

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ROADS

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

October 2001

IMPROVEMENT PLAN
THE CONTEXT SET BY THE CABINET

EXTRACT OF CABINET MINUTES – 10 SEPTEMBER 2001

4 Best Value Review of Roads

The Cabinet received a report which introduced and attached the recently completed Best Value Review of Roads and the recently completed draft Improvement Plan. The report had been produced taking account of comments received from the Cabinet on the previous report submitted, which it had been felt received insufficient attention to the 'compare and challenge' elements of Best Value.

It was reported that compared with South East counties the condition of Buckinghamshire's roads was significantly below the average. Street Lighting however was above the average. The cost comparison showed that, taking account of the high traffic levels, the County was in a mid-way position, with some examples of good practice and evidence of tight budgetary control on maintenance.

It was noted that consultation via MORI had shown that the public were more satisfied with the condition of roads and pavements and that consultation would be further improved via the Local Committees. Areas for improvement highlighted included a need to better target existing resources, a revision of contracts to eliminate weaknesses and links between the operational strategy and the financial strategy required improvement.

Resolved

- 1 The level of resources for highway maintenance be considered by the Council each year as part of its service planning and budget making process where the relative priority between achieving objectives in all service areas can be considered.**
- 2 Within the resources that are likely to be available over the next 5 years, the Council will aim to achieve the average performance for South East Counties in relation to the quality of roads maintenance.**
- 3 The Head of Transportation is requested to explore alternative ways of increasing the resources for highway maintenance, for example, through external bidding mechanisms, the Local Transport Plan, other national challenge funding mechanisms, the use of unsupported Credit Approvals and partnerships with other Councils.**

- 4 **The Head of Transportation should bring forward proposals for a greater targeting of the resources available on the non-principal road network.**
- 5 **The Head of Transportation is requested to identify and implement those areas for improvement which can be met from within existing budgets.**
- 6 **The Improvement Plan should be finalised by the Cabinet Member in the light of these recommendations and submitted to the Deputy Leader for approval.**

Notes

1. The majority of the actions listed beneath each of the nine Improvement Objectives require varying degrees of staff time. However staff time has only been identified as a *resource implication* where this cannot be accommodated within existing staffing levels i.e. without significant disruption to other work and where additional staff resources might be necessary.
2. United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS) surveys are necessary to enable structural maintenance priorities and BVPI performance to be established.

Improvement objective 1

The Council shall ensure the decisions to award the Professional Services Consultancy and Term Maintenance Contracts are based upon the track record, approach and commitment of the Consultant and Contractor towards partnering, mutual support and continuous improvement. This will be followed by:

- A review of the structures and line management responsibilities/relationships of the Headquarters Contracts and Maintenance Support Team and the Area Office Maintenance Teams - by December 2001 and implementation of any changes before April 2002.
- Implementation of a series of facilitated workshops for the Client, Consultant and Contractor commencing in 2002 to ensure partnering is fully embraced and part of normal working arrangements by April 2003.
- Regular and frequent performance and partnering review meetings.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall develop contracts that are firmly based upon the principles of partnering, mutual support and continuous improvement – by September 2001.	New contracts out to Tender by September 2001. Contracts to reflect partnership approach, rejecting prescriptive approach. Contract award January 2002.	Potential increase in rates for work (possibly up to 20%) – potentially meaning less work carried out (if budgets cannot be increased). Partnering and mutual support will potentially produce savings that could offset the increase in rates for work (and deliver Best Value).
The Head of Transportation shall ensure the decision to award the new contracts in January 2002 is based upon the track record, approach and commitment of the favoured consultant and contractor towards partnering, mutual support and continuous improvement.	Report to Cabinet Member/Strategic Manager (Planning and Transportation) - re contract award.	As above
The Head of Transportation shall complete a review of the structures and line management responsibilities/relationships of the Headquarters Contracts and Maintenance Support Team and the Area Office Maintenance Teams - by December 2001 and implements any changes before April 2002.	Proposals for new structures. New structures in place before commencement of new contracts in April 2002.	Additional staff FTE's in the Contracts Support/ Maintenance Team. Increase in Pay Range for staff with more responsibility. Co-location with consultant or alternatively developing more flexible ways of working. (Costs associated with the above could be at the expense of works programmes).

