

Public Realm Integration Project

1. Public realm - Background to Current arrangements

- 1.1. Lancashire County Council has been responsible for the delivery of all highway related functions since Local Government Reorganisation in 1974.
- 1.2. At that time, District and Borough Councils within the county were offered an Agency Agreement whereby the district Council carried out various functions as highway authority including the maintenance of defined roads in their area. - described as 'core areas'. Certain District Councils declined to take on any highways maintenance responsibilities but did carry out other highway functions, whilst others were happy to agree to the more comprehensive Agency agreement. This resulted in different levels of responsibility for service delivery across each district.
- 1.3. In 2003, the original Agency Agreements were terminated and replaced with a Lancashire Highways Partnership Agreement. This was, in turn, superseded by a Residual Highways Partnership in 2006. In both cases, the agency to carry out some highway functions were passed to the District Councils but delivery of most highway services reverted to the County Council; District Councils being responsible for street cleansing and some associated services.
- 1.4. In 2009, following further consultation, a street services agreement was proposed to the District and Borough Councils that outlined the division of services between Lancashire County Council and the District under a new agency agreement. At the time of writing, not all districts have signed their particular Street Services Agreement.
- 1.5. Highways and Environmental Management currently manage service Delivery for public realm works through three area offices as follows:

Area	North	South	East
Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fylde • Lancaster • Wyre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorley • Preston • South Ribble • West Lancashire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnley • Hyndburn • Pendle • Ribble Valley • Rossendale
• Population	• 312747	• 442331	• 379898
• Road length (kms)	• 2063	• 2343	• 2173
• Street lights and lit signs	• 42712	• 71256	• 50392
• Gullies	• 82095	• 102034	• 97656
• Structures	• 1782	• 1062	• 1693

The term Road above refers to publicly maintainable vehicular highways

2. Public Realm - Differing Perspectives and Focus

- 2.1. One of the main duties of Lancashire County Council, as highway authority, is to maintain the adopted highway network in a safe condition meeting both statutory

requirements and the needs of highway users. The highway authority also has power to improve the highway network.

- 2.2. The focus on safety, network maintenance and network enhancement is based on the statutory duty placed on the County as the Highway Authority and the professional practice of the highway engineers employed by the County. Consequently, the highways teams within the County Council see the main purpose of a highway as a means of providing a safe passage for the public traffic entitled to use it.
- 2.3. The priorities for members and officers within the District councils are different and their view of the importance of the highway is seen in terms of defining their sense of place and of giving them an identity. For the District Council, vehicular roads and streets:
 - are the places on which their residents live, work and meet
 - give a sense of identity to the towns, villages and locality
 - become enablers to economic development
 - attract visitors and tourists
 - are places on which retail outlets are developed
- 2.4. This fundamental difference in perspective on the purpose of the highway leads to differing priorities and nowhere is this more pronounced than in the area of the public realm. The County Council takes the view that the surface of publicly maintainable highways vest in the Council, and it is responsible for, the infrastructure; the district council's take the view that they own the streets and the sense of place created by the public realm.
- 2.5. An example of the differing perspectives lies in the cutting of grass verges. The County Council takes the view that grass at the side of the road should be cut to safe levels – on average 5 times per year. District Council's take the view that there should be an increase in the number of annual cuts to enhance the image of the district. As a result, they may be looking to cut the verges up to 14 times per year.
- 2.6. A further example can be seen in relation to planned public realm improvement schemes. The County Council's design team will give primary consideration to the safety and functionality of the highway; aesthetics, the choice of paving materials and street furniture will take a lesser priority in the design phase. These elements, however, are key to the district council in creating an improved sense of place.
- 2.7. These differing viewpoints lead to budgetary and decision making tensions between County and District. Evidence of this can be observed in the agenda items of the Lancashire Locals groups, the exchange of views between elected members and correspondence and discussions between officers at both County and District levels.
- 2.8. The pilot programme in South Ribble looked at a more integrated approach to working on the public realm and was successful in integrating both service delivery, a one team approach and improved customer focus.

