

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In March 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a “review of the year event”, part of which was suggestions for topics to scrutinise the following municipal year. The topic of Highways was selected as one of the top two issues and the Task and Finish Group was set up in June 2009.

The desired outcomes of the inquiry were to improve the delivery of the highways service delivered by Lancashire County Council and Chorley Council for the residents of Chorley. This could be achieved through delivering the service more efficiently and the enhancement of communication and performance monitoring between Lancashire County Council, Chorley Council, Lancashire Locals and utility companies.

Objectives

Confirm following meeting on Oct 20

Group Membership

Councillor Michael Devaney (Chair)	Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ken Ball	Councillor Nora Ball
Councillor Doreen Dickinson	Councillor Roy Lees
Councillor Adrian Lowe	Councillor Marion Lowe
Councillor June Molyneaux	

Officer Support

Martin Walls (Service Manager - Streetscene Services)
Ishbel Murray (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods))
Sarah Palmer (District Partnership Officer)

Meetings

The meeting papers of the Group can be found on the Council’s website:
www.chorley.gov.uk/scrutiny

Contribution of Evidence

The Group would like to thank all those who have provided evidence and contributed to the Inquiry.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the recommendations are

3. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Evidence

The Group received and considered several reports and documents, these included:

Witnesses

Jo Turton (Executive Director for the Environment, Lancashire County Council)

Rick Hayton (Traffic and Safety Network Manager, Lancashire County Council)

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 1: Provision of information

Public perception and communication to the public was also a key issue for consideration South Ribble

The lack of performance indicators in respect of most of the functions within the Agreement makes an assessment of performance difficult. Pendle

Performance in commenting on planning applications has been a longstanding area of concern by a number of districts in Lancashire. Pendle

The aim of the Lancashire Locals (joint Committees, comprising all the County Councillors having electoral divisions in the particular District and an equal number of Borough/District/City Councillors appointed by the District Council) is to strengthen local democratic accountability through empowering locally elected councillors to take certain decisions and shape/influence the delivery of local government services within the District. Pendle

Recommendations:

Objective 2: Communication cycles

Street lights that are not working will be mended within 5 working days if the problem is a replacement bulb or a fuse. If the problem relates to the electrical supply the matter may take longer especially if the failure is underground and has to be located, or if the matter has to be referred to United Utilities. Problems arise when the member of the public who has reported the fault notices that the street light has still not been repaired some weeks later. Usually, this problem arises due to the fault being referred to United Utilities; however, the customer will only discover this if they make a second call to the Hub. In the meantime the customer is likely to believe their call has not been dealt with. South Ribble

All Councillors and members of the public should be encouraged to use the Hub to register Highways faults in order to allow statistics to be gathered which will ultimately highlight problem areas and provide an indication of funding required. South Ribble

That the level of feedback provided to the customer after an initial query has been raised is improved by ascertaining whether the customer would like a follow up call updating them on progress. South Ribble

Recommendations:

Objective 3: Consulting and influencing

There are some districts that disagree in principle with the current arrangements. They would prefer to see urban grass cutting standards set locally, LCC & Pendle & SR.

a pilot project with South Ribble Borough council is underway to enhance public service delivery of streetscene related functions, LCC

There is scope for more cooperation between the county and district councils in making responsible decisions about highways trees. LCC

The introduction of quarterly meetings between the county and district portfolio holders should also enhance two tier working South Ribble

Removal of unauthorised signs etc Pendle undertake this

That the County Council introduces a system of consulting with Borough Council Ward Members as well as County Councillors on proposed schemes to be undertaken and whether the work has been completed satisfactorily in order to obtain feedback on the visual quality of repair to further enhance partnership working. Rossendale

Recommendations:

Objective 4: Anomalies

Recommendations: