

The Steering Group:

We meet bi-monthly with the chair alternated between Heather Barnes, Strategic Director Place, Devon County Council (DCC) and David Lee, Non-Executive Chairman for South West Highways (SWH). The Group members consist of Ben Pyle, Managing Director for SWH; Stewart Struthers, Deputy CEO of Colas Ltd; David Whitton, Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste, DCC; Nicky Allen, Assistant County Treasurer, DCC; Glen Robinson, VJV Partnership Director, and Joe Deasy, Asset Management Group Manager.

Driving Efficiency**Programme Delivery -**

The Steering Group heard that patch marking resource for surface dressing has been highlighted as a concern, with a significantly larger programme compared to last year, coupled with a large volume of patching sites being identified Devon Highways Board has identified additional resource to tackle this bottleneck.

Grass cutting is progressing well and wherever possible activities are being combined to reduce costs. This has been particularly effective on the high speed network where during night time closures gully emptying, grass cutting and safety defect work, as well as some maintenance patching, has been undertaken.

Financial Efficiency –

The final year end results for 2014/15 show a 3.48% level of efficiency, which was welcomed by the Steering Group. This equates to a Devon County Council gain share of £520,000.

This year has seen a slow start, with turnover of work behind profile. Site sizes have been relatively small which has also impacted on efficiencies achieved.

Patching and drainage are performing well and delivering the majority of the efficiency gain which stands at 1.38%.

Funding and Asset Strategy –

Forward planning for the 2016/17 year is underway and outline levels of funding for various works programmes discussed and agreed. Schemes associated with surface dressing have already been identified and pre-patching is underway.

Key Performance Measures –

The Group recognised the excellent safety performance figures, which are all green. In particular it was noted that there has not been a lost time incident in over seven months.

Productivity measures for cost reimbursable works have been developed and are now being monitored on a monthly basis and benchmarked against historical data where available.

Gangs have been equipped with iPads to capture this data which in the future can be imported into i-ways. Crews are also carrying out gully repairs identified during the cleansing programme and the repairs they are recording will be added to the gully asset history.

All of the data can be viewed on maps in the HUB, and a web portal is available for third parties to view this information.

Mobilising Communities

Self Help Training –

It was great to hear that a large number of town and parish councils who have expressed an interest in joining the Community Road Warden Scheme have also registered to become chapter 8 trained. This demand has meant the need for additional training capacity and is an excellent outcome.

Community Payback –

Payback teams are being mobilised throughout the county on highway clearing and cleaning tasks in low risk areas. Where volumes of green waste are high, part of the allocated budget is being identified to fund designated skips and disposal costs.

Managing Demand

Reactive Works –

During March and April, pot hole gang resources were significantly increased to deal with the high volume of pot holes being reported. The peak has declined over the past two months to more typical levels for the time of year,

Despite the increased demand, response times remained high at over 97%.

A task group was established in May to look at the increasing number of safety defect repairs and to review, and where considered appropriate, recommend changes in our approach to reactive works.

A number of quick wins have been identified, which through a change of policy and/or procedure should allow more effective and efficient operation in the longer term.