

# SCRUTINY REPORT



**MEETING:** Overview and Scrutiny

**DATE:** 12 January 2023

**SUBJECT:** Highways Maintenance and LGA Peer Review Progress Update

**REPORT FROM:** Councillor Alan Quinn  
(Exec Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations)

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil S Long  
(Assistant Director of Operations)

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Earlier this year the Council initiated a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of highway maintenance to understand whether the level of existing investment gave the Council value for money and at the beginning of June the LGA Peer Review took place. The scope of this review was to look at the following elements of work –
- Highways resurfacing programme.
  - Highways preventative maintenance programme.
  - Highways inspections.
  - Highways Asset Management Policy; and
  - Strategic asset management and longer-term planning.
- 1.2 Peer challenge is a key part of sector led improvements based on the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) peer review methodology. It is not an inspection – lead peers are invited as ‘critical friends’. The HMEP strategic review focussed on four key components
- **Context and priority setting** – transport policy, corporate vision, and stakeholder expectations
  - **Planning and performance** – strategy, performance, data and information and lifecycle planning
  - **Enablers** – leadership, risk management, asset management and monitoring
  - **Delivery** – programme, service delivery and procurement
- 1.3 The LGA Peer Review team interviewed the Council’s senior leadership team, including the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder, and Deputy as well as officers from across Engineers and Streetscene as well as representatives from TfGM. Focus groups were also held with officers to understand how the highways maintenance service is delivered and managed.
- 1.4 The outcome and findings of the LGA review were reported to Overview and Scrutiny on 19 July 2022. This report provides a progress update as detailed in section 2.4 below.

## 2.0 ISSUES

2.1 The LGA Peer Review Team were asked for an independent view on the following five key questions: -

- Given the size and condition of the Council's highways network, is the current level of capital and revenue funding appropriate for managing the highway asset and meeting the Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway?
- Is the Council's Strategic approach to reactive, preventative, and planned maintenance suitable and sufficient?
- Is the Council's delivery approach to reactive, preventative, and planned maintenance suitable and sufficient?
- Are the expected returns in the current level of investment as would be expected in terms of condition improvement, insurance claims and public satisfaction?
- Following on from £20m of investment over the last 6 years, is the Council acting prudently in seeking to invest a further £10m in the highway network over the next 3 years? Should further investment be stopped, paused, reduced, or increased

2.2 In terms of the impact on the highway network of the HIS and DfT investment, this can be quantified as follows –

- 45 roads (or sections) resurfaced in HIS 2.
- 13 roads proposed for 22/23
- 12.1km in length for HIS 2 (6.8km complete and 5.3km to do).
- 3620 Sq. M of paving re-laid at The Rock
- In 21/22 94.5% of £3.6m major resurfacing was completed
- In 21/22 the £1m (112,000 sq. m of surface dressing/micro asphalt surface treatment programme completed
- In 21/22 12,000 pothole repairs completed
- In 21/22 and additional £70k spent on white lining works
- In total for 21/22 84.4% (£5.6m) of the planned £6.6m was spent

### 2.3 Strengths identified during the review

- 'Let's do it' strategy provides a clear vision for Bury focusing on growth, communities, and delivery. Evidence also exists showing that the strategy is being embedded within the service.
- GM 2040 Transport Strategy - Bury is positioning itself to maximise the opportunities for the district by developing its own Bury Transport Plan.
- Relationships with TfGM are established and positive and it is clear that Bury are performing within the GMCA to maximise all opportunities.
- A fit for purpose service, the £10m capital for HIS3 is required.
- Some excellent areas of work highlighted around Key Road Networks which is being shared as best practice by TfGM (asset data management and deterioration model)
- Good relationship between service, portfolio holders and other elected members
- Network – there is clear evidence of improvement
- Ongoing review of organisational structures to better equip the service to meeting existing and future demands
- The Loyalty and commitment shown by staff and the Exec Cllrs was obvious
- 100% attendance at all the LGA meetings including group meetings which is not often seen and was appreciated.
- There is renewed focus on delivering an improved customer experience as a priority with progress being made on new web presence

- In-house delivery of reactive works – the workforce is skilled, committed, empowered to deliver with embedded H&S practices
- Evidence of operational improvement, e.g., vehicle and kit replacement aligned with green agenda, move to Alloy system, handheld / digital approach
- Professional and multi-skilled teams across the departments, multi-tasking to get things delivered