3. Issues with the existing arrangements

- 3.1. As a result of differences in agreements over many years (i.e. Agency, Highways partnership, and residual partnership) service delivery in the public realm is fragmented and inconsistent. There is frequently confusion about service delivery and responsibility for services and geographic areas of land. This leads to tensions between the County Council and the District Councils at both member and officer level.
- 3.2. The organisational structure within the Environment Directorate and Highway Environmental Management in particular, is confusing. For instance, the roles between the commissioning and service delivery functions are unclear and this leads to confusion in both County Council and District colleagues over roles and responsibilities. The proposed restructure of the Directorate will go some way to alleviate these issues.
- 3.3. There is a disjoint between the strategy for Highways developed within the Highway and Environmental team; the Area Management; the operational delivery supplied by Lancashire County Engineering Services; and the needs of the District and Borough councils. This is primarily caused by the current structure, the lack of role clarity and accountability and inadequate performance management mechanisms.
- 3.4. There are few formal meetings, forums, or mechanisms between County Council and District officers for the exchange of views or ideas on highway or public realm matters and this leads to frustration, inertia and wasted time. In preparing this plan, District council officer gave clear views that they wanted more integration with the County on public realm matters.
- 3.5. The recent Place Survey results indicate that the customer places a high score on the repair and maintenance of the highway, clean streets and a reduction in traffic congestion. There is dissatisfaction with roads and pavements with over 35% of respondents believing that this area needed the most improvement. This view was spread across the County which indicates wide dissatisfaction, in varying degree, with the current arrangements
- 3.6. There is frustration and confusion over customer contact arrangements with customers having different numbers to ring for District and County council services and this needs to be addressed. Customer contact arrangements between the County and District Councils will need to be more integrated as customers seek a one team approach.
- 3.7. The public realm is important in the economic life of the County, particularly in the area of tourism. Local authorities, the County included, are major providers of visitor services but the lack of joined up processes, in relation to the public realm, impairs the effectiveness of the overall strategy. Tourism, as a discretionary activity, is at a real risk of being squeezed in harsher financial climates by the need to deliver statutory services with reduced budgets. This can be reduced, or even avoided, in Lancashire by making savings and efficiencies in the current operation and the way that services are delivered.

4. Drivers for change

- 4.1. Strong evidence exists from surveys, comments and complaints that the public, elected Members and officers at both County and District level want a more integrated approach to public realm works. In preparing this plan, officers talked openly about their being a need for “a one team approach’, more “joined up and integrated services’ and ‘joint service provision with retained local democracy”.
- 4.2. There are over 180 parish and town councils in Lancashire covering both rural and urban areas. Parish councils are playing an increasing role in the development of their localities and issues relating to the public realm are high on their list of priorities. The public realm project will engage with the Parish councils through existing channels to ensure that their representations and views are incorporated.
- 4.3. More joined-up, efficient service delivery in two-tier authorities was clearly outlined by Central Government in “Strong and Prosperous Communities - the Local Government White Paper” of 2006. This paper is clear that councils working under two tier arrangements should aim to achieve unified service delivery models with service users having no need to understand whether the county, district or other service provider is responsible. Central arguments of the White paper centre on a stronger leadership for place-shaping at both county and district level and more flexibility to respond to local needs and local priorities so that local people have a say in the way services are delivered.

5. Public Realm Integration Project

- 5.1. For the reasons outlined in the previous sections we recommend a Public Realm Integration Project that builds on the success of the South Ribble Pilot and will identify the arrangements of working appropriate with each District Council to prepare to deliver a more integrated service based upon a district council footprint.

6. Public Realm Strategy

- 6.1. The Project will be defined by a Public Realm Strategy which will provide clear direction on:
 - The scope of Integration and delivery of public realm services
 - Determine what will be achieved and how
 - Project objectives and priorities
 - Timescales and achievability
- 6.2. The strategy will be developed during Phase 1 of the Project and will adopt a “One Team” approach encompassing service delivery by County, Districts, Parishes and external providers.
- 6.3. The Public Realm Strategy will be a dynamic document and as phases 2, 3 and 4 of the Public Realm Project commence the Public Realm Strategy will be developed and updated.

7. Public Realm Agreements

- 7.1. The outcome of the project will result in a separate District Public Realm Agreement with each District Council. The Public Realm Agreements will supersede the Residual Services Agreement or the Street Services Agreement, which ever is in place.

8. Potential Benefits of the Public Realm Integration Project

- 8.1. The pilot project in South Ribble showed that improved co-ordination across a range of Highway, transport and environmental activities resulted in more efficient and customer focused service. In addition, working relationships and understanding between officers at County and District level were improved as traditional cultural barriers were removed.
- 8.2. Whilst customer satisfaction was not measured specifically during the South Ribble pilot, it is likely that a more integrated approach will positively impact on customer perception. Particularly in areas that currently score low on satisfaction levels.
- 8.3. There is potential for reducing the amount of non added value activities through the consolidation and integration of some of the services. Estimates are difficult to quantify at this stage until more detailed analysis of processes are available and directorate restructuring is finalised.
- 8.4. A more collaborative approach to procurement with the District Councils would realise significant savings. At the moment, the benefits of combined procurement and the economies of scale are not being achieved by either the County or the Districts.
- 8.5. Organising inspection regimes around clearer defined local areas, with multi-disciplinary teams working towards common outcomes would focus on local needs and enhance community engagement.
- 8.6. Moving to a more locally based service will reduce the travel distance for vehicles and machinery and will have a positive impact on carbon emissions and fuel costs.
- 8.7. Delivering the project through the area offices will increase the dialogue, understanding and integration of the County and District councils on Public Realm matters.

9. Member, Officer and Customer Engagement

- 9.1. The project will have regular engagement, communication and dialogue with elected members at County, District and Parish level. This will be done through a mixture of formal reporting, one to one and collective meetings and defined links to the Lancashire Locals, MAA clusters and other local committees.
- 9.2. The Public Realm Integration Project will act as a catalyst for public opinion on public realm issues and will map customer perception and satisfaction levels in each locality prior to the start of the project. Results will be baseline mapped

prior to the start of the project and periodically tested against this base. This will give counties and districts early indication of customer perception and satisfaction levels and mechanisms for early intervention.

- 9.3. County and District officers will be engaged in the project through workshops and one to one meetings. The Public Realm Integration project will act as a vehicle for debate at officer level and for improved integration between the County Council officers and the District and Parish Councils and the Highways Area offices. The Project team is identified below

10. The Project - Phases and Tasks

- 10.1. The project sets out the services and functions which require consideration to achieve an integrated approach to the development of Public Realm strategies.
- 10.2. The project is divided into 4 Phases;
- Phase 1 - Service delivery – Clean and Green activities
 - Phase 2 - Service delivery - Wider aspects of public realm integration
 - Phase 3 - Operational Management - Integrated working with Communities
 - Phase 4 - Strategic Management and Policy Decisions
- 10.3. Each Phase will be rolled out across all 12 Districts in three work streams working concurrently. To further integrate the working of the Environmental Area Offices with the District and Parish councils, the work streams will be organised around the area office structure.

For Phase one this would be

- Workstream 1 - **South Ribble, Wyre, Chorley, Ribble Valley, Rossendale**
- Workstream 2 - **Lancaster, Preston, Pendle, Hyndburn**
- Workstream 3 - **Fylde, West Lancashire, Burnley**

- 10.4. The district order for phases two, three and four will be determined on completion of Phase 1 and will rotate the order of approach for area implementation.
- 10.5. As part of each phase reviews will be carried out to identify the most efficient and effective method of service integration. This will include reviews, analysis and potential redesign of:
- Decision making and agreements
 - Budgets and funding
 - Risks and Liabilities
 - Service Specification
 - Customer Contact Arrangements
 - Processes
 - Communication
 - Service Specifications
 - Priorities
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Technical capability
 - Logistics

- 10.6. A complete suite of data for the purpose of benefit analysis will be baselined at the start of the project and progress will be measured against this data. These data sets will include comprehensive data on:
- Operational performance
 - Resources
 - Budgets
 - Customer Satisfaction

11. Phase 1 - Service delivery – Clean and Green activities

- 11.1. Progress has already been made in joining up mainly “green” services as part the Public Realm Pilot scheme in South Ribble Borough Council. To build on this success the Public Realm Project will initially focus on integrating the “Green” services and will look to build similar agreements with the remaining districts.
- 11.2. The model developed in the South Ribble pilot will be used as a blueprint for the roll out of “Clean & Green” activities in Phase One and the services and functions to be considered will be:
- Grass verge maintenance
 - Weed control
 - Tree & shrub maintenance
 - Leaf sweeping
 - Clearing wind blown sand
 - Enforcement of overhanging vegetation
- 11.3. The reviews will primarily focus on the potential transfer of services, budgets and resources between the County and District councils whilst also giving consideration to ensuring value for money is enhanced or at least retained.
- 11.4. Service standards will be reviewed and agreed acceptable standards will be a key feature of the way forward.
- 11.5. The Project team will look at risks, liabilities, contractual and HR issues as part of their remit and a complete range of options will be discussed with the District Councils.
- 11.6. A framework approach will be developed by the Project team in which District Councils can “opt in” on an area basis and will remain equally equitable to the County Council.

