

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

HIGHWAYS JOINT INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to:
 - Show progress against the actions identified as part of the Highways Review and the development of the Highways Joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement plan.
 - Provide an update on highway activities which have been undertaken since the beginning of the financial year.

Information

2. The innovation and change activities described in this report continue to form a significant change programme across the Council's highways functions, which has been embraced by the Council and Via East Midlands (Via) staff. The change programme was initiated by the Highway Services Review the outcomes of which were reported to the Place Select Committee in January 2023.
3. Subsequent work has been closely steered and monitored by a joint County Council and Via Innovation and Continuous Improvement Board. The outputs of this Board are closely aligned with the Council Plan and are resident focussed. Work continues to utilise sector best practice and has been guided and challenged by external critical support and the Via East Midlands Ltd Board.
4. The Joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement Plan builds on the scope of the original Highways Review, incorporating a summary of the key outputs from that review which are set out below:
 - To embed the functional split between the County Council and Via, underpinned by clear leadership arrangement, accountabilities, and responsibilities.
 - To embed performance management arrangements and contract management of Via by monitoring and managing performance against national and County Council metrics.
 - To deliver value for money and review processes to ensure quality of output is delivered.
 - Increase our effectiveness and efficiency, maximising the return on our investment in highways by ensuring that our strategy, policy, and plans drive our maintenance/ investment priorities and treatments/techniques, alongside our increased use of innovation and technology.
 - Maintain our overall network condition and seek to improve it within financial constraints, alongside our footways wherever possible.

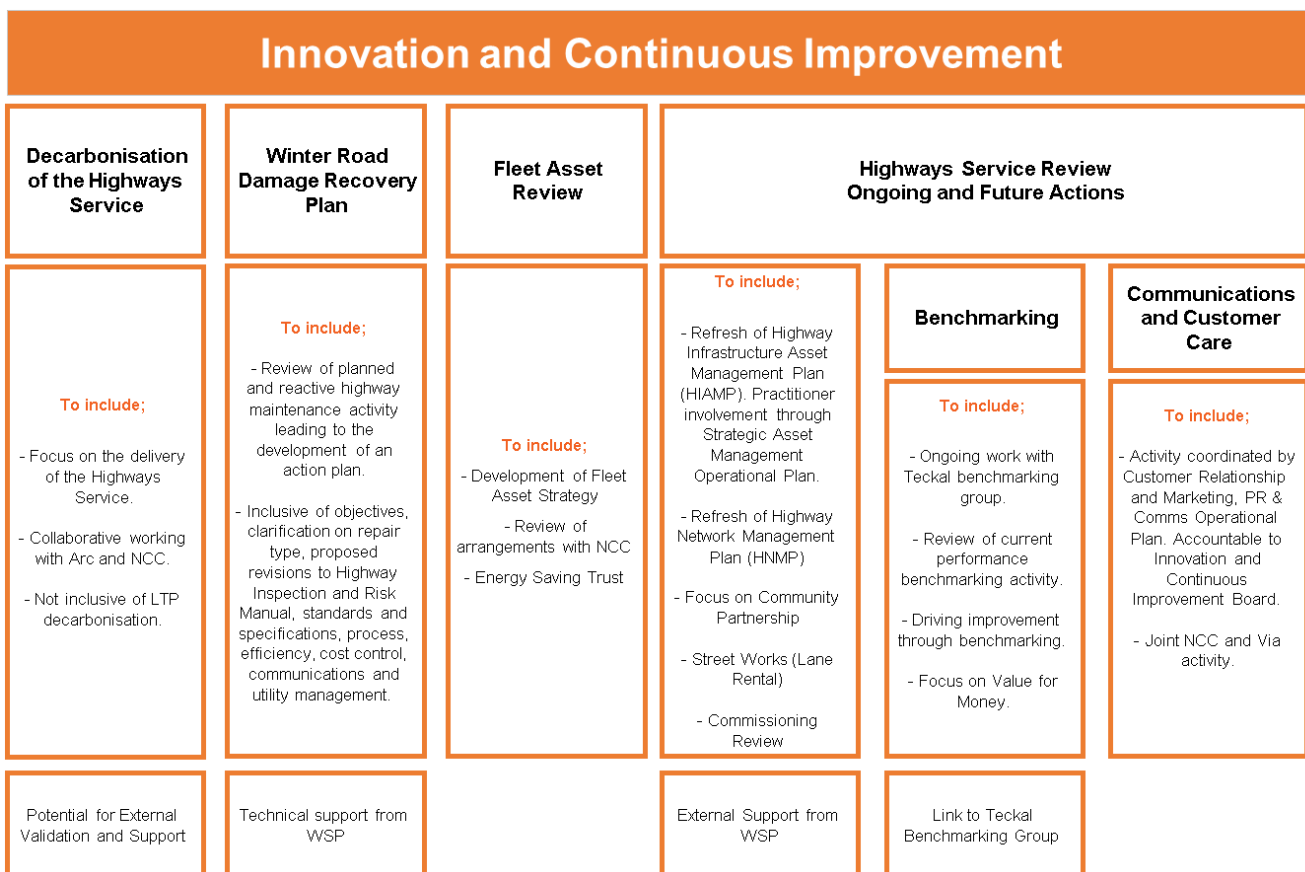
- To embed a move to right repair, right time approach that delivers permanent repairs wherever possible. Recognising that prevention is better than cure and that whole street approaches are desirable.
- Improve our major capital programme management.
- To proactively monitor utility works including remediation standards, coordination, traffic management and damage to infrastructure.
- Publish a longer-term programme of capital works to keep residents informed of future plans.
- Improve our communications, so that residents are better informed about our work, and understand our approaches and future plans.

