

# WILTSHIRE HIGHWAYS CONTRACTS

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF SERVICE 2017



## **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 last year and started in April 2016. This contract is for five years, with possible extensions of up to two years subject to performance.

This review covers the period April 2016 to March 2017, and includes the first year of the new highways contract. It has been prepared as a joint report between the Council and the main service suppliers.

## **Ringway Infrastructure Services**

Ringway, working closely with associated Eurovia companies, manage and maintain the largest portfolio of highway maintenance contracts in the UK, covering more than 56,000km of strategic and local highway network. Ringway are part of Eurovia UK, and the wider group relationship underpins their declared self-delivery focus bringing access to the very best national and international expertise.

As a leading service provider to local authorities, Ringway undertakes the management, maintenance and improvement of the built environment across a national portfolio of term contracts; these include local authorities, Private Finance Initiatives and Highways England strategic roads.

Ringway delivers a range of services for Wiltshire Council 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 most respected design, engineering and project management consultancies with over 17,000 employees worldwide. It is the UK's largest engineering consultancy.

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 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.

## **New Highways Contract**

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 highways 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. There were 107 staff and operatives that transferred to the new contractor. A new management structure had to be recruited to replace individuals not available through the transfer.

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 was made in delivering the key services at the start of the contract. The recruitment and training of the Parish Stewards was completed for the re-launch of the scheme in October. This included training in the use of the My Wiltshire system and arranging the communication channels with the town and parish councils.



*Ringway have established a new depot at Melksham for the contract.*

Ringway also mobilised a new depot at Stanton St. Quinton. Council staff from the Council's old Bowerhill depot are now co-located with the contractor at the new Ringway depot at Melksham. The Ringway safety record has been good, and there is a comprehensive training programme for operatives.

## **Contract Management**

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. A sub-group has been established to ensure effective environmental management and procedures.

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

## **Highway Major Maintenance**

Wiltshire has over 3,000 miles of road. Wiltshire Council is committed to the good management of the highway asset, and has been working on implementing good asset management principles for several years, supported by the Atkins asset management team. Preventative asset management practices have continued to be applied in 2016/17, using

carriageway condition survey data to identify potential schemes, leading to more effective management of the network.

The Asset Management Team has developed geographical information systems mapping of all proposed Major Maintenance schemes to assist with collaboration and knowledge sharing with others, and is developing the forward programme of schemes for future years.

A Performance Management Framework has been developed to support the Councils' Asset Management Strategy and includes 6 Asset Management Strategy objectives aligned to the Councils' Local Transport Plan Objectives and 36 Performance Measures. The Council was successful in achieving a Band 3 (the top level) Incentive Funding from the Department for Transport this year.

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 most of the surfacing work carried out by Tarmac and Eurovia, with support from Ringway.



*Wiltshire Council is making a major investment in improving the condition of the county's roads.*

A number of large road surfacing schemes were undertaken in 2016/17, including the A345 at Upavon village and Ashley Road, Butts Road in Salisbury. 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.



*An extensive programme of surface dressing helps seal and protect the county's rural roads, and improves skid resistance.*

The Council carried out an extensive programme of surface dressing (tar and chippings) on parts of the rural road network during the summer, including the A342 between Upavon and Tidworth. This comparatively inexpensive treatment prolongs the life of the road, improves skid resistance and protects the structure of the road. The work was carried out for the Council by specialist contractors Eurovia, and was to a very high standard.





*Various treatments are used to improve the strength and surfaces of the county's roads.*

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 during 2016/17 to improve the surfaces of many of our high speed rural roads, particularly those with poor safety records. The intention is that 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 ease 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 a team to carry out larger surfacing repairs.

The programme of pothole repairs, carriageway repairs and other treatments continues throughout the year. However, the best approach is to prevent serious deterioration of the roads by the timely resurfacing of those roads in poor condition. This is what the increased road maintenance expenditure is delivering. 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 strength assessments to inform future maintenance work on highway bridges and structures. They also provide support to assess planning applications involving structures and design the more complex new and replacement bridges for the Council.

