

Scrutiny Committee

(Quorum 3)

The Scrutiny Committee has responsibility to consider and respond to proposals from Councillors, Cabinet Members, members of the public and local community representatives who suggest issues that should be subject to strategic scrutiny.

Conservative Group

Councillors Mary Evans (Chairman), Peter Beer, Jessica Fleming, Robin Millar, David Ritchie and Robin Vickery.

Labour Group

Councillor Kathy Bole, Sandra Gage and Len Jacklin.

UKIP Group

Councillor John Burns.

Liberal Democrat and Independent Group

Councillor John Field.

Green and Independent Group

Councillor Trevor Beckwith.

Date: Tuesday, 20 December 2016

Venue: Elisabeth Room
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX

Time: 10:00am

For further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Linda Pattle, Democratic Services Officer, on 01473 260771.

Business to be taken in public

1. Public Participation Session

A member of the public who is resident, or is on the Register of Electors for Suffolk, may speak for up to five minutes on a matter relating to the following agenda.

A speaker will need to give written notice of their wish to speak at the meeting using the contact details under 'Public Participation in Meetings' by no later than 12 noon on Wednesday, 14 December 2016.

The public participation session will not exceed 20 minutes to enable the Committee to consider its other business.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

To note and record any apologies for absence or substitutions received.

3. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

To receive any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Pages 5 - 14

To approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2016.

5. Highways Services Contract

Pages 15 - 72

To receive an update on the actions taken in response to the Committee's previous recommendations relating to the Council's Highways contract with Kier, and to consider current issues relating to the delivery of the contract.

6. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management

Pages 73 - 92

To consider progress towards developing an asset management approach to the upkeep of the County's highways infrastructure.

7. Information Bulletin

Pages 93 - 94

Written information has been provided for the Committee for reasons indicated. The Committee may wish to consider whether there are any matters arising from this information that warrant specific aspects being added to the forward work programme.

8. **Key Decision Forward Plan and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme**

Pages 95-104
Pages
105-108

To consider the development of an updated Scrutiny Forward Work Programme taking into account proposals from councillors, statutory co-opted members and also having regard to the Key Decision Forward Plan.

9. **Urgent Business**

To consider any other item of business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified in the minutes), as a matter of urgency.

Date of next scheduled meeting – Tuesday, 7 February 2017 at 10:00am.

Access to Meetings

Suffolk County Council is committed to open government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact Democratic Services on:

Telephone: 01473 260771;

Email: Committee.Services@suffolk.gov.uk; or by writing to:

Democratic Services, Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BX.

Public Participation in Meetings

Members of the Public who wish to speak at a Scrutiny Committee meeting should read the following guidance:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/apply-to-take-part-in-a-public-meeting

and complete the online form: www.suffolk.gov.uk/apply-to-speak

Filming, Recording or Taking Photographs at Meetings

Further information about the Council's procedure with regard to the filming, recording or taking of photographs at meetings can be found at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/Filming-at-Meetings-Protocol.pdf>

Evacuating the building in an emergency: Information for Visitors

If you hear the alarm:

1. Leave the building immediately via a Fire Exit and make your way to the Assembly point (Ipswich Town Football Ground).
2. Follow the signs directing you to Fire Exits at each end of the floor.
3. Do not enter the Atrium (Ground Floor area and walkways). If you are in the Atrium at the time of the Alarm, follow the signs to the nearest Fire Exit.
4. Use the stairs, not the lifts.
5. Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

Deborah Cadman OBE
Chief Executive

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 20 December 2016 at 10:00 am in the Elisabeth Room, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Mary Evans (Chairman), John Field (Vice Chairman), Trevor Beckwith, Peter Beer, Kathy Bole, John Burns, Jessica Fleming, Sandra Gage, Michael Gower, Len Jacklin, David Ritchie and Robin Vickery.

Also present: Councillors James Finch, Sandy Martin and Graham Newman

Supporting officers present: Theresa Harden (Business Manager, Democratic Services) and Linda Pattle (Democratic Services Officer).

28. Public Participation Session

There were no applications to speak in the Public Participation Session.

29. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robin Millar (substituted by Councillor Michael Gower).

30. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

31. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. Highways Services Contract

At Agenda Item 5 the Committee considered a report providing an update on activities since October 2015, when the previous scrutiny review of the Highways Services Contract had taken place. The Chairman welcomed the following witnesses:

Councillor James Finch, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Geoff Dobson, Director of Resource Management

And from Suffolk Highways:

Mark Stevens, Assistant Director (Operational Highways), Suffolk County Council

Jerry Pert, General Manager, Kier

Peter Ingram, Kier

Councillor Finch made some introductory remarks and Mark Stevens presented the Evidence Sets. Jerry Pert commented on the speed of change he had witnessed in relation to the Suffolk Highways contract, where an adversarial attitude between the two parties had changed over the previous 15 months to a much more collaborative approach. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

Recommendation: The Committee agreed:

- a) to recognise the work to date on rolling out the Highways Transformation Programme;
- b) to express concern, however, at the length of time taken on implementing all elements of the Highways Transformation Programme and ask the Director of Resource Management to ensure that the leadership team was adequately staffed and resourced to deliver the work in a timely fashion;
- c) to recommend the Assistant Director, supported by the contract management and legal teams as appropriate, to regularly review the contract to ensure the County Council's interests were protected and changes in policy and operational arrangements resulting from the Transformation Programme were appropriately recorded in line with the change mechanism in the contract;
- d) to request a diagram/schedule showing the management and accountability for "Suffolk Highways" (SCC and Kier), and confirmation of its legal status;
- e) to request an information bulletin describing the new structure, including arrangements for recruitment, as soon as this was available and ideally in time for the Committee's formal meeting on 8 March 2017;
- f) to request clarification of the relationship between Suffolk Highways and the Network Assurance Team;
- g) to request further information about how much of the highways contract was sub-contracted, in terms of financial value and workload, to whom, and how work was awarded and monitored and how much of that was further sub contracted (possibly in the form of a diagram);
- h) to consider scrutiny in six months' time of how some of the new integrated team arrangements were working (possible areas for scrutiny being drainage and/or local highways budgets);
- i) to recommend that the lead for the communications strand of the Transformation Programme should consult and work with councillors on major improvements in the sharing of information with councillors on highways works. This should include enhancements to the on-line reporting tool, seeking to equal or exceed the standards set by competing commercial reporting tools;
- j) to support efforts to clarify the term "Design Costs", and request a case study to demonstrate the elements of the preparation of a project covered by this phrase, along with data to demonstrate how "design costs" relative to total costs had declined/changed as a result of taking a more pragmatic approach;
- k) to request that, as planned highways works programmes became available, information should be shared at the earliest opportunity with councillors, District and Borough Planning teams, and the County Council's Strategic Planning team;

- l) that, in developing its system for data management, the new local highways budgets team should ensure that councillors had access to all the necessary information to enable them to control their Highways Budgets;
- m) to request further information about the work taking place on community engagement on highways issues and request that local councillors be kept informed of any pilot work taking place in their division;
- n) to recommend that efforts be made to improve communications between Parish Councils/Area Committees and Suffolk Highways, for example by holding training events/workshop events in accessible locations. The events could cover how to access information, seek feedback on what information was required from Suffolk Highways to enable them to keep the public properly informed and assess potential for devolving responsibilities for certain functions. A small fee to cover the costs of the training could be an option.
- o) to request sight, as soon as practical, of the programme of works for highways maintenance for 2017/18;
- p) to recommend that lessons learned from management of the highways contract and from the highways transformation programme be shared with the Procurement Team and they, in turn, should share these lessons in training and workshops with directorates and staff undertaking contracting and contract management.

Reason for recommendation:

- a) The Committee acknowledged that a great deal of progress had been made over the previous twelve months. In October 2016 the Cabinet had agreed that the Highways Services contract with Kier be extended by five years, to its maximum 10-year duration, and Kier was now looking to invest for the remaining 7 years of the contract. Members heard that the original contract had placed most of the risk on Kier, which had had a number of unintended consequences. The relationship between the two parties had changed and they now had an agreed set of shared values and behaviours. Employees of the County Council and of Kier had started working as integrated teams in a number of areas, and this had proved very successful. There was evidence to show that significant savings were being made, a number of which were sustainable. Members were pleased to hear that Suffolk Highways had won a number of awards in recent months.
- b) Members were aware that the intention had been that all elements of the Highways Transformation Programme would be completed by the end of March 2017. However, they heard that it would now be difficult to meet that target, as there had been delay in establishing a new organisational structure. A staff consultation process was due to start on 16 January 2017. Most, but possibly not all, staff would know by the end of March 2017 how the reorganisation would affect them. The Committee was aware that much of the work involved in the reorganisation fell to the Assistant Director, Operational Highways, supported by a recently appointed Project Manager and staff from HR. The Committee heard that by the end of February the Assistant Director would also have the support of a senior management

team, but members considered that, in the short term, the structural re-organisation was a significant additional workload.

- c) The Committee was aware that changes had been and were continuing to be made to the working arrangements and relationships between the County Council and Kier. The Committee heard that decisions on such matters were made by an Operations Board and a Strategic Board. The decisions were duly recorded and were reflected in exchanges of correspondence. The Committee wished to highlight the need for the Assistant Director to review the contract regularly in consultation with colleagues in the Contract Management Team and Legal Services, in order to protect the Council's legal position.
- d) The Committee heard that the most appropriate description of Suffolk Highways was as an "alliance" between the County Council and Kier, and that staff at head of service level would in future be managed jointly by the Assistant Director, Suffolk County Council and the General Manager, Kier. It was confirmed that the County Council remained the commissioner of all highway infrastructure services required of Kier. However, members considered that greater clarity was needed as to whether or not "Suffolk Highways" had a legal identity.
- e) The Committee was aware that the planned reorganisation of the workforce would involve the establishment of integrated teams focusing on functions including, for example, surface dressing, footways, and carriageways. The aim would be to co-locate employees of Kier and the County Council in depots at Rougham, Halesworth and Phoenix House, Ipswich. Members were assured that in this way local geographical knowledge about highways would be retained and shared. The Committee was aware that by the end of March 2017 some posts within the new structure might remain vacant. Members therefore wished to be informed as soon as possible about the new structure and about plans to fill any remaining vacancies.
- f) The Committee was aware that part of the role of the Network Assurance Team was to liaise with Suffolk Highways and utilities companies in order to manage roadworks and minimise disruption to traffic flows. Members expressed some concern that roadworks had over-run and the public perception had been this was down to Suffolk Highways, when it was actually due to utilities works. Members were also concerned that signage for roadworks should make clear who was responsible for works. Members heard that there was a need for Suffolk Highways Conditions Technicians to work more closely with the Network Assurance Team. They wished to have a better understanding of the relationship between Suffolk Highways and Network Assurance.
- g) The Committee was aware that some of the work for the County Council was sub-contracted by Kier to other companies, and that in some cases the sub-contractors had not met the standards expected. Members heard that in recent years Kier had reduced its supply chain and that it planned to increase its direct workforce to improve resilience. The Committee wished to know more about the proportion of Suffolk Highway's work carried out by sub-contractors and about the arrangements for awarding and supervising sub-contracted work.

- h) The Committee recognised the importance of the integration workstream to the success of the Highways Transformation Programme, in terms of making savings and improving efficiencies. Members therefore wished to scrutinise the new arrangements as soon as was practical.
- i) The Committee heard that within the new structure there would be a Head of Strategic Services who would focus on customer liaison, including liaison with councillors. Members expressed concern that to date the appropriate level of information had not always been made available to them. They therefore wished to highlight the need for the new communications lead to discuss with councillors how much information could practically be shared with them. The Committee acknowledged that the new in-house online tool had made it easier for members of the public and councillors to report highways defects, but members had suggestions, from the user's perspective, about possible enhancement of the tool, which could assist in its further development.
- j) County and parish councillors had in the past expressed their concerns about the high "design costs" associated with relatively minor pieces of work, such as the installation of a new pedestrian crossing or the introduction of parking restrictions. Members were aware that Suffolk Highways was making efforts to be clearer about the meaning of the term "design costs". They heard that whilst it did include some true design work, it also included elements such as: carrying out a site survey; investigation of options; consultation; preparation of Traffic Regulation Orders, and job specification. The Committee wished to receive a case study to demonstrate the various steps and costs of preparing a project.

The Committee heard that recently design costs had been somewhat reduced by no longer seeking to produce work which was "gold standard". Members wished to receive data to show the effects of adopting this more pragmatic approach.
- k) The Committee was pleased to hear that work was taking place to develop integrated works programmes which would make it possible for tasks to be organised efficiently, for example by arranging for drainage work on a road to be scheduled before, not after, surface dressing. Programmes of work were now being published on the Council's website in order to improve transparency. Members wished to highlight the need for Suffolk Highways to share its plans with county councillors, district and borough planning teams and the Council's strategic planners, so that all parties could be aware of the implications that major strategic schemes (such as housing developments) would have on highways work, and vice-versa.
- l) The Committee recognised that a new integrated Local Highways Budgets (LHB) team had been established in May 2016, and that it had made good progress in reducing the backlog of schemes which were earmarked to be funded through LHB. An up-to-date programme of all schemes had been placed on the County Council's website in mid-November 2016 to clarify where all such schemes had reached in terms of implementation and the related dates for such schemes. It was intended that this programme would be updated on a monthly basis for the 2016/17 schemes. Nevertheless, members were not currently satisfied with the level of control they were able

to exert over their individual LHBs, for example in terms of having information available such as contact details, progress with requests for schemes and a clear indication of costs incurred and budget still available. They considered that councillors should be consulted about ways of keeping them better informed about their Budgets.

- m) The Committee heard that further work was required to make progress on community engagement work. Some parish councils were willing to consider taking on tasks such as the cleaning of road signs or the cutting of verges, and Suffolk Highways was not opposed to this in principle, but there were a number of practical issues which still required attention. Whilst some members reported local interest in taking tasks on, others were clear that local communities would not wish to do this without additional funding. Community engagement would come within the role of the customer liaison officers in the new Service Delivery Centres. Members wished to highlight the need for these officers to keep local councillors informed of any developments within their divisions.
- n) Members considered that representatives of parish councils and area committees would welcome the opportunity to attend meetings where there could be a dialogue with Suffolk Highways about ways of improving information exchange on a range of issues, such as: how to report defects, how to monitor progress; and what local people themselves could do to improve their highways both legally and safely. The Committee recognised that such meetings would need to be held in accessible locations, and that there might need to be a small charge to cover the costs.
- o) The Committee heard that work was continuing through the Communications Workstream of the Highways Transformation Programme to clarify what would and would not be done on highway maintenance matters, and the maintenance programme for 2016/17 was now available online. The programme for 2017/18 was being developed, and members wished to have access to this as soon as possible.
- p) The Committee was aware that in recent years the way in which Suffolk County Council provided services to its residents had changed significantly. Whereas previously most services had been delivered “in-house”, now most of them were delivered through external contracts, equating to expenditure of approximately £475m each year. Consequently, it was becoming increasingly important that the Council should be able to carry out effective and efficient procurement and contract management. Members considered that it was essential that the Procurement Team should understand the lessons, both positive and negative, learned from the Highways Contract, and that the Team in turn should ensure that the lessons were shared with officers involved in procurement and contract management.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

Councillor David Ritchie left the meeting at 12:33 pm. The meeting adjourned for lunch from 12:55 to 1:45 pm. When it reconvened the following Committee

members were present: Councillors Mary Evans, John Field, Kathy Bole, John Burns, Jessica Fleming, Sandra Gage, Michael Gower, Len Jacklin and Robin Vickery.

33. Highways Infrastructure Asset Management

At Agenda Item 6 the Committee considered a report providing information about the Council's developing approach to Highways Asset Management.

The Chairman welcomed the following witnesses:

Councillor James Finch, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Mark Stevens, Assistant Director (Operational Highways)

John Clements, Highways Maintenance Specialist

Mark Stevens presented Evidence Set 1. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

Recommendation: The Committee agreed:

- a) to congratulate officers on the work which had taken place to date to develop an asset management approach to maintaining Suffolk's highways infrastructure;
- b) to recommend to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team that officers undertaking consultation exercises should refer to good practice advice available within the County Council and externally such as the Cabinet Office Principles;
- c) to recommend, where correspondence was being drafted by Suffolk Highways for councillor led projects, that reference should be made in the correspondence to local councillor involvement
- d) to support work taking place to improve plain English communications on highways issues.

Reason for recommendation:

- a) The Committee heard that every local authority was expected to apply the principles of asset management with regard to its highways network. Previously, the Council had been slow to develop a risk-based approach to highways maintenance, but in the last 18 months significant progress had been made. Highways officers were currently gathering information in order to establish what maintenance work was required and when was the optimal time to carry it out. Members recognised that this was a challenging task which was likely to take three to four years.
- b) In July 2016 the Cabinet had authorised public consultation on a draft Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and a Highway Maintenance Operational Plan. Members were disappointed to hear that few members of the public had taken the opportunity to give their views. The Committee suggested that a better response might have been achieved through reference to good practice guidance, for example on issues such as timing, communications, and seeking the views of minority groups. Members wished to ensure that, throughout the Council, officers undertaking consultations referred to good practice advice available internally and externally.

- c) The Committee was aware that occasionally in the past Highways officers had sent residents letters which gave information about projects instigated by the local county councillor, but which omitted to make any reference to the councillor. Members wished to ensure that where councillors had led on highways projects, this was made clear to residents.
- d) Members suggested that one of the reasons for the poor response to the consultation could have been that the language used was very technical. The Committee recognised that officers had tried to make the consultation more easily understandable by producing a summary document. However, members considered that there was generally a tendency in the highways industry to use language that was too technical, and they wished to encourage all officers to use plain English wherever possible.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

Councillors Michael Gower and Robin Vickery left the meeting at 3:58 pm.

34. Information Bulletin

The Committee received an Information Bulletin at Agenda Item 7.

35. Key Decision Forward Plan and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

At Agenda Item 8 the Committee received the Key Decision Forward Plan and the Scrutiny Committee forward work programme.

Decision: The Committee agreed:

- a) That it would wish to scrutinise progress with Broadband in Suffolk soon after the County Council elections in May 2017.
- b) That early in 2017 it would have an informal discussion about ways of making Scrutiny Committee meetings more effective.

Reason for decision:

- a) The Committee recognised the importance of good internet connections in supporting the local economy and therefore wished to give a high priority to scrutinising progress made by the Better Broadband programme.
- b) Members agreed that they would welcome an opportunity to discuss ways of maximising the time available for questioning and ways of making their questions more incisive.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

36. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 4:12 pm.

Chairman

Scrutiny Committee

20 December 2016

Highways Services Contract

Summary

1. On 1 October 2013, the Council entered into a contract with Kier for the provision of highways services. Under the terms of the contract, which was to run for five years (to 2018) with potential for extensions to 2023, Kier took on responsibility for a range of services relating to the Council's statutory obligations as the local highways authority. The County Council retained responsibility for the setting of policy and strategy and for budgetary allocation and monitoring.
2. The Committee has scrutinised progress with the delivery of the contract at several previous meetings. This report provides an update on activities since the last scrutiny review and recommendations made in October 2015.

Objective of the Scrutiny

3. The objective of this scrutiny is to provide the Committee with an update on the actions taken in response to the recommendations made on 29 October 2015 and an opportunity to explore current issues relating to the delivery of the contract.

Scrutiny Focus

4. The scope of this scrutiny has been developed to provide the Committee with information to come to a view on the following key questions:
 - a) What actions have been taken as a result of the recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015 (as set out in Evidence Set 1)?
 - b) If no action has been taken, what are the reasons for this?
 - c) What are the current staff vacancy rates, to what are they attributable and how do they impact on the organisation?
 - d) What skills gaps have been identified and how is this being addressed?
 - e) What data is available to demonstrate how Kier is currently performing against the contract and how does this compare with performance in previous years?
 - f) To what extent is Suffolk's highway's work sub-contracted to third parties?
 - g) What changes are being made under the highways transformation programme?

- h) What has been done to improve sharing of information, processes and systems between the County Council and Kier, and what difference has this made?
- i) How does the target costing work and how successful has this been in enabling shared savings?
- j) Are reported savings to date sustainable?
- k) To what extent have issues relating to final account disputes been resolved?
- l) What has been done to improve the programming and visibility of minor works?
- m) To what extent does the County Council liaise with other councils who contract with Keir for Highways services, to share information and experience?
- n) How have changes to the design process made this quicker and more cost effective?
- o) What are the arrangements for gully clearing and how is this work prioritised and monitored?
- p) What are the arrangements for responding to requests for Highways attendance at local parish and town council and area committee meetings?

How does this relate to County Council priorities?

5. This scrutiny is linked to the County Council's corporate priorities as indicated below. All scrutiny items should consider how well they are delivering against the County Council priorities and Suffolk's Community Strategy.

Suffolk County Council's Corporate Priorities	Link to this Scrutiny
Raise educational attainment and skill levels	
Support the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to increase economic growth	
Maintain roads and developing Suffolk's infrastructure	✓
Support those most vulnerable in our communities	
Empower local communities	

6. Having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:

- a) make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and/or Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage;
- b) make recommendations to the Director of Resource Management and/or Assistant Director Operational Highways;
- c) identify topics which may warrant further scrutiny;
- d) request further information.

