

Wiltshire Council

Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Strategic Review

This peer challenge feedback

- The peer team
 - The process and themes
 - Feedback in key questions format
 - Strengths
 - Areas for consideration
 - Your reflections and questions
 - Next steps
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The peer challenge process

- It is part of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) offer to support sector-led improvement
- Not an inspection – invited in as “critical friends”
- Non attributable information collection
- People have been open and honest
- Very grateful for all the support we have had...and in particular from Megan Mouny and Suzanne Simpson
- Our feedback is based on the triangulation of a range of views from various sources (i.e. what we have read, heard and seen). These have come from across the political spectrum, council staff and other stakeholders.

The Strategic Review process

Pre-onsite

- Agreeing scope
- Document and data analysis

Onsite

- A range of meetings
- Collation of information and triangulation
- Feedback presentation

HMEP Strategic Review-Core Components

1. Context and priority setting: This looks at assessing how the council's delivery takes into account national and local transport policy, corporate vision, stakeholder expectations, legal and financial constraints
2. Planning and performance: This covers the council's strategy, performance, data and information, and lifecycle planning and works programmes
3. Enablers: This component focusses on leadership, risk management, asset management, and performance monitoring
4. Delivery: This considers programme and service delivery and procurement

The team were asked to focus the HMEP Strategic Review for Wiltshire in a number of areas:

Wiltshire Council Focus areas (1)

You wanted the team's views on:

- Delivering a Highways Service in a way in which it can contribute to an authority's wider corporate vision. Also - the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Fund and your engagement with the wider LEP agenda.
 - The performance, capability and capacity of the Highways Service to deliver a modern Highways service in the context of the resource pressures that Wiltshire (like all other councils) is facing. Particularly in terms of innovation and understanding further opportunities for continuous improvement.
 - The effectiveness of the communication of the vision for Highways with Wiltshire Council's internal and external stakeholders. How effectively you are devolving delivery to a local level alongside views on what you might do the Government's devolution agenda.
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Wiltshire Council Focus areas

And...

- Your application of the right procurement and contract governance to purchasing services and goods.
 - For the Review, where appropriate, to recognise and validate improvements and any notable practice in Wiltshire
 - Provide signposting to practice from elsewhere which would be of benefit to both Wiltshire and any other authorities.
 - Where appropriate an external view of how you compare with other authorities in terms of performance whilst recognising that there is a local context to Wiltshire which influences what (and how) you deliver.
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The Peer Challenge Team

1. **Lead Peer** Jason Russell (Surrey County Council)
2. **Member Peer** Cllr. Nick Chard (Kent County Council)
3. **Senior Officer Peer** Owen Jenkins (Oxfordshire County Council)
4. **Senior Officer Peer** Andrew Martin (Dorset Council)
5. **Senior Officer Peer** Martin Pollard (Local Partnerships)
6. **Senior Officer Peer** Scott Tompkins (Gloucestershire County Council)
7. **Review Manager** Ernest Opuni (Local Government Support Team, Local Government Association)

Context and Priority Setting - Strengths

1. The Council has a clear strategic vision and has been on a consistent journey for several years
 2. There is strong political and officer leadership
 3. The Council has an effective approach to achieving its vision – transition before transformation
 4. The transition to a unitary authority has been managed effectively, and achieves a balance between County wide and local priorities.
 5. Members are supportive of the service – strong cabinet member, cross party support and recognition of where the authority is with contract change and issues
 6. Area Boards and CATG's effective at enabling local ownership, decision making and influence
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Context and priority setting – areas for consideration

1. Clarity needed about how the wider Council vision and transformation cascades to the highways and transport service:
 - Consider the development of a clear vision and strategic outcomes for the service, linked to the Council's priorities, and supported and understood by all stakeholders
 - Opportunity to align/link wider service activities (maintenance, congestion, resilience, procurement) with economic growth and social value agenda (apprenticeships, local suppliers etc.)
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Planning and Performance - strengths

1. The case has been successfully made for investment in the infrastructure and in an asset management approach/methodology
 2. The development of long-term depreciation modelling has started for key assets
 3. Realised opportunity to create benefits for communities from being a unitary authority:
 - Asset transfer and service delegation project
 - Communities involved in decision making through Area Boards
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Planning and Performance – areas for consideration

1. Consider the development of a performance management framework to underpin delivery of strategic outcomes:
 - Will assist in expectation management
 - Critical if the authority is to achieve Band 3
 - Will assist effective benchmarking
 2. Depreciation modelling still to be rolled out to all assets to enable long term prioritised lists to lead to longer term programmes
 3. Consider development of service improvement plans to achieve key service objectives (e.g. Band 3, winter service transformation)
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Enablers - strengths

1. Harnessing the knowledge and energy in local communities has led to improved outcomes and additional funding
 2. Many skilled and knowledgeable people in the service
 3. There is a clear positive intent amongst staff and partners to ensure the service is successful
 4. There is a positive and effective relationship between Members and Officers
 5. Strong and capable senior political leadership which gives clear and consistent vision
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Enablers – areas for consideration

1. Recognise and plan for the risks associated with the significant challenges faced over the coming months:
 - Contract mobilisation
 - Service reviews and restructuring
 - Major infrastructure pipeline
 2. You are a lean organisation, reliant on key individuals in business critical roles; consideration should be given to capacity, succession planning and development needs
 3. Ensure IT systems support integration and workflow/feedback
 4. Consider whether supply chain management is effective and Client role in managing new model
 5. Ensure there is a shared understanding between Members and Officers of contract and performance management
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Delivery - strengths

1. The service managed the termination of the highways contract and the very challenging procurement of the new contract effectively
 2. Service delivery teams are an effective vehicle for collaboration between the partners
 3. You have successfully delivered LEP schemes on time and to budget
 4. Local delivery and decision making is effective:
 - Area Boards have devolved decision-making increasing community involvement
 - The reinstatement of the steward scheme, which further empowers parish councils and communities
 - The CATGs help to manage local expectations, allowing local communities to resource, influence and deliver services
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Delivery – areas for consideration

1. Ensure you fully understand the benefits and cost of each stage in the delivery process, e.g. the balance between detailed scheme design vs ‘walk, talk and build’
 2. Ensure that you are fully realising the potential in the supply chain and further utilisation of early contractor involvement
 3. Ensure contract performance management is aligned with the service performance management framework and stakeholder expectations
 4. Consider option for further innovation in technology, such as exploring again a transition to LEDs, gang scheduling efficiency
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Key messages (1)

- The service has successfully overcome some significant difficulties in the last few months
 - There will need to be strong leadership and focus on the challenges you face over the coming months
 - The new arrangements are universally welcomed, but ensure that you stay awake to the issues that are impacting on delivery
 - Consider how shared learning/alignment with wider Council initiatives can assist the service in its development
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Key messages (2)

- Once you have stabilised the operational issues, consideration should be given to longer term strategies and sustainability, including:
 - Creating the vision and key strategic outcomes for the service
 - Consider the strategies required to achieve this vision
 - Consider the delivery strategies that you need in the future
 - Consider the contract and procurement strategy for future highways contracts
 - Consider the role of the Client organisation and the capabilities you will need in the future
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Your reflections & questions?



Next steps

- We will give you time to reflect on the messages from today and give some thought to how you wish to take this forward
 - A follow-up Action Planning Day has been agreed for **26 April 2016**. This will allow you take turn some of these reflections into action.
 - You determine the shape and outcomes you want for the day and the team has made itself available to support this as you see fit.
 - We will stay in touch with you between now and the Action Planning to agree the input you would find most valuable from the team.
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Contact details

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