

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting14th May 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Scrutiny Review of Highway Network Management

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented the findings of the Regeneration & Transport Select Committee following a review into Highways Network Management, which took place between July 2008 and March 2009. The Committee considered evidence covering several key areas which, collectively, contribute towards the overall maintenance and operation of the Council's highway network, which covered roads and pavements maintenance. These included the Council's inspection and maintenance regime, finance, risk and insurance and working relationship with the utilities companies. The Committee considered evidence arising from residents' perceptions and experiences of the service and it also consulted with fellow Members and Parish and Town Councils. The review noted the high performance and satisfaction of highways, and the many areas of good practice in Stockton Borough.

It was noted that following consideration of the recommendations by Cabinet an Action Plan would be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations would be implemented, detailing officers responsible for action and timescales.

RESOLVED that: -

1. Highways officers issue Roadworks Reports to Ward, Parish and Town Council Members on a timely basis thereby ensuring Members are adequately briefed on highways schemes affecting their local area, and are able to provide suitable feedback to local residents as and when required.

2. Ward, Parish and Town Council Members are given the opportunity to accompany highways officers undertaking highway inspections or site specific inspections.

3. To enable Members make 'right first time' contact with the relevant service area, Members are provided with relevant contact details showing

the best way to report defects (e.g. through the service area's generic email address).

4. Ward, Parish and Town Council Members reporting defects to highways officers are provided with adequate and timely feedback.

5. Highway Officers produce an annual report on the performance of Utility companies operating in the highway. The report should include numbers of sample and third party inspections undertaken, defective repairs, statutory notices issued and a summary account of income generated e.g. from fines.

6. Networks are developed with other highways authorities in the Tees Valley area and regionally to further enhance working relationships, share benchmarking data and to promote and disseminate best practice.

7. Members are kept fully up to date on highways policy through a programme that places highways policy documents on the Forward Plan, followed by Cabinet approval, and ensures copies of all Cabinet approved plans and strategies relating to the management and maintenance of the highway network are provided in the Members' library and that all new and updated versions are similarly made available.

8. The development of a fully integrated ICT Highway Asset Management system be investigated and procured to provide best value for the delivery of the highway service. This should include hand held devices for recording highway condition and raising repair orders to allow for accurate, robust and reliable management information systems.

9. Briefing notes on the following highway-related subjects are provided in the Members' library and on the Council's intranet:

- A summary of the policy on highway repairs together with the criteria used to determine carriageway and footway maintenance and the priorities for repair.
- The procedures for recording, processing and defending insurance claims received from members of the public as a result of damage to vehicles arising from road defects and injury claims resulting from falls on footpaths.

These briefing notes will also help inform Members when responding to residents' questions and concerns raised in Ward surgeries.

10. Residents are provided with suitable information so they know who to contact if they are having problems with roads or pavements.

11. Opportunities to publicise and promote the Council's performance on highways are maximised through a series of positive news articles in

Stockton News and on the Council website.

12. Officers explore the development of web-based systems (including those featuring web mapping) to report highways defects by Members and the general public, ensuring the system selected is both user friendly and easy to navigate.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The request to carry out this review had first been suggested by Members in 2008 in determining the areas to be considered for scrutiny. As a result, the Executive Scrutiny Committee included this topic in its Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By Midnight, Friday, 22nd May

Proper Officer
19 May 2009