Contact details:

Theresa Harden, Business Manager (Democratic Services), Scrutiny and Monitoring
 Email: theresa.harden@suffolk.gov.uk; Tel: 01473 260855

Background

7. The County Council, as local highways authority, has responsibility for all non-trunk roads maintainable at public expense in Suffolk (trunk roads in Suffolk being the A14, A11 and the A12 south of Ipswich and north of the Lowestoft Bascule Bridge). The Council is required to ensure that, in all reasonable circumstances, non-trunk roads are not dangerous for traffic.
8. The Council's regime for the inspection of highways, and timescales for rectification of different types and severities of highways defects are defined in its Highways Maintenance Operational Plan. Its Winter Service Plan sets out policies and standards to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe passage along a highway is not impeded by snow or ice.
9. The Council has obligations to remove encroachments and obstructions on the highway, to co-ordinate work taking place within the highway and to monitor the signing, guarding and quality of work of others working in the highway. It also has powers to make improvements to the highways network.
10. On 1 October 2013, the Council entered into a five-year contract with Kier for the provision of highways services, with possible extensions up to ten years. Kier took on responsibility for a range of services including design and construction of highways maintenance and improvements, winter maintenance, emergency works, street lighting, traffic signals, bridge maintenance and repairs, materials testing, road condition surveys, laboratory services and fleet maintenance. The County Council retains responsibility for the setting of policy and strategy and for budgetary allocation and monitoring.
11. Under the terms of the contract, the Council controls the flow of work to Kier, the primary payment mechanism being via a price list of clearly defined items. This is combined with target costing; the final cost of any works or services is compared with the target cost agreed before the work commenced, and any over or under-spend is split between Kier and the Council. Target costing, combined with a mechanism for annual comparison of prices in the price list with the actual costs of work undertaken each year, was included in the contract to incentivise Kier to provide projects below the agreed target cost figure, drive out efficiencies and help ensure that the Council shares in any savings.
12. The Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised and made recommendations on the Highways Services Contract and related issues on several occasions. Links to the written evidence presented to the Committee and minutes of the meetings are provided in the Supporting Information section below.
13. On 7 May 2014, the Committee heard that the workload of the Highways Area Offices was challenging, and had been put under further strain by the new contract. It therefore scrutinised the Highways Area Teams in more detail on 25 September 2014, considering their structures, processes and relationships with Kier. Responses to the Committee's recommendations regarding the Highways Services Contract, and information on the subsequent actions that had been taken were considered by the Committee on 12 March 2015.
14. On 2 July 2015, the Committee received information on performance against the contract's key performance indicators for the first 4 months of 2015, and staff turnover from the beginning of the contract. It decided to undertake further scrutiny of Kier's performance and operation of the contract and, at its meeting on

29 October 2015, received information about several Operational and Management Performance Measures including street lighting, over-run of road works, staff sickness, turnover and pricing of works. The Committee heard that a theoretical exercise had indicated that the contract had delivered the required £2m savings per year and asked questions about the amounts of money spent and saved, the volumes of work delivered and the nature of outstanding accounts between the Council and Kier. The Committee requested additional information on these points, which was presented in an information bulletin to the meeting on 10 February 2016 (available from: <http://tinyurl.com/h7qum5x> and <http://tinyurl.com/h7qum5x>)

15. The Committee was concerned about recruitment and training for Kier staff, long term sickness rates and staff morale, and requested an update on these matters, which was received on 7 June 2016 (see: <http://tinyurl.com/jruqvt9> and <http://tinyurl.com/j9247s6>). Members were concerned by the number of staff vacancies at Suffolk Highways, and their impact on the organisation.
16. On 7 May 2014, the Committee had recommended that communications between Highways and local community representatives should be improved, especially in unparished areas. On 12 March 2015, it heard about an on-line reporting tool which provided information and updates about reactive repairs. In an update on 29 October 2015, the Committee was reminded that there were a very large number of minor works, and weather variability made it hard to predict completion dates, but the forward view would be increasing from 1 to 3 months. The Committee requested a progress report on these matters, along with responses to other recommendations made on 29 October, as set out in Evidence Set 1.
17. On 18 October 2016, the Cabinet agreed that the Highways Services contract with Kier be extended by five years, to its maximum 10-year duration. The report to Cabinet recommended that the extension should be conditional on clarifying and formally agreeing the detail of the financial investment and other commitments broadly indicated in the business case submitted by Kier, which was presented to Cabinet alongside the report. Cabinet agreed the responsibility for finalising such clarification should be delegated to the Director of Resource Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage.
18. Cabinet agreed that an assessment of adequacy of overall achievement of the outcomes in the Suffolk Highways performance management framework should be developed by the end of December 2016, so as to determine whether there shall be any time deductions in the five-year extension for under-performance. Any time deductions from the overall contract period would be determined on an annual basis by the Director of Resource Management in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage, until such time as two years remain of the contract, at which point it shall naturally expire.
19. The report to Cabinet proposed that a performance update should be provided to Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. As the National Highways and Transport (NHT) satisfaction survey results are not released until the end of October, the proposal that performance under the contract should be reported to the Scrutiny Committee in December each year.

Main body of evidence

Evidence Set 1 sets out the recommendations made by the Committee on 29 October 2015, and reasons for those recommendations.

Evidence Set 2 has been prepared in response to the key areas of investigation set out in the Scrutiny Focus section above.

Evidence Set 3 sets out the interpretation of the National Highways and Transport (NHT) satisfaction survey results and other aspects of the Suffolk Highways performance management framework adopted on 1 April 2016.

Glossary

AWA	Anglian Water Authority
BT	British Telecommunications
CFC	Carriageway, Footway, Cycleway
ES Pipelines	Company working to extend the national gas network
Fulcrum	Gas and Utilities Company
HMEP	Highways Management Efficiency Programme
HIAMP	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
HMOP	Highways Maintenance Operational Plan
IWP	Integrated Works Programme
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injury
LHB	Local Highways Budgets
NGG	National Grid
NHT	National Highways and Transport
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OPMs	Operational Performance Measures
PMF	Performance Management Framework
PROW	Public Rights of Way
TMM	Temporary Traffic Management
UKPN	UK Power Networks
WMS	Works Manager System

Supporting Information

Papers relating to Scrutiny of Highways Contract on 7 May 2014 (Agenda Item 5) and minutes of the meeting; Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=7/May/2014&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Papers relating to Scrutiny of Highways Contract on 25 September 2014 (Agenda Item 5) and minutes of the meeting; Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=25/Sep/2014&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Papers relating to Scrutiny of Highways Contract on 12 March 2015 (Agenda Item 5) and minutes of the meeting: Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=12/mar/2015&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Information Bulletin presented to Committee 2 July 2015 (Agenda Item 7 and Appendix 1): Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=02/jul/2015&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Papers relating to Scrutiny of Highways Contract on 29 October 2015 (Agenda Item 5) and minutes of the meeting: Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=29/oct/2015&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Information Bulletin presented to Committee 7 June 2016 (Agenda Items 7a and 7b): Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=07/jun/2016&c=Scrutiny Committee>

Cabinet (18 October 2016); Agenda Item 6; Extension to the Highways Services Contract; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181dd768a&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet and Kier Business Case, Available

from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181dd768b&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet



Extract from the Confirmed Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 29 October 2015 at 10:00 am in the Elisabeth Room, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Mary Evans (Chairman), John Field (Vice Chairman), Trevor Beckwith, Peter Beer, Kathy Bole, Stephen Burroughes, Jessica Fleming, Sandra Gage, David Hudson, Len Jacklin, David Ritchie and Jane Storey.

Also present: Councillors Tony Brown, Sandy Martin and Guy McGregor

Supporting officers present: Theresa Harden (Business Manager, Democratic Services) and Linda Pattle (Democratic Services Officer).

Highways Contract

At Agenda Item 5 the Committee considered a report providing an update on the operation of the County Council's contract with Kier for the provision of services to meet its responsibilities in relation to highways services. The report also examined some specific areas of performance under the contract.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillor James Finch, Cabinet Member for Roads and Transport, and the following County Council officers:

Mark Stevens, Assistant Director, Operational Highways
Alan Thorndyke, Head of Highway Network Management
Chris Graves, Contract Manager
John Clements, Highway Maintenance Specialist
Richard Webster, Street Lighting Manager

The Chairman also welcomed the following external witnesses:

Jerry Pert, Kier General Manager, Suffolk Highways
Mike Francis, Head of Service Delivery, Suffolk Highways

Councillor James Finch introduced the report. The witnesses were invited to make comments. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on what they had heard.

Recommendation: The Committee agreed:

- a) To recommend that the Cabinet should support the Cabinet Member for Finance in ensuring that the County Council's commissioning and procurement function continued to be strengthened as a priority for the Council, bringing in outside support as necessary.
- b) To recommend that the Babergh lean systems pilot should be completed as a priority, so that this learning and lean systems could be rolled out across the county at the earliest opportunity.

- c) To recommend that mechanisms for monitoring the quality of works provided under the contract should be developed to provide clear evidence of the results achieved and any corrective measures without incurring high inspection costs. Sampling of work and customer surveys should be considered.
- d) To commend the work which had already taken place in respect of the highways contract following the appointment of the new Assistant Director (Operational Highways) and that, despite on-going concerns, on the basis of the evidence presented, the Committee recognised that the Assistant Director (Operational Highways) was committed to improving performance under the amended highways contract and the strategy for reviewing and improving the contractual and working arrangements was encouraging, in particular a move towards incentives rather than penalties in the contract was recommended to bring about improvements.
- e) To recommend that an action plan and timescales should be developed to underpin the proposed improvements, supported by a communications plan which should include raising public awareness of the plans for improvement.
- f) To welcome the adoption of performance measures that were outcomes (as opposed to outputs) based, for managing and monitoring the contract.
- g) To welcome greater collaboration between Kier and the County Council through the development of an integrated team.
- h) To recommend the reduction of design process costs and time by adopting a more pragmatic design approach through greater use of standard details rather than the more onerous 'fit for purpose' service standards.
- i) To recommend that as much design work as possible be done by staff living and working in Suffolk rather than other counties, in particular for routine jobs and where a site visit was beneficial.
- j) To recommend that the work to improve highways on-line information and reporting systems should continue, ensuring problem reporting was easy and feedback effective. This work should take into account feedback from councillors about how systems could be improved to become more intelligent and responsive.
- k) To recommend that officers and councillors should make every effort to ensure that enquirers used the on-line information and reporting system.
- l) To request an information bulletin update in six months' time on progress including information about recruitment and training for Kier staff, activity to address long term sickness rates and improve staff morale, and what difference this had made.
- m) To request an information bulletin update for the Committee's February meeting providing details of:-
 - i) predicted spend and actual spend on the contract to date;
 - ii) actual figures to demonstrate savings delivered;
 - iii) the volume of work delivered;
 - iv) an update on the resolution of outstanding accounts and details of current position;
 - v) an indication of the extent to which performance of the highways service was consistent across the county;

- n) To recommend that every effort should be made to ensure that materials which were sympathetic and appropriate for conservation areas and listed buildings were used, recognising that these materials should be both cost effective and readily available.
- o) To welcome the County Council's developing approach to highways asset management, which would be reported in more detail to Cabinet on 10 November 2015.
- p) To request a further report on progress in 12 months' time.

Reason for recommendation:

- a) The Committee considered that the experience from the highways contract showed there needed to be a very robust commissioning and procurement function within the Council. The Committee heard that the highways contract had been developed with a risk averse approach to performance monitoring which incentivised unhelpful behaviours designed to meet targets and avoid penalties, creating bureaucratic and duplicative processes and frustration for both parties. Members considered it important that this experience was learned from and not replicated in future procurement exercises.
- b) Members considered that there was an urgent need to complete the Babergh lean systems pilot and roll it out in order to reduce wasteful activity across the county. They heard that it had not so far been possible to release key staff from their current roles to work solely on the pilot due to other pressures. However, some new business development resources had been added recently, and officers were confident that the pilot would be complete by spring 2016.
- c) The Committee heard that the quality of the works provided was monitored in a number of ways: Kier had their own internal supervisors; and also staff from the Area Offices would report on defects if they became aware of any. Any instances of poor quality work were recorded in a Defects Register which also assigned a particular person responsible for rectifying the problem within four weeks. The Register was reviewed on a monthly basis. However, members were aware of instances in their own divisions where the quality of work was variable, and, whilst appreciating that costs of quality monitoring needed to be kept to a minimum, they considered that greater attention could be given to this, for example through a formal sampling process or by undertaking more customer satisfaction surveys.
- d) The Assistant Director outlined his objectives as being to improve programme management, contract management and develop the Council's approach to asset management. He also wished to encourage more integrated working and to reduce financial bureaucracy. Members of the Committee expressed a view that the evidence presented at the meeting had demonstrated a refreshed approach and a willingness from both the County Council and Kier to work together to make the necessary improvements.
- e) The Committee wished to see the objectives outlined by the Assistant Director translated into an action plan with clear indications as to when the actions would be completed. Members were aware that among members of the public there were negative perceptions about the highways service. Therefore they considered that a communications plan was needed to help people understand what changes they could expect to see.

- f) Members agreed with evidence presented that the contract's emphasis on the penalisation of poor performance was not encouraging the right behaviour from Kier. There was too much emphasis on measuring performance outputs, whereas members considered that focussing on outcomes would make it possible for the contract to contribute more effectively to the Council's corporate priorities.
- g) Members were encouraged to hear that there was a move towards greater integration and closer working between highways staff working within Kier and the County Council.
- h) Members questioned the procedures and costs associated with the design process, which from experience they considered could be cumbersome and expensive. Members heard that until recently works had been designed to a high "fit for purpose" standard. They were pleased to hear that in general now works were being designed to standard details, which would make the process quicker and more cost-effective, particularly for small schemes
- i) The Committee considered that having most design work carried out within Suffolk would be more efficient and cost-effective than going out of county.
- j) Members recognised the value of the current online system for reporting defects and highways problems. They considered that the system should be developed further. Having submitted a report or requested something, the councillor or member of the public should be able to track progress online. The Committee recognised that being able to provide information online about when work would be done would require good programme management.
- k) Members were aware that encouraging more people to use the online reporting system would reduce the number of telephone calls and ad hoc emails to officers and lead to improved efficiency.
- l) The Committee was aware that there were a number of vacant posts in the Suffolk Highways organisational structures. Members heard that some of the vacancies had now been filled on a temporary basis, but due to an upturn in the economy there were difficulties in finding suitable permanent recruits. The Committee considered these vacancies, together with absences due to long-term sickness and the quality of training provided, could have an impact on staff morale. Members therefore wished to be kept informed about recruitment and training, as well as activity to address long term sickness rates and improve staff morale.
- m) Members appreciated that a theoretical exercise had revealed that an annual net revenue saving of just over £2 million had been made. However, they wished to receive more specific information about the amounts of money spent and saved and the volume of work delivered through the contract. They were also aware that an exercise was being undertaken to resolve a large number of outstanding accounts between the County Council and Kier, and they wished to be updated on progress. The Committee heard that some councillors believed that the quality of work carried out in the west of the county was not as high as that in the east. Members therefore requested information about consistency of performance throughout the county.
- n) The Committee heard that there had been instances where street works in conservation areas had been treated unsympathetically, with unsuitable replacement materials being used. Members recognised that when schemes were

designed for conservation areas there was a need to consider the whole life costs and to ensure that replacement materials remained available over a long period.

- o) The Committee was pleased to hear that officers were in the process of strengthening the Council's approach to highways asset management by developing a new suite of documents, incorporating the latest thinking, philosophies and recognised best practice.
- p) Members were aware that the Highways contract was a matter of great significance to all Suffolk residents, and wished to reconsider in 12 months' time the extent to which progress had been made.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

Scrutiny Committee
Date: 20 December 2016
Highways Services Contract

Information in this report was produced on behalf of	
Director or Assistant Director	<i>Director of Resource Management</i>
By	<i>Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Operational Highways</i> <i>Tel: 01473 264994</i> mark.stevens@suffolk.gov.uk
Title:	<i>Highways Services Contract</i>
Date Submitted:	<i>7 December 2016</i>

Introduction

1. This evidence set has been provided by county council officers and representatives of the Highway Services Contract provider, Kier Infrastructure Services Ltd. This joint approach is consistent with the aspiration to adopt a 'one team' approach to the overall delivery of the highways service in Suffolk.
2. This evidence set responds to the key questions set out in the Scrutiny Focus.
 - a) **What actions have been taken as a result of the recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015 (as set out in Evidence Set 1), and**
 - b) **If no action has been taken, what are the reasons for this?**
3. The following paragraphs set out the recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 October 2015, followed by the actions taken or an explanation as to why such recommendations have not been acted upon:

Recommendation a) To recommend that the Cabinet should support the Cabinet Member for Finance in ensuring that the County Council's commissioning and procurement function continued to be strengthened as a priority for the Council, bringing in outside support as necessary.

4. This was not a specific recommendation for either the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport or Assistant Director Operational Highways to personally respond to. However, since October 2015, the Corporate Procurement and Contract Management Team has worked closely with relevant colleagues across the organisation and has undertaken the following actions to respond to this recommendation:
- Developed a formal risk assessment process for each contract held by the Council;
 - Established corporate guidance and training at both basic and advanced level for all contract managers across the Council which has since been attended by over 100 officers and a member of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group;
 - Briefed the Contract Management Board on commercial skills specifically in the use of active contract management to drive service efficiency and savings from external spend;
 - Continued to use the Contract Management Board as an opportunity for officers to share learning and best practice when undertaking procurement and contract negotiations;
 - Held 'Savings Clinics' with individual directorates via Contract Management Board representatives;
 - Provided commercial input to major highways and construction infrastructure projects including the development of market intelligence from early market engagement, and strategy development for future procurement and contracting activity.
5. Since the date of the recommendation, the Scrutiny Committee considered a further report on 'Procurement and Contract Management' from the Director of Resource Management at its meeting on 10 February 2016 and subsequently established a Task and Finish Group to consider this area in greater detail. The Corporate Procurement and Contract Management Team provided input to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and supported the development of its recommendations which were reported back to Scrutiny Committee in September 2016. These recommendations will be received by the Contract Management Board at its meeting on 27 October 2016 and an action plan is being developed in response.

Recommendation b) To recommend that the Babergh lean systems pilot should be completed as a priority, so that this learning and lean systems could be rolled out across the county at the earliest opportunity.

6. As set out in the report of 29 October 2015 to Scrutiny Committee, the Babergh lean systems pilot set out a number of objectives. These objectives are repeated below with an indication as to how they have been progressed/delivered:
- (i) Defining more clearly the role of an area highway office. In the development of a revised Highways Transformation Programme, the area highways offices indicated a number of activities that drew heavily

on officers' time. These areas have been progressively tackled so that consideration of speed limits, progression of Local Highways Budget schemes and identification/prioritisation of major works programmes are all now being dealt with by other parts of Suffolk Highways. This allows the area highway offices to focus primarily on routine/condition inspections and tackling customer service requests.

- (ii) Developing and publishing the core offer from Suffolk Highways. Work is continuing through the Communications Workstream of the Highways Transformation Programme (through emailed messages to county, district, borough, town and parish councillors in Suffolk and on the County Council's Suffolk Highways webpages) to clarify what will and will not be done on highway maintenance matters. The recent revision of the Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (as reported to Cabinet on 12 July 2016) is an example of this.
- (iii) Ensuring that, where possible, customer enquiries are directed to the customer service/contact centre or the web portal, thereby ensuring resources are much more efficiently used. The Integration Workstream of the Highways Transformation Programme continues to make improvements to the online highways reporting tool. In 2014, online contacts were at an average of 485 per month (just over 23% of all forms of contact for highways issues). In 2016, this has risen to an average of 1145 contacts per month (about 43% of all forms of contact since the beginning of the year).
- (iv) Undertake a lean systems review of a range of key processes to ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible. The application of lean/systems thinking has been applied across all Suffolk Highways activities through a series of workshops managed by the aforementioned Integration Workstream. The outputs of these workshops are directly influencing how Suffolk Highways are delivering (and will deliver) future local highways services.
- (v) Centrally managing the strategic asset management of the highway network thereby releasing some resources. The asset management approach was endorsed by Cabinet on 10 November 2015 and is being applied on a consistent, centrally managed county-wide basis. This is the subject of a separate report to the Committee's 20 December 2016 meeting.
- (vi) Devise training and support to staff and customers in new ways of working. The implementation of temporary integrated teams has enabled Council officers to more fully appreciate the challenges previously faced by Kier personnel and vice-versa. This has led to jointly developed simplification of works processes for collective benefit. Clarity is being provided to the public through improvements to the Suffolk Highways webpages, including the highways online reporting tool.
- (vii) Develop ambassadorial roles, supporting local communities to obtain information on works in their area and support them to undertake self-help basic maintenance work. The lack of progress with this objective

has been one of a number of drivers towards abandoning the inconsistent area office arrangement. Suffolk Highways is now moving towards creating 'service delivery centres' in early 2017 that co-locate and integrate Council and Kier resources, thereby enhancing service performance, information accessibility and communication with local communities.

Recommendation c) To recommend that mechanisms for monitoring the quality of works provided under the contract should be developed to provide clear evidence of the results achieved and any corrective measures without incurring high inspection costs. Sampling of work and customer surveys should be considered.

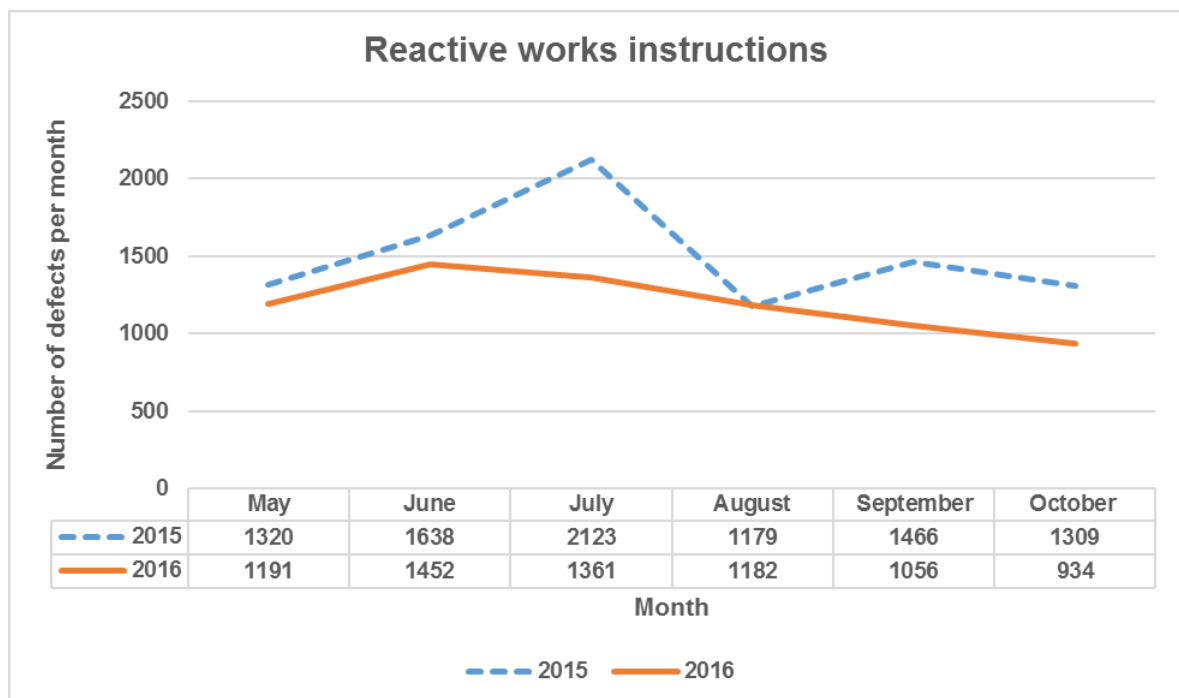
7. The four area highways offices have not worked in a consistent manner across the county. Each area highway office has prioritised works and used its historic, arbitrary budget allocations differently. Furthermore, there has been insufficient focus on planning and the development of schedules/programmes of work, thereby inhibiting cost-effectiveness. A significant proportion of work has been ordered on a reactive basis at high cost. The unnecessarily high volume of reactive work and an associated set of punitive output performance indicators were compounding the inconsistent area highways office approach – resulting in rushed work of less than satisfactory quality.
8. The priority was therefore to replace the inconsistency in contractual requirements. The existing Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) was either ill-defined or not followed in terms of identifying reactive work as opposed to the less costly preventative maintenance work. On 9 May 2016, a replacement draft HMOP was introduced with far clearer intervention levels for all forms of defect. Those expected to raise works orders received initial training and there was a series of workshops at which feedback on the replacement HMOP was provided and slight amendments made. A 'final' version was presented to and approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2016 and this document has now been out to public consultation.
9. A temporary role of 'superintendent' was created so that one person in the control hub at Phoenix House could review all works order requests so that these were all consistent with the HMOP requirements. Orders were rejected if they did not comply. The superintendent role was filled on a rotational basis to ensure that as many of the individuals raising works order requests had the opportunity to both challenge inconsistency and see first-hand its potential negative impact.
10. A supplementary requirement was that photographs of the defect to be tackled and of the surrounding environment (to enable better determination of the traffic management required to undertake the repairs safely for the workforce and the public) be submitted with works order requests. This has further helped clarify what type of treatment (temporary or permanent repair) is necessary.
11. The number of reactive works orders raised has fallen significantly and enabled a reorganisation of the operational workforce. During 2015/16, there were 25 2-man gangs operating on a cost-plus basis (i.e. paid for the

day, irrespective of work output, size or quality). Since the changes in May, the number of 2-man gangs has reduced to 3 (focused on reactive repairs required within 48 hours) and the remaining workforce has changed to either 3-man gangs or 4-man gangs (which varies between 9 and 13 in total, with gang mix dependent on workload and type). The cost of the arrangement in 2015/16 was around £3.8m whereas the new configuration is projected to only cost £2.5m.