Ringway operate two full time bridge maintenance gangs to carry out routine maintenance and minor strengthening work on bridges. Additional resources and sub-contractors are on occasions called upon to cater for larger and more specialist schemes.



*A programme of bridge strengthening and renewal is being undertaken by the Councils contractors*

Ringway also make repairs to bridges, including for example those following vehicle damage such as during 2016 at Baldham Mill Bridge on the A361 near Seend, and at Bradford Town Bridge. These repairs can often involve bridges that are listed structures or Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and which require particular care and expertise when being worked on. Many of the rivers and watercourses in Wiltshire have environmental designations; these can often affect the timing of work, permissions required and the methods used.

In addition to the routine maintenance works Ringway have over the last twelve months completed over a dozen larger bridge schemes. These include amongst others, the reconstructions of Galteemore Culvert Beckhampton, Clivey Bridge Dilton Marsh, the widening of Sambourne Bridge, Minety and the reconstruction of a large road embankment at Chilmark.

## **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 Atkins and Ringway 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.

Recent larger schemes include major safety improvements at A350 Lacock Crossroads and A30/Barrington Road junction in Salisbury, and a substantial new cycleway facility between Amesbury and Bulford. 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.



*Integrated Transport schemes include pedestrian improvements and access schemes*

In 2016/17 there were 107 CATG schemes progressed of which 18 were pedestrian improvement schemes and a further 26 were for the installation of dropped kerbs.

## **Drainage Improvements and Flood Alleviation**

A programme of drainage investigations, repairs and flood alleviation schemes was undertaken in 2016/17. The work is co-ordinated through three Operational Flood Working Groups that include the Environment Agency, Wessex Water, other organisations and stakeholders, including the town and parish councils.

Atkins design, supervise and help prepare bids for 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.

A specialist Drainage Investigation and CCTV Survey team working for Ringway 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.



*The Council has carried out drainage improvement and flood alleviation schemes across the county.*

There were 39 drainage schemes implemented this year, and a number of studies are underway to develop schemes to for future funding bids. These schemes are to improve drainage systems, repair damaged pipes and help to reduce flood risks for communities.

Major schemes were designed for Tilshead and Forest Road, Melksham. These should be implemented shortly when funding is approved by the Environment Agency. 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**

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 computer 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 of 23% in the past three years.



*A programme of maintenance, including electrical and structural testing, is carried out on the Council's street lighting stock.*

Testing of both concrete and steel columns is being undertaken by Ringway to keep the county's street lighting safe. A programme of removing life-expired concrete columns whilst introducing LED equipment with reduced energy consumption and maintenance requirements is continuing as funds permit.

Ringway took over delivering street lighting maintenance in April 2016, and the transition to 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.



*As well as installing new traffic signals the Council's contractors attend and repair collision damage*

Telent respond to faults and damage following accidents and carry out pre-planned Annual Inspections and Bulk Lamp Changes. They also install new equipment, upgrade and refurbish existing signals sites as instructed and designed by Atkins.

Existing pedestrian crossings were upgraded to Puffin crossings at a number of locations, including at Ludgershall Library and Penning Road at Tidworth, Mortimer Street in Trowbridge and at New Park in Devizes. Changes were made to the traffic signals on the A350 at Lacock and A30 London Road, Salisbury. Other work carried out in the year included improvements to monitoring at 25 sites and new pedestrian crossing push buttons at 7 sites. The Council also inspected and adopted new traffic signals provided by developers at High Street and Tetbury Hill, Malmesbury, and at Royal Wootton Bassett.



## Trees and Landscaping

Atkins manages the maintenance of highway trees and protected verges for Wiltshire Council. Maintenance work carried out by contractors Wessex Tree Care and Conservation Contractors includes maintenance of street trees in towns and villages, annual pollarding (removal of all trunk and crown shoots), street tree planting, street light clearance and maintenance of natural regeneration in rural verges.

