



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	TfB Update
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Purpose of Agenda Item

Following an update on the TfB Progress at the Environmental, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee in April 2016 Members requested an update on the performance of the service delivered by Ringway Jacobs during the past 12 months. This report provides members with an update on TfB's progress during this period.

Background

At the last Select Committee, Members were advised that continued improvement has been made in the delivery of the service, with the successful delivery of 2016/17 service plan. Members did however highlight a number of areas where the delivery of the service had not met expectations, and that action was urgently required to address these.

Members also had concerns with regard to the ongoing interim staff arrangements have been largely addressed with the appointment of permanent staff within the Client team.

Summary

The delivery of the TfB service continues to be undertaken largely in accordance with BCC expectations and requirements, and shows continued signs of improvements in many areas.

The service has generally met the Council's strategic objectives, with service visibility increasing as the Confirm system data and interrogation tools mature. A much greater proportion of the service information is now shared collaboratively with the client teams through a shared portal, allowing more focus on driving required quality improvements in some service areas.



The client team continue to focus TfB on demonstrating value for money, service quality, improved customer experience, and innovation, which will be key to shaping the service in 2017/18.

Contract Governance

The Council's overall governance of Ringway Jacobs has been strengthened, with the arrival of Mark Averill (Head of Highways) and Mark Kemp (Director, Growth, Strategy and Highways). The regularised Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) meeting structure has been reviewed and minor adjustments made to ensure service issues are being addressed.

Service visibility has improved through 2016, as capital improvement and routine maintenance programmes are in place and are being shared with the Client team to provide robust challenge where required. Performance dashboards (using our Confirm work and asset management system) are in place for most service areas, however work is still required to address street lighting and gully cleaning service issues which have been criticised by Members over this several months. Both service areas have action plans in place to address this.

The TfB meetings continue to interface effectively with the Transport Environment Economy Business Unit (TEE) governance structure and the Cabinet Member's own Portfolio Board, and have been instrumental in ensure the service remains within the Council's budgets.

Medium Term Financial Plan

The Service continues respond to the Council's medium term budget objectives as set out by the MTFP. Service efficiencies have been realised and processes challenged and tested in some key savings areas. This has been informed by evidence provided through Confirm. While service reductions have been put in place, the visibility and adherence to programme, particularly grass cutting, has not resulted in a significant increase in resident's complaints.

The client team will be working with Ringway Jacobs as part of the development of the 2017/18 Annual Plan to ensure the MTFP challenges are being incorporated and managed.

Customer Communication

With reference to the Council's over-arching customer strategy of self-help through digitalisation, a number of key customer interface improvements with the services TfB provide have recently been implemented.

Customer updates on enquiry progress is now linked to real-time status changes in the work management system, Confirm. The feedback received so far has been largely positive, with minor teething problems and training issues being addressed as required.



The process of respond to TfB customer complaints has also improved. The creation of the Customer Compliance Officers within each area as reduced the number of complaints being received and improved the response times to complaints, with most being responded within the required 28 day target.

TfB continue to work closely with BCC's contact centre team to understand the enquiry volumes and mix. Improvements are still required to ensure enquiries that relate to unnecessary clarification (21%), or progress chasing (11%) are being reduced.

The Capital Maintenance Programme

A total of 384 individual schemes (including 65 plan-and-patch locations) are planned for 2016/17, of which 303 have been completed to date. All have been monitored by the Client's supervision team.

The capital drainage improvement programme is now addressing long outstanding localised flooding issues across the County. 18 of the 30 schemes planned for 2016/17 have been completed, again under the supervision of the Client's supervision team. A further 53 schemes have been identified, through liaison with TfB's on-street teams, and will form the basis of a rolling programme of work.

The Buckingham to Winslow cycle scheme, part of BCC's engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership is progressing in line with the agreed programme, and is expected to open in the New Year.

Area Schemes

Improvements in the communication of area schemes, particularly the provision of quotations to parishes and districts, have been put in place and consequently reduced the number of customer complaints.

Further improvements have also been made in the recording of scheme changes and the resulting cost impact. The perception this service is expensive continues to be subject to challenges by the Client team to ensure the costs charged are reasonable.

Routine and Reactive Maintenance Works

This service area has again been largely delivered to programme, however issues have been identified with the quality of some gully cleaning and some pothole repairs, as both are highly reactive services. An improvement plan is in place to address these concerns over the next few months, and is being closely monitored by the Client team.

The Service continues to work collaboratively with the devolution project team and devolved parishes to clarify minor obligation issues. No significant issues have been identified

through the period, as the devolved parishes have undertaken the work in line with their agreements. This arrangement is now a business as usual operation within the TfB service.

Street Lighting

Actions to address the findings of the internal audit on the 3 year replacement programme of the old orange sodium street lights with LEDs on the county's A and B roads are largely complete. Further reviews are being undertaken to ensure the Council have received value for money.

The street lighting asset has been uploaded into the asset database, Confirm. Submissions have been made to the district network operator to receive street lighting energy cost rebates.

There are an unacceptably high number of outstanding responses to historical lighting enquiries. Process changes that increase the visibility of the asset service status have been developed and will be in place within the next quarter. This is expected to improve response times and address the backlog of outstanding work.

Winter Maintenance

Ringway Jacobs has reviewed the winter maintenance fleet and procured 5 new gritters. The remaining gritter fleet have now been refurbished which will ensure the resilience of this service until at least 2023.

The extent of the gritted highway network will remain unchanged for the 2016/17 winter season, and will be reviewed with the introduction of the new network hierarchy.

Asset Management

This area of the Service continues to progress towards asset management principles aligned with the requirements of the Department for Transport (DfT) highway maintenance funding arrangements. This requires Councils to adopt asset management as a core strategy to their highway maintenance programmes, and has been used to advise the Council's medium term financial planning. The required level as set out by the DfT has been achieved for this funding year and plans are in place to reach the next level by 2018/19.

The majority of the highway capital improvement schemes, agreed with Members as part of the 3 year rolling programme of work, have been successfully delivered and improvements are event in the completion of follow up works (i.e. white lining, raising iron work).

Progress has also been made in the use of Confirm as a key tool to support the asset strategy, with the finalisation of the network hierarchy, and the input of a number of key asset groups.

Corporate Social Responsibility

TfB are working closely with the local charity PACE by undertaking fundraising activities events. PACE is a charity that provides intensive education and therapy for children with cerebral palsy through two specifically designed facilities both located in Aylesbury. Over £1,400 has been raised so far, with further events planned to the end of the financial year.