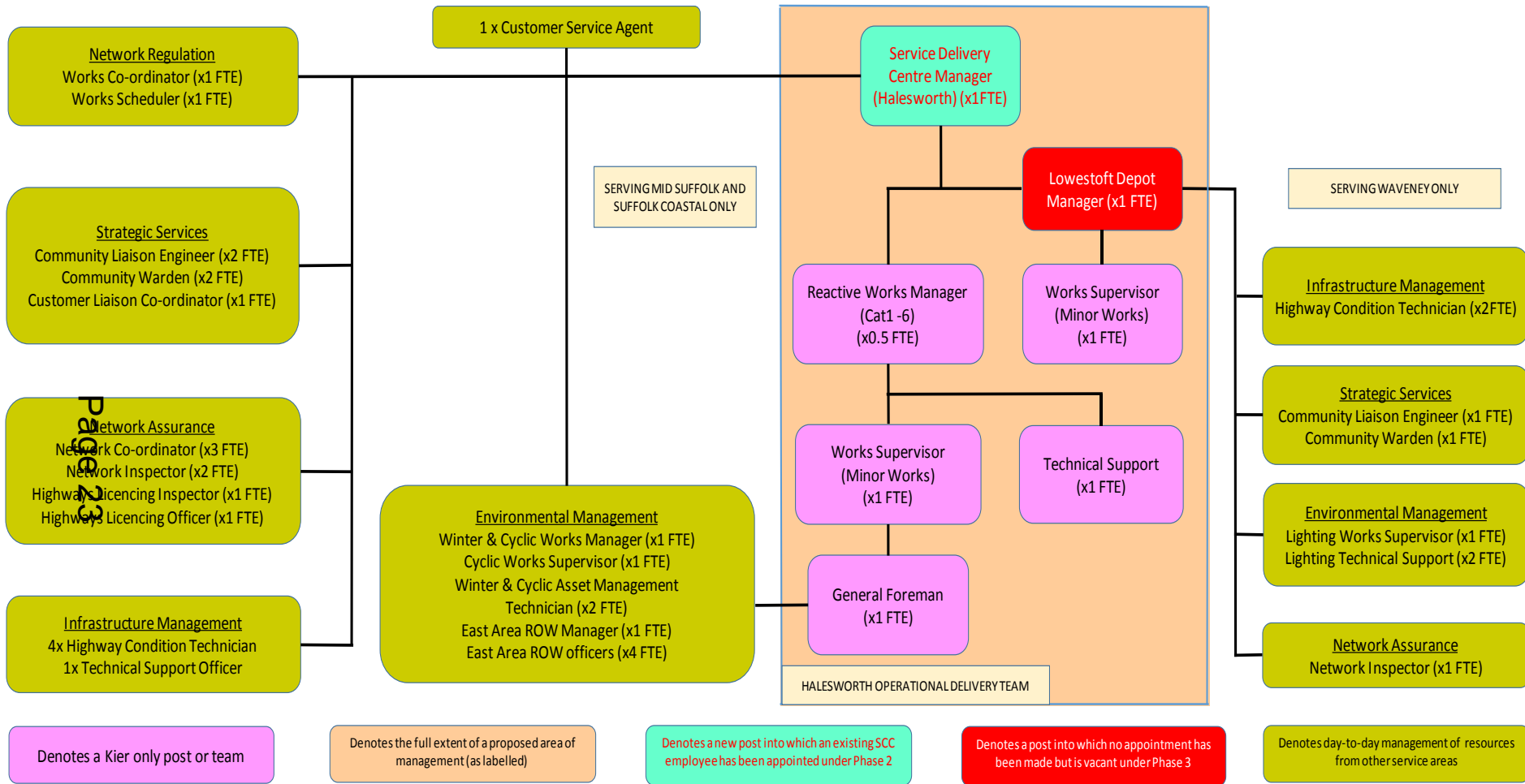
Strategic Services
 2x Community Liaison Engineer
 3x Community Warden
 2x Customer Liaison Co-ordinator

1 x Customer Service Agent

Denotes a Kier only post into which no existing Kier post-holders can be slotted in but can be appointed to

Denotes a post into which no appointment has been made but is vacant under Phase 3

Service delivery centre resource (3)



Senior Leadership Team responsibilities (1)

Mark Stevens – Assistant Director Operational Highways & **Jim Harker** – Interim General Manager provide the oversight/management of and strategic direction for the Suffolk Highways Services Contract