12. Phase 2 - Service delivery. Wider aspects of public realm integration

- 12.1. This phase will include the review of a wider range of services that are relevant to effective public realm management and are compatible with services delivered by all three council tiers – County, District and Parish. e.g. a consistent approach to the maintenance and management of signage and “street clutter”, especially in town centres.
- 12.2. The focus will be on areas of streetscene and public realm services that may benefit from more local knowledge, intervention or service delivery.
- 12.3. Services and functions for consideration in Phase 2 are:

- Removal of obstructions from the Highway
- Drainage repairs
- Gully cleansing
- Lengthsman scheme
- Signage (non-illuminated)
- Street furniture
- Public Conveniences

12.4. Reviews of each service activity will focus on:

- Current and future processes for service delivery
- Cost benefits of status quo and any recommended changes
- The benefits (or not) to the resident, business, visitor and local authorities of the County and District of delivering the services in a different manner.
- The feasibility or possibility of the transfer of services
- Impact on budgets and resources at county, district and parish levels
- Proposed service standards and outcomes

13. Phase 3 – Operational Management – More integrated working with Communities.

13.1. The focus for Phase 3 will be improving the way that the District and County engage with the communities and provide a safe and sustainable environment. This will include both District and County inspection regimes and enforcement activities.

13.2. Phase 3 will also consider how a co-ordinated approach to enforcement throughout each district for enforcement powers in relation to street cleansing, refuse, street trading, footway parking, builder's materials, abandoned vehicles, highway obstructions, fly posting and other associated legislation will improve the public realm.

13.3. The services and functions to be reviewed in this phase are;

- Inspection regimes
 - More District & community focused
 - Consideration of multi-function and multi skilled
 - Links to neighbourhood engagement teams
 - Inspection priorities & maintenance specifications
 - Streetscene audits
- Enforcement, Permits and Licences
 - Obstructions
 - Overhanging vegetation
 - Planning
 - Disabled access
 - On street activities
 - Permits and licences
 - Special events
 - TRO
- Highway Routine/Planned Maintenance
 - Specification
 - Co-ordination
 - Materials Palette

13.4. As in the previous phase, the Reviews will focus on feasibility, business case, impacts, service standards and service delivery.

14. Phase 4 – Strategic Services and Policy Decisions

14.1. Phase 4 will consider the whole street approach to Public Realm by improving the collaborations and communication on planning and development and providing the districts with the ability to make decisions on design, influence local schemes and have a say in where funding is spent.

14.2. By Phase 4 the project will have gained momentum and integration and we propose reviewing services with wider ranging implications for the county and communities e.g. parking and winter maintenance.

14.3. Service for review in this phase will include:

- **Planning & design**

- Improving local input into decisions
- Improved decision making (fast tracking)
- Design codes and materials pallets
- Mechanisms for early integration of planning and design in local schemes
- Improved communication between strategic functions, technical officers and the District
- More defined links and support of locality and master plans
- Visibility of forward planning, budgetary planning and future proofing public realm service across the county

- **Local funding – Options Appraisals**

- Section 106 & Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980
- Sponsorship and Advertising in the Public Realm

- **Parking**

- On street/Off street
- Residents Parking

- **Winter maintenance and related streetscene activities**

- **Lighting**

- Street Lighting
- Amenity lighting
- Public Building lighting
- Attachments
- Advertising

- **Public Rights of Way/Countryside services**

- Maintenance
- Improvements
- Shared information and asset management

- 14.4. Reviews will adopt the approach of reviews in previous phases but there will be more emphasis on feasibility studies, options appraisals and recommendations that may need to be considered by wider colleagues in the County Council.