12. The following table shows that the proportion of carriageway repairs that are temporary is steadily falling. This clarifies that a greater proportion of repairs are being completed on a permanent basis. Photographs of completed work are being submitted by all reactive works gangs so that this can be checked for quality and consistency.

	Apr 2016	May 2016	Jun 2016	July 2016	Aug 2016	Sept 2016	Oct 2016
Percentage of temporary carriageway repairs (out of total number of carriageway repairs)	21%	21%	11%	9%	7%	3%	5%

13. The total number of reactive repairs that have been ordered has fallen from the levels identified in 2015. There has also been a more consistent month-by-month demand during 2016, making service delivery more manageable. The HMOP impact on reactive repairs is as shown in the following chart.



Recommendation d) The Committee recognised that the Assistant Director (Operational Highways) was committed to improving performance under the amended highways contract and the strategy for reviewing and improving the contractual and working arrangements was encouraging, in particular a move towards incentives rather than penalties in the contract was recommended to bring about improvements.

14. The aspiration of the Highways Services Contract between the County Council and Kier was that a 'one team' relationship would emerge. Regrettably, little had been done to achieve this aspiration prior to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29 October 2015.
15. The Highways Transformation Programme at that stage did not sufficiently address the need to develop an appropriate partnership between the two parties. Rather than maintaining a 'master/servant' relationship, the new Highways Transformation Programme had to create an alliance between two partners looking to take shared responsibility for the delivery of a better quality service than existed at that time. That alliance would be simply called 'Suffolk Highways'.
16. A list of activities that either needed creating or addressing was compiled. This was then segregated into six specific workstreams: contract management; integration; programme management; finance; asset management; and communications – collectively treated as the new Highways Transformation Programme. The communications workstream would provide the tools to allow communication of progress with the Highways Transformation Programme to all councillors, Suffolk Highways personnel and to the general public.
17. In early February 2016, Suffolk Highways' personnel identified the existence of an HM Treasury document entitled 'Improving Infrastructure Delivery: Alliancing Code of Practice'. In its preface, it states that "This document provides accessible and valuable support to those embarking on an alliance journey and to those who are already developing an alliance." Reference to this document was therefore considered entirely valid to assess the Highways Transformation Programme against and to better enable a 'one team' delivery model to be put into place.
18. The document, which was created by the Infrastructure Client Group (in essence, central government and major infrastructure clients working together) goes on to clarify that:

"An alliance is:

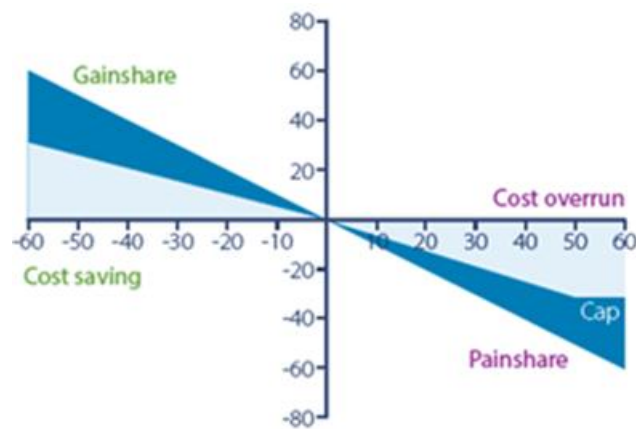
 - A collaborative and integrated team brought together from across partners and owners to deliver a programme or project;
 - Shared commercial goals, aligned directly with customer or project outcomes;
 - Integrated teams, developed on a best for task basis;
 - Underpinned by a commitment to key working principles and trust based relationships;

- An emphasis on creating the right culture and behaviours, including no-blame;
 - Strong, collective and unanimous leadership.”
19. The document identifies four key themes: behaviour; integration; leadership; and commercial. In order to address the need to move towards incentives from a penalty-driven approach, it suggests that *‘the proposed commercial model demonstrates how partners will generate a return, the level of performance required to generate that return and how performance remains aligned with the client’s business requirements’*.
20. The transition required is best demonstrated by the following figure from the document:



21. The last bullet point for the ‘Alliance Approach’ is most relevant here. Failure to meet the Operational Performance Measures (OPMs) set out in the contract meant that a financial penalty would be imposed. However, these OPMs were driving the wrong behaviours between the two ‘partners’, particularly in the way in which the highways service was geared heavily towards reactive maintenance, rather than preventative maintenance.
22. There was also no clear link between these OPMs and the County Council’s priority objectives – particularly to ‘maintain roads and improve Suffolk’s infrastructure’. The Council’s Local Transport Plan identifies four specific desired objectives: a prosperous and vibrant economy; creating the greenest county; safe, healthy and inclusive communities; and learning and skills for the future.
23. A new Performance Management Framework (PMF) was built round these four themes and replaced the OPM-based approach with effect from 1 April 2016. The report to Cabinet on 18 October 2016 regarding the extension of the Highway Services Contract recommended that this new PMF should be used as the basis for determining overall contract performance delivery by Kier and thus whether or not any time should be deducted from the contract extension. However, the PMF is also being considered as a mechanism for rewarding Kier for good performance (set out in paragraphs 37 to 40 below) – perhaps linked to receiving a share of any efficiency savings generated.
24. One issue that is important to the Council and any external party (such as parish councils) that seek to commission work is cost-certainty. At present, most works estimates are derived from a schedule of prices submitted at contract tender stage, uplifted in a defined manner by a set of standard industry indices. Although more effort is now taken to provide accurate estimates for the cost of all stages of scheme preparation and the construction itself, there is no direct incentive to adhere to these estimates.

25. An alternative available within the contract is to use a 'target price' approach. An estimated final cost for a scheme is established and, if this estimate is exceeded, then the 'pain' of the extra cost is shared between the client and the service provider – but, equally, so is the 'gain' of delivering the scheme for less than the estimate.
26. There is no standard apportionment of who bears the most 'pain' or benefits from the most gain. However, the Alliancing Code of Practice suggests that 'there should be a fair distribution at all levels of performance'. The following chart shows how the pain/gain allocation under the target price payment mechanism could work in general terms. This shows that each partner equally shares all of the gain (i.e. the benefit of the actual cost being less than the original estimate) but there is a limit on one of the partner's pain by placing a 'cap' on that potential liability.



27. The contract currently stipulates that the distribution of pain and gain shall be as shown in the table below:

Share Range (Variance from estimate)	Contractor's Share Percentage	Council's Share Percentage
Less than 90%	0%	100%
From 90% to 100%	25%	75%
From 100% to 105%	75%	25%
Greater than 105%	100%	0%

This is an uneven distribution of pain and gain in favour of the Council with caps on both pain to the Council and gain to Kier. To put this into context, if a scheme had a target cost of £200k but ultimately costed £150k, £30k would fall in the 'less than 90%' range and £20k would fall in the 'from 90% to 100%' range. The gain to the Council would be 100% of the £30k and 75% of the £20k – i.e. £45k. The gain to Kier would only be £5k so represents poor incentivisation.

28. The potential for a fairer distribution of pain and gain is now being explored. The latest consideration is as shown in the table below:

Share Range (Variance from estimate)	Contractor's Share Percentage	Council's Share Percentage
Less than 80%	0%	100%
From 80% to 100%	50%	50%
From 100% to 120%	50%	50%
Greater than 120%	100%	0%

In this instance, the gain to the Council would be 100% of £10k and 50% of £40k – i.e. £30k. The gain to Kier would be £20k and thus represents an enhanced incentivisation. Full incentivisation would be achieved if the share of gain was equal, irrespective of the percentage.

29. The application of the target price approach is currently being developed for the future provision of the cyclic drainage service. The same approach could also potentially apply to next season's surface dressing programme.

Recommendation e) To recommend that an action plan and timescales should be developed to underpin the proposed improvements, supported by a communications plan which should include raising public awareness of the plans for improvement.

30. The overall composition of the Highways Transformation Programme was shared with Suffolk County Council and Kier highways managers at a 'leadership event' held at Ipswich Town Football Club on 17 December 2015. Details were provided about each of the six workstreams and volunteers were sought from the audience as to whom wished to work in the sub-groups for the Highways Transformation Programme workstreams.
31. The following targets were set at that stage:
- (a) Contract Management Workstream – new PMF by end of March 2016
 - (b) Integration Workstream – end-to-end reviews completed by June 2016
 - (c) Programme Management Workstream – revised HMOP by June 2016
 - (d) Finance Workstream – closure of contract year 1 & 2 payments by end of March 2016
 - (e) Asset Management Workstream – HIAMP by Nov 2016
 - (f) Communications – substantial work completed by June 2016
 - (g) All elements of the Highways Transformation Programme completed by the end of March 2017
32. As identified above, target (a) was achieved by the switch to a new performance management framework on 1 April 2016. A trial of the revised Highway Maintenance Operational Plan began on 9 May 2016 (and formally endorsed for public consultation at Cabinet on 12 July 2016) so target (c) was met. Although target (d) involved considerable effort from a large

number of people, it was nonetheless achieved. For target (e), a draft Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan was presented to Cabinet on 12 July 2016, has been publicly consulted on, is the subject of a separate report to Scrutiny Committee and is on track to be finalised by November 2016.

33. A significant amount of effort has gone into making the highways service more transparent. Programmes of work are now available on the Suffolk Highways pages of the County Council's website and a number of messages from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport ('Highways Matters') have been issued. Replacement Suffolk Highways vans have been delivered with revised 'Suffolk Highways' livery and the branding deployed appears on operatives' personal protective equipment and advance warning signs. There is still much to be done on enhancing the website content for highways issues and more information is to be provided for forward works programmes but, in essence, target (f) has been met.
34. The timescale for target (b) was not met but this overall task was completed during September 2016. Business Change Team personnel were involved in applying systems thinking to a number of highways end-to-end processes and this aided the generation of the HMOP. However, more detailed reviews were required to fully map out existing processes, identify where improvements could be made and help inform what Suffolk Highways' integrated team organisational structure should ultimately look like.
35. Although challenging, the overall changes identified in the Highways Transformation Programme are fundamentally still on track for completion by the end of March 2017, although the transition to the fully integrated team model is now likely to extend beyond this date. However, it is recognised that there will be scope for further improvement and development of the services provided by Suffolk Highways – as the alliance will be seeking to implement continuous improvement.
36. In addition, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Assistant Director Operational Highways have been working with local media to clarify how the service is changing. Furthermore, the latter has been giving presentations at local Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) meetings and at an Our Place meeting in West Suffolk.

Recommendation f) To welcome the adoption of performance measures that were outcomes (as opposed to outputs) based, for managing and monitoring the contract.

37. As identified above, the Performance Management Framework comprises of outcome-based measures. As identified in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2016, the PMF draws information from a number of sources (such as data submitted to Central Government bodies – particularly the Department for Transport) as well as primarily focusing on the results of the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) public satisfaction surveys. The NHT survey (undertaken in June/July each year) provides three levels of comparative benchmarking - at national, regional and county council levels.

38. In keeping with the principle of making Suffolk Highways' activities more transparent, the contents of the PMF and an associated action plan (which will respond to those measures where performance is less than satisfactory) should be shown on the Suffolk Highways webpages on the County Council's website. It is also considered entirely appropriate to provide an annual performance update to Scrutiny Committee. As the NHT survey results are not released until the end of October each year (to coincide with the NHT Annual Conference), reporting to Scrutiny Committee in December would work best. Evidence Set 3 sets out the interpretation of the 2016 NHT satisfaction survey results in the context of the overall PMF adopted on 1 April 2016.
39. Although the report to Cabinet recommended extending the contract to its full ten-year duration, it was agreed that this should be conditional on satisfactory performance against the PMF outcome measures in a manner that is to be defined by the end of December 2016. Through annual assessment, it could be readily determined whether to deduct time from the approved five-year extension or not. Such deduction could be in full or part-year time periods, depending upon the severity of any under-performance.
40. Whilst Scrutiny Committee could potentially feed into this process by way of its above mentioned annual review, it would only be able to make recommendations. The decision would need to rest with those with the delegated authority to make such deductions – the Director of Resource Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage.

Recommendation g) To welcome greater collaboration between Kier and the County Council through the development of an integrated team.

41. An opportunity arose early in 2016 to revise the manner in which the street lighting service was being delivered. Operational street lighting was, in essence, a subcontracted service that was recognised as under-performing in the first two years of the contract. With the departure of some of the senior managers involved, consideration was immediately given to creating an integrated street lighting team, drawing together the County Council 'client' function with the residual operational arrangement.
42. The principle of a proposed integrated team structure was formally approved by the Highways Services Contract Strategic Board (chaired by the Director of Resource Management) on 18 January 2016. The structure came into formal effect on 1 April 2016.
43. The integrated team is responsible for the following aspects of street lighting: asset management; works scheduling; works programme development; financial control; quality control; resource allocation; and operational delivery.
44. The identified benefits of this integrated street lighting team are as follows:
 - (a) A reduction in management resource need, equivalent to three members of staff, has yielded an ongoing in-year saving of around £100k;

- (b) Personnel are working as 'one team' with peaks and troughs in workloads being balanced accordingly amongst all team members, with assistance being provided where required;
 - (c) All capital works sites are visited, assessed and detailed using a standard form containing all relevant information prior to works commencing – previously, this was not carried out;
 - (d) A programme of work has been developed to clear the backlog of revenue and capital works from the first two years of the contract;
 - (e) Team members are assigned to roles that focus on their specialisms - the right person doing the right job at the right time;
 - (f) Communication at all levels and in all directions has significantly improved;
 - (g) Feedback from operatives is that morale has increased;
 - (h) The payment process was reviewed to ensure costs are agreed prior to works commencing with variations agreed as and when they occur;
 - (i) A greater understanding of work pressures within the team has led to a number of working barriers being removed;
 - (j) A 7-year asset management plan has been created to target the actual condition of the lighting asset, as opposed to its age;
 - (k) A full-year works plan was developed for 2016/17 – the first time this has ever been in place
 - (l) As a consequence, 1500 lighting columns were replaced in the first six months of 2016/17, compared to just 400 in the entirety of 2015/16;
 - (m) There has been improved general maintenance performance:
 - The average percentage of working street lights is now 99.6% compared with 97.8% last year;
 - 94.2% of lighting repairs are now complete within 10 days - last year it was 86.3%.
45. In view of the growing backlog of schemes being funded by Local Highway Budgets (LHB) but not being delivered in a timely or cost-effective way, an integrated LHB team was established in May 2016, comprising three Kier personnel and three Council officers (one each from the West Area Highways Office, the East Area and the Central Area). At that stage, the backlog of schemes that the area highways officers had agreed with local County Councillors (and any contributing parish/town councils) and were therefore ready for implementation stood at 103 schemes of which 51 had been ordered for construction but none had actually been delivered.
46. By mid-September, the total number of identifiable schemes had risen to 180 but the integrated team had delivered 82 schemes, identified with the relevant County Councillors that 15 schemes would not be progressed, 40 schemes were ordered for construction and the remaining 43 were in the 'design' stage – most of which involved public consultation for permanent traffic regulation orders.
47. The situation in mid-November was that the total number of schemes stood at 220, of which 120 had been delivered. An up-to-date programme of all schemes was placed on the County Council's website in mid-November

2016 to clarify where all such schemes had reached in terms of implementation and the related dates for such schemes. This programme will be updated on a monthly basis for the 2016/17 schemes.

48. It was intended that the LHB team would only be in place on an interim basis to clear the backlog that had developed. The LHB team members have identified a number of benefits in the way that they have been working
- (a) Co-location:
 - Faster, earlier, clearer flow of information between team members, colleagues and stakeholders;
 - Reduced misinterpretation of project briefs;
 - Flexibility of team to manage projects, cover leave and workload peaks;
 - (b) Knowledge sharing:
 - Bridging the previous divide between organisations;
 - Team able to access both the County Council's and Kier's systems, teams and processes;
 - The shared and varied knowledge, experience and background has enabled a wide range of projects to be progressed.
 - (c) The positive 'Can Do' attitude of the team has resulted in finding the most effective way to deliver projects and feeling empowered;
 - (d) Seeing the other organisation's perspective has improved understanding and relationships;
 - (e) Minor works not involving traffic regulation orders (which entails lengthy consultation) can be delivered very quickly.
49. On the basis of the above, the integrated LHB team is being retained to not only ensure that the remaining backlog schemes are delivered but to become the first point of contact, rather than area highways officers. In this way, it is expected that the entire end-to-end delivery of Local Highway Budget-funded schemes will be delivered far quicker and more cost-effectively than in the past.
50. Through the Council's revenue budget and capital allocation setting process, an additional £10million capital funding was allocated to highway maintenance over the two financial years, 2016/17 and 2017/18. In order to obtain optimum value from this funding from an asset management perspective, it was determined that a significant increase in the surface dressing programme was required.
51. Surface dressing work is essentially best spread over a two-year period for each annual list of sites. In the first year, the hardness of the road surface at each surface dressing site needs to be checked so that the dressing design can be optimised. In addition, any deterioration in the road surface should also be treated, primarily through patching work but this may also entail regulating any undulations in the existing road surface. The following year, the surface dressing work is undertaken at some point between April and

August. Continuing such work into September is ill-advised as both day and night temperatures begin falling and there is increased likelihood of rain.

52. Preparation for the planned 1 million square metres of surface dressing for 2016/17 (comprising 151 sites) took place during 2015/16 – and cost £4.6million. It was felt that up to 2 million square metres of additional surface dressing might be deliverable during April to August 2016 if the weather was good and additional surface dressing crews could be brought in early enough.
53. An integrated surface dressing team was therefore created in March 2016, comprising 6 Kier personnel, 6 County Council officers and 4 temporary staff, all co-located at Phoenix House. 431 additional possible surface dressing sites were considered but this was reduced to 247 sites for possible treatment.
54. All 247 of these additional sites underwent testing and preparatory works costing £830k. Tackling these sites earlier in the degenerative process that all flexible roads experience (through both trafficking and weathering) meant less preparation costs compared to the original programme – in other words avoiding future patching and regulation work. Had the 247 sites been allowed to deteriorate to the same level as the original 151 sites, that would suggest preparation cost of £9.2m. Earlier dressing would therefore avoid £8.4m preparation costs.
55. As 17 full days and 5 partial days were lost to wet weather, progress was slower than hoped for with the surface dressing gangs already committed to Suffolk. Gangs elsewhere in the country were also hampered by the poor weather and thus they did not arrive in Suffolk until August (during which time 4 surface dressing days were in operation). However, 309 sites out of the total 398 identified sites received surface dressing, equivalent to 2.474million square metres.
56. Earlier in 2016/17, the decision had been taken to trial the use of a 'temporary closure 15-minute delay' sign as an alternative to implementing a full road closure. Trials were successfully implemented in a manner agreed by the Network Assurance Team. The trial showed that, in many instances, the roads being worked were rarely being trafficked at the same time and, in most cases, traffic could be safely steered past the site without any delay.
57. This alternative traffic management approach was used on 89 of the sites. Instead of incurring the cost of implementing a temporary traffic regulation order and setting up traffic management along a diversion route, this approach merely required some additional personnel and barriers at the entry points to where the works were taking place – a significant reduction in cost. The net saving from this was £135k. The same approach is being rolled out across as much of Suffolk Highways maintenance work as possible – and will save a further estimated £400k.
58. These are all examples of the positive impact of the integrated teams that have been introduced – some permanent and some starting out on a temporary basis. However, these teams will now be established on a

permanent basis and the principle of integrated teams will apply across all of Suffolk Highways.

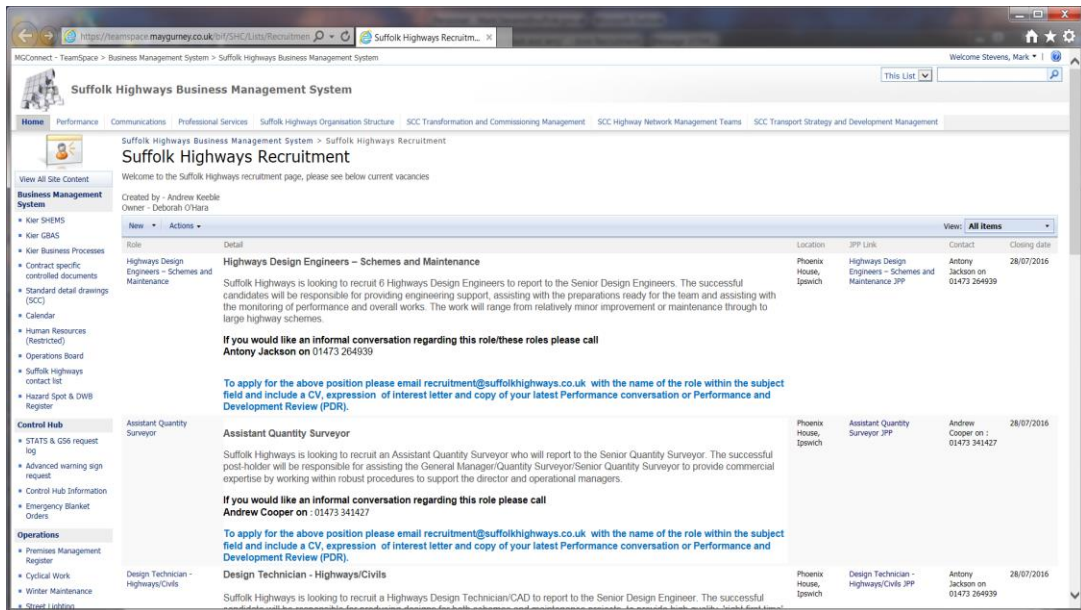
59. The latest integrated team to be established is a drainage team, set up to tackle a significant backlog of sites around the county where flooding of the highway is being experienced and causing varying levels of disruption. The funding required to address these flooding issues has been allocated and the various schemes are being prioritised. Direct contact can be made with the team through a dedicated email address – to supplement rather than replace the ability of the public to access Suffolk Highways via the customer service centre.

