

WILTSHIRE HIGHWAYS CONTRACTS

ANNUAL REVIEW OF SERVICE 2016



Introduction

Wiltshire Council manages over 3000 miles of road and about 1,000 bridges and structures. This infrastructure is vital to local residents and businesses, and it is important that it is kept in safe condition.

Wiltshire Council has contracts with Atkins, Ringway Infrastructure Services and other specialist contractors to provide highways consultancy and works services. The new highways term maintenance contract was awarded to Ringway in January 2016 and started in April 2016. The new highways contract is for five years, with possible extensions of up to two years subject to performance.

This review covers the past year, and includes the first six months of the new arrangements. It has been prepared as a joint report between the Council and the service suppliers.

Ringway Infrastructure Services

As one of the leading providers of highway services in the UK, Ringway is renowned for consistently delivering cost-effective performance and sustainable, innovative solution. Working closely with local authorities for over thirty years, Ringway currently operates a number of highway maintenance contracts throughout the country, including North Yorkshire, Shropshire, Bracknell Forest and Hertfordshire, as well as two PFI's in the London Borough of Hounslow and Isle of Wight.

Ringway delivers a range of services for Wiltshire from planned and reactive highways maintenance, through to winter precautionary salting, emergency response, gully cleansing, street lighting installation and maintenance, and traffic management and safety schemes. Ringway were previously the highways term maintenance contractor in Wiltshire between 1999 and 2013, and their current contract started in April 2016

Atkins

Atkins is one of the world's leading design, engineering and project management consultancies with over 17,000 employees worldwide. It has been the UK's largest engineering consultancy for the past 15 years.

The Wiltshire Highways Consultancy Contract started in December 2012, and operates from a local office at County Gate, Trowbridge. Atkins design and supervise road and bridge schemes for the Council, and manage the street lighting and traffic signals as well providing technical information and advice on a wide range of highway and transport matters.

Other Suppliers

A number of specialist sub-contracts were transferred to the Council in the past year following the end of the previous highways and streetscene contract in March 2016. These contractors include Tarmac who delivers road surfacing and repairs, Eurovia who carry out surface dressing and specialist road surfacing, and The Landscape Group who carry out urban grass cutting and landscape maintenance.

Other specialist contractors working for the Council include Wessex Tree Care, Simon Jackson for rural grass cutting, Telent maintaining traffic signals, Texture Blast and Miles Macadam for particular road maintenance processes.

Contract Management

There was a short procurement and lead in period for the new highways contract following the early end of the previous contract. The transition went very smoothly, with the new contractor Ringway establishing a new depot at Melksham at the start of the contract, and making early arrangements for staff recruitment, new equipment and vehicles. In view of the tight timescale for mobilisation it was always envisaged that not all services would be fully operational from day one, but good progress has been made already in delivering the key services.

The services provided under the highways and other contracts are managed by a number of Service Delivery Teams, which report to the Council's monthly Contract Management Meeting. The teams are headed by a Council officer and include representatives from the consultant and contractor. They are responsible for managing the delivery of the service, including project planning, programming and budget control.

Performance of the service is assessed by using a series of Key Performance Indicators, satisfaction surveys and where appropriate by monitoring the delivery of undertakings given at the tender stage.

Highway Major Maintenance

Wiltshire has over 3,000 miles of road. Carriageway resurfacing and other major road and footway maintenance are a major part of the highways service. The Council's 'Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020' is making a massive investment to improve the condition of the roads in Wiltshire over six years. The programme of work started in April 2014, and is designed and supervised by Atkins, with the work carried out by Tarmac and Eurovia.



A number of large road surfacing schemes have already been undertaken this year, including at A363 from Bradford to the County boundary and on the B3098. These were delivered successfully with a good quality of workmanship and traffic management. Some of the recent surfacing work has attracted very positive comments from the public and local residents. Many of the sites have been difficult because of the proximity of properties and the potential disturbance and disruption for businesses and residents.

The Council has carried out an extensive programme of surface dressing (tar and chippings) on parts of the rural road network this summer. This comparatively inexpensive treatment prolongs the life of the road, improves skid resistance and protects the structure of the road. The work was being carried out for the Council by specialist contractors Eurovia, and was carried out to a very high standard.



Miles Macadam provided especially durable surfacing at a number of sites, which suffered from heavy vehicle loadings or especially wet conditions. These included sites at Bowerhill Industrial Estate and the bus lay-by at New Canal, Salisbury.

Roads deteriorate in condition because of various factors, including traffic volumes, ground conditions, weather and drainage issues. Technical surveys of the condition of the highway network are carried out annually and the information is used to help prioritise schemes. Road safety is the priority, and maintaining adequate skid resistance on the busy high speed roads is vital. Work has continued this year to improve the surfaces of many of our high speed rural roads, particularly those with poor safety records. The sites proposed for major maintenance are reviewed annually by the local Area Boards to help identify local priorities.

The performance of all of the companies delivering road maintenance in Wiltshire, including Ringway, Tarmac, Miles Macadam, Texture Blast and Eurovia has been good. All of the companies have worked with the Council to manage the transition to the new delivery arrangements.

