

Devon Highway and HATOC Meetings

As part of the Devon Highways communications strategy, we have been attending the autumn round of Highways and Traffic Orders Committee meetings. A representative of both DCC and SWH has attended to give elected Members on the HATOCs an opportunity to receive an update and to ask questions. The update has concentrated on the recovery from last winter on fixing potholes, how the deployment and optimisation of works gangs has changed using V Works and how this is indicating an efficiency gain. We continued to stress to Members the importance of our preventative maintenance strategy and how this good asset management practice helped up in our successful bid to the Government's pothole Fund. Also, the direction of travel on the new DfT capital funding process, which like the Pothole Fund bid will favour authorities that demonstrate good asset management practice, demonstrate collaborative working with service providers and other authorities and have a track record of innovation in service delivery.

Self-help was a common topic raised by Members, and we are now able to show them our Member Briefing note and the Guidance Notes on the Road Warden scheme and Community Self Help to explain how we can enable communities to carry out some works where they want to.

Scrutiny

In preparing for our future service delivery arrangements beyond March 2017, Meg Booth and I provided a briefing to Scrutiny Members before the full Place Scrutiny Meeting in November. Place Scrutiny decided to hold a further, full day, session to concentrate on the Highway Service, with an open meeting for all Members in the morning and a Place Scrutiny Member only meeting in the afternoon. The afternoon session will concentrate on what are the important issues for Members in any future delivery arrangements. This will focus on the factors that the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) toolkit for service delivery models identifies in looking at alternative models. The input will be useful in drawing in Member views before reporting to Cabinet in March 2015 with recommendations for the future service delivery model.

Team Days

I would like to thank everyone who attended the recent Team Days for their open and honest contributions to our discussions. I feel we have come a long way in the last year or so in developing the right culture in Devon Highways. I hope you agree!