

Highways Strategic Partnership Review – Response from Essex Highways

Review Topic	Highways Strategic Partnership			
Scoping Report to go to meeting on	11 June 2013			
Review to take place at meeting on	3 September 2013			
Review Format Required at meeting <i>(tick appropriate)</i>	Written Report (to be supplied at least five working days before the meeting)	X	Presentation	
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Susan Barker			
Lead Officer	Roger Harborough			
Stakeholders	Uttlesford residents, businesses and all road users.			

Suggested Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § To understand how the partnership with Ringway Jacobs is progressing 1 year into the contract. § To establish if there has been any further progression for the strategic partnership to become a joint venture. § To find out if the link with statutory undertakers has improved, and how. § To ascertain if efficiency and performance targets are being achieved. § To understand if the new ‘jet patcher’ pothole treatment is successful and what the customer response has been since implementation. How long does the treatment last. § To find out what compensation has been paid in pot hole damage. § To establish why there have been inconsistencies with warnings of road closures and the supporting signage.
Response from Essex Highways	<p>The Essex Highways Partnership continues to develop, with good collaborative relationships now established and the broader experience and skills of Ringway Jacobs being embedded into service delivery and strategic thinking. Through Year 1 additional service was successfully delivered, such as an extra £11M of road repairs, and the service successfully responded to a prolonged cold spell</p>

through the winter season, requiring many more salting actions than previous years (experienced by many of our neighboring authorities too).

ECC aspires to see Essex Highways operating as a traded vehicle. This is being led by the county's procurement team and senior leaders but it is important that the external environment is ready for such a trading opportunity and therefore ECC will instigate a thorough test and review as soon as the market is ready.

Essex Highways continue to work closely with all utilities that need to open up the highway, managing the time that we allow them into the highway and also inspecting the quality of their reinstatements. We are also looking at the feasibility of operating a permit scheme which could provide additional improvements to the way in which we work together.

Numerous efficiencies have and are being achieved and cost savings are evident to ECC across numerous service delivery areas, including the significant areas of roads maintenance, structural repairs, street lighting and winter service. The majority of performance targets for Year 1 have been met, and where achievements are below expectation, mitigating circumstances are apparent, or action plans are underway to ensure target performance is achieved across the board. There is a joint performance team established between ECC and Ringway Jacobs whose sole focus is to monitor and drive good performance.

The jetpatcher initiative has successfully delivered treatment of in excess of 50,000 defects with numerous evident on Uttlesford's roads. The process has been witnessed and actively supported by the chair of the Uttlesford Local Highways Panel, and although it is difficult to ascertain how this has been perceived by the public without undertaking specific surveys linked to jetpatcher works, ECC's own Members reported a decrease in the complaints they were receiving after the treatment was delivered. In addition, more customers are now using the Essex Highways website to interact with us, rather than calling us. The website allows people to view, track and report highways problems online.

Treatment longevity is dependent on many factors, not least traffic levels and weather conditions (particularly

	<p>winter) but Essex Highways would expect that a jetpatcher fix to typically last as long as a traditional patch. However, where rural road defects at the very edge of the carriageway have been treated then both patches and jetpatcher is vulnerable to degradation when vehicles continue to overrun the carriageway/verge transition. In addition, last year jetpatcher treatment in a very small number of urban areas could have been applied more successfully, but these issues are being addressed to prevent recurrence this year.</p> <p>ECC has received 3250 claims as a result of potholes on roads that have occurred on 1st April 2012 onwards. Of these 424 have been in the Uttlesford area. ECC has made payments of £6,346.01 (Uttlesford area) for these claims. However, please note that the reason for these claims depends on a number of factors including when the last inspection took place and the nature of the defect and should not necessarily be put down to how Ringway Jacobs deliver service within Essex Highways. It is encouraging to note that ECC's repudiation rate for highways claims stands at a very healthy 84%, demonstrating the rigorous nature of our process.</p> <p>Whenever a utility needs to have a road closure to undertake their work, this is processed by Essex Highways and the team responsible ensure that it is correctly managed (i.e. discussions with bus operators etc. in advance) and correctly advertised.</p> <p>If this relates to Essex Highways works, committee members may wish to provide example to ECCs Customer Service team (via the Essex Highways website) who will liaise with the Maintenance and Operations team to provide an understanding of what may have happened and to learn from the process so as to prevent it recurring.</p>
<p>Suggested Purpose and/or Objective of the Review</p>	<p>§ To ensure that the strategic highways partnership is working effectively.</p>
<p>Methodology / Approach (methods to be used to gather evidence)</p>	<p>§ Consult with ECC Highways</p>
<p>Attendees required</p>	<p>§ None at present. Previous attendee Peter Massie, Head of Highways Commissioning for Essex Highways and Transportation.</p>