

Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Case Study:

How the HMEP Strategic Peer Review enabled Surrey County Council to transform their approach to strategic planning to support the long-term investment and delivery of future services for roads and highways by boosting their spending power and bringing £16 million of potential savings over the next five years.

Background

- We all want roads that are fit for the future but as budgets for highway services become tighter the need to deliver better roads, more affordably, will not go away.
- HMEP's vision for the highways sector:

“Deliver 15% savings by 2015, and 30% or more by 2020, transforming delivery so that roads and services are improved”

- Incremental changes will certainly help to improve effectiveness and balance budgets; but may also lead to service reductions in the longer term, if savings targets cannot be met.
- If we, the highways sector (clients, providers, the supply chain, professional bodies, academics and policy makers), can move as quickly as we can to radically improve efficiency and effectiveness, transforming the way in which we commission and deliver our services, HMEP believes this will bring the increased efficiencies needed to improve roads and services in every area.
- HMEP knows the approach works. Leading practitioners have already transformed the delivery of highways services by identifying and delivering significant and substantial efficiencies.

How Surrey County Council responded:

Surrey County Council, based in South East England faced a number of challenges to satisfy their growing requirements for the management and maintenance of their local roads and highways infrastructure.

With one of the country's largest road networks leading to three of the UK's major motorways, including the M25, spread over eleven boroughs and serving one of the largest population densities (over 1.1 million) outside of London, Surrey County Council needed to take a more radical approach to satisfy the increased public and business demand for a world-class road infrastructure whilst delivering challenging

savings and efficiencies identified through the spending review.

Jason Russell, Assistant Director Highways at Surrey County Council said:

“Doing more of the same, was not really an option for us. To meet the needs of our customers and to realise the service transformation required, we chose to take a more strategic, holistic and longer-term approach that pulled together a number of plans that helped us to increase the overall quality and management of our services, while reducing our costs.”

Surrey County Council worked with HMEP using their Strategic Review. This provided **Surrey County Council** with the engagement, collaboration and commitment to action they needed, allowing them to take a more holistic and 'outside of the box' approach to planning future investment in highways maintenance, resulting in improved service quality, increased savings and greater efficiencies.

Using a holistic approach and working with their suppliers, practitioners' network across the county and HMEP, Surrey County Council took a 'root and branch' review of their whole approach to planning and delivering services for Surrey's roads and highways. This process provided them with robust evidence and the confidence to change. HMEP brought everyone in the network up to speed and to arrive at a common starting point. The process proved to be transformational.

Surrey County Council worked with their contractor and key supply-chain partners, examining their cost-base, warranties, and project management, quality controls and customer-feedback mechanisms, to develop a five-year Capital programme. This process has delivered £16 million savings, as well as 10-year warranties and a greater investment in skills. Savings will be identified, tracked and verified over the next five-year period, with independent scrutiny through Constructing Excellence.

Jason said: **“While the themes of highways planning and maintenance have stayed consistent, the methods of delivering our road services in Surrey have radically changed. This new approach will not only provide £16m savings, but it will also improve the quality of the work undertaken, backed by 10-year warranties.”**

None of this would have been possible without first securing the pro-active support of the Cabinet and leadership team from Surrey County Council. This level of support proved to be an essential ingredient, with their elected member, John Furey, playing a significant role in supporting the level of change required.

Speaking about his experience John Furey, Cabinet Member at Surrey County Council said:

“At Surrey County Council, roads remain a key priority for our businesses and wider community. We believed it was vital for