15. Interface with other County Council Projects

- 15.1. A number of other initiatives and projects are currently ongoing in the County Council and the deliverables of some of these projects may have an impact on the scope and direction of the Public Realm Integration. Therefore, all outcomes from other related projects will be considered for inclusion in the recommendations that will be identified throughout the Public Realm Project lifecycle.

16. Project Governance

- 16.1. Project governance plays a vital role in the successful delivery of public sector change projects and is key to maintaining the links between elected members and officers, and between County and District Councils. Effective project governance provides strategic direction and ensures that the project is moving at the correct pace and with the right balance of control.

17. Lancashire Local Committees

- 17.1. The County Council has, in partnership with District Councils, established Lancashire Local Committees to strengthen policy making to reflect local needs and bring decision making on county functions closer to communities. Lancashire Local Committees also enhance engagement with parish and town councils.
- 17.2. The majority of discussions held at Lancashire Local Committees relates to public realm and highway issues and frequently include discussions on Traffic Regulation Orders, Traffic Calming Measures, 20 mph schemes and road safety issues.
- 17.3. It is imperative that the views of locally elected members are obtained on an integrated approach to service delivery. The Lancashire Local Committees and other locally elected groups will be kept informed on the direction and progress of the project and will have input into project direction.
- 17.4. An alternative option would be to include debate with meetings held by the MAA Clusters.

18. Project Roles and Responsibilities

18.1. Project Manager

- 18.2. The Project Manager will;
- Have overall management and co-ordination of the project.
 - Contribute to strategy, policy and procedure.
 - Manage senior relationships including those between Officers and Members.
 - Have budgetary control of the Project.
 - Monitor, and respond to, issues at the Project level

- Ensure that the benefits identified at the outset have been identified and realised

19. The Project team

- 19.1. Other project team members will be co-opted into the project as and when required by the Project Manager.
- 19.2. Some of the project activities will require full time project commitment for a defined period; others will require less input and management and can be achieved through agreed and defined project time.
- 19.3. Team member roles will vary depending on the specific focus of the project. Typically they might be to:
- Work with users to ensure the project meets business needs
 - Documentation and analysis of current and future processes/systems
 - Identification and mapping of information needs
 - Defining requirements for reporting and interfacing
 - Work with both County and District on identifying solutions and initiatives
 - Provide functional expertise in an administrative process

20. Risk and Issue Management

- 20.1. Risks and issues will be a major factor for consideration during the management of the Project. The risks and issues will fall into two categories:
- Service Delivery/Operational Risks and Issues
 - Project Risks and issues
- 20.2. Service Delivery and operational issues, including liabilities, and legal issues will be identified as part of each phase of the project.
- 20.3. Project risks will be dealt with as and when they arise by the project manager. Strategic risks or risks to the project direction will be escalated to the Project Board for decision and advice.

21. Project Approach

- 21.1. The project approach will be based on and will use techniques from accepted and recognised process and project methodologies that will be familiar to County Council and District council staff.

This will include;

- Development of clear objectives and scope
- Determine the feasibility and option appraisals
- Analyse data and processes
- Analyse budgets, resources, costs
- Consider liabilities and risk
- Develop business cases and cost benefit
- Discussions with all relevant stakeholders
- Benefits analysis and realisation

- 21.2. This approach will be used for each phase to ensure consistency and thoroughness. This approach will also act as a catalyst for an improved dialogue with the districts and will allow them to input into an integrated strategy for Public realm that will become an exemplar of effective two tier working.
- 21.3. There will be a closing stage at the end of every project milestone. This stage will focus on embedding continuous improvement through performance management, benefits realisation and lessons learned.

22. Performance Management

- 22.1. Performance management information is not currently used effectively to drive forward service improvements and business change. There is limited evidence of how information is being fed back through the organisation to improve future delivery and improve customer service.
- 22.2. The Public Ream Integration project will also look to focus performance management within the public realm across both the Districts and the County organisations resulting in shared objectives and targets.
- 22.3. Baseline information will be collect at the outset of the Public Realm Integration Project, against which a comparison can be made of how the changes and benefits have developed by the end of the Project.