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall implement a series of facilitated workshops for client, consultant and contractor staff commencing in 2002, to ensure partnering is fully embraced and part of normal working arrangements - by April 2003.	A timetable of workshops. Strong evidence of partnering and mutual support being part of normal working practices by April 2003. Service improvements. Strategic Managers report to Cabinet Member (P&T) by April 2003.	Up to £15,000 for facilitated workshops.
The Head of Transportation shall establish, in conjunction with the consultant and contractor by April 2002, the frequency of performance and partnering review meetings.	A timetable of review meetings. Evidence that partnering and mutual support part is part of normal working practices by April 2003.	
The Head of Transportation shall review the roles, responsibilities, monitoring and reporting duties of the Highways and Bridges Engineering Teams and Lighting Client - before April 2002.	Responsive and fully functioning teams. Clear contract monitoring/reporting framework for staff to follow.	Changes to team structures. Additional ITS Client support post.
The Head of Transportation shall by December 2002 identify and implement those areas for improvement associated with the Consultancy and Maintenance Contracts (through partnering) that can be met from within existing budgets.	Report to Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation and Strategic Manager (P&T).	Potential improvements at minimal cost.

Improvement Objective 2

The Councils' annual Service Planning and budget making processes shall consider the level of funding necessary to address road, lighting and bridge maintenance, and the relative priority between achieving objectives in all service areas. This will include developing strategies to improve conditions over the life of the Improvement Plan that are in line with the strategies contained in the LTP and Service Aim 10 of the Local Performance Plan. Any potential benefits likely to accrue from the new Professional Services Consultancy and Maintenance Contracts will form part of the overall strategy.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Cabinet Member (P&T) and Head of Transportation shall present to Cabinet, annually, revenue and capital funding needs for road, lighting and bridge maintenance and inspections - as part of the Service Planning and budget making process. This will include an assessment of the relative priority between achieving objectives across the Transportation Service area.	Report to Cabinet. Increase in road, lighting and bridge maintenance works. Bridge inspections to national standards. Completion of a condition survey of the lamp column stock. Accelerated programme of UKPMS data collection. Improvement in Services.	Potential increase in revenue and capital funding for road, lighting and bridge maintenance. Potential re-prioritisation of spending across the Services, including any new sources of funding. Supplementary LTP bids. Staff, Consultant and Contractor resources to deliver works.
The Head of Transportation shall explore alternative ways of increasing the resources for highway maintenance before August 2002. (for example, through external bidding mechanisms, the Local Transport Plan, other national funding mechanisms, the use of unsupported Credit Approvals and partnerships with other Councils).	New and innovative sources of funding for highway maintenance.	Potential increase in capital funding for highway maintenance – coming from new and innovative sources of funding. Supplementary LTP bids. Staff, Consultant and Contractor resources to deliver works.
The Head of Transportation shall develop for Cabinet consideration before August 2002, a maintenance strategy for roads, lighting and bridges that will deliver targeted improvements during the period up to 2005/06 and beyond.	Report to Cabinet. A strategy for maintenance of roads, lighting and bridges. Improvement in Local and BVPI performance data.	Staff time to develop strategy and report to Cabinet. Potential increase in revenue and capital funding for roads, lighting and bridges. Re-targeting of finance available including any new sources of funding.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall consider the feasibility and implications of funding lighting improvements from the Local Transport Plan capital allocation in 2002/03.	Report to Cabinet Member (P&T). Continuation of programme of lighting improvements/repairs.	Reallocation of Local Transport Plan funding. Reduction in spending upon other elements of LTP strategy.
The Head of Transportation shall review annually, road condition Local and BVPI targets in light of budget allocations and road condition data - with the aim of working towards average performance compared with South Eastern Region Authorities by 2005/06.	Improvement in Local and BVPI 96, 97 and 105 performance.	Review of strategy and development of new funding priorities. Potential increase in road maintenance funding. Staff time to review Local and BVPI performance/targets. Staff, Consultant and Contractor resources to deliver works.
The Head of Transportation shall by December 2002 identify and implement those areas for improvement across the Transportation Service area that can be met from within existing budgets.	Report to Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation and Strategic Manager (P&T).	Potential improvements at minimal cost.