**2.4 Considerations and Future Development  
Progress Update at December 2022**

Considerations and Developments	Progress Update
Significant levels of deterioration in our unclassified roads are driving up complaints, demand, risk and add to the reputational problems for the service.	Agreed that the allocation of future HIS3 and CRSTS funding of capital resurfacing to be targeted at unclassified network, with a ratio of 80% unclassified and 20% classified. Preventative maintenance programmes of work are already heavily targeted towards unclassified network.
We need to capitalise appropriate professional fees, to be retained as growth/capacity, and not to be presented as saving options.	Restructure proposals for Streetscene and Engineers to be implemented in 23/24, building capacity through increased fee charges to capital allocations
Service in a precarious position following sustained reductions – in some areas 75% of required revenue budgets historically reduced.	Agreed
Develop the relationship with TFGM but some real improvements in this aspect already being seen.	Partnership work continues with TfGM, in particular Key Route Network Asset Manager who sits on our HAMP officer group.
Improve our Policy Processes and procedures to add reassurance around our delivery – make our delivery more visible.	This will be addressed through the development of the HAMP (Highways Asset Management Plan) and programmes of work will be on our website and updated regularly. Series of Portfolio Member workshops established and ongoing
Further Project management support required in the service to get the fundamentals in place.	There is a Programme Managers post proposed in the Engineering Services restructure that will have these responsibilities across the entire capital programme delivered by Engineering Service.  Restructure proposals planned within Streetscene will build project management

	capacity
Wider consultation on developing the £10m HIS3 needs to take place with Members and staff feedback together with challenge and scrutiny	Programme of works is being developed by colleagues across asset management and highways – Early consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder is currently taking place through a series of workshops before any wider consultation.
Establish a corporate capital programme board.	<p>A departmental Project Delivery Board has been set up within Engineering Services to ensure the effective delivery of the highways capital programme, including resurfacing schemes, road safety schemes and active travel and other schemes.</p> <p>A corporate review of capital process is currently progressing and a capital programme board will be established following the review.</p>
An update to the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) is required to reflect deterioration in parts of the asset, climate change and emerging transport plan.	The HAMP is currently being redrafted to reflect this and the Let's Do It Strategy.
Embed data and evidence-led approach to track performance, delivery, and success.	<p>Asset Management is a data/evidence led approach with data being used to track the deterioration of our highway network so that funding can be targeted effectively.</p> <p>Streetscene have established a service dashboard and performance management processes are in place</p>
IT/Digitalisation is a key development for the service and is key to transform – Staff in particular fed back they could perform better with increased focus and support in this area.	<p>Hand-held devices are currently being explored for streetworks inspections which will make the inspection and processing of streetworks more efficient.</p> <p>Streetscene service is fully digitised, although further system development is ongoing. Recently implemented mapped based reporting systems for highways, drainage and street lighting.</p>
Workforce Planning and development essential – need for graduates and apprentices and rebuilding the loss in capacity.	<p>There are 3 apprentices currently being recruited within Engineering Services.</p> <p>Graduate and apprenticeship programmes have been embedded in Streetscene for a number of years.</p>
Update, resource and deliver communications strategy – to raise	Yes, we are working towards developing a comms plan for all our schemes to raise

awareness and deliver behavioural change, end to end across all stakeholders.	awareness and share information.
Increase use of benchmarking against other GM authorities and the wider highways sector to measure successful outcomes, and limited focus generally on performance management across Operations.	Benchmarking takes place across all disciplines through the Greater Manchester groups attended by colleagues across Engineers and Streetscene. Further benchmarking is carried out through APSA
Collection / use of performance data to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.	NHT survey results are used to improve service delivery.

### 3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Following the recent LGA peer review of highway maintenance an action planning day took place 12 July 2022.
- 3.2 The programming for the £10m HIS 3 (23/24 to 25/26) and other funding such a CRST is now progressing with initial workshops with the Leader and Portfolio Members to be followed with wider consultation with Members and Stakeholders and challenge from scrutiny.
- 3.3 The actions following the LGA review are progressing well. Proposed restructures in Engineers and Streetscene are now well developed and include consultation with staff and trade unions. The restructures are aimed at building additional capacity through capital funding and to deliver an extensive programme over the next 5 years including improvements to road infrastructure, road safety schemes and active travel schemes.

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#### List of Background Papers: -

LGA Peer Review - position statement  
Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

#### Contact Details: -

Neil S Long - Assistant Director (Operations)  
Peter Stokes – Head of Streetscene  
Carmel Foster-Devine Head of Engineers

Executive Director sign off Date: 20.12.22

Cabinet member sign off Date: 19.12.22

JET Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_