Larger scale schemes are carried out for highway safety, including clearances and visibility improvements along sections of road to remove dead, dying and dangerous trees and also prior to major maintenance surfacing schemes.



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 through a specialised highway contract. This contract delivers the majority of statutory and safety reactive highway functions for the Council. However, the discretionary Parish Steward Scheme is also included in the contract to help address the highway priorities of the local communities. The scheme has been a great success and is a well liked and respected service.



*The Parish Steward Scheme operated by Ringway has been very well received by the local communities*

The urban streetscene and landscaping services are currently being undertaken by idverde following the transfer of the previous sub-contract to the Council. The contract provides the statutory cleansing functions and the council's grounds maintenance provision.

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 to ensure that the statutory functions of the Council are maintained. However, public expectations remain high, and meeting this demand continues to be a challenge in the future.



*My Wiltshire is an innovative reporting and management tool being used by Ringway.*

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

## **Winter and Emergency Response**

The precautionary salting of Wiltshire's roads during the winter is carried out by Ringway using Wiltshire Council's vehicles under the supervision of the Council's staff. The winter of 2016/17 was fairly mild, but there were still 44 primary route and 16 secondary route precautionary salting treatment runs, which used 5,524 tonnes of salt.

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 the apparently mild winter as the temperatures were marginal on a number of nights.



*Despite a mild winter the Council still needed to use 5,524 tonnes of salt to treat the roads.*

The transition of responsibility for the out of hours and emergency response to Ringway in April 2016 went very smoothly, and there was good support from the various sub-contractors during emergencies, including Wessex Tree Care during the storms.

The Council's Duty engineers dealt with 1,492 out of hours incidents, including supporting the fire service in clearance of phosphorous in Trowbridge and assisting the police following a serious incident. The Ringway teams provide an on site response as required, with the potential to increase resources should an incident escalate.



*The Council's contractors work with the Environment Agency and local communities during flooding and other emergencies.*

The threat of flooding earlier in the 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 Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue to ensure the timely placement of the flood defences.

The team also dealt with storms and assisted with the summer and winter solstice operations.

### **A350 Improvement Schemes**

The Council was successful in obtaining funding for the third stage of the A350 improvements at Chippenham and for junction improvements at M4 Junction 17. The bid documentation and design were prepared by Atkins and submitted to the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership for approval. The tenders for the contracts were returned in February, and a contractor appointed to enable the works to start in the summer of 2017.

The third phase of the A350 Chippenham improvements 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 A350 north of Chippenham.



*A contract has been awarded for major improvements at M4 junction 17 and on the A350 at Chippenham.*

The M4 Junction 17 works involve the signalisation of the roundabout and resurfacing works. These schemes will improve safety and capacity, and reduce journey times on this important route.

Atkins also supported the council in preparing Challenge Funding bid for major surfacing work on the A350 at Hart Hill near Shaftesbury.

## **Performance and Future Developments**

A major aspect of highways service delivery during 2016/17 was the ending of the previous contract with BBLP in March 2016, and the start of the new highways contract with Ringway Infrastructure Services. There were also major changes in the 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 who worked together to manage the transition.

A Peer Review carried out in February 2016 as part of the DfT funded Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme complimented the Council on the way the transition from the previous contract was being managed. A series of projects were established following the review, to deliver a number of improvements to the highway service, especially in

connection with joint training, performance management, supply chain management collaboration and asset management.

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

The Council was pleased to achieve Band 3 (the highest level) in the assessment process for the Department of Transport's Incentive Funding. This reflects the progress made on implementing good asset management processes in the highway service.

The performance of the Council's highway supply chain has been good during 2016/17, and further improvements are being developed to build on this success. These include the introduction of a new asset management system, which will become operational in April 2018, to improve delivery of the highways service and help make better investment decisions to maintain the extensive highways assets.