Antony Jackson – Head of Professional Services provides leadership for improvement scheme feasibility, technical design/works preparation, drainage & Local Highway Budget schemes design

Chris Graves – Service Manager is responsible for the adherence to the contract by Suffolk Highways, including financial control and the Network Assurance function (which includes use of Suffolk's roads by public utilities)

Dan Howarth – Head of Commercial and Financial Services manages works estimation, expenditure control and financial profiling

David Stiff – Civil Parking Enforcement Implementation Manager is heading up the delivery of civil parking enforcement by Suffolk's district and borough councils by April 2019

Senior Leadership Team responsibilities (2)

Jasper Barnham – Head of Infrastructure Operations is responsible for works delivery management, including surface dressing, surfacing, footway works and structural repairs and provision of winter maintenance resources

Jenny Wilson – Head of Strategic Services leads communications, customer services (including councillor and community liaison) performance monitoring, quality assurance, business development and highways ICT

John Clements – Head of Infrastructure Management leads the prioritisation and apportionment of revenue budgets/capital allocations, safety inspections, bridge/structures maintenance and improvement, asset data management and asset condition assessment

Mark Wedgwood – Head of Environmental Management looks after grass cutting, weed spraying & general soft estate management, gully cleansing, public rights of way, street lighting and winter maintenance response

Peter Ingram – Head of Network Regulation is the lead for general highway repairs/major works, traffic signals, road safety, speed and traffic management

Any questions?

Suffolk County Council – Scrutiny Committee

**Extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee
held on 27 July 2017**

10. Highways Services Integrated Teams

At Agenda Item 5 the Committee considered a report setting out progress with the development of new integrated team arrangements for the delivery of highways services.

The Chairman welcomed the following witnesses:

Councillor James Finch, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Mark Stevens, Assistant Director (Operational Highways)
Jim Harker, Interim General Manager, Suffolk Highways
Peter Ingram, Head of Network Regulation, Kier Services
John Clements, Head of Infrastructure Management
Chris Graves, Service Manager, Resource Management
Jenny Wilson, Head of Strategic Services, Suffolk Highways

The Chairman also welcomed Councillors John Burns, Susan Glossop and Diane Hind, members of the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had been invited to observe the meeting since their Committee was considering undertaking scrutiny of highways services in West Suffolk.

Councillor Finch made some introductory remarks and Mark Stevens gave a presentation. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

Recommendation: The Committee agreed:

- a) To urge the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to lobby for better funding for local highways authorities from central government.
- b) To establish a “task and finish group” to meet with Councillor Alexander Nicoll, Member with Special Responsibility for Highways Information to consider:
 - i) how communications with residents and councillors on highways matters could be improved;
 - ii) mechanisms for managing customer expectations in relation to highways services, in the light of reducing resources;
 - iii) the wording of the automated responses on the highways reporting system and how these messages could be improved;

- iv) potential pro-active communications about how Suffolk Highways was planning for winter 2017/18.
- c) To recommend to the Assistant Director (Operational Highways), that all councillors should be proactively contacted prior to commencement of the new service on 4 September 2017 with contact details showing "who was who" at their local Service Delivery Centre, details of the role of the community engineer, how problems could be escalated, and information about what could be expected in terms of regular engagement going forward.
- d) To note the officer recommendations on page 19 (paragraphs 22 and 23) of the report at Agenda Item 5 and to express concern at the statement that it would take *"a number of months after [implementation on] 4 September 2017 for Suffolk Highways to begin to make the fullest impact on the delivery of the service"*.
- e) To recommend to the Corporate Management Team that the learning from the experience of the Highways Transformation Programme should be captured and used to inform future transformation work, particularly with regard to the need to ensure significant programmes of work could be adequately resourced from the corporate centre.
- f) To request information bulletins on the following:
 - i) the outcome of the work taking place with Cranfield University on value for money of highways services, including details of how Suffolk was performing;
 - ii) details of which aspects of the Council's highways responsibilities still sat within the County Council structure (rather than in Suffolk Highways), who was responsible and in which part of the organisation;
 - iii) details of how the County Council was responding to new technology in relation to highways services;
 - iv) clarification about the arrangements for encouraging communities to take on responsibility for certain aspects of highways work and what communities could do for themselves;
 - v) details of skills gaps within the new integrated teams and how these were being addressed;
 - vi) an update on local highways budgets, in order to consider whether to review this further.