Recommendation h) To recommend the reduction of design process costs and time by adopting a more pragmatic design approach through greater use of standard details rather than the more onerous 'fit for purpose' service standards.

60. The 'fit for purpose' contractual design requirement arose from the desire at contract tender stage to shift all design risk to the incoming contractor. The entire design function transferred to Kier at the beginning of the contract but not all existing design staff transferred at the same time, preferring to take alternative roles within the retained County Council organisational structure.
61. The consequence of the fit for purpose requirement was that designs were made 'watertight' from a risk perspective rather than a more simplistic, pragmatic design approach – for which the risk could be shared. The time taken to design to a fit for purpose standard was long and therefore costly – and resulted in considerable frustration from those requesting work.
62. The establishment of the integrated teams identified above has resulted in quicker agreement over what would constitute a 'pragmatic design'. Those involved are using standard drawings and details, although work is ongoing through a 'materials, specification and innovation' sub-group to simplify and simplify these standard drawings and details yet further. A recent example has been consideration of the design for a 'gateway' – simplifying the gateway configuration, the sign to be used and the gateway material to ensure low levels of maintenance liability.

Recommendation i) To recommend that as much design work as possible be done by staff living and working in Suffolk rather than other counties, in particular for routine jobs and where a site visit was beneficial.

63. Earlier in 2016/17, a number of posts were vacant within the Kier organisational structure, including a number of positions in the Kier design team. The opportunity was taken to adapt Kier job descriptions into the County Council's 'job and personal profile' configuration and were then taken through the job evaluation process. Following this, the vacant posts were internally advertised, as set out in the screenshot below.



64. Following an interview process, a number of Suffolk County Council Operational Highways employees have secured posts in the design team. A number of these will be working in the new integrated drainage team referred to above.
65. Organisational changes are being put into effect through the Highways Transformation Programme. Every opportunity will continue to be pursued to ensure that the design function is delivered from within the existing pool of Kier and County Council employees, rather than use resources from outside of the county.

Recommendation j) To recommend that the work to improve highways on-line information and reporting systems should continue, ensuring problem reporting was easy and feedback effective. This work should take into account feedback from councillors about how systems could be improved to become more intelligent and responsive.

66. The changes to the Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) identified above meant that changes were necessary to the highways on-line reporting tool. In addition, there was considerable feedback from councillors that, for those instances where reported defects did not meet the old HMOP intervention criteria, the defect was shown with a green 'pin' – giving the false impression that work had been completed when none, in fact, had. Councillors also identified that the highways online reporting tool did not allow accurate reporting close to boundaries with adjacent local authorities.
67. On that basis, work has taken place with the software provider of the highways online reporting tool and a number of important updates have been recently implemented:

- where work is ordered to fix the reported defect, the date of the order and timescales for repair (as set out in the HMOP) are now provided;
- new blue pins appear on the reporting tool map to show the defects that do not currently meet HMOP intervention levels – this is the penultimate pin shown in the legend. These defects are added to the highway inspection programme and will also be taken into account when programmes for future preventative maintenance are being developed;
- the automated responses have been improved to provide greater clarity and links to further information available on the Council's and other organisations' websites – this is of particular relevance when the issue being raised is not one that Suffolk Highways would address;
- reports can now be plotted outside the Suffolk border on highways which the County Council maintains in agreement with neighbouring authorities.



Recommendation k) To recommend that officers and councillors should make every effort to ensure that enquirers use the on-line information and reporting system.

68. A concerted effort has been made to improve all forms of communication and, in each instance, the opportunity is taken to encourage online reporting. The last message on each 'Highways Matters' communication to all councillors from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is encouraging everyone to 'report a fault' by making contact via the website at <http://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>.
69. In 2014, online contacts were at an average of 485 per month, representing just over 23% of all forms of contact for highways issues. In 2016, this has risen to an average of 1145 contacts per month, representing about 43% of all forms of contact. Work will continue to encourage as much of the remaining 57% to use the online reporting tool.
70. It is worth noting that the highways online reporting tool was 'highly commended' in the V3 Digital Technology Leaders Awards 2016, and was a runner-up in the O2 Digital Champions Award category of the O2 NextGen Digital Challenge Awards 2016. This recognition related to the highways online reporting tool before the latest set of improvements.

Recommendation l) To request an information bulletin update in six months' time on progress including information about recruitment and training for Kier staff, activity to address long term sickness rates and improve staff morale, and what difference this had made.

71. As identified in the covering report, this matter was responded to in a report to the Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2016.

Recommendation m) To request an information bulletin update for the Committee's February meeting providing details of:-

- i) predicted spend and actual spend on the contract to date;***
- ii) actual figures to demonstrate savings delivered;***
- iii) the volume of work delivered;***
- iv) an update on the resolution of outstanding accounts and details of current position;***
- v) an indication of the extent to which performance of the highways service was consistent across the county;***

72. As identified in the covering report, this matter was responded to in a report to the Scrutiny Committee on 10 February 2016.

Recommendation n) To recommend that every effort should be made to ensure that materials which were sympathetic and appropriate for conservation areas and listed buildings were used, recognising that these materials should be both cost effective and readily available.

73. A sympathetic and appropriate approach is being taken in the selection of materials that are used. From an asset management perspective, it is important that the selection of material is cost effective for the particular location in which the material is used. If a location is particularly prone to vehicular damage (which may be difficult to prevent) or is in a location where there are a multitude of public utility mains, cables, equipment and services, it is highly likely that a less costly product is used.
74. The matter of being readily available is also important. If a particular product or material is rarely used, it is unlikely to be held in stock so may require manufacture or import. In either case, the lead-in period can be lengthy and thus cause frustration to those who are keen to have a replacement article or material in place.
75. A recent example of where due consideration was given to ongoing material cost and maintenance was in the Princes Street/Queen Street highway improvement scheme – designed and supervised by the Transport Strategy Group and delivered 'on the ground' by Suffolk Highways.
76. The Giles Circus statue area was seen as the point where two significant roads meet in the town centre: Princes Street from the railway station; and Queen St/St Nicholas St/St Peters Street from the waterfront. The Transport Strategy Group considered that the palate of materials going towards the waterfront should be consistent and that the palate going towards the station in Princes Street should be more contemporary.
77. It was decided that the best location for a differentiation in material finish should be at Giles Circus. York stone (with tegula setts) was therefore used in Queen Street whilst more readily available concrete paving was used in Princes Street. Had York stone paving been used in Princes Street as well, the cost would have been £44,400 but, by using the concrete paving, the cost is £8,000 – i.e. a total cost saving of £36,400. Any future maintenance work in Princes Street will therefore also be less costly and permanent

repairs quicker than may be experienced in Queen Street, depending upon the amount of replacement York paving that is required and its availability.

Recommendation o) To welcome the County Council's developing approach to highways asset management, which would be reported in more detail to Cabinet on 10 November 2015.

78. A separate report on highway infrastructure asset management has been submitted to Scrutiny Committee to consider in conjunction with this report.

Recommendation p) To request a further report on progress in 12 months' time.

79. It is hoped that the preceding and following paragraphs provide sufficient reassurance to Scrutiny Committee that significant progress has been made with the improvement to the highway service and the relationship between the County Council and Kier.

c) What are the current staff vacancy rates, to what are they attributable and how do they impact on the organisation?

80. Out of a desired staff structure numbering 138, Kier has 39 permanent employee vacancies. However, all but 5 of these are filled with agency staff. The majority of the vacancies (17) are within the design function. The high vacancy rate is in part due to the lure of more attractive positions further south and, in part, to the poor reputation of Suffolk Highways that existed until recently.
81. Recruitment has become easier with the improving performance of the contract and the increased stability of the Kier senior management team. Impact on the organisation is negligible in all areas except design although the recent recruitment of County Council personnel to some of these roles will begin to ease that pressure. Further progression of the integrated team approach will also have a positive impact, particularly in the delivery of sensitive and minor works for which local knowledge and expertise will be invaluable.
82. In terms of operatives, Kier currently employs 121 across all disciplines. A recruitment drive was recently launched for a further 22 operatives. These additional operatives will increase the resilience to severe weather events, and enable more works to be self-delivered.
83. Within the County Council, all the area offices have, at various stages, suffered from staff losses arising from movement within different teams and sections within the County Council, to the private sector or to neighbouring local authorities.
84. In addition, the need to resource the integrated teams referred to above through a secondment process has also meant that area offices have not always been fully resourced – although the integrated teams have simultaneously taken away some of the workload pressures. Agency staff have been brought in to provide temporary cover but at higher salary rates than in the past due to an increasingly competitive market where the demand for skills and experience is high.

85. The completion of statutory highway inspections within the required timescales has remained the highest priority for the area offices but this has been to the detriment of responding to customer service requests. The area offices have therefore seen an increase in complaints, mainly linked to response timescales but are now able to address this with the stabilisation of workforce numbers.

d) What skills gaps have been identified and how is this being addressed?

86. One major area of training identified has been that of National Highways Sector Scheme 12D T7. This is targeted at all levels of management, client officers, technicians and any person not actually installing temporary traffic management (TTM), but requiring a knowledge of basic practice of TTM on urban and rural roads. This is currently exclusively being targeted at designers and design managers and will see an improvement in initial designs and design estimates as the correct traffic management is more likely to be identified at the outset.
87. A further area where this a problem lies within the Structures Team. Structural engineers are limited in number across the country and those that are suitably qualified (in order to fulfil a legal 'technical approval authority' role) are rarer still. The Structures Team is therefore developing the existing in-house resource to attain the recognised professional status of Incorporated Engineer or Chartered Engineer.
88. To overcome the longer term potential shortfall in suitably trained and experienced staff needed to deliver the local highways service, Suffolk Highways has had a fresh intake of 8 new apprentices to supplement 8 technical trainees. The intention is that all of these 'new' recruits will rotate amongst the various Suffolk Highways teams to ensure they receive a thorough grounding in all aspects of the services provided by Suffolk Highways and become well-rounded individuals that can be deployed to where the demands are greatest in the future.

e) What data is available to demonstrate how Kier is currently performing against the contract and how does this compare with performance in previous years?

89. As clarified above and, as recommended by Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015, the performance measures used in the early part of the contract are no longer applied as they were punitive, output focused and driving the wrong behaviour. These have been replaced by outcome-focused performance measures in the new PMF.
90. Given that the revised Highways Transformation Programme began in January 2016, though, a more effective assessment of service performance would be not to focus on Kier but to focus on Suffolk Highways instead. The joint development of the new Highway Maintenance Operational Plan enabled joint consideration of the operational gang structure and the potential to pursue controlled reactive maintenance and focus on the effectiveness of the integrated teams.
91. The reduction in the percentage of temporary repairs (as set out in paragraph 12 above) and the stabilisation of reactive works orders (paragraph 13 above) are clear indicators of in-year improvement. The

acceleration in the delivery of Local Highway Budget schemes, the improvement in street lighting activity and the immense amount of surface dressing delivered during the summer are key indicators that Suffolk Highways is performing at levels far in excess of previous years.

f) To what extent is Suffolk's highway's work sub-contracted to third parties?

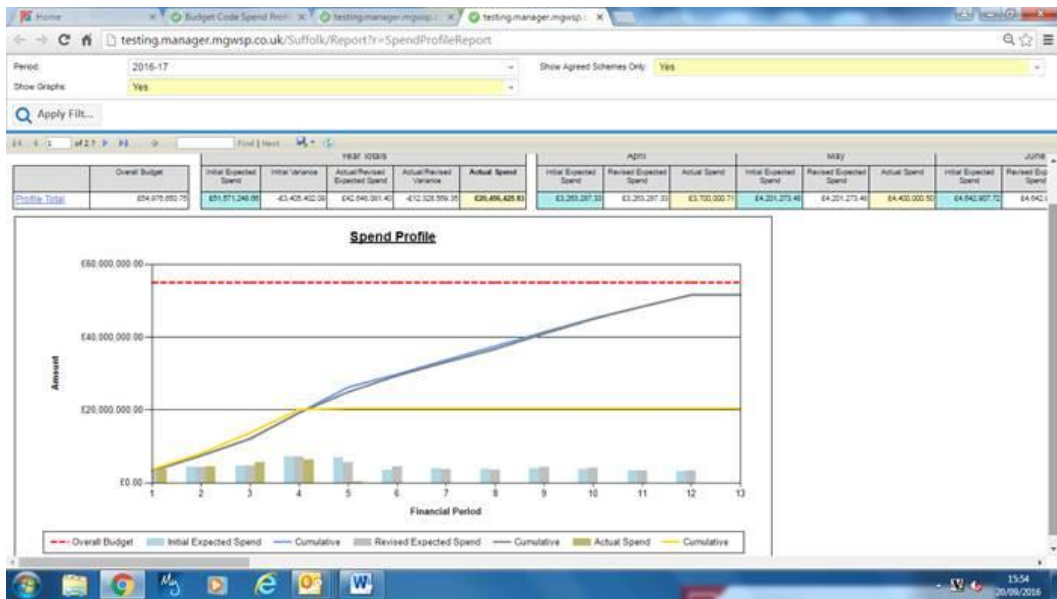
92. The split between delivery by direct labour/associated Kier companies and third party delivery is approximately 50/50. The drive over the next year is to recruit more labour so that the reliance on third parties will decrease and workforce resilience and flexibility can increase. This, in turn, will provide greater responsiveness to severe weather events.

g) What changes are being made under the highways transformation programme?

93. This has already been extensively covered in the paragraphs above.

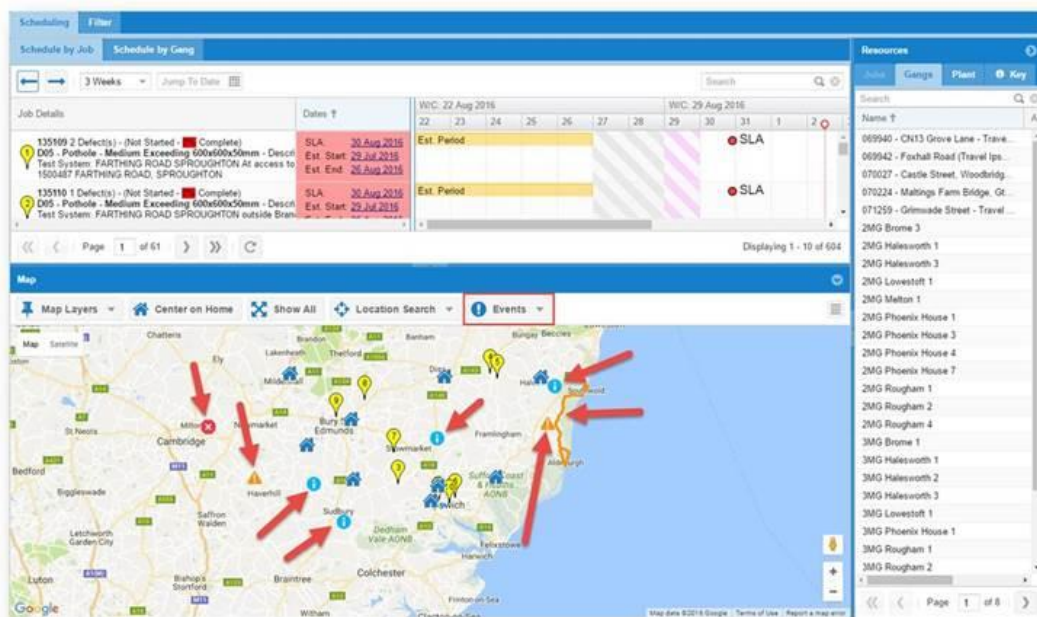
h) What has been done to improve sharing of information, processes and systems between the County Council and Kier, and what difference has this made?

94. Development is under way for an integrated works programme (IWP) in Kier's Works Manager software system (WMS). A 'Gantt Chart' facility has been introduced in the live system together with co-ordination opportunity and conflict management. Below is a summary of the new functionality that is available in WMS and how this will assist the future management of the contractor's plan (which is the in-year value of work, broken down into various categories).
95. The use of the IWP is being trialled for the rest of the year for drainage and major schemes, with the view to full integration for 2017/18 onwards of all works programmes. A number of programmes have been provided on the County Council's website but the IWP may prove to be a simpler mechanism for sharing this information
96. Linked to this is the development of the forward planning module of Insight (which is used to record all defects and asset information, as well as ordering works) to provide a list of schemes. This list can, in turn, be uploaded into the WMS schemes module to create the integrated works programme. Through its asset management approach, lists of different forms of works for 2017/18 are being generated and provided far earlier in the year than in the past and this will allow the IWP to be developed
97. This development will provide better visibility of programmes, particularly the overall forward programme, and monitor progress as the year progresses. It will also provide the opportunity to filter out the different types of works programmes.
98. When the integrated works programme is fully populated, managed and orders are associated, the spend profiling report below will automatically create the graph to represent the anticipated spend profile which can, in turn, be used in the monitoring of the contractor's plan progress. This spend profile report can also be broken down further into categories of work within the contractor's plan.

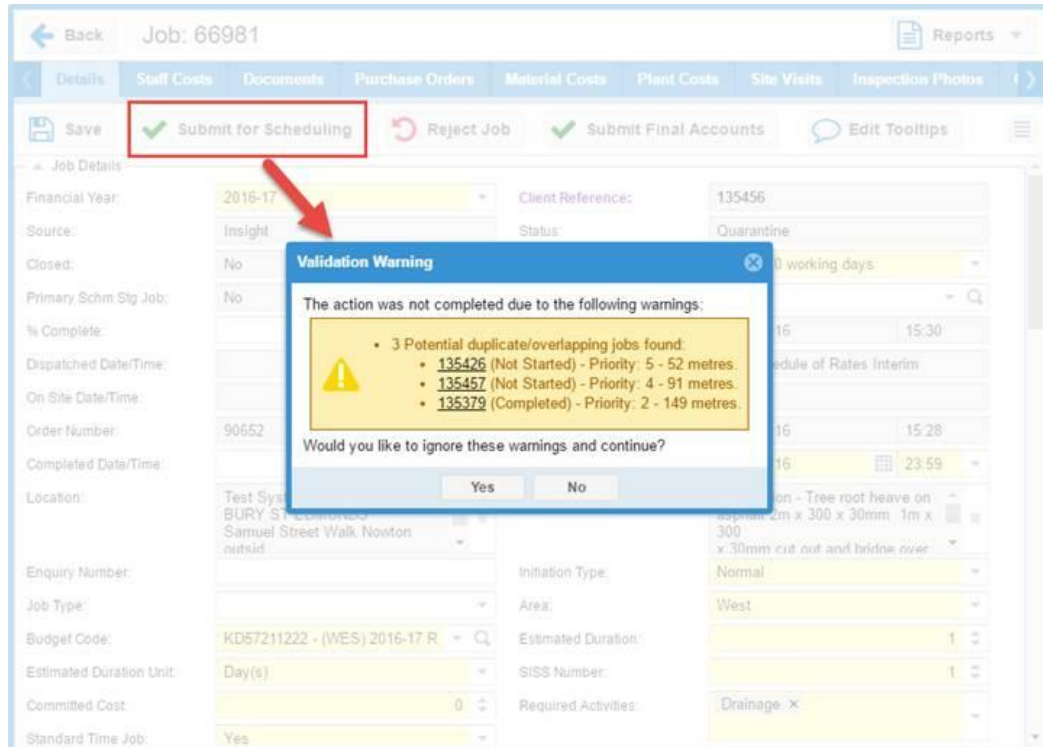


99. The delivery of programmes of work, schemes and maintenance works in general are impacted upon by local events that place pressure on or affect parts of the local highway network. The integrated works programme approach will:

- Allow events to be recorded in WMS and shown on maps across the system for the relevant date range;
- Record those events as single/multiple points, lines or polygons on the map and given a date range;
- Show these events on maps throughout the system to make users aware of all events going on at a given time;
- Clarify the events that will have an impact for the date range being viewed when using the scheduling modules (as shown in the map below).

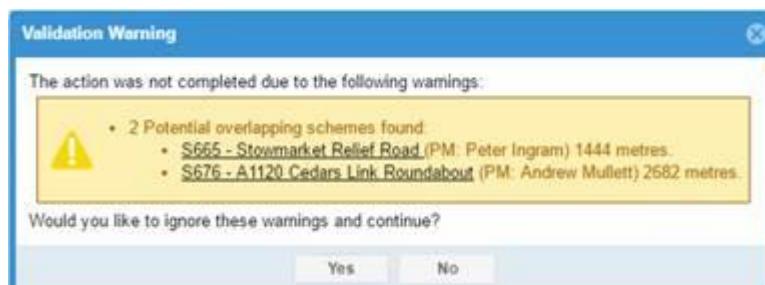


100. When a scheme or works package is accepted from a works commissioner, the system can be configured to check for jobs within a specified radius. If any existing known jobs are close by, the system will warn the user as follows:



101. This is configured against each job priority - indicating the warning radius for jobs with other priorities and also how long a warning remains in place after a job is completed. For example, if a pothole is added to the system and is then completed, it can remain in the system and warn against a later notification for the same defect – and thereby avoid an abortive site visit.

102. The distance to adjacent pieces of work can be anything up to 5 kilometres. This provides flexibility about managing both conflicts and opportunities for proximity of similar works for cost-effective resource deployment.



- i) **How does the target costing work and how successful has this been in enabling shared savings?**

103. This was covered in paragraphs 25 to 29 above.

j) Are reported savings to date sustainable?