Improvement Objective 3

The Council shall encourage proposals that will move the Council towards the average performance for South East Counties in relation to BVPI 96 (condition of Principal Roads) over the life of the Improvement Plan (i.e. 5 years) (see table 3) and in line with Service Aim 10 of the Local Performance Plan, and towards upper quartile in the longer term.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall ensure the Principal Road maintenance programme is developed annually as determined by UKPMS and Deflectograph priorities and is consistent with Local Transport Plan strategy.	Annual programme of maintenance works. Continued financial support from DTLR. Improvement in BVPI 96.	Continuation of LTP capital allocations from DTLR. Revenue to support capital borrowing. Consultancy fees for data collection.
The Head of Transportation shall ensure the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report to DTLR sets out up to date Principal Road maintenance funding requirements necessary to achieve the LTP road maintenance strategy and Local/BVPI targets.	Annual LTP Progress Report. Continued financial support from DTLR. Allocation of additional funding arising from supplementary bids. Improvement in BVPI 96.	Continuation of LTP capital allocations from DTLR. Revenue to support capital borrowing. Increased allocations in line with supplementary bids. Reallocation of resources to provide dedicated staff to monitor progress with Local and BVPI targets.

Improvement Objective 4

The Council shall encourage a strategy aimed to achieve a targeted improvement in the condition of the Non – Principal Road network during the life of the Improvement Plan and beyond - as measured by BVPI 97.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall establish adequate BVPI 97 performance data by February 2002 and thereafter the level of funding necessary to prevent further decline in the condition of Non – Principal Roads and achieve average performance over the life of the Improvement plan.	Report to Cabinet. BVPI 97 performance data.	Potential increase in revenue and capital funding for Non – Principal Road maintenance. Increase in capital funding for highway maintenance – coming from new and innovative sources of funding. Reallocation of resources to provide dedicated staff to monitor progress with Local and BVPI targets.
The Head of Transportation shall develop for Cabinet consideration before August 2002, a strategy for the Non – Principal Road network that will deliver targeted maintenance work aimed to improve Local targets and BVPI 97 during the period up to 2005/06 and beyond.	Report to Cabinet. A strategy for targeted maintenance of the Non – Principal Road network. Improvement in Local and BVPI 97 performance data. Public aware of targeted strategy and giving positive feedback.	Staff time to develop strategy and report to Cabinet. Potential increase and/or re-prioritisation in revenue and capital funding for targeted maintenance of the Non – Principal Road network. Increase in capital funding for highway maintenance – coming from new and innovative sources of funding.
The Head of Transportation shall carry out a risk assessment of road maintenance needs and priorities as part of developing the targeted maintenance strategy.	Risk assessments.	Staff time

Improvement Objective 5

The Council shall encourage a review the current practices in collecting and calculating data, which produces Best Value Performance Indicators, and to participate in any national debate concerning the relevance to the Transportation Service of these Performance Indicators.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall clarify with DTLR the method of calculating/reporting all Roads BVPI's and then review internal procedures - before April 2002. This will include participation in regional/national Benchmarking Groups, where possible.	Written procedures for data collection/reporting. Ability to report Roads BVPI's consistent with national methodology. Identification of Best Practice through Benchmarking Groups. Improvement in BVPI's.	Staff time to participate in Benchmarking Groups. Reallocation of resources to provide dedicated staff to monitor progress with Local and BVPI targets.
The Head of Transportation shall review UKPMS data collection needs by December 2001 and ensure data collection is geared to enable maintenance strategies to be pursued.	Rolling programme of UKPMS data collection. Ability to calculate Local and BVPI performance data over 5 -year period.	Staff time to produce/monitor data collection and to set up GIS based road network database. Consultancy fees to carry out surveys.
The Head of Transportation shall consider establishing a call centre approach at the Wycombe and Winslow offices (already operating at Beaconsfield) before April 2002 – to assist with reporting BVPI 105.	Increased efficiency. Positive feedback from customer surveys.	Staff training.
The Head of Transportation and Maintenance Contractor shall review before July 2002, the methods of dealing with reports of dangerous damage to roads to achieve improvements in data recording/reporting, response times and hence improvement in BVPI 105.	Written procedures for data collection reporting. Ability to produce data and report BVPI 105. Ability to transfer data electronically to and from Maintenance Contractor. Improvement in BVPI 105.	

