

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for Places Councillor Eric Bell)	Executive Cabinet	18 August 2011

RESPONSES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP'S INQUIRY INTO HIGHWAY ISSUES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To approve the Executive Cabinet's response and actions following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review and recommendations for highways and to note Lancashire County Council and United Utilities response.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To approve Chorley Council's response and actions in section 8 of this report. To note Lancashire County Council and United Utilities response in sections 9 and 10 respectively.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented a report on highways to the Council's Executive Cabinet in February 2010
- The recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's report are shown in sections 8, 9 and 10. Section 8 includes the Executive's response to recommendations to Chorley Council. However, sections 9 and 10 include the recommendations to, and responses from, Lancashire County Council and United Utilities, respectively.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To respond to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and make improvements to the highways service within the Borough

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	√
Safe Respectful Communities	√	Quality Community Services and	√

		Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	√
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			√

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

8. This section includes recommendations to Chorley Council and the Executive's response.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation		Executive Response
Objective	Recommendation	
Provision of information	To make available to Members current street cleaning schedules and the maintenance schedule for the car parks.	The street cleaning schedules appeared in 'In the Know' on 25 March 2011. The plan is to provide this information on an annual basis. There is an opportunity to discuss street cleaning issues in the six monthly Neighbourhood meetings. The car parks are formally inspected on a monthly basis. In addition, the Civil Enforcement Officers report defects on car parks as and when the defect arises.
Provision of information	To utilise 'In The Know' to cascade highways and neighbourhoods information to Members	This is being actioned.
Consulting and influencing	To include performance monitoring information on enforcement activities on the quarterly report presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and forwarded to LCC as the Highway Authority.	Enforcement activity is included in Neighbourhood reports. This allows discussion and action to be taken on specific areas. Highways enforcement sits with Lancashire County Council. If and when this transfers to Chorley Council, information will also feed into Neighbourhood reports.
Consulting and influencing	To enter into negotiations with Lancashire County Council to provide certain enforcement services such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation and seek a level of devolved budget to support this function.	Discussions are underway.
Consulting and influencing	To further develop Chorley's pavement Cafe Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and serves the needs of the traders and other town centre users and has an element of clear regulation built into to prevent abuse.	Rather than do this piece of work in isolation it needs to tie in with the enforcement recommendation in the section above. It is envisaged that the earliest this will be done will be in the final quarter of 2011/2012.

Anomalies	To enter into an agreement whereby the County has responsibility for maintaining roads and pavements and Chorley Council has responsibility for grass verges, weed control, tree and shrub maintenance, leaf sweeping and enforcing overhanging vegetation.	There is an existing agreement in place that covers all areas apart from grass verges in outer core areas and enforcement of overhanging vegetation. We are in discussions with Lancashire County Council about both of these issues.
Anomalies	The Service Manager – Streetscene Services to set in motion the gritting of Chorley’s car parks on receipt of notification from Lancashire County Council that they are gritting the roads.	Lancashire County Council’s gritting information and other local intelligence, is used in order to inform the gritting of car parks
Anomalies	To formalise arrangements and resources to enable Chorley Council to deliver gritting services in an agreed town centre area on behalf of Lancashire County Council.	Formal arrangements were introduced for 2010/11 which resulted in Chorley Council providing gritting and clearing services in Chorley Town Centre. Lancashire County Council provided the grit. The arrangements will be reviewed for 2011/12.

9. This section includes recommendations to Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Council’s response.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation		Lancashire County Council Response
Objective	Recommendation	
Provision of information	To set in place a formal information sharing system between Councillors and officers on a strategic level, for example, changes to gritting routes and policy changes, utilising email and other communication tools.	Members have been invited to information sessions regarding highway issues, most recently a presentation on arrangements for the winter. In addition, Lancashire County Council’s Public Realm Manager provides a regular highway bulletin which appears in ‘In the Know’
Provision of information	To use ‘In the Know’ to notify Members of practical information, such as, roadworks, highways and neighbourhoods information.	Lancashire County Council’s Public Realm Manager provides regular highway bulletins and monthly neighbourhood reports have been in place for the past six months. In addition to this, there have also been other articles in ‘In the Know’ covering road works and transport issues, for example, changes to bus routes.
Provision of information	To identify and introduce meaningful performance indicators to enable both	Performance is measured by existing litter and detritus indicators, customer contact and inspections. There are no plans to increase