104. This report has identified a number of areas where savings have been made. Each of these savings will be considered in turn to clarify to what extent these are sustainable:

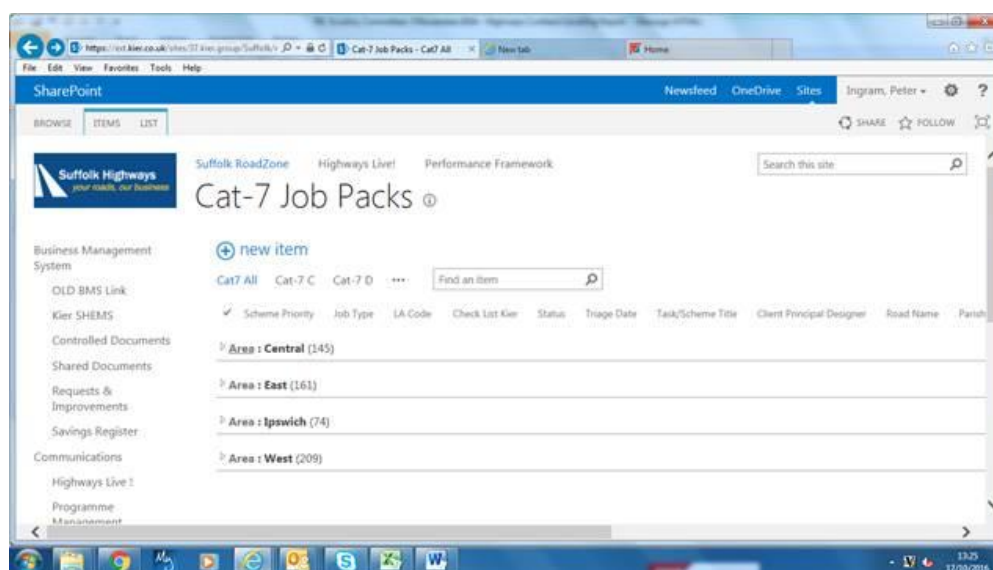
- Paragraph 11 referred to a saving of £1.3m by the reduction in reactive maintenance work. This is sustainable if the intervention levels set out in the HMOP are adhered to. However, much of what was ordered previously as high cost, reactive 2-man gang work should have been ordered as programmable or cyclic maintenance works (such as preventative carriageway patching, cutting back grass overgrowing footways, sign cleaning, hedge cutting etc). These works can be more cost-effectively undertaken in bulk with the right machinery rather than with the hand tools that the 2-man gang would have. There are therefore sustainable savings to be derived by more cost-effective ways of working – i.e. in a planned manner in the right way at the right time;
- Paragraph 44 referred to a saving in street lighting personnel in the sum of £100k. This is a permanent saving and consideration is being given to further rationalisation of the team, particularly after it has cleared the backlog from the first two years of the contract;
- Paragraph 54 identified a cost avoidance of £8.4m. This arose from a large-scale programme of surface dressing, undertaken at an earlier point in deterioration of the road network. This cost avoidance will re-occur if intervention remains at an early stage but the scale of the cost avoidance will depend on the scale of future surface dressing programmes. Whilst 0.5million square metres of road identified for surface dressing in 2017/18 has already been prepared, a further 817 individual sites are currently being assessed – to achieve a total surface dressing programme of 3 million square metres next year. If the roads selected are in a worse state than those undertaken this year, the cost avoidance will be less – but if in the same or better state, the savings could be repeated. Ideally, surface dressing should take place in sufficient quantity on a 10-year cycle so as to avoid the need to treat potholes or even patch at all – which would make the saving sustainable;
- The extent to which the £135k saving identified in paragraph 57 is less, the same or more in 2017/18 depends on the suitability of the sites for the use of the ‘temporary closure 15-minute delay’ sign. However, the sign has generally only been used on rural unclassified roads. Only around 25% of the roads surface dressed this year were unclassified – this is likely to be higher in 2017/18 so the savings could be greater;
- The additional £400k saving from use of the sign for general maintenance work is regarded as sustainable;
- The £36,400 saving from the use of concrete paving instead of York stone paving in Princes Street has the potential to be sustainable, albeit in different locations on different schemes but applying the same level of pragmatism and practicality.

k) To what extent have issues relating to final account disputes been resolved?

105. The final accounts for Years 1 and 2 are now agreed. Works are on-going to agree Year 3 but this should be completed by the end of December 2016. Once this has been achieved, the focus will shift to resolving Year 4 accounts. The development of practical means to avoid disagreements over payments has taken longer than was hoped for. However, the principle of having a 13-week final account lead time has now been adopted and the Works Manager system (WMS) software has been enhanced to allow better financial tracking and management.
106. Although this has now been implemented, it requires the passage of time to take full effect and enable all schemes to be closed out within the agreed 13-week target. Every opportunity will be taken to reduce this period in the future so that accounts are settled far sooner – the switch to integrated teams should also assist in this regard.
107. WMS development means that claims over 105% of the ordered value are now automatically prohibited without the upload and presentation of supporting documentation to the claim. Additional developments have also been made to complete the works commissioner’s assessment through WMS, giving greater visibility of the assessment and any reason for deductions against the claim line. The intention of these developments is to minimise commissioner deductions prior to the submission of any final account.

l) What has been done to improve the programming and visibility of minor works?

108. The programme and visibility of minor works (HMOP Category 7) continued to be enhanced through 2016. Improvements have been achieved by introducing a new electronic Category 7 process on Sharepoint. This system manages the design and mobilisation of the work within Suffolk Highways, and assists with the delivery of the works through WMS.



109. The advantage of this process is that all Suffolk Highways personnel can see progress with the end to end delivery of such works. The system provides automated updates and requests to carry out tasks to assist in works delivery and provides a single location of the work programme.
110. Since the introduction of the Cat 7 process, together with monthly progress reviews, there is more confidence in the delivery of these works. Approximately 1100 jobs have been delivered since Oct 2015, at a cost of £1.4m.

m) To what extent does the County Council liaise with other councils who contract with Keir for Highways services, to share information and experience?

111. There has been extensive liaison with other Kier contracts, particularly with respect to development of IT solutions. The new integrated works programme functionality, for example, has been scoped and developed by a user group comprising representatives from many contracts. New working methods, such as Roadmender (which recycles existing extracted road materials with additives), have also been trialled across Kier contracts on local and strategic roads, as well as utility contracts (such as Anglian Water).
112. Surrey and Lincolnshire County Councils also have highway maintenance contracts with Kier. They and Suffolk County Council are part of a national working group linking up with the Department for Transport to develop a performance management framework that can be used consistently across all local highway authorities.

n) How have changes to the design process made this quicker and more cost effective?

113. Much of this has already been addressed above. However, the design estimating process has also been revised, including a more rigorous checking procedure and to ensure that a greater understanding of the many and varied design briefs is achieved.
114. The outcome of this process change has meant greater assurance that the estimate covers all known aspects of the scheme design works. Fewer challenges to the monthly claims will therefore arise, which reduces back-office commercial time spent on reconciling the claims and payments each month. Risks and opportunities are also highlighted so that commissioners can be certain that what they will receive is in line with their expectations.

o) What are the arrangements for gulley clearing and how is this work prioritised and monitored?

115. At present, the known surface water drainage asset comprises 129,000 gullies and 22,700 kerb offlets which are cleansed on a 9-month cycle. In addition, a number of associated assets (including catch pits, interceptors and linear drains) are cleansed on an ad-hoc basis as instructed by the area highways offices. This approach came to an end on 21 November when the existing subcontract arrangement with the current service provider expired.

116. The new service provider (Flowline) has now mobilised and is bringing a new approach to the delivery of the drainage service. Initially, the service will move to a 12-month cycle but will include the cleansing of the gully connection (the link between the road gully/offlet and the surface water sewer or adjacent watercourse). The gully cleansing operation is invariably ineffectual unless both operations are undertaken which does not happen with the current service provider. Looking ahead, further savings are anticipated as the service evolves to a needs-based approach.
117. The new service model is based upon an asset-led approach. Significant effort is being invested in developing the asset data to enable smarter use of resources and to deliver targeted services in the future. Furthermore, a target cost model is being developed with a pain / gain mechanism to incentivise the subcontractor to become more efficient and for the County Council to share in any savings delivered.
118. The subcontractor performance will be monitored as follows:
- Daily verbal update: Suffolk Highways' drainage supervisor will discuss the previous day's work with the subcontractor, highlighting any safety or operational issues together;
 - Weekly scheduled meeting: Suffolk Highways' drainage supervisor will meet with the subcontractor to discuss previous week's progress and forthcoming week's schedule, highlighting potential risks;
 - Monthly service review meeting: Suffolk Highways' Head of Operations will meet with the contract manager of the incoming service provider to discuss overall adherence to programme, quality, safety and operational issues;
 - Audit regime: Suffolk Highways' drainage supervisor will conduct a minimum of four site visits per month to check the quality of work completed and the accuracy of data recorded in the asset management system.

p) What are the arrangements for responding to requests for Highways attendance at local parish and town council and area committee meetings?

119. The new organisational structure of Suffolk Highways will result in area office personnel being co-located and fully integrated with other County Council Operational Highways and Kier personnel. Reactive maintenance work will be identified, scheduled and delivered primarily from three service delivery centres, based at Rougham, Halesworth and Phoenix House depots.
120. Each of these service delivery centres will have customer liaison officers whose role will be to provide daytime clearer linkage between Suffolk Highways and local county, district, borough, town and parish councillors. It is planned that each such depot will have a formal reception desk for visitors.
121. Attendance at all local parish town and area committee meetings would represent a significant level of resource diverted from delivery of the day-to-day highways service. At present, senior managers within the County

Council have been attending larger scale meetings (as identified in paragraph 36 above) to improve contact between Suffolk Highways and external parties. However, it is recognised that the development of this customer liaison role needs to be progressed in a sensible manner to ensure that the right level of local interaction is achieved.

Supporting Information

Cabinet (10 November 2015); Adoption of Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy Documents; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711819c53f2&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Cabinet (12 July 2016); Strategic Highway Asset Management Plan; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9b&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Cabinet (12 July 2016); Highway Maintenance Operational Plan; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9d&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Scrutiny Committee
Date: 20 December 2016
Highways Services Contract

Information in this report was produced on behalf of	
Director or Assistant Director	<i>Director of Resource Management</i>
By	<i>Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Operational Highways</i> <i>Tel: 01473 264994</i> mark.stevens@suffolk.gov.uk
Title:	<i>Highways Services Contract</i>
Date Submitted:	<i>7 December 2016</i>

Introduction

1. This evidence set has been provided by county council officers and representatives of the Highway Services Contract provider, Kier Infrastructure Services Ltd. This joint approach is consistent with the aspiration to adopt a 'one team' approach to the overall delivery of the highways service in Suffolk.
2. This evidence set provides information on the Suffolk Highways performance management framework (PMF) which came into effect on 1 April 2016. This evidence set has a particular focus on the public satisfaction scores obtained in 2016 as a consequence of the County Council's involvement in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) public satisfaction survey.

The origins of the PMF

3. A review of operations across all UK public sector services was conducted in 2003/4 by Sir Peter Gershon. As a consequence of this review, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), as the central government sponsoring department, introduced the need for local authorities to save £6.45bn over the next 3 years. Central government has continued to seek efficiency savings for local government ever since.

4. In 2011, central government determined that it would initiate a new 'Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme' (HMEP) to bring about greater consistency amongst the 150 or so local highway authorities across England in the way in which local highway networks were managed. Whilst this new initiative was assigned £6m to enable the Department for Transport to deliver HMEP, the ultimate aspiration was to reduce the combined central government revenue and capital expenditure on highway maintenance by around 25% (from around £4bn per annum to around £3bn per annum).
5. A significant proportion of the HMEP expenditure was on delivering guidance and toolkits to enable local highway authorities to deliver local highway maintenance services more cost effectively. However, there was no specific driver in place to make local authorities use any of the HMEP products.
6. In order to encourage the use of these HMEP programmes, the Department for Transport determined that the annual capital maintenance allocation for 'structural maintenance' would no longer be solely 'needs-based', directly linked to network length. Central government responded to calls from the highway sector for greater long-term certainty over allocations by allocating £6bn over a 6-year period, commencing in 2015/16.
7. In 2015/16, all allocations would essentially be determined as it had been in the past – linked to road length. However, for 2016/17 onwards, the proportion of needs-based funding would reduce but such reduction could be retrieved by local authorities securing 'Incentive Fund' money. The total value of needs-based funding and Incentive Fund would remain the same each year (i.e. circa £1bn) but the needs-based allocation would decrease over a three-year period with a corresponding increase in the Incentive Fund.
8. To secure the Incentive Fund element, each local authority would have to complete a self-assessment questionnaire – comprising 22 questions. The questionnaire would help determine whether a local authority was ranked as a Band 1 authority (i.e. poor implementation of asset management principles and little use of HMEP products), a Band 2 authority (partial asset management approach and some take-up of HMEP products) or a Band 3 authority (full asset management approach and good use of HMEP products).
9. The third question in the self-assessment questionnaire indicates that:

“A set of performance measures and a monitoring regime have been developed to support the implementation of the asset management strategy, the works programmes and other aspects that will support continuous improvement. This includes measures of stakeholder satisfaction, safety, serviceability and sustainability of the network. These are measured and reported on a regular basis and the approach is clearly documented, together with relevant action plans.”
10. Whilst the intention of HMEP was to bring some degree of standardisation to the way in which local authorities maintain their local road network, no standard set of performance measures or monitoring regime was provided

or defined in any detail. Suffolk Highways therefore developed an outcome-focused PMF, as suggested by Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015.

11. County Council officers are currently engaged with other local authority officers and the Department for Transport to try to define a standard performance management framework so that there is greater consistency across England, thereby better enabling the benchmarking of performance.
12. Depending on the extent to which Suffolk Highways' PMF differs from the emerging standard performance management framework, there may be a need to amend certain aspects of the Suffolk Highways PMF in the future. However, the early indications of this work is that little change will be required.

The Suffolk Highways PMF

13. In keeping with the general advice set out in the self-assessment questionnaire (particularly in relation to highway infrastructure asset management), the Suffolk Highways PMF has been built round the four Local Transport Plan objectives of: a prosperous and vibrant economy; creating the greenest county; safe, healthy and inclusive communities; and learning and skills for the future.
14. The extract from the self-assessment question 3 refers to 'measures of stakeholder satisfaction, safety, serviceability and sustainability of the network'. In previous years, the County Council has made negligible use of the results of the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) public satisfaction surveys – in which it has participated since its inception in 2008. It was therefore evident that use of previous years' data would provide some helpful context when reviewing the public responses to the 2016 survey. Whilst consideration of some NHT measures would address the need to consider 'stakeholder satisfaction', it would equally be inappropriate for the PMF to be solely focused on these responses.
15. When considering the subject of 'safety' performance, the natural inclination would be to focus on the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) or those slightly injured. However, such data is not actually that reflective of highway maintenance but more related to what traffic management measures are deployed to make the network safe. As the decisions over the deployment of such measures rests with Transport Strategy than Operational Highways, it was considered that KSIs would be the wrong metric.
16. The extent to which the network is 'safe' would therefore be more related to adequate skid resistance on specific roads across the county, the completion rates of highway safety inspections, the timeliness with which observed highway defects are 'made safe' and data related to highway insurance claims.
17. The extent to which the highway network is considered 'serviceable' links back to its overall condition. The County Council already gathers and provides data to the Department for Transport on the proportion of A-roads, B and C-roads, and unclassified roads are in need of highway maintenance.

This information is primarily derived from machine surveys and is therefore arguably as independently assessed as the NHT public satisfaction results.

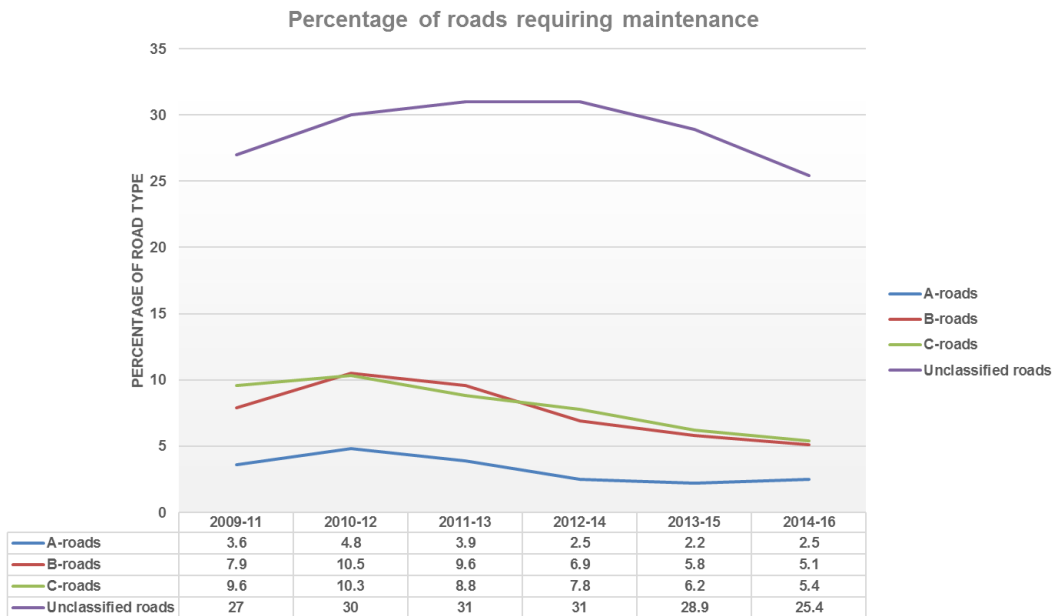
18. The matter of highway maintenance 'sustainability' is not linked to the availability or condition of sustainable travel mode facilities. This relates more closely to recycling practices, fuel consumption, community engagement and the extent to which Suffolk Highways develops its own staff to better ensure that there is continuity of local resource to delivery highway network upkeep.
19. The Suffolk Highways PMF therefore draws upon these sources of information. Whilst it can currently benchmark with other authorities on the NHT results, it will only be through greater national standardisation of performance management framework outcome performance data that comparability will be fully achieved.
20. Whilst it is possible to compare the County Council's NHT results against all participating local highway authorities (of which there were 106 in 2016), comparison is far more relevant against the County Council's peer group – i.e. other county councils round the country (of which 28 participated in 2016). National and regional comparison may provide some different and interesting context but there is such variability over the size of highway networks that more detailed comparison would need to be heavily qualified and therefore of limited use.

PMF Performance Interpretation

21. Appendix A to this Evidence Set sets out the 82 performance measures, split out over four separate tables – representing the measures related to the four Local Transport Plan priority objectives (as shown in the top right hand corner of each page). Some indicators require results that increase, others that seek a decrease.
22. The trend (over a period of months, quarters or years, depending on the relevant circumstances) for each performance measure is depicted by either an upwards or downwards arrow – coloured red for where the measure's trend is heading the wrong way and coloured green for a trend in the right direction. In many instances, no figures or trends are available as there are a number of new indicators for which there is no or limited data.
23. The first three pages contain performance measures that are shaded pink. These are the performance measures where data is taken directly from the NHT public satisfaction survey.
24. The information shown is as submitted to the Highway Services Contract 'Operations Board' (which draws representation from senior managers of Kier and the County Council). The information was presented for Quarter 2 of the 2016/17 financial year (i.e. July 2016 to September 2016) on 6 December 2016.
25. The focus of the rest of this Evidence Set will be on the PMF performance measures that have been ascribed a red trend performance arrow.

PMF Measure 1

26. This PMF Measure and the following two measures represent the general road condition of Suffolk’s highway network. Whilst the media is keen to compare the number of potholes that different local authorities have, the varying definition of what a pothole actually is renders comparison of such numbers as somewhat meaningless. PMF Measure 1 provides a far clearer indication of the state of Suffolk’s A-roads, as assessed during 2015/16 but using data from the preceding two years to identify a three-year average.
27. Although the trend is negative, this is because the focus in 2015/16 was more heavily directed towards surface dressing and resurfacing the B-roads, C-roads and unclassified roads in Suffolk. This is illustrated in the chart below.

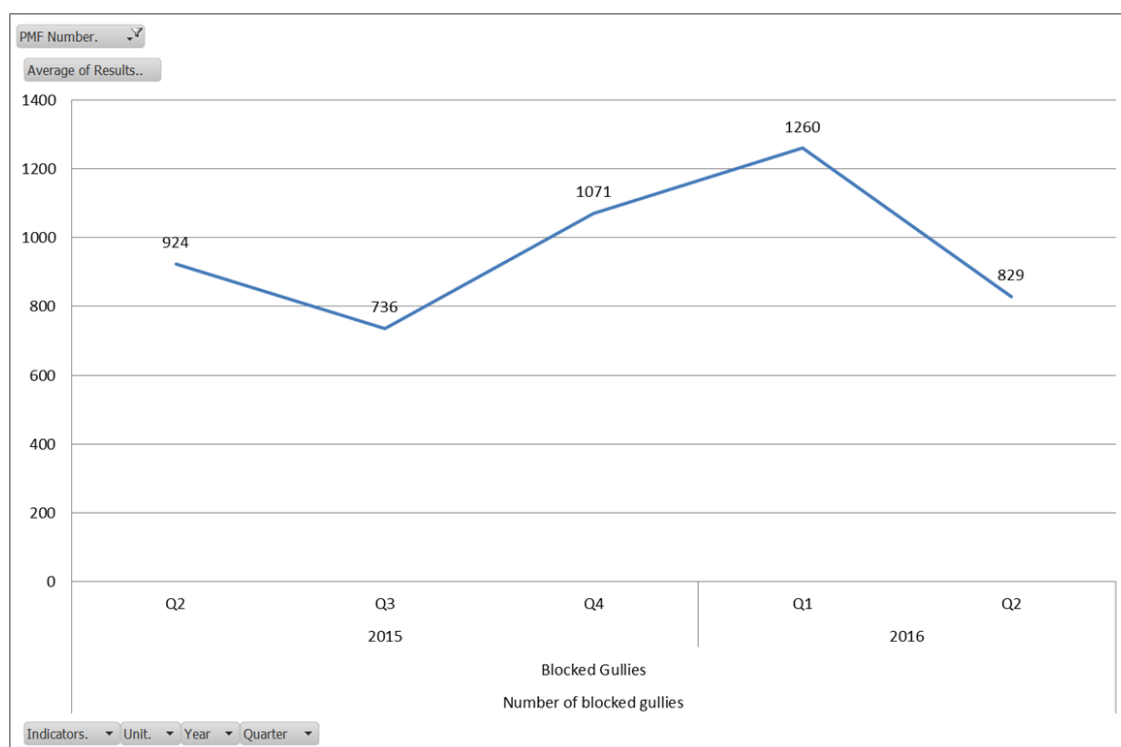


28. It is anticipated that there will be improvement in this performance measure as a consequence of the significant programme of surface dressing work undertaken during the summer of 2016 (which was evenly spread across all road classifications and Suffolk’s districts/boroughs).

PMF Measures 4 and 42

29. As shown in the chart below, the number of blocked gullies has increased during 2016 due to under-performance of the drainage sub-contractor. That under-performance resulted in more flooding incidents that would otherwise have been expected and generated additional complaints. The level of service has therefore been far from satisfactory. Unsurprisingly, this was reflected in the public response to the NHT question related to ‘Keeping drains clear and working’ (which appears as PMF Measure 42 in Appendix A).

30. A new drainage subcontractor commenced on 21 November 2016 and is expected to deliver a more robust, consistent service. The trend is shown as negative because the number of blocked gullies in 2016/17 Quarter 2 is higher than the number identified in Quarter 3 of 2015/16.