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall review maintenance policies and procedures in light of the recommendations of the new Highway Maintenance Code of Practice - before summer 2002.	Report to Cabinet Member (P&T). Programme of remedial action relating to changes in policy and procedures.	Staff and Consultancy time to review the Code of Practice. Staff time to produce new policies. Possible road maintenance funding implications to deliver changes in policy.

Improvement Objective 6

The Council shall phase in a programme of lamp column identification to include who owns the column and contact telephone number in order to assist inspections and public awareness.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Head of Transportation shall establish with the new ITS Consultant, a programme of lamp column identification – to be implemented over a 3-year period as part of the bulk lamp changes and before 2005/06.	Each lamp column throughout the County is marked with the owners name and address and contact telephone number. Improved efficiency in rectifying faulty lamp columns.	Contractor resources to deliver programme over a three-year period – as part of the bulk lamp changes.
The Head of Transportation shall agree with the Cabinet Member (P&T) the way in which lamp columns will be marked and the wording used.	Report to Cabinet Member (P&T).	
The Head of Transportation shall, during 2002/03, encourage Parish and Town Councils to adopt a similar approach for their lamp columns.	Report to Local Committees in 2002/03.	

Improvement Objective 7

The Council shall carry out a cross cutting audit of safer communities, health and highway issues so that improvements can be made that benefit the community.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Environment of Buckinghamshire' shall establish within its work programme for 2002/03 a cross cutting audit of safer communities, health and highway issues and that the findings of the Committee are reported to the Cabinet before the end of 2002/03.	Scrutiny Committee forward work programme. Final report and recommendations to Cabinet.	Staff and member time across affected service divisions.
The Head of Planning (Transport Strategy Team) shall carry out a survey of crime and fear of crime on the transport network during 2001/02.	Completed survey. Targeted improvements (e.g. street lighting).	LTP capital allocations to target improvements.

Improvement Objective 8

The Council shall consider ways to further enhance our responsiveness to the public and our partners, e.g. District Councils, including the possibility of allocating further resources for use in local priorities.

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Cabinet Member (P & T) and Head of Transportation shall carry out a review of public consultation to address the perception that the Council does not listen, and also considers the relationship between the County and District Councils on Transportation and Highway matters – before December 2003.	Report and recommendations to Cabinet.	Staff and member time.
The Cabinet Member (P&T) and the Head of Transportation shall present to the January and/or April 2002 Local Committees a report to generate debate about the prospect of local Parish and Town Councils, in conjunction with the local member, becoming more involved with the decision making process about how an element of the routine maintenance budget should be allocated to their area.	Report and outcome of January Committees. Enhanced local decision-making. Enhanced attention to local priorities. Positive feedback from Local Committees.	Pressure on revenue budgets.
The Local Area Co-ordinators shall continue to support elected members with developing their representational role in their local area.	Regular local meetings with members. Joint problem solving with Parish Councils.	
The Strategic Manager (Planning and Transportation) shall review the outcome of encouraging greater public involvement with the Local Committees by December 2002.	Report to Cabinet Member (P & T) and Cabinet - (update on Scrutiny Committee Report).	

Improvement Objective 9

The Council shall ensure the outstanding recommendations from the Root and Branch Reviews are progressed (GIS Developments, Area Presence and Best Practice).

Action	Measures	Resources Implications
The Cabinet Member (P&T) shall annually review the progress of the former Root and Branch Review recommendations.	Annual report by the Head of Transportation and Cabinet Member (P&T) to the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and possibly Cabinet. Ongoing service improvements.	Potential resource investment - if required by further recommendations.
The Strategic Manager (Planning and Transportation) and Head of Transportation shall continue to monitor the implementation of GIS roads related projects to ensure practical completion by March 2003.	Fully operational/integrated Roads based GIS. Efficient service delivery.	Systems and set up costs. Staff training costs. Data collection. Ongoing support costs.
The Strategic Manager (Planning and Transportation) shall review accommodation levels - including the location of the Beaconsfield Area Office before December 2002.	Report to Cabinet Members (Planning and Transportation) and (Resources).	Relocation of the Beaconsfield office would release a valuable asset that could be used to offset relocation costs.
The Head of Transportation shall review the procedures for cascading/implementing Best Practice in the Traffic Management and Traffic Safety and Systems Groups before December 2002.	Clear simple process in place, best practice demonstrably put into practice by staff.	