Carriageway Repairs

The wet winter and flooding in previous years has resulted in substantial damage to the road network. It is important that serious defects are treated promptly to keep the roads safe. Ringway currently operate four Pothole teams that respond to urgent issues, and Tarmac has been operating teams to carry out larger surfacing repairs.

The programme of pothole repairs, carriageway repairs and other treatments will continue throughout the year to address the damage. However, the best approach is to prevent the deterioration by the planned resurfacing of those roads in poor condition, which is what the increased road maintenance expenditure will deliver. Unfortunately it is not possible to resurface every road and work has to be prioritised, with arrangements also made to deal with defects as they arise.

Bridges and Structures

Wiltshire Council maintains about 1000 road bridges and a similar number of Rights of Way bridges. The Council undertakes general inspections and routine maintenance on these structures in accordance with national codes of practice.

Atkins carry out principal bridge inspections and investigations to inform future maintenance work on highway bridges and structures. They also provide support to assess planning applications involving structures and design the larger new and replacement bridges for the Council.

Ringway operate a bridge maintenance gang and Bridge Warden to carry out routine maintenance work on bridges, which also includes clearing debris resulting from flooding, and making minor repairs.

Ringway also make repairs to bridges, including for example following vehicle damage at Baldham Mill Bridge on the A361 near Seend, and at Easton Grey. This often involves repairing bridges which are listed structures or ancient monuments. These require particular care and often need permission for alterations to historic structures. Many of the rivers and watercourses in Wiltshire have environmental designations, which can affect the timing of work, permissions required and the methods used.



A number of major bridge schemes were carried out by Balfour Beatty Living Places last year, including at Steeple Langford. Under the new contract this type of work will generally be carried out by Ringway in the future, and they have been recruiting staff and making arrangements to deliver this specialist work.

Integrated Transport

This year saw the delivery of a number of integrated transport and safety schemes. The Council's traffic engineering team have worked with the contractors to plan and deliver a range of projects to the local community most notably through the Area Boards and Community Area Transport Groups (CATGs). The schemes ranged in size and complexity from simple sign installation through to more complex road safety improvement schemes to safety schemes.

Recent larger schemes include major improvements at Wingfield cross-roads traffic signals, a new footway at Dauntsey Road, Great Somerford, and the start of construction of a new cycleway between Bulford and Amesbury. In addition the team has delivered a significant

number of smaller scale projects, such as pedestrian crossings, speed limits, footway improvements and gateway schemes.



Development work is progressing on a number of Taking Action on School Journeys schemes, 20 mph speed limits and safety schemes for delivery next year. The close working relationship of the design teams with the CATGs is helping identify and deliver local priorities.

In 2015/16 there were 146 CATG schemes progressed of which 29 were pedestrian improvement schemes and a further 11 were for the installation of dropped kerbs.

Drainage Improvements and Flood Alleviation

Programmes of drainage investigations, repairs and flood alleviation schemes are undertaken throughout the year, but the flooding in recent years has meant that there has been a need to respond immediately to flooding issues, as well as dealing with previously identified problem sites.

The drainage improvement and flood alleviation work is co-ordinated through three Operational Flood Working Groups that include the Environment Agency, Wessex Water, other organisations and stakeholders. Atkins design and supervise many of the larger schemes, some of which are funded by the Environment Agency, with construction and survey work being undertaken by Ringway and their sub-contractors.

The specialist Drainage Investigation and CCTV Survey team locate, clean, survey and map the underground drainage network. Survey and asset condition data collected from the drainage investigations and surveys is recorded for future reference.



Major drainage improvement schemes carried out this year include works at Bradford on Avon, Urchfont, and Great Bedwyn. These schemes have improved drainage systems, repaired damaged pipes and helped to reduce flood risks for communities.

Major schemes were delivered to help reduce flood risks for communities badly affected by the flooding, including works at Aldbourne last year. Schemes are being developed by Atkins in conjunction with the Council to enable bids for funding and implementation in the near future, including design of a scheme to help protect Tilshead.

Street Lighting

The Wiltshire has over 50,000 street lights and illuminated signs which are managed by Atkins, with Ringway carrying out maintenance and improvement work.

A large proportion of the street lights in the urban area are controlled by a centrally managed street lighting system, which allows for flexibility in energy saving methods, remote monitoring of energy consumption and automatic fault reporting to minimise the time between failure and fix. The introduction of part night lighting in many areas has seen a significant reduction in energy consumption, with the Council being on target to reduce street lighting energy by 23% in the past three years.



With an aging stock of street lighting a programme of both concrete and steel column testing is underway by Ringway to keep the lighting safe. A programme of removing life-expired concrete columns whilst introducing LED equipment with reduced energy consumption and maintenance requirements will continue as funds permit.

The transition to Ringway delivering the lighting service under the new contract has gone smoothly.