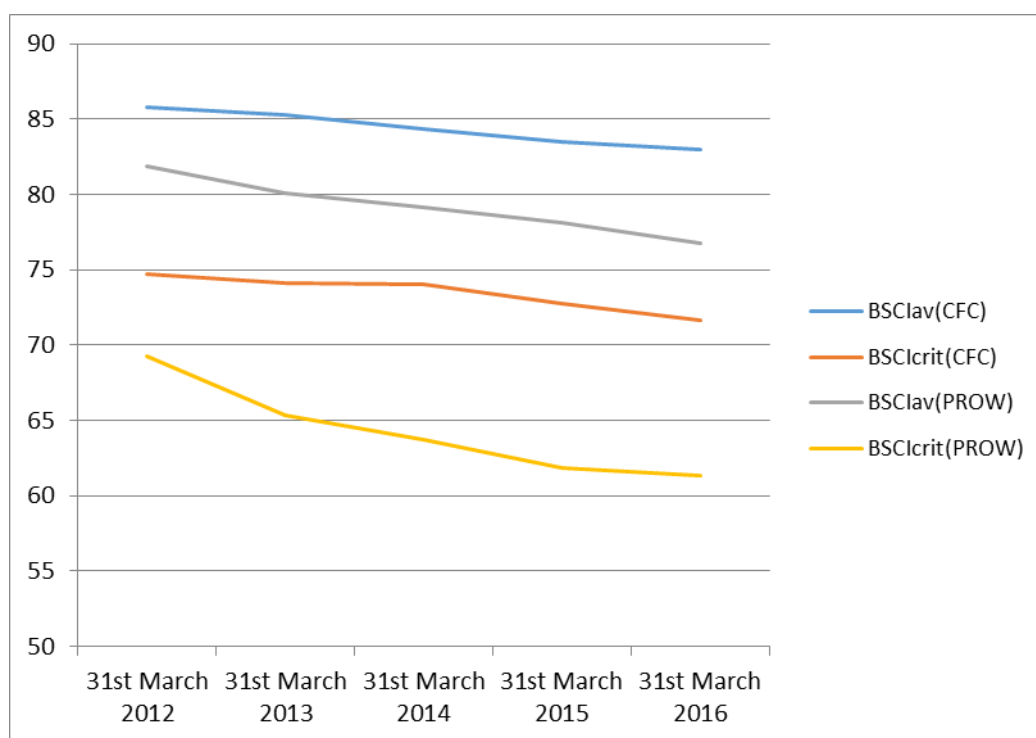


PMF Measure 5

31. Until the creation of the Performance Management Framework, the scale of the problem with bridge maintenance had not been particularly visible. Work has been undertaken in the preparation of the 'structures' section of the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan which has helped to identify the scale of future capital funding that will be required to begin to return the bridge stock in Suffolk to a far better state. However, the more detailed situation as at April 2016 is as follows and the numbers identified in Appendix A relate to carriageway, footway and cycleway structures only, rather than including public rights of way structures:

Condition Description (BCI Range)	Carriageway/footway Cycleway Network				PROW Network			
	BCI _{Ave}		BCI _{Crit}		BCI _{Ave}		BCI _{Crit}	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very Good (100-95)	112	7	338	21	22	7	38	12
Good (94-90)	240	15	58	4	34	10	2	1
Fair (89-80)	617	38	303	18	103	31	39	12
Poor (79-65)	582	35	445	27	117	36	124	38
Very Poor (64-40)	87	5	353	21	50	15	63	19
Severe (39-0)	6	<0.5	147	9	2	1	62	19

32. The overall trend in previous years is as follows:



33. This is a strong indicator that the County Council either needs to begin investing far more in the maintenance of its highway structures to stave off further decline in this element of highway infrastructure.

PMF Measure 11

34. Funding was assigned for the 2016/17 financial year for the cleaning of road signs. However, in the absence of any inspection reports indicating that sign cleaning was required, resources were deployed to begin cleaning signs on the more heavily used A-road network. A wider list of sites where sign cleansing is required is being compiled.

35. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 provides greater scope for sign decluttering and also relaxed the requirement for sign illumination. As this will pose an increasing difficulty for highway inspectors to differentiate between illuminated and non-illuminated signs (and therefore whether an electrical or non-electrical repair is required), future sign maintenance and cleansing will be undertaken by street lighting crews – who have the advantage of the right equipment to work safely at height.

PMF Measure 14

36. This measure relates to instances where the opinion of local residents is sought. In previous years, a feedback form and freepost envelope would be provided with works notification letters and this would generate a reasonable response rate. Around 12 months ago, this approach was abandoned in favour of asking those affected to go online and comment. As

the response rate has been poor, the process will revert to a Suffolk Highways A5 card freepost response method.

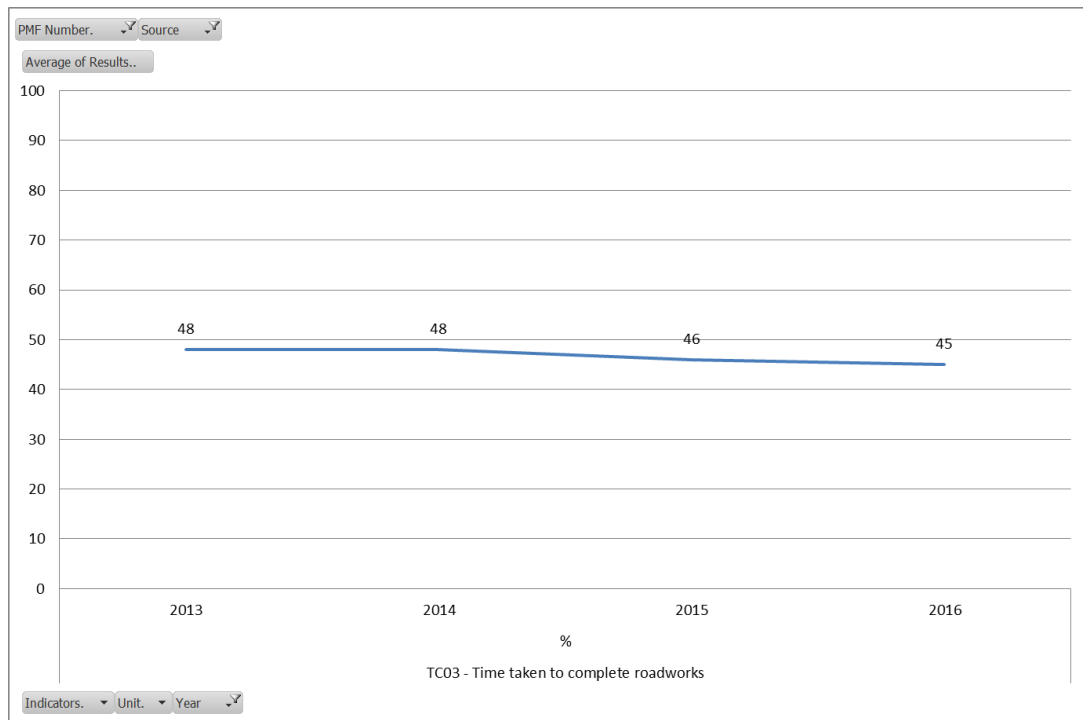
PMF Measures 15 and 20

37. There is a common misunderstanding that all roadworks in Suffolk are instigated by the County Council whereas, in reality, around 50% of roadworks activity is generated by the public utilities. Whilst there are instances where the public utilities are slow in clearing away upon completion, the occasions on which there is an overrun on the permitted works period is relatively few in number (given there are around 10,000 utilities opening per year across the county). The following table relates to a recent Freedom of Information request on roadworks overruns in Ipswich over a three-year period ending on 30 September 2016.

DATE	UTILITY	ROAD NAME	OVER RUN DAYS	S74 Charges
18/10/13	ES PIPELINES	ASTER ROAD	33	£6250
23/10/13	NGG	FELIXSTOWE ROAD	1	£1500
23/10/13	AWA	RANSOMES WAY	1	£1000
07/11/13	BT	TINABROOK CLOSE	1	£250
08/11/13	AWA	CHELTENHAM AVENUE	1	£250
06/12/13	BT	FORE STREET	2	£500
12/12/13	AWA	TREFOIL CLOSE	1	£100
18/12/13	NGG	MEADOWVALE CLOSE	1	£250
18/12/13	UKPN	ASHCROFT ROAD	1	£100
20/12/13	BT	ATHERTON ROAD	1	£250
16/01/14	BT	COLCHESTER ROAD	1	£100
24/01/16	NGG	SELKIRK ROAD	1	£250
24/02/16	NGG	WOODCOCK ROAD	1	£2500
15/09/14	VIRGIN	GODDARD ROAD	3	£750
09/12/14	BT	LANERCOST WAY	1	£250
28/01/16	AWA	FOUNDATION STREET	1	£750
03/02/16	NGG	MALLARD WAY	1	£250
10/02/16	UKPN	SIDEGATE LANE	1	£100
25/04/16	AWA	BIXLEYROAD	1	£250
25/04/16	SCC	THANET ROAD	1	£250
03/06/16	FULCRUM	SIDEGATE AVENUE	1	£250
16/06/16	AWA	ELMCROFT ROAD	1	£250
29/06/16	UKPN	FOUNDATION STREET	1	£100
18/08/16	AWA	RUSHMERE ROAD	1	£100
19/08/16	AWA	HENLEY ROAD	2	£500
16/09/16	AWA	HAWTHORN DRIVE	1	£250
16/09/16	AWA	DALES VIEW ROAD	2	£500
26/09/16	NGG	FOXHALL ROAD	1	£250
26/09/16	AWA	NACTON ROAD	6	£9000
29/09/16	AWA	SIDEGATE LANE	25	£6250

38. To clarify the situation, Highways Matters Edition 2 provided clarification on general 'roadworks'. However, as that was directed to Suffolk's various councillors, a message to the wider general public was needed.

39. Appendix B is an extract from the East Anglian Daily Times of 6 December 2016. The same article appeared in other newspapers (such as the Ipswich Star) and online. The Suffolk Highways communications team and the corporate Communications Team are now working together to provide more proactive clarification over a range of highways issues, of which roadworks is one.
40. Whilst PMF Measure 15 is shown as having a downward trend, the trend is relatively flat, as shown in the following chart:

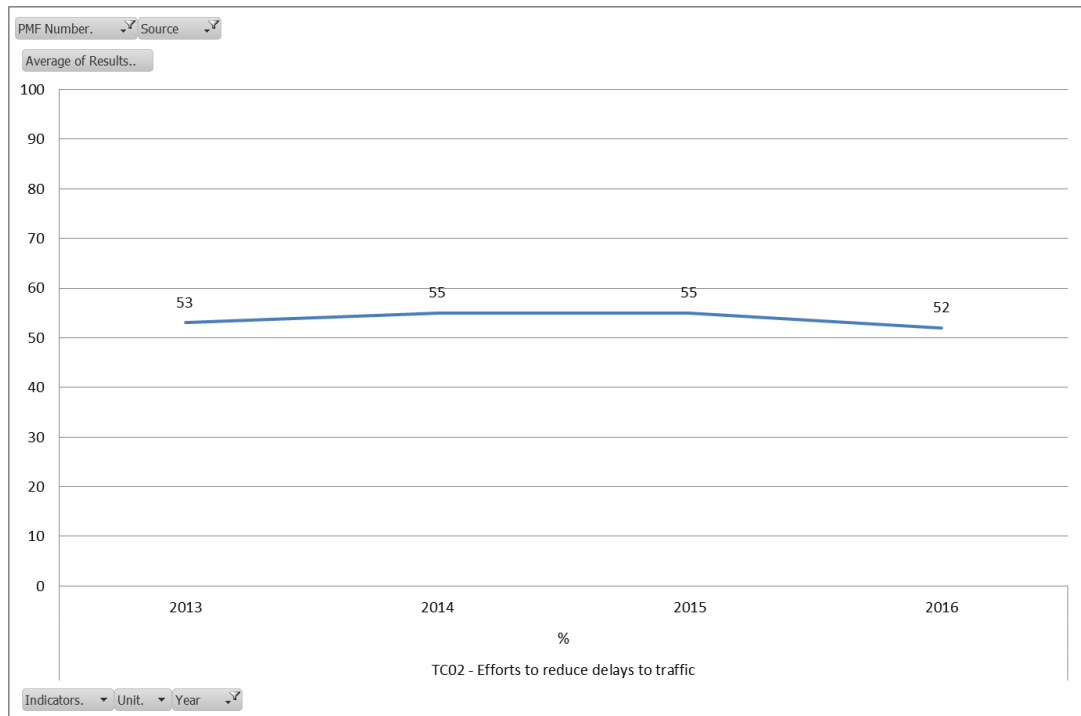


PMF Measure 19

41. As identified in Evidence Set 1, the focus during 2016 for the area highways offices has been, first and foremost, to complete the statutory safety inspections on time. With staff changes and secondments, there has been a drop-off in performance. However, the impending reorganisation of Suffolk Highways is set to address customer service requests in a more focused way through customer liaison officers, by ensuring that information is more readily and clearly accessible from the Suffolk Highways webpages, and to broaden out the range of Suffolk Highways personnel able to respond to enquiries.

PMF Measures 25 and 26

42. In some respects, PMF Measure 25 has been addressed above in the comments on PMF measures 15 and 20. However, it should be noted that surveys were sent out in May 2016 which was before the public would have begun to experience the benefit of the successfully trialled 15-minutes temporary obstruction sign which has served to avoid the need for lengthy diversions. However, as shown in the following chart, there is not a huge variation from one year to the next in the public opinion associated with PMF Measure 25:



43. If the public utilities make greater use of this sign, there should be an improvement in PMF Measures 25 and 26. It is recognised, however, that there is also scope for improvement in the sub-contracted service for traffic management (particularly for diversions) which will also have a beneficial effect. Whilst there has been much media coverage of lengthy diversion routes arising from road closures, there has not been equivalent coverage of the reduction in the number of road closures (PMF Measure 24) and the flexibility afforded by the 15-minutes temporary obstruction sign. This latter point needs to be addressed.

PMF Measure 29

44. This particular measure will always be variable due to the level of street lighting and illuminated sign energy consumption rising during the autumn to a winter peak before tailing away during spring to lowest levels in the summer. However, over time, this PMF Measure may need to switch over towards greater monitoring of the annual trend rather than monthly.
45. The challenge, however, is to ensure that energy reduction at least keeps pace with the acquisition of additional street lights and illuminated signs through highway adoptions and local traffic management schemes. In that way, overall increased annual energy consumption can be controlled and continue to fall. Central to this, though, will be the continued roll-out of LED lighting and the de-illumination of traffic signs wherever practicable.

PMF Measure 31

46. There is limited data for this particular measure which makes analysis difficult. There is no apparent cause for an increase in the average miles covered other than perhaps the ever-reducing number of reactive maintenance requests. This falling number may mean that reactive maintenance gangs are having to travel further between consecutive repairs as the condition of the network begins to stabilise. A further year's worth of data for this PMF Measure will be helpful in understanding the performance better.

PMF Measure 45

47. A reduction in the tonnage of road planings recycled during the autumn compared to the summer is to be welcomed as this is a reflection that road maintenance (particularly road resurfacing) is being undertaken during warmer weather. This enables the laid material to achieve a longer life, consistent with the County Council's asset management approach.

PMF Measure 67

48. The number of hits to Suffolk Highways webpages has seen a gradual reduction during the year. This is partly down to high levels of webpage activity during the summer where many searches for information took place on the grass cutting schedules but also attributable to the number of major schemes either in progress or about to start. The Majors/Mulberry scheme has been completed for a number of months now, as has the work at Nacton Road. The corresponding reduction in website activity is therefore to be expected.

PMF Measure 68

49. The number of editions of Highways Matters reduced in the second quarter as a result of a change in communications team personnel within both the SCC communications team and the corporate Communications Team. The area of 'communications and consultation' has recently been reinvigorated so that aspiration is to increase levels of communication in this area. The number of Highways Matters editions so far in the third quarter already matches the second quarter's performance.

Monitoring Kier's contractual performance

50. The report to Cabinet on 18 October 2016 on the extension to the Highway Services Contract identified that there was the potential incentivised safeguard against any future tailing off in performance by Suffolk Highways by making the extension subject to satisfactory performance assessed. It was suggested that such performance assessment could be directly linked to aspects of the Suffolk Highways performance management framework.
51. The performance management framework has been developed jointly by personnel from both Kier and the County Council so the inference was that a performance model could be mutually agreed by the County Council and Kier, based upon the PMF. The Cabinet determined that this task should be completed by the end of December 2016 with responsibility for the development, adoption and use of such a model resting with the Director of Resource Management, in agreement with the Cabinet Member for

Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage.

52. Segregation of Suffolk Highways' performance against the actions of Kier in isolation from the County Council using the PMF will become ever more challenging as the integration of the two workforces becomes increasingly embedded. However, the rationale would be that the model could comprise the following:
- A general public satisfaction trend from a selection of the NHT-based PMF measures. These measures could come from PMF Measures 11, 12, 13, 20, 25, 26 and 42;
 - The percentage of the public responding to surveys that are satisfied with completed works (PMF Measure 14);
 - The number of abandoned/ overrun notices for roadworks (PMF Measure 23);
 - The percentage of the operational fleet that is using alternative fuel (PMF Measure 33)
 - The tonnage of plantings used within reconstituted road construction (PMF Measure 45) AND/OR the total percentage of materials recycled (PMF Measure 46)
 - Attendance at community activities (PMF Measure 61) AND/OR community days/ volunteering days by staff (PMF Measure 62)
 - The number of Kier-sponsored trainees (PMF measure 72) AND/OR number of Kier-sponsored apprentices (PMF Measure 73)
 - The number of new maintenance techniques and materials implemented (PMF Measure 79)
53. These measures do not necessarily require an improvement but could be specified as to not fall below a baseline. For example, PMF Measure 46 could be specified as to not fall below 90% for three consecutive calendar months.
54. Work is ongoing on the development of this framework but the above is indicative of what is currently being considered.

Supporting Information

Cabinet (12 July 2016); Strategic Highway Asset Management Plan; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9b&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Cabinet (18 October 2016); Extension to the Highway Services Contract; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181d7326f&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Performance Management Framework Report - Quarter 2 - 2016 - A Prosperous & Vibrant Economy					
↑	Trending up				Annual Results - recorded from 2012 (where information is available)
↓	Trending down				Quarterly Results - recorded from Q1 2015 (where information is available)
■	No Result to display				Monthly Results - recorded from April 2016 (where information is available)
A green arrow shows a positive trend					
A red arrow shows a negative trend					
PMF Number	Measure	Result	Date of Result	Trend Direction	Comments
1	Percentage of A roads where maintenance should be considered	2.50%	2016 (Annual)	↑	Result is 3-year average over 2014-2016. 2013-15 result was 2.2% and 2012-14 was 2.5%
2	Percentage of B and C roads where maintenance should be considered	5.20%	2016 (Annual)	↓	Result is 3-year average over 2014-2016. 2013-15 result was 6.0% and 2012-14 was 7.3%
3	Percentage of unclassified roads where maintenance should be considered	25.40%	2016 (Annual)	↓	Result is 3-year average over 2014-2016. 2013-15 result was 28.9% and 2012-14 was 31.0%
4	Number of blocked gullies	829 Blocked Gullies	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	Improvement plan in place following appointment of new drainage subcontractor
5	Number of bridges not meeting acceptable condition index threshold	0 BCIAv<80 and BCICrit<80	2016 (Annual)	↑	Not due till April 2017. However, previous data suggests greater investment required - 675 & 945 (2015); 627 & 905 (2014); 581 & 879 (2013); 518 & 843 (2012); 489 & 831 (2011)
6	Public perception of the The condition of pavements (NHT - WC02)	56 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	1% above average Ranked 11 out of 28 -3% on the 2015 result
7	Public perception of the Condition of cycle routes (NHT - WC10)	57 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	1% below average Ranked 14 out of 28 -3% on the 2015 result
8	Public perception of the Condition of Rights of Way (NHT - WC20)	54 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	4% below average Ranked 24 out of 28 -1% on the 2015 result
9	Public perception of the Condition of road surfaces (NHT - HM01)	39 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	0% above average Ranked 9 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
10	Public perception of the Condition of road markings (NHT - HM03)	57 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	1% below average Ranked 16 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
11	Public perception of the Condition and cleanliness of road signs (NHT - HM04)	55 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	5% below average Ranked 22 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
12	Public perception of the Quality of repair to damaged roads/Pavement (NHT - HM08)	39 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	0% above average Ranked 5 out of 28 -1% on the 2015 result
13	Public perception of the Undertakes cold weather gritting (NHT - HM17)	67 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	8% above average Ranked 1 out of 28 +2% on the 2015 result
14	Percentage of public responding to survey satisfied with completed works	27 %	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	Q1 result was calculated using a similar question to the indicator. Q2 result is from the actual question 'I am satisfied with the completed works'
15	Public perception of the Time taken to complete roadworks (NHT - TC03)	45 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	0% above average Ranked 21 out of 28 -1% on the 2015 result
16	Public perception of the Speed of repair to street lights (NHT - HM06)	58 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	2% below average Ranked 20 out of 28 0% on the 2015 result
17	Public perception of the Speed of repair to damaged roads/pavements (NHT - HM07)	29 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	3% below average Ranked 14 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
18	Public perception of the Deals with mud on the road (NHT - HM20)	49 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	3% below average Ranked 17 out of 28 -1% on the 2015 result
19	Percentage of queries responded to within the designated 20 day timescale	72.83 %	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	Action already under way - being addressed through Suffolk Highways reorganisation - creating customer liaison officers
20	Public perception of the Advanced warning of roadworks (NHT - TC01)	63 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	2% above average Ranked 13 out of 28 +3% on the 2015 result
21	Public perception of the Provides information on Gritting (NHT - HM18)	50 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	5% above average Ranked 3 out of 28 +2% on the 2015 result
22	Number of hits to forward scheduling webpages	5413 Hits	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	Grass cutting - 133 Weed control - 71 Highways drainage - 145 Roadworks in Suffolk - 5064
23	Number of abandoned/overrun notices	1 Notices	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	Quarter 1 was 24 notices compared to 1 notice in Quarter 2
24	Number of Suffolk Highways TTRO requests for road closures	202 TTRO Requests	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	July - 92 August - 62 September - 48
25	Public perception of the Efforts to reduce delays to traffic (NHT - TC02)	52 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	1% below average Ranked 17 out of 28 -3% on the 2015 result
26	Public perception of the Signposting of road diversions (NHT - TC04)	55 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	2% below average Ranked 22 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
27	Public perception of the Waiting time at permanent traffic lights (NHT - TC10)	58 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	5% below average Ranked 28 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result

Performance Management Framework Report - Quarter 2 - 2016 - Creating the Greenest County