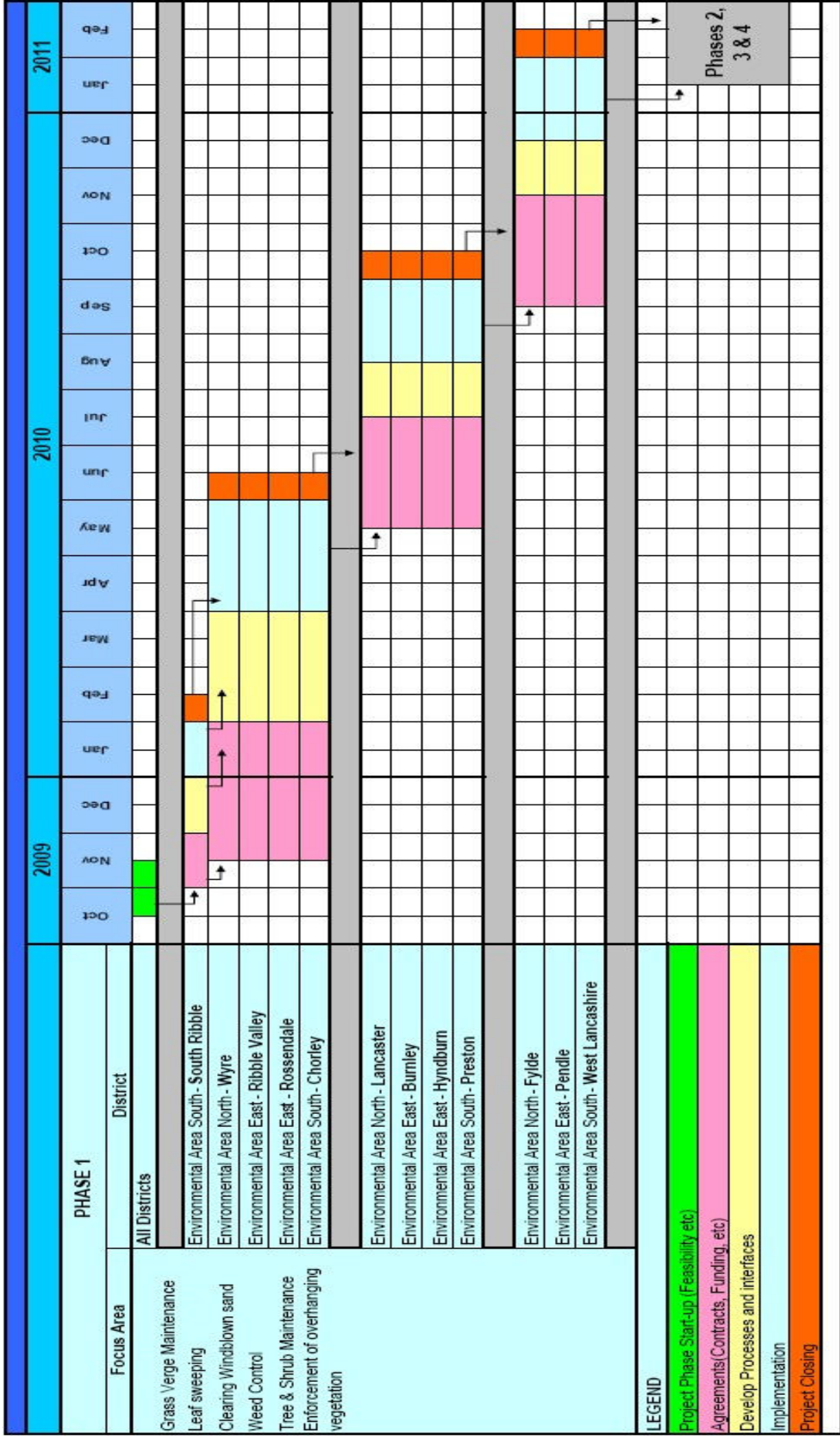
23. Project Communication

- 23.1. A project communication plan will define all interested parties and Stakeholders in the projects and will describe the means and the frequency of communication between them. This will ensure that the all stakeholders and interested parties are kept informed of key decisions and progress during the project lifecycle.
- 23.2. Communication will take place in a variety of media and format from internal memorandum and briefings, internal and public presentations to press releases where appropriate.

24. Project Plans and Timescales

- 24.1. A high level Phase 1 plan is provided below. Detailed planning will commence at project start –up and plans for Phase 2, 3 and 4 will be developed upon completion of Phase 1.

25. Project Plan – Phase 1



26. Project Plan – Phase 1 to 4

Project Phase	2009			2010												2011												2012												2013		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar												
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