Traffic Signals

The Council's traffic signal stock, including the Salisbury Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system, is monitored and managed by Atkins on behalf of the Council with maintenance work undertaken by the Council's signal maintenance contractors Telent. Telent also respond to faults and damage following accidents. They also install new equipment and upgrade the existing signals as required.



Trees and Landscaping

Atkins manages the maintenance of highway trees and protected verges for Wiltshire Council. Maintenance work carried out by the specialist contractor Wessex Tree Care includes annual maintenance of street trees in towns and villages, including annual pollarding (removal of all trunk and crown shoots) on trees in urban streets.

Larger scale schemes are carried out, including highway safety works along miles of major routes to remove dead, dying and dangerous trees and improve clearances and visibility. Pruning is often needed prior to major maintenance surfacing schemes to allow access for the works vehicles and to prune around street lights.



There are 50 protected verges in the county which receive special management. The wildflower verges now support an excellent range of fauna and flora, including slow worms and lizards and Biological Action Plan species of butterflies.

Local Highways

The Local Highway Service carries out routine highway maintenance, including pot hole filling, gully emptying, grass cutting, litter collection, litter bin emptying, and dead animal collections. The Council's teams have recently undergone a significant internal reorganisation to reflect the new contract arrangements and service delivery requirements.

The majority of the highways maintenance activities are now undertaken by Ringway under the new highway contract which started on 1st April. The transition from the previous contractor went well, without major disruptions to services. The recruitment and development issues have largely been addressed and the service is working well, with a good relationship established with the highways contractor.

The urban streetscene and landscaping services are currently being undertaken by The Landscape Group (TLG) following the transfer of the previous sub-contract to the Council. The new arrangements started in September 2015, and an appreciable improvement in delivery has already been noted.

The local highways service is predominantly funded from revenue expenditure, which has been under significant budget pressures in recent years. In recognition of these issues funding was increased in this area for 2016/17, which has improved the situation, but demand and public expectations remain high, and meeting this demand is likely to continue to be a challenge in the future.

There are a number of customer contact improvements that have been implemented in recent years, including the My Wiltshire app, which is being developed further so that the operatives and Parish Stewards will have direct access to it to report work completed.



The Parish Steward scheme is being reintroduced in October 2016. This was an extremely popular scheme when it was operated by Ringway previously, and arrangements have made to appoint stewards with new vehicles and a full programme of training ready for the launch. The scheme involves the town and parish councils setting priorities for the 20 Parish Stewards.

Winter and Emergency Response

The precautionary salting of Wiltshire's roads this coming winter will be carried out by Ringway using Wiltshire Council's vehicles under the supervision of the Council's staff. The winter of 2015/16 was fairly mild, and the operation of the winter service did not cause any serious concerns, despite the ending of the previous contract. However, the Council's Duty Engineers and contractors faced challenges on occasions regarding the salting of the network, including the need to keep crews on standby and carry out gritting runs at short notice. There were still many precautionary salt runs despite the lack of snow and apparently mild winter.



The transition of responsibility for the out of hours and emergency response to Ringway in April went well, and the support from the various sub-contractors during emergencies, including Wessex Tree Care during recent storms, has been very good.



The threat of flooding earlier this year required the deployment of temporary flood barriers at Bradford on Avon. The Council's staff and contractors worked closely with the Environment Agency and others to ensure the timely placement of the flood defences.

A350 Improvement Schemes

The Council was successful in applying for funding for the second stage of the A350 improvements at Chippenham. The bid documentation and design were prepared by Atkins. The tender was won by local company M. J. Church and the scheme was delivered on time and on budget. The scheme involved the dualling a section of the A350 at Bumpers Farm. It has delivered the benefits of less congestion and better journey time certainty.



Design work is being completed by Atkins on the third phase of the A350 Chippenham improvements, which includes improvements to Chequers Roundabout on the A4, and the dualling of the remainder of the section of the A350 between the A420 and the Malmesbury Road Roundabout north of Chippenham.

Design work is also progressing on improvements to the M4 junction 17 with the A350. Procurement processes for these scheme is starting and work is anticipated to start on site next year.

Performance and Future Developments

A major factor in highways service delivery in the past year has been the ending of the previous contract with BBLP in March 2016, and the procurement of the new highways contract. There have also been major changes in arrangements with the previous sub-contractors to deliver some of the services as direct contractors to the Council.

These substantial changes were made without serious disruption to services and with the full co-operation of the previous and current contractors to manage the transition.

The Peer Review carried out in February as part of the DfT funded Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme complimented the Council on the way the transition had been managed. A series of projects have since been established following the Peer Review, which will deliver a number of further improvements, especially in connection with joint training, performance management, supply chain management collaboration and asset management.

The programme of review and improvement is being implemented by the Council in conjunction with Atkins, Ringway and the other contractors. There is a commitment from all involved to work with Wiltshire Council to improve services and deliver the Council's Business Plan, which includes investment in highways maintenance as a key action.

The performance of the Council's highway supply chain, and progress on implementing the proposed improvements has been good in the past year. This is expected to continue in the coming year, and progress on improving performance will continue to be reported annually.