Governance

5. The Innovation and Continuous Plan is managed by a joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement Board which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The purpose of this Board is to maintain momentum and measure progress against the key deliverables of the Plan. The Board ensures that any actions delivered are aligned with the goals set out below (paragraph six).

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

6. The Innovation and Continuous Improvement actions have been consolidated into one of the eleven operational plans. This operational plan includes any outstanding actions of the Highway Services Review and future developments. Consistent progress continues to be made against each of these actions.
7. The diagram below illustrates the Board's current workstreams.



- 8. Officers are working alongside Cornwall Council, Norfolk County Council and North Yorkshire Council who have similar highway delivery arrangements to benchmark activities and capture best practice.
- 9. Following the successful launch of Alloy - *the new Highway Asset Management System (HAMS) in April 2023* - a further phase of development is underway to maximise the benefits which can be realised from the use of this system. This will result in Alloy becoming a central database containing a comprehensive set of jobs, assets, and other relevant information, replacing or interfacing with other systems to provide a reliable and timely source of data. The delivery of this project will be governed through the existing collaborative Via and Council Project Board.

Strategic Asset Management

- 10. Positive collaboration is ongoing between Via and the Council to develop the Strategic Asset Management Strategy. This includes the creation of the Asset Management Policy, Strategy, and Plan, the Highways Inspection and Risk Manual, and the Highways Maintenance Delivery Plan. This collaboration establishes a “Golden Thread” of accountabilities and responsibilities between the Council as the asset owner and Via as the delivery partner, with a focus on governance, programming, risk management, cost management, and service delivery reporting.
- 11. The illustration below shows the relationship between the strategic and operational plans.



- 12. Work is progressing to develop a three-year capital programme programme which will be delivered from April 2024. Central to the delivery of this programme will be the continued development of ‘The Hub’ which is designed to effectively manage the coordination of all highways programmes of work including revenue activities. ‘The Hub’ will also ensure the delivery of timely programme/project management information to key stakeholders, enabling effective communication with residents through the MyNOTTS App.

13. Following the Highway Review, a commitment was made to manage and maintain Nottinghamshire's roads differently in order to provide a quality, long-term improvement of the network. As a result, a right repair, right time approach has been prioritised. One consequence of this is has been that 22 of 38 additional machine lay maintenance schemes have already been delivered with the remaining planned for early December 2023.
14. Additional resource planning has taken place to accommodate for the anticipated winter damage to the highway which typically occurs between December and March. Since November 2022, 128,279 m² of permanent Hotbox patching repairs across 357 sites as well as 17,600m² of spray injection Roadmaster repairs have been delivered.

Street Works Permits

15. Via continue to collaborate with the Council to effectively manage and inspect utilities - *and other statutory undertakers* - works to ensure they comply with the Street Works Permitting Scheme and any applicable highway reinstatement specifications. This is managed through a quarterly meeting with the Council's Traffic Management team.
16. These improvements translate into minimised disruption for members of the public, better communication to road users and the effective coordination of works.

Communications

17. The implementation and delivery of a joint communications and engagement plan has continued throughout the year. This has built on previous initiatives and is aimed at pro-actively informing and engaging with residents about highways activities. This has generated improvements including:
 - Road surface improvements communicated (with completed photographs) through a new website at NottsHighways.co.uk, raising visibility and awareness of works amongst residents online and through the MyNOTTS App.
 - Introducing the NottsHighways brand to make it clearer to residents who is delivering works and improvements in Nottinghamshire, including visual branding on vehicles and signage.
 - Ongoing delivery of year-round campaigns using the 'Inform, Celebrate, educate' model. This has included winter maintenance, seasonal maintenance, surfacing, riparian ownership.
 - Increasing engagement with parish councils through the development of new channels, such as the Lengthsman Local newsletter.
 - Introducing new video explainers with front-line staff in different service areas.
 - Continuing to develop resident feedback systems, provide more opportunities, online surveys, wider promotion of opportunities for residents to feedback, and pilots of door-to-door surveys.
 - A proactive media and PR programme with regular generated PR and a full forward calendar of positive opportunities and releases
 - Celebrating the positive impact on communities, people and environment through the delivery of highways services
18. The joint PR, Marketing and Communications Operational Plan continues to be developed, refined and delivered. A key development in 2024/25 will involve the improved communication of future planned works to residents. This initiative will be combined with further development

of the NottsHighways.co.uk website to become a hub of operational highways information for residents and stakeholders.

Update of Highways Activities

19. In addition to the progress made towards the delivery of the actions identified in the Highways Joint Innovation and Continuous Improvement plan, Via has also received a number of awards over the course of the last year, these include:
- 2023 ICE East Midlands Major Project Award for GAR
 - 2023 ICE East Midlands - Highly Commended for Regatta Way Cycling Scheme
 - 2023 ICE East Midlands, Highly Commended for Lowes Wong School / Southwell Flood Scheme
20. During the same period Via's ISO 9001 (Quality Management) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) accreditations were also renewed by the British Standards Institution (BSI).
21. Throughout 2023/24 Via has undertaken significant volumes work across the wide variety Highway Services it delivers on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council, these include:
- 151 Emergencies attended.
 - 998 Street lights repaired.
 - 22,629 Potholes filled.
 - 25,082 Gullies emptied.
 - 23,026 Highway enquiries received.
 - 48 Bridges inspected.
 - 83,143m² of programmed patching and preventative maintenance,
 - 26,450 Highway inspections carried out.
 - 147 Highway schemes delivered.
22. In future a six-monthly update will be provided which will detail the highway activities that have been delivered within the previous period.
23. It is proposed that information for these updates will be recorded within Alloy and presented in the form of a dashboard. Officers are seeking the views of the Place Select Committee about the format of this dashboard however, it is anticipated that it will make use of Microsoft's Power BI data visualisation tool. This application has already been adopted by several departments within the County Council and internal expertise is available to support its use.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

24. This report and its recommendation have been produced in order to comply with the resolution made at the January 2023 meeting *i.e.: for a progress report on the delivery of the Highways Joint Continuous Improvement Plan be brought to the December 2023 meeting of the Place Select Committee.*

Statutory and Policy Implications

Financial Implications

The actions set out in this report will be funded from within existing Highway Budgets.

Implications for Residents

The delivery of the actions contained within the Innovation and Continuous Improvement Plan will provide an improved Highway Service for the people of Nottinghamshire.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

The actions contained in the Innovation and Continuous Improvement Plan will enhance the sustainability of the Highways Service and assist the Council to comply with Ambition 9 of The Nottinghamshire Plan.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

- a. Members consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE
Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments (SSR 12.12.2023)

25. The recommendation falls within the terms of reference for the Place Select Committee to consider.

Financial Comments (PAA29 12/12/2023)

26. The cost of completed and proposed work for 2023/24 as set out in the report will be met from existing 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Report of Transport and Environment Committee, Highways Review Update Report (15th of June 2021)
- Report of Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment, Highways Review

(15th of December 2022)

- Report of Cabinet Member, Transport and Environment, Highways and Road Safety (11th of January 2023)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All