PMF Number.	Measure	Result.	Date of Result	Trend Direction	Comments
↑	Trending up				Annual Results - recorded from 2012 (where information is available)
↓	Trending down				Quarterly Results - recorded from Q1 2015 (where information is available)
■	No Result to display				Monthly Results - recorded from April 2016 (where information is available)
A green arrow shows a positive trend A red arrow shows a negative trend					
28	Percentage converted to LED (Street Lights, Signs, Bollards and Traffic Signals)	18.5 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	Increase from 17.84% in September and 17.51% in August
29	Energy usage (Street lighting /Traffic signal/Traffic sign and bollards)	1646931 kWh	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	Increase in monthly usage due to lengthier nights but overall consumption is less than in October 2015.
30	Depot energy usage		Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	■	Data being verified
31	Average number of operational works miles per revenue spend	91.1 Miles	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	69.1 miles in Quarter 1 compared with 91.1 miles in Quarter 2
32	Miles saved by number of voice and video conferences	180 Miles	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	180 miles recorded on the Saving Register
33	Percentage of fleet using alternative fuel (LGP/Hybrid/Electric)		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
34	Total miles travelled by non-operational staff	70073 Miles	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	91,765 miles travelled in Quarter 1; reduced to 70,073 miles in Quarter 2
35	Temporary repairs vs permanent % (Total No. carriageway repairs)	5 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↓	760 Cat 3-6 repairs completed, 41 of these were temporary (excluding 7 requested temporary repairs) but increase from 3% in September due to large number of edge deteriorations
36	Percentage of funding used on reactive maintenance		October 2016 (Monthly)	■	In-year figures yet to be determined due to timelag in confirmed payments
37	Total area of surface dressing		2016 (Annual)	↑	2,484,194 square metres completed in 2016 compared to circa 1 million square metres in 2015
38	Total area of slurry sealing		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
39	Area of anti-skid surface replaced by high PSV surfacing		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
40	Number of road signs permanently removed		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
41	Total length of pedestrian guardrail and vehicle restraint system permanently removed		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
42	Public perception of Keeping drains clear and working (NHT - HM12)	46 %	2016 (Annual)	↓	5% below average Ranked 21 out of 28 -4% on the 2015 result
43	Public perception of Deals with flooding on roads and pavements (NHT - HM22)	41 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	7% below average Ranked 25 out of 28 -7% on the 2015 result
44	Overall carbon consumption		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
45	Tonnage of road planings recycled within reconstituted highway	584.3 Tonnes	October 2016 (Monthly)	↓	Reduction from peak of 3152 tonnes due to seasonal impact (with less resurfacing/recycling undertaken during autumn and winter months). No comparable data for 2015
46	Total percentage of materials recycled		October 2016 (Monthly)	■	Data being verified but generally 96% to 98% per calendar month for April to June 2016

Performance Management Framework Report - Quarter 2 - 2016 - Safe, Healthy & Inclusive Communities

PMF Number.	Measure	Result.	Date of Result	Trend Direction	Comments
↑	Trending up				Annual Results - recorded from 2012 (where information is available)
↓	Trending down				Quarterly Results - recorded from Q1 2015 (where information is available)
■	No Result to display				Monthly Results - recorded from April 2016 (where information is available)
A green arrow shows a positive trend A red arrow shows a negative trend					
47	Public perception of the Safety of walking (NHT - RS04)	62 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	3% below average Ranked 18 out of 28 +1% on the 2015 result
48	Public perception of the Safety of cycling (NHT - RS05)	53 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	1% below average Ranked 11 out of 28 +1% on the 2015 result
49	Number of third party claims	36 Claims	October 2016 (Monthly)	↓	62 claims in August, 41 claims in September and 36 in October, compared with 75 in both March and April 2016.
50	Percentage of claims successfully defended	87 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	45 highways claims closed during month of which 39 were repudiated - performance was at 49.3% in April 2016
51	Percentage of highway carriageway inspections undertaken to programme	90.1 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	Inspection rate as low as 79% in January 2016
52	Percentage of highway footway inspections undertaken to programme	97.4 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	Inspection rate as low as 68% in January 2016
53	Percentage of general bridge inspections undertaken to programme	62 %	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	8% in July, 24% in August, 40% in September and 62% in October
54	Percentage of parish/town councils engaged in looking after the highway network		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
55	Value of work carried out		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
56	Percentage of parish/town councils maintaining their own grit bins		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
57	Public perception of the Direction signposts for pedestrians (NHT - WC04)	63 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	0% above average Ranked 14 out of 28 0% on the 2015 result
58	Public perception of the Drop kerb crossing points (NHT - WC06)	63 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	0% above average Ranked 12 out of 28 0% on the 2015 result
59	Public perception of the Cycle route information e.g. maps (NHT - WC14)	52 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	1% below average Ranked 19 out of 28 -2% on the 2015 result
60	Public perception of the Signposting of Rights of Way (NHT - WC19)	60 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	0% above average Ranked 12 out of 28 +1% on the 2015 result
61	Attendance at community activities (e.g. school visits, youth groups, parades, local fayres)	0 Events	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	Improvement Plan in place
62	Community days - Volunteering Days by staff	27 Days	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	Staff constructing new footpath at Lound Lakes with Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Performance Management Framework Report - Quarter 2 - 2016 - Learning and Skills for the Future

PMF Number.	Measure	Result.	Date of Result	Trend Direction	Comments
63	Percentage of staff undertaking development reviews		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
64	Percentage of staff receiving 5 or more learning/training days		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
65	Percentage of staff responding to engagement surveys		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
66	Number of proactive external press releases	2 Press Releases	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↑	Only one achieved in Quarter 1. Being addressed through reinvigorated joint meetings between Suffolk Highways communication team and SCC Communications Team
67	Number of Suffolk Highways webpages hits	681 Hits	October 2016 (Monthly)	↓	Majors corner - 61 Princes St - 80 How we're working for you - 103 Nacton Road - 139 Ipswich forecourt - 298
68	Number of internal newsletters to County Councillors parish/town councils	2 newsletters	Q2 2016 (Quarterly)	↓	3 'Highways Matters' from Councillor James Finch in Quarter 1, reducing to 2 editions in Quarter 2
69	Number of customer enquiries (processed through the contact centre)	3028 Customer Enquiries	October 2016 (Monthly)	↓	2016 peak at 5,510 in January and 5,277 in March.
70	Ratio of compliments vs complaints (processed through the contact centre)	0.909 Ratio	October 2016 (Monthly)	↑	20 compliments - 22 complaints YTD - 3 Stage 2 Complaints - No complaints upheld by Ombudsman
71	Number of staff pursuing qualifications (NVQ, HNC, HND, BEng, MEng)		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
72	Number of trainees (operatives/technicians/graduates)	7	2016 (Annual)	↑	The distribution of technical trainees is 3 Kier employees and 4 SCC employees. This is Kier's first year for engaging trainees
73	Number of apprentices	16	2016 (Annual)	↑	The distribution is 9 civil engineering apprentices (5 Kier, 4 SCC), 1 street lighting apprentice, 1 business support apprentice and 5 roadworkers. At the start of the contract, there were only
74	Number of staff with professional qualifications (HNC,HND etc.)		2016 (Annual)	↑	This information has yet to be accumulated but there have been in-year completions of engineering degree courses
75	Number of works processes reviewed		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
76	Number of staff ideas generated		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
77	Percentage of staff ideas implemented		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
78	Number of new maintenance techniques and materials proposed for review		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017 but Green Apple award for Elveden footway recycling scheme (using hydraulically bound material) and ov 2016 Roadmender trial presentation to DfT
79	Percentage of new maintenance techniques and materials implemented		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
80	Number external events for which information is then shared		2016 (Annual)	■	First result not due till April 2017
81	Percentage of the Contractor's employees on this contract based defined as being based in Suffolk	82.1 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	
82	Percentage of non-surfacing subcontracted work by value that is delivered through local Subcontractors	43 %	2016 (Annual)	↑	

Pitfalls, potholes and the team whose

Long delays caused by roadworks are the bane of motorists' lives in Suffolk. **JASON NOBLE** was invited by Suffolk County Council's highways team to find out more about what goes into planning roadworks, and get the answers to some of your questions.

From emergency utility repairs to lengthy planned works, motorists in Ipswich have voiced their frustration at roadworks which have plagued their journeys over recent months.

But in a bid to help educate the public as to the challenges involved, Suffolk County Council has outlined how it plans roadworks and explained why a quick fix solution is not always possible.

Roadworks carried out by county highways teams are routinely split into three areas – planned work which is already scheduled to take place, reactive works which are tackled after being reported by the public, and emergency works such as fallen trees, snow and flooding.

While attempting to avoid unnecessary costs and complete work as efficiently as possible, the county's highways team is aiming to carry out more planned work and prevent emergencies where possible.

James Finch, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "It's about making better use of our resources. It's a real commitment and we are very proud of our weather programme – all our roads are cleared within 12 hours.

"Now our plan is to do first time final fixes – it's safer and it's cheaper."

Those final fixes include targeting potholes sooner so they are easier to repair, and cutting some of the red tape around repairing defects encountered by engineers.

Mark Stevens, assistant director of operational highways, said: "There's



■ James Finch, cabinet member for highways and transport

no national definition for a pothole. Different authorities will have different levels. For most local authorities they will only go to something deeper than 50mm deep. On July 12 cabinet discussed how much of a risk overall is presented to the public when there is something wrong. Cabinet approved something we had been talking about since May – 400mm diameter or more we would be out there in two hours to do something about it. We will now deal with potholes between 25-50mm deep. We are intercepting those problems on the road significantly earlier. It causes less of a problem to the



■ Traffic congestion on Colchester Road, Ipswich, due to traffic light roadworks.

travelling public, you can get in there stop the decay and saving money as well. It means we can programme our work more – our approach is preventative rather than reactive."

And figures from the highways department appear to back up that progression – 31% of the network under the old scheme needed work compared to 25.4% now under the latest maintenance plan, according to the team.

But why is it that motorists are still

facing multiple sets of works on the same stretch of road within days or weeks of another finishing?

Network assurance manager Renee Fox said part of the problem came down to emergency works for utility firms.

"They can notify us two hours after, so if there's a gas leak they can go out, start work and then inform us they are out there before we can put our programme into action," she said.

"We then notify blue light services, public transport and updating roadworks.org. It's a huge task there are so many things to think about, even down to planning works near a school.

"The work is not solely moving a car from A-B, although we never really please anybody. There's so much more that goes into the co-ordination than just being able to move your car from A-B. There's cars, pedestrians, cyclists – everybody that uses it."

Inspectors from the network assurance team work alongside utility firms to make sure utility work complies with legislation, health and safety and avoids as much disruption as possible.

"There's a lot of negotiation that goes on with our utilities, they are very good about trying to avoid disruption," Miss Fox added. "We can go out with teams to locations and tell them how we think they should improve those. There's an awful lot that goes into it, it's just it's commonly not seen."

County highways teams say they

encourage utilities to put up signs as early as possible warning of disruption, but given that many utility jobs are responding to emergency leaks or flooding, it is not always possible.

Legally, utility firms only have to put signs up if they are closing the road.

In September, chiefs said they would not condone roadworks where no work was happening, but said while mistakes can be made there is often genuine reasons behind work not taking place, such as safety issues around gas leaks or waiting for concrete to set.

“ It means we can programme our work more - our approach is preventative rather than reactive

Mark Stevens

Miss Fox said: "It could be one of a couple of different reasons. In the case of gas escape they have to make sure it's safe enough to work without any implications. Ninety-nine percent of the time there's a good reason why there is no-one there. They are all monitored and in the occurrences, and it does happen, where signs go up without needing to, or they over-run, we do take action as soon as we are informed. They get charged. When they over-run they get one day and we take a picture and then charging them a daily rate until they are cleared. We give them an opportunity



■ Empty roadworks left on Spring Road, Ipswich.

Photo: CONNOR MCLOONE

task is to keep Suffolk on the move



Photo: SARAH LUCY BROWN



■ Mark Stevens, assistant director operational highways, left, with James Finch, cabinet member for highways and transport, and Phil Elliott, seated, who is control hub manager at Phoenix House, Ipswich.

Photos: NIGEL BROWN

to clear it and then a daily rate in following up until it's cleared."

Opposition Labour group transport figures have called for a permit scheme in order to crack-down on issues of over-running work, but Mr Stevens said that the idea a permit scheme would instantly solve the problem was a myth.

"Part of the misunderstanding is the permit system would be like waving a magic wand," he said. "Nothing different happens – it doesn't have a magic effect. It adds resources bureaucracy and costs. There's a penalty process in place already and all the permit is going to do is drive up the cost. It's a falsehood that the permit system will make a difference. We have got a good relationship with those utilities."

Miss Fox added: "We looked at the permit system some years ago and it looked like they would have to double the time just to manage that. When you consider the amount of works we deal with, events on the highways, markets, parades, all of those events some require road closures or part-closures, we are working with those as well."

On any given day around 150 highways engineers will be out and about on Suffolk's roads to try to complete work as quickly as possible to minimise disruption, but Mr Finch admitted it does sometimes get roadworks planning wrong.

"We are never complacent, we are human and we do make mistakes," he said.



"We are addressing things to make it clearer and tighter. I have been doing it 16 months and I haven't finished. I am very proud of what the team is doing, I am very proud of the relationship we are delivering with the Kier team – as far as we are concerned we are one team. It's all working as a team to get a more professional result more quickly. We are making good progress and in order to do that we have to sort future improvements all the time."

■ **Mark Stevens and James Finch, keep up to date with the latest information on roadworks in Suffolk**

■ **Did you have a question you would like the highways team to answer? Send your suggestions to newsroom@archant.co.uk or write to Ipswich star Roadworks Watch, Portman House, 120 Princes Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 1RS.**

Ridgewell White Horse

STARTERS

- Homemade cream of mushroom soup garnished with sautéed wild mushrooms
- Ham hock and wholegrain mustard terrine served with toasted ciabatta and homemade piccalilli
- Roasted red pepper, prawn and avocado cocktail with sweet pepper coulis
- Frosted melon with tropical fruit salad
- Deep fried brie wedges with homemade Cumberland sauce

MAIN COURSE

- Festive roast turkey, Yorkshire pudding served with roast potatoes, seasonal vegetables, homemade chestnut stuffing and homemade cranberry sauce
- Steamed homemade steak and kidney pudding with creamy herb mash and roasted root vegetables
- Pan fried salmon supreme with crushed new potatoes, a medley of fresh vegetables, white wine and dill sauce
- Homemade vol au vent filled with a mixed bean cassoulet served with roasted potatoes and French beans

DESSERTS

- Christmas pudding served with brandy custard
- Homemade chocolate and orange tart served with a jug of cream
- Homemade blackberry delice with fruit coulis
- Homemade vanilla sponge topped with spiced apple compote and custard
- A fine selection of cheese served with biscuits, grapes and celery
- To follow, a cup of freshly brewed coffee and homemade mince pies
- On your festive table will be home baked warm rolls and butter, crackers and party poppers

★

★

★

Please note we are closed Monday lunchtimes - Except Bank Holiday Monday

Mill Road, Ridgewell, Essex CO9 4SG | 01440 785532

www.ridgewellwhitehorse.com

Scrutiny Committee

20 December 2016

Highways Infrastructure Asset Management

Summary

1. The highways infrastructure is the most valuable asset owned and managed by any local authority. It is vitally important for the economy and the quality of life of Suffolk's residents and road users. However, there are increasing financial pressures on local authorities and a drive for more efficient use of limited resources.
2. The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan sets out how the County Council seeks to obtain best value from the highways infrastructure and meets the needs of Suffolk's residents and road users, in an environment of reducing resources. Highways assets include all the things which make up the highway infrastructure – not just roads and pavements but, for example, bridges, traffic management signals and signs and street lights, drainage and fences.
3. This report provides the Committee with information about the County Council's developing approach to Highways Asset Management.

Objective of Scrutiny

4. The objective of this item is to provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider progress towards developing an asset management approach to the upkeep of the County's highways infrastructure.

Scrutiny Focus

5. The scope of this scrutiny has been developed to provide the Committee with information to come to a view on the following key questions:
 - a) How has consultation on the Highways Asset Management Plan and Highways Maintenance Operational Plan been undertaken?
 - b) What were the results of the consultation and how is this being taken into account?
 - c) How is information about highways infrastructure being gathered and analysed and what further work is required?
 - d) When will any changes be implemented as a result of the new approach?
 - e) What will be the impact on Suffolk's residents?
 - f) How are changes being communicated?

- g) Is SCC on track to receive maximum “Incentive Fund” returns for the period to 2021?

How does this relate to County Council priorities?

6. This scrutiny is linked to the County Council’s corporate priorities as indicated below. All scrutiny items should consider how well they are delivering against the County Council priorities and Suffolk’s Community Strategy.

Suffolk County Council’s Corporate Priorities	Link to this Scrutiny
Raise educational attainment and skill levels	
Support the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to increase economic growth	
Maintain roads and developing Suffolk’s infrastructure	✓
Support those most vulnerable in our communities	
Empower local communities	

7. Having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:
- a) make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport;
 - b) make recommendations to the Assistant Director for Operational Highways;
 - c) identify issues which would warrant further scrutiny;
 - d) request further information.

Contact details

Theresa Harden, Business Manager (Democratic Services), Scrutiny and Monitoring
 Email: theresa.harden@suffolk.gov.uk; Tel: 01473 260855

Background

8. Suffolk County Council is the local highway authority for all non-trunk roads maintainable at public expense within Suffolk. As the local highway authority, the County Council has to fulfil a number a number of statutory duties, many of which are contained in the Highways Act 1980. National recommendations for the provision of the highways maintenance service have previously been defined in three specific Codes of Practice – Well-Maintained Highways, Well-Lit Highways and the Management of Highway Structures. The content of these three Codes of Practice is being reviewed and brought together under a new overarching Code of Practice entitled Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure. The new Code encourages the development of a locally determined risk-based approach to highway maintenance, aligned to central government’s expectation that local highway authorities will adopt appropriate asset management.

9. From the 2015/16 financial year, highways maintenance funding has included an Incentive Fund, which is planned to increase over the period 2015/16 to 2020/21, with a corresponding reduction in the highways capital maintenance indicative needs formula allocation over the same time period. The Incentive Fund is based on performance, evaluated using a self-assessment questionnaire, one of the qualifying requirements being evidence of progress in relation to asset management.
10. Accordingly, on 10 November 2015, Cabinet approved a new Highways Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and associated Strategy documents. Members heard that, upon endorsement of these documents, work would commence on developing a Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP), and also a communication plan to enable consultation and to broaden the understanding and application of HIAM documentation. The Cabinet was informed that the draft HIAMP would be ready for full public consultation by Summer 2016, with a view to approval and publishing in the Autumn. Members also heard that, during this period, many other low level activities would need to be completed, including revisions to the Highways Maintenance Operations Plan to align it to the risk based approach advocated in the new Code.
11. The highway infrastructure assets covered by the approach are the elements that make up the highway in the broadest sense. This includes (but is not restricted to) roads, pavements, public rights of way, cycleways, bridges, highway structures, lighting, traffic signals, drainage, signs and roadmarkings, fences and bollards, hedges trees and verges, weather stations and bus stops/shelters.
12. In order to secure best value for money, asset management planning considers the whole-life cost of providing, maintaining, operating and replacing the assets. This includes maintenance treatments, at the most appropriate time to minimise the whole of life cost. Far greater consideration also needs to be given to the revenue impact of a capital investment in new infrastructure.
13. On 12 July 2016, Cabinet approved revisions to the existing Highway Maintenance Operational Plan to formally enable Suffolk Highways to move towards more risk-based preventative highway maintenance, thereby providing a more cost-effective approach than the existing reactive maintenance approach. The revised plan came into immediate effect but was also subject to formal public consultation, alongside the HIAMP. Cabinet delegated responsibility to the Assistant Director Operational Highways to consider the public consultation responses and determine the final version of the Highway Maintenance Operational Plan by no later than the end of November 2016. The consultation closed on 15 September 2016.
14. In order to develop a maintenance regime that applies risk management to decision making about the upkeep of the highways asset, a set of maintenance response matrices have been developed. The matrices provide guidance on the timescales for repair, dependent upon the severity of a defect and its relative location within Suffolk's highway network.
15. Since 9 May 2016, all defects identified either by the highway inspection process or reported through the highways online reporting tool or direct contact with the customer service centre have been assessed on a trial basis against these matrices, and the matrices have been updated in light of the information gathered through the trial. Repair response times have been standardised into categories

1-8, ranging from Category 1 (emergency 2 hour response) to Category 8 (planned works defined annually as part of the asset management approach). All identified defects are assigned to one of these categories.

16. Further information about the Council's proposals to implement an asset management approach to the upkeep of Suffolk's highways can be found on the Council's website at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/highways-asset-management/>

17. A copy of the full Highway Maintenance Operational Plan, including the matrices for decision making can be found at:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9e&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Main body of evidence

Evidence Set 1 has been provided by the Assistant Director, Operational Highways and is attached to this report

Supporting information

Cabinet (10 November 2015); Agenda Item 7 and Appendices A to C "Adoption of Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy Documents":

Available from:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=10/Nov/2015&c=The+Cabinet>

Cabinet (12 July 2016); Agenda Item 8 Highways Maintenance Operational Plan; Available from:

http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9d&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet and Appendix; Available from: http://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=0900271181cbcd9e&qry=c_committee%7e%7eThe+Cabinet

Suffolk County Council's Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy; Available from: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/Highways-Asset-Management-Summary.pdf>

Glossary

ADOH	Assistant Director of Operational Highways
HIAM	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management
HIAMP	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
HMOP	Highways Maintenance Operational Plan
SALC	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
UKPMS	UK Pavement Management System

Scrutiny Committee

20 December 2016

Highways Infrastructure Asset Management

Information in this report was produced on behalf of:	
Director or Assistant Director:	Mark Stevens, Assistant Director Operational Highways, mark.stevens@suffolk.gov.uk 01473 264994
By:	John Clements, Highway Maintenance Specialist, john.clements@suffolk.gov.uk , 01473 265023
Date Submitted:	6 December 2016

Introduction

1. This evidence set has been provided by County Council officers responsible for the management of highway infrastructure asset management through Suffolk Highways.
2. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress that Suffolk Highways is making towards strengthening the Council's approach to highways infrastructure asset management.
3. The work being undertaken is directed and shaped by the Highways Transformation Programme, ensuring that changes in the approach to asset management align with the future ambitions of the County Council in respect of the highway maintenance and improvement work delivered by Suffolk Highways.

Responses to question in the Scrutiny Focus

How has consultation on the Highways Asset Management Plan and Highways Maintenance Operational Plan been undertaken?

4. Approval was given by Cabinet on 12 July 2016 to undertake stakeholder consultation for both the draft Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) and the Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP).
5. Summary documents for both the HIAMP and HMOP were prepared to provide stakeholders with a precis of the full documents. It was envisaged that, by providing these accompanying documents, stakeholders could choose to read the overview to gain an understanding of the new approach with the option to delve into the more detailed and technical documents if they wished to.

6. The HIAMP consultation exercise was launched on 26 July and finished on 15 September 2016. The summary and full documents were made available to stakeholders on the consultation pages of the Council's website.
7. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport officially launched the consultation exercise in the July version of 'Highway Matters' which is distributed to all county, district and borough councillors, and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) for further distribution to its parish and town council members. This was accompanied by a press release in the East Anglian Daily Times on 29 July 2016.
8. Stakeholders were able to comment on the HIAMP online.
9. The HMOP consultation exercise commenced on 17 October and will conclude on 14 November 2016 and stakeholders are able to comment online.

What were the results of the consultation and how is this being taken into account?

10. Suffolk Highways' responses to the HIAMP consultation have been published on the Council's website and can be found in Appendix 1.
11. Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Resource Management, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to consider the responses received from the stakeholder consultation exercise and make appropriate changes to the HIAMP.
12. Suffolk Highways' responses to the HMOP consultation have been finalised and will be published on the highways area of the Council's website in December 2016. A copy of the responses can be found in Appendix 2.
13. Cabinet delegated authority to the Assistant Director Operational Highways to consider the public consultation responses and make appropriate changes to the HMOP.
14. Final versions of the HIAMP and HMOP documents will be published on the highways area of the Council's website in December 2016.

How is information about highways infrastructure being gathered and analysed and what further work is required?

15. To enable effective asset management, it is essential that suitable and complete data is stored in an asset management system.
16. The Asset Management workstream of the Highways Transformation Programme completed a review of the data held for each major highway infrastructure asset, focusing on inventory and condition data. This included a review of what data was currently collected, for what purpose and where it was stored.
17. Gaps were identified in the data held for some assets and these were subsequently prioritised for collection. The Council's audit team were engaged to undertake a review of the processes for the ongoing management of this asset data and provided assurance that the systems in place were fit for purpose. The audit confirmed that some asset data could benefit from migrating data from existing storage into the Symology *Insight* asset management system. The migration of this data is under way.

18. Inventory and condition data collection varies depending on the asset. For example, inventory data for street lighting is updated when works are undertaken using handheld devices at the roadside. This information is fed back to the *Mayrise* asset database. Condition data for carriageways, on the other hand, is a blend of machine surveys and condition inspections undertaken in the field by appropriately qualified technicians. This information is stored in the UK Pavement Management System (UKPMS) module in *Insight*.
19. The other essential ingredient for asset management, used alongside inventory and condition data, is understanding the current and future performance of infrastructure assets. Using a combination of historical and industry recognised performance data, lifecycle plans have been produced for all key assets.
20. These lifecycle plans enable asset teams to project forward, over a number of years, how assets will perform using different maintenance techniques and treatments to determine the lowest whole life cost for maintaining each asset.
21. The preferred lifecycle plan for each asset can then be utilised to determine investment levels for a given level of service (e.g. improving, maintaining or managing the decline of each asset's overall condition). In turn, this provides the asset manager with a number of scenarios to consider and enables informed decisions to be made when apportioning annual and multi-annual budgets.
22. Once indicative annual budgets are set, each asset team will use actual condition data to identify individual assets, which are in their optimal window for a given maintenance treatment, and develop forward works programmes. This process will ensure that the levels of investment afforded to each asset are targeted at the right asset at the right time ensuring that the maximum benefit for each pound spent is achieved.
23. Whilst much work has been undertaken over the last 12 months, asset management does not stand still. Condition data is gathered for all key assets at least annually. This refresh of data allows the performance of assets and their respective lifecycles to be constantly reviewed and refined. Additionally, this new data enables each asset team to refine and reprioritise schemes for delivery in subsequent years, ensuring that investment continues to be directed in the most appropriate manner.
24. Highway infrastructure asset management constantly evolves with the sharing and learning from other local highway authorities, other highway contracts within the Kier group, published best practice and advancements in materials and maintenance techniques. Suffolk Highways is sharing its practice with other local highway authorities and the Department for Transport. It is receptive to the practices of others and, where appropriate, incorporate these into its approach, ensuring that the service continues to meet and, where possible, exceed stakeholder's expectations.

When will any changes be implemented as a result of the new approach?

25. Changes to Suffolk Highways approach to asset management are constantly being introduced.
26. The development of carriageway lifecycle plans has supported the business case for investing in preventative treatments. Including these treatments in a roads lifecycle provides the lowest whole life cost of all the lifecycle plans. As such, a

condition-led scheme identification exercise was undertaken to develop a works programme for the first tranche of the additional £10m allocation to highway maintenance for 2016/17 and 2017/18. This was an informed tactical switch away from tackling 'worst first' which detracts from these more cost effective preventative interventions.

27. Using the condition data, the asset team was able to identify sites for treatment in their optimal window whereas, historically, locations were being identified too late, meaning they required substantial preparatory patching and structural repairs. By selecting sections of road at the correct time for surface dressing the cost of the preparatory works reduced from £31,553 average per site to £4,254 average per condition data identified site, a significant reduction of 87%. Put in context, this is a saving in preparatory costs of approaching £4.2m for every 1million m² of surface dressing completed.
28. The proven success of condition-led scheme identification will enable substantially more carriageway assets to be treated for the same budget and increase coverage. It will also provide the road network with resilience to pothole formation and other related structural failures, whilst supporting the existing infrastructure to last longer than if left untreated.
29. Other changes include introduction of the new risk-based HMOP (trialled since May 2016). Over the last decade or so, highway maintenance has moved further and further towards reactive maintenance, meaning that only large and high risk defects were repaired.
30. The new risk-based HMOP provides Suffolk Highways with a mechanism to identify and record smaller defects which previous versions of the HMOP would have left unattended. Tackling defects at an early stage whilst they are low risk and preventing them from getting worse allows Suffolk Highways to group repairs in the same location together. On the rare occasion where this is not possible, due to the serious nature of a particular defect, the remaining defects will be programmed for patching at a single return visit.
31. Over time, the identification and repair of smaller defects will reduce the number of occasions where large defects occur, reducing the risk and improving the safety of your roads. This approach is consistent with the direction that central government wishes all local highway authorities to take, as exemplified by the principles set out in the Department for Transport's 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure'.
32. As significant changes are introduced, these will continue to be shared with county, borough, district, parish and town councillors through Highways Matters newsletters.

What will be the impact on Suffolk's residents?

33. The asset management approach will deliver a risk-based, preventative whole life cost approach to highway infrastructure asset management.
34. This approach will determine where best to put resources to maintain the highway to a safe standard at the lowest cost. While there is no intention to focus on urban/rural areas specifically, people living in any area of Suffolk may notice a change in the way highway assets are maintained. For example, they may notice either more or less, depending on the need in their area. This summer's surface dressing programme was relatively evenly distributed across the county

and across the different road classifications – but this may not be replicated in the summer of 2017.

35. When the public come across the work undertaken by Suffolk Highways, they should increasingly experience greater coordination. For example, where traffic management is required to undertake grass cutting, Suffolk Highways will look to simultaneously undertake gully cleansing or minor patching or road marking renewal or a combination of these activities at the same location, depending on the suitability of weather conditions and the amount of equipment and other resource that is able to occupy the working space available.
36. Similarly, when Suffolk Highways attend a location to fix a pothole, the opportunity will be taken to treat adjacent potholes, even if they do not carry the same level of urgency for repair. Furthermore, whilst improving public perception by working in this way, such repairs will be completed as often as is practically possible under the temporary obstruction, 15 minute closures – thus reducing the need for costly and time-consuming road closures and associated diversions.
37. Effective coordination and consideration of how we plan to undertake works will reduce the amount of time Suffolk Highways will occupy the network, increasing accessibility to the critical infrastructure that supports public, businesses and critical services in undertaking their day to day activities.

How are changes being communicated?

38. The asset management approach supports better communication with stakeholders. Suffolk Highways will keep the public informed through the use of a number of channels:
39. Website - this is the primary source of information and provides access to:
 - i) Works programmes;
 - ii) Highway infrastructure asset management documentation;
 - iii) Map-based information on schemes and road closures;
 - iv) Mechanism for feedback on projects, policy, strategy and plans;
 - v) 'Report It', a tool that interacts with maps to help report issues.
40. Customer Contact Centre - customer service agents have access to all forms of highways service information and are briefed on numerous subject areas including asset management and relevant scheme details.
41. Twitter - used as a method of getting out information that is likely to be of interest to a large audience such as details about gritting during the winter.
42. Correspondence to individuals and organisations - letters and formal notices will be sent to affected residents and businesses in advance of works on the highway where passage to and from private property is likely to be restricted. Suffolk Highways will endeavour to respond to letters or emails that it receives within 20 working days (on the basis that many enquiries are of a detailed nature and invariably require some form of investigation or research before a response can be sent)
43. Media interaction - issues relating to changes in policy, strategy, plans and new projects/programmes of work will often be accompanied by press notices. If these are considered to be of public interest, these issues will be picked up by

the media. Suffolk Highways officers and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport will be made available to provide details and undertake interviews or provide supplementary information as required.

44. Newsletters - these are sent directly to all councillors (county, district, borough, town and parish) and Suffolk Highways staff. The newsletters contain useful information on works planned in forthcoming months, along with other service developments such as notification of the availability of future works programmes on Suffolk Highways webpages. By placing these newsletters on the website, they are available for wider access and consideration.
45. Public consultation - consultation exercises are undertaken to enable Suffolk's road users to shape how the Council targets and delivers its services. Suffolk Highways is keen that Suffolk residents have the opportunity to understand and comment on the future approach to asset management, why it is being implemented and the decisions that will be made such that available funding is used in the most cost effective and efficient manner

Is SCC on track to receive maximum “Incentive Fund” returns for the period to 2021?

46. The Highways Transformation Programme is supporting the bulk of the work required to enable the Council to return an overall band 3 classification (the highest band) to the Department for Transport. It is understood (but not yet officially confirmed) that the original target date for this year's self-assessment submission is to be put back from November to December.
47. To achieve an overall band 3 classification, band 3 scores are required in 18 of the 22 incentive fund questions.
48. A recent review, undertaken on 1 December 2016, with the Assistant Director Operational Highways and the Director for Resource Management confirmed that Suffolk has evidence to support band 3 scores in 20 of the 22 incentive fund questions. This will secure all available funding for Suffolk Highways in the financial year 2017/18.
49. Work will continue up to the submission date with the goal of providing evidence for all 22.
50. The Highways Transformation Programme is providing and will continue to provide the building blocks for the continual improvement required in the five key areas of the 'Incentive Fund': asset management; resilience; customer; benchmarking and efficiency; and operational service delivery, to ensure that band 3 status is maintained for the period to 2021 thus safeguarding all available funding for Suffolk Highways.

Supporting information

Appendix 1 – Responses to stakeholder consultation on the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

Appendix 2 - Responses to stakeholder consultation on the Highway Maintenance Operational Plan

Public comments on the HIAMP consultation exercise

We asked for your views on the proposal to implement an asset management approach for the upkeep of your highway network.

Thank you to all that took part.

We have reviewed the responses received and have provided some answers to common questions/observations below:

‘the greatest cause for concern is the way potholes have been repaired; it has not been unusual for repairs to be undertaken in the rain so that the patching fails within a very short space of time. If the job were to be done properly the first time around there would be huge amounts of money saved by not having to make repeat visits’

Suffolk County Council officer response:

At the centre of our asset management approach is the need to make sure we spend money effectively.

Alongside our asset management plan, we have developed a new risk-based Highway Maintenance Operation Plan which specifies the standards Suffolk Highways will operate to with regards reactive maintenance (i.e. maintenance which is triggered by safety concerns such as ‘potholes’ for which there is actually no agreed nationally accepted definition).

Our new approach provides us with the ability to identify and record for repair smaller defects which present less of an immediate risk to road users. As the risk is less, we are able to have slightly longer to repair them, allowing us to avoid adverse weather, group repairs at similar locations and deliver ‘right first time’ quality and lasting repairs.

Our asset management approach does not stop there. With a conscious increase in annual preventative treatments programmes, we aim to significantly reduce the number of potholes and other types of defects from forming in the first place.

‘I am Clerk to a rural Parish and my Council is concerned about tighter funding leading to less work undertaken on the management of overgrown roadside vegetation and hedges’

‘very much appreciate the NOT cutting verges back so much and would like to see them NOT cut back at all until August - September, save even more money and just do them once in September’

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Suffolk Highways have to balance differing views!!

Our asset management approach needs us to hold better information on all of our assets. This enables us to have one set of data in one asset management system improving how we plan our service.

Our roadside nature reserves have been separately identified by the Council's ecology team so we can tailor cutting at appropriate times, reducing the amount we cut.

For the remainder of our network our cutting regimes are based around safety requirements. Having greater detail on all our activities allows us to plan and coordinate, sharing costs where possible. For example, when we need to install expensive traffic management to safely cut grass in a central reservation, we will plan to clean the gullies at the same time.

Effectively coordinating our activities will reduce the impact of any funding reductions allowing us to maintain similar levels of service.

'It all sounds good and logical but experience to date does not encourage confidence in a decent service being delivered'

'It is a worthy enough aim but the experience of highways services locally is that there is a vast gulf between what is said and what is actually delivered'

Suffolk County Council officer response:

As part of Suffolk Highways' transformation to an asset management approach we will be sharing performance data so that you can see what we are achieving and how our achievements compare with neighbouring authorities and others in the eastern region.

We are currently collecting performance data, some of which will emerge from the National Highways and Transport public satisfaction survey in November. We will start publishing this data soon afterwards so that you will be able to check in and see how we're doing on the Suffolk Highways pages on the Council's website.

'I have never seen preventative maintenance carried out on roads'

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Preventative treatments such as surface dressing have always formed part of Suffolk Highways' works programmes but we are significantly increasing the amount we do.

These treatments target roads that are in a fair condition, catching them before potholes and structural damage can occur and are a cost effective way of extending the life of the road network.

The implementation of a full asset management approach enables engineers to use condition information to identify more roads that are at the appropriate stage of deterioration for these treatments to have maximum benefit. This approach will reduce the overall cost of maintaining your roads over their life, ensuring improved safety and reducing our reliance on more costly and disruptive pothole and deep structural resurfacing repairs.

This year, using our asset management approach, we surface dressed over 6% of our entire road network (over 500 miles).

‘I think all roads and pavements should be well maintained and repaired. Is it fair that a road in a shocking state can be left because you deem it to be low priority?’

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Even using the most efficient form of highway maintenance, there's currently not enough money provided by central government to carry out everything that we'd like to do.

This means that we do have to prioritise where we invest your money to ensure that busier routes serving hospitals, transport hubs, business centres and commuter routes which support our everyday lives are considered first. This does not mean that other roads will not receive investment but it may mean that it takes longer for us to get to these.

Furthermore, our approach will not leave roads in an unsafe condition. Suffolk Highways' new Highway Maintenance Operational Plan allows us to identify and repair smaller defects than the previous version of the Plan. This means that we will patch more, thereby improving the safety and serviceability of your roads.

‘We do not see a problem with choosing the economically optimum material on the hundreds of miles of Suffolk's roads but how that looks as a place to visit and the impression it gives of our town is far more important than the choice of materials’

Suffolk County Council officer response:

We have to be mindful in selecting our choice of materials.

Expensive, premium paving materials significantly drain our limited maintenance budgets when they need replacing. It can often be difficult to source replacements and, even if replacements can be found, there can be lengthy delivery times.

Equally, coloured asphalt-based surface materials are not readily available in small

quantities so are expensive for asphalt plants and suppliers to create – an issue that was probably not even thought about when the material finish was originally selected.

This invariably results in both Suffolk Highways and utility companies (who carry out around 50% of the roadworks activity on Suffolk's road network) little option but to fill in gaps with black, bituminous material. Depending on the surrounding surface finish, these temporary repairs may be permanently repaired once the matching material is available. This approach is not sustainable and not visually appealing.

However, this does not mean that we will only use an asphalt finish or one 'standard' type of paving slabs throughout Suffolk. Suffolk Highways recognise the diverse nature of Suffolk and is developing a pallet of materials from which engineers, town planners and developers can choose in some locations.

Public comments on the HMOP consultation exercise

We asked for your views on Suffolk Highways' new Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP). Thank you to all that took part.

We have reviewed the responses received and have provided some answers to common questions/observations below:

I am extremely concerned at the implications of the proposed policy relating to trees, particularly those on verges adjacent to the highways. Statements such as: "*Felled trees will not automatically be replaced*", "*There will be a presumption against replanting tree trees in urban areas*" and "*Any dead, diseased or vandalised trees that are removed from the highway will not be automatically replaced*".

Suffolk County Council officer response:

The quotations referred to above are from some early draft versions of both the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) and Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) documents which formed part of the July 2016 Suffolk County Council Cabinet papers. Both documents were revised prior to the HMOP consultation exercise to address these concerns to read:

"For any tree that must be removed from the highway due to being dead, diseased or vandalised every attempt will be made to plant a new tree in a location that requires the minimum amount of root protection/containment, accords with the Highways Act 1980 and has the potential to flourish in appropriate ground conditions. This would preferably be in wide highway verges away from all metalled highway surfaces or in non-highway locations (such as local amenity, landscaped areas). This approach should also be followed for new tree provision in general".

Agree there should be a risk assessment approach to repairs. However, I would not like to see it result in "quieter" rural roads totally ignored.

Estate roads look like they are going to be left.

It is not satisfactory that rural roads, already in need of repair and having been on the maintenance schedule for some time, will now be further down the list.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Suffolk Highways maintain around 6,500km of highway network so the approach is to define timescales that can be met across the entire county, irrespective of whether the work is in an urban or rural environment.

For example, a deep 400mm diameter pothole on a 60mph 'A' class road would represent a greater risk than that posed by a similar sized pothole in a residential cul-du-sac. This does not mean that the pothole on the 'quieter' road is ignored; we

would still repair the defect but in a slightly longer timescale. In reality, a carriageway defect on a less trafficked road had to be a minimum of 600mm x 600mm x 50mm to warrant reactive maintenance intervention under the previous HMOP. Under the new HMOP, a carriageway defect measuring just 100mm in diameter on a local urban road has the potential for being treated through reactive maintenance. So, rather than 'totally ignoring quieter rural roads', the opposite is true insofar as the new HMOP is proactive in dealing with emerging defects.

In principle, it seems a good plan. However, the Council needs to be flexible in dealing with defects.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Over the last decade or so, highway maintenance has moved to repairing defects when they get really bad. The new Suffolk Highways' HMOP approach is to tackle defects at an early stage when they pose less of a risk to users and to prevent them getting worse.

Whilst we are identifying smaller defects for repair we maintain the flexibility, where appropriate to assign a quicker response time to be assigned to a repair. This is entirely in keeping with the risk-based approach that central government expect local authorities to have in place by 2018, to accord with the new 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' Code of Practice launched by the Roads Minister at the end of October 2016.

The HMOP document list a number of categories but how do I know what category my road is?

The changes are not based on comprehensive enough assessments. The category of road does not reflect the speed or volume or class of vehicles travelling over it. The apparent increasing trend of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) routing on minor rural roads represents high impact usage which clearly compromises the condition of the road surfaces and edges.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

More detailed descriptions on how Suffolk Highways categorise roads, footways and cycleways (including consideration of HGVs) to help us prioritise highway maintenance can be found on our web pages by following the link below (now added to the HMOP document):

www.suffolk.gov.uk/categories-of-roads

In the past Highways have never been co-operative nor even bothered to answer on-line, emailed or telephone reports of Highways requiring attention.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

All customer reports are now channelled through our on-line reporting tool (whether directly or input by one of our customer service team following a telephone or email report). This allows customers to receive updates on what we are proposing to do and the timescales within which we will do it. The highways online reporting tool was highly commended in the V3 Digital Technology Leaders Awards 2016 and was a runner up in the O2 Next Gen Digital Challenge Awards in recognition of its enhancements and ongoing development.

This is ridiculous how can Suffolk County Council be having a consultation on this when it was approved by Cabinet months ago?

Suffolk County Council officer response:

In July 2016, the Cabinet was asked to support the approach and direction of both the HIAMP and HMOP documents to confirm the contents was consistent with the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy documents that it had approved on 10 November 2015.

Additionally, Cabinet agreed that both documents should be made available to the public and other stakeholders for comment and for appropriate changes to be made prior to the final documents being published on the Council's website.

I have never seen the state of the roads as they are today in Beccles, potholes everywhere.

Suffolk Highways' HMOP allows us to identify smaller defects for repair. Defects such as potholes can be reported by using our online reporting toolkit:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/report-a-pothole

All highways in Suffolk are the subject of regular routine inspections which are now carried out in a far more consistent way through the new HMOP. Any potholes meeting the intervention criteria will be rectified but those outside of the criteria will continue to be monitored through the regular inspections. The focus of highway maintenance is to ensure that the local highway network is safe to use rather than aesthetically pleasing. Reasonable steps are nonetheless now being taken to undertake maintenance on roads at an earlier stage in their overall deterioration, wherever available funding allows.

It sounds a sensible and pragmatic approach is being taken to managing the highways - at long last. However, I have severe doubts about the ability of the team to work to and deliver this plan effectively.

I would support this proposal as long as Highways actually keep to it.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

As part of Suffolk Highways' transformation to an asset management approach, we will be sharing performance data so that anyone can see what we are achieving and how our achievements compare with neighbouring authorities and others in the eastern region.

We are currently collecting performance data, some of which emerged from the National Highways and Transport public satisfaction survey in November. We will start publishing this data soon afterwards so that anyone is able to check in and see how we're doing on the Suffolk Highways pages on the Council's website. However, since the trial of the HMOP began at the start of May 2016, the number of occasions on which reactive maintenance has been identified by the public or highway inspections has fallen month on month.

Standards of workmanship are generally not impressive; there are backlogs to be cleared.

All work should be thoroughly inspected and guaranteed for at least one year by the contractors.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

We strive to drive up the quality and efficiency of the works we undertake so we now photograph all of our defect repairs to both complement site visits by our works supervisors and reduce the need to inspect every element of completed work – and this keep costs at a more sustainable level. Since the introduction of the new HMOP in May there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of temporary repairs to carriageway defects (down from 21% in May 2016 to 3% in September 2016)

The defect repairs we complete are guaranteed for up to a year so, if on the rare occasion something does fail, the cost of these subsequent repairs are borne by Suffolk Highways' highway maintenance service provider.

This service provider does not wish to be burdened with these costs so is constantly improving repair techniques and identifying new materials which are supported and approved through our Material, Specification and Innovation group.

We are spending money on road surfaces but not tackling long terms problems with drainage on the same roads so the improved surface will be compromised.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

Suffolk Highways in 2016/17 has heavily invested in both the carriageway and drainage infrastructure to prevent deterioration and structural damage which is costly to repair.

From a drainage perspective, we have almost doubled investment this year to around 1/10th of our annual maintenance budget, prioritising locations where

properties are being flooded as well as key locations on the highway network. This investment in drainage is set to continue whilst there are issues for us to investigate and resolve. In addition, an enhanced programme of drainage grip cutting has commenced to address localised rural highway flooding.

Further details of our future works programmes are available on our website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks/roadworks-in-suffolk/>

It does not appear to address the major fault with the current system which is that a repair team is told it can only repair a pothole of a certain size so if they go out to a hole that meets the criteria, but there is a smaller one next to it that doesn't, the latter is ignored. This means the small one that could have been quickly and cheaply filled while the team was on site, is left to become a big one that needs more work and may even grow to compromise the repair next to it.

Suffolk County Council officer response:

As part of our risk-based approach, we are now taking the opportunity to identify and record those defects that, in isolation, do not meet our intervention criteria for repair – this ensures that those scheduling repair work are aware of the presence of these potential future works.

When and where possible, Suffolk Highways works schedulers are grouping repairs in the same location together – even if the timescale for remedial treatment may vary from one defect to another. On the rare occasion where such grouping is not possible – perhaps due to the serious nature of a particular defect where a temporary ‘make safe’ response is more appropriate or there is limited time to effect more overall repair due to traffic constraints - the remaining defects will be programmed for patching at a single return visit.

Over time, the identification and repair of smaller defects will reduce the number of occasions where large defects occur, reducing the risk and improving the safety of your roads.