Reason for recommendation:

- a) The Committee recognised that the money allocated to Suffolk County Council for highways maintenance was insufficient to meet the high level of demand which was the inevitable consequence of underinvestment over a number of years as a result of restrictions on public expenditure.

Members accepted that all other local highways authorities were in a similar position, and they wished to encourage the Leader and Cabinet Member to redouble their efforts to bring this problem to the attention of central government

- b) The Committee was pleased to hear that Councillor Alexander Nicoll was taking on special responsibility for Highways Information. Councillors wished to be actively involved in discussions with him about how communications could be improved, because they wished to ensure that when highways operations were planned, local councillors and local residents were given accurate information with adequate notice.

Members recognised that managing the expectations of the public was a significant challenge, as it was clear that the requirement for highways improvements far outstripped the resources available. Councillors often bore the brunt of complaints from local residents, therefore they wished to ensure that in its communications with the public, Suffolk Highways sent out messages which were sensitive to the concerns of residents, whilst at the same time giving a realistic response about whether or when defects could be rectified. In this respect, they had a number of criticisms about the current wording of the automated responses on the highways reporting system and they wished to suggest improvements.

Members were also aware that winter preparedness was a significant reputational issue for the Council, and suggested there was an opportunity for some pro-active communications on this subject.

- c) The Committee heard that from 4 September 2017 Service Delivery Centres would be managing the delivery of Suffolk Highways work. The intention was that community engineers would work with town and parish councils to understand local needs and assess competing demands. Members were pleased to hear that generic email addresses were already being made available to all county councillors, but they preferred to have a named contact, and therefore considered that before the new arrangements came into force each county councillor should be given the names of the officers they could get in touch with to discuss particular highways issues and problems needing attention within their division.
- d) The Committee was aware that the contract with Kier had been in existence since 2013. Whilst recognising that the process for implementing the new Suffolk Highways structure had been difficult and had required a great deal of effort, members regretted the length of time it had taken to bring about this organisational change. The Committee understood that the new arrangements were intended to rectify organisational problems which had built up over a number of years and therefore not all the benefits of the new arrangements would be felt immediately. Nevertheless, members considered that the new Service Delivery Centres should be fully operational by soon after 4 September 2017.
- e) The Committee heard that the original aim was to complete the reorganisation by 1 May 2017. This target had not been achieved, partly because the amount of time required for dealing with HR issues had been

underestimated. Although the Senior Leadership Team had received help from the HR team, much of the work had fallen to senior Highways officers, at a time when they had been also trying to continue with the "day job". Members were also aware that delays had occurred because of accommodation problems and IT issues. The relevant corporate HR, Property and IT teams had been supportive, but had been stretched as a result of reorganisations occurring simultaneously in other parts of the Council. The Committee expressed concern at the apparent lack of resource available from the corporate centre, and wished to ensure that the experience gained from the Highways Services reorganisation was used to good effect in any future transformation work.

- f) (i) Suffolk Highways was involved with work undertaken by Cranfield University to assess the value for money being derived from the Highways Services contract. The work would continue over the next 12 months, and the Committee wished to be kept informed about the findings.
- (ii) The Committee was aware that the organisational change under review affected all staff dealing with operational highways matters, and that other areas of highways work (such as strategic planning) remained within the County Council structure. Members wished to receive clarification as to where the various responsibilities now lay.
- (iii) The Committee heard that Suffolk Highways was keen to explore ways of taking advantage of new technology (for example through the use of drones). Members wished to know more about current thinking with regard to future innovation.
- (iv) The Committee was aware that Suffolk Highways was piloting a new information pack aimed at helping local communities understand what work they could do for themselves, such as cleaning signs or gritting roads. Members wished to receive further information about ways in which local communities were being actively encouraged to take on these roles.
- (v) The Committee heard that the Senior Leadership Team was in the process of identifying areas where there was currently a shortage of skills, with a view to filling any gaps as part of Phase 3 of the reorganisation, either by making permanent appointments or by providing appropriate training for existing staff. Members wished to receive an update on this work.
- (vi) County councillors were often called upon to consider allocating money from their local highways budgets to fund relatively minor works in their divisions. However, some councillors thought that this put them in an invidious position because of the high design costs involved, the demand for works to be done, and the limited amount available to each councillor (£6,666 per annum). Members wished to receive information about the effectiveness of the current arrangements.