	County and District officers and members to scrutinise the performance of the Streetscene Services Agreement. This is subject to the development of the Public Realm Strategy that could supersede the Streetscene Services Agreement.	performance management.
Provision of information	To present an update report to the relevant County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee every six months on the inquiry recommendations to ensure robust performance monitoring.	Request to be submitted to the Exec Director of Environment, Jo Turton. Recommendations being followed up as part of the ongoing public realm discussions.
Provision of information	That key information relating to inspections frequencies, highway intervention levels and key performance indicators are extracted from the Highway Maintenance Plan and provided in a simpler format to Members and Key Officers.	<p>Inspection frequencies and performance information, once reviewed, will feature in future highway bulletins to include details of the highway maintenance programme.</p> <p>The intervention levels detailed in Section 8 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban footways and cycle traces >20mm • Rural footways and cycle tracks > 25mm • Carriageways >40mm or >20mm at designated crossing points
Provision of information	To provide a separate reporting mechanism for officers and Councillors rather than the current single telephone number.	<p>In Chorley, technology allows calls from Councillors' recognised numbers to be dealt with more speedily via the Contact Centre. This avoids the need to provide basic information at the beginning of the call and it also ensures that Members do not receive customer response surveys based on each individual contact.</p> <p>No system is currently in place to allow for this at LCC but this recommendation will be fed back to the Contact Centre for consideration as part of future development.</p>
Provision of information	To communicate with the public more, for example, by improving information on the Lancashire County Council website with the detail of the highways maintenance plan.	Lancashire County Council are always looking for ways to improve the provision of information for customers. This work is ongoing. An example of an improvement made has been the use of social media to keep people informed e.g. the use of Twitter during the winter.
Provision of information	To reduce avoidable contact with the Contact Centre (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with	This is being addressed by better communication between the service areas and the Contact Centre so that the Contact Centre staff are able to give realistic timescales for the work that has

	text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for “work in progress” or “work completed”.	been requested. In addition, customers are asked whether they would like to receive an update electronically, via text or email. .
Provision of information	To implement an information sticker to be used on grit bins, street lights and generally which displays contact telephone numbers and location information to enable easier fault reporting.	Lancashire County Council have placed information stickers on a number of bins. The effectiveness of this will be reviewed before any decisions to roll out further are taken
Consulting and influencing	To introduce meetings between the county (Environment) and district (Neighbourhoods) portfolio holders at appropriate times, perhaps April and October, and to report back relevant information to Members via intheknow.	Chorley Council's Executive Member for Places and Lancashire County Council's Executive Member for Highways and Transport have met to discuss joint working. Future meetings will take place, when appropriate, rather than at a prescribed date. Improvements and changes to services, arising from such meetings, will be brought to Member's attention, via 'In the Know', or when they require an Executive decision, via the existing procedures.
Consulting and influencing	To introduce regular meetings between Lancashire County Council (Environment Directorate) and Chorley Council (People and Places Directorate) officers.	This has been put in place. Operational meetings take place monthly and strategic meetings on a quarterly basis.
Consulting and influencing	To streamline existing meeting arrangements (including co-ordination meetings with utility companies and highways schemes) to make them more effective and ensure the correct people are in attendance and the information from meetings is cascaded down	A representative from Chorley Council will attend a separate network coordination activity meeting for the Chorley area that covers all activities on the highway and includes representation from the various agencies and utility companies. This also forms part of the regular monthly meetings with the LCC Public Realm Manager.
Consulting and influencing	Officers to enter into negotiations with respect to Chorley delivering some enforcement functions, such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation.	Negotiations are underway. Members will be informed of any changes
Anomalies	To enter into an agreement whereby the County has responsibility for maintaining roads and pavements and Chorley	There is an existing agreement in place that covers all areas apart from grass verges in outer core areas and enforcement of overhanging vegetation. We are in discussions with Lancashire County Council about both of these

	Council has responsibility for grass verges, weed control, tree and shrub maintenance, leaf sweeping and enforcing overhanging vegetation.	issues.
Anomalies	The Lancashire County Council call out officer to notify, by the most appropriate means, Members and the Service Manager – Streetscene Services when gritting wagons are dispatched.	Information about gritting is provided to Chorley Council on a daily basis, during appropriate times of the year. During the winter of 2010/2011 Lancashire County Council have provided information on their website and via social media, for example twitter to notify people of gritting arrangements in their area. This will be reviewed and refined for 2011/2012.
Anomalies	To formalise arrangements and resources to enable Chorley Council to deliver gritting services in an agreed town centre area on behalf of Lancashire County Council.	New arrangements were introduced for 2010/11 which resulted in Chorley Council providing gritting, and clearing services in Chorley Town Centre. Lancashire County Council provided the grit. The arrangements will be reviewed for 2011/12.
Anomalies	To investigate and resolve the anomaly of gully cleaning just one side of the road rather than both sides.	This has now been resolved.

10. This section includes the one recommendation to United Utilities and their response.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation		United Utilities Response
Objective	Recommendation	
Communication cycles	To reduce avoidable contact (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for “work in progress” or “work completed”.	<p>United Utilities have confirmed that for all capital projects a letter drop is undertaken; highlighting the project details, work to be undertaken, if diversions or road restrictions are planned and a contact number for enquiries. If a capital project is delayed, customers will receive an additional letter</p> <p>They have recently trialled a registration system where customers can sign up for updates.</p> <p>The UU website provides details of all major projects http://www.unitedutilities.com/ and there is an online system that allows customers to ask questions http://ask.unitedutilities.co.uk/</p> <p>Customers can also use Twitter to make enquiries http://mobile.twitter.com/unitedutilities</p>

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

11. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

12. The recommendations that relate to Chorley Council and are currently being actioned and are being done within existing resources. As part of the ongoing public realm discussions, we will be looking at opportunities to work more efficiently. Clearly, any additional responsibilities taken on by Chorley Council will need to be cost neutral to Chorley Council. If there are areas of work that require additional expenditure, these will be brought to the Executive Cabinet.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Dixon	5250	16 March 2011	Highways response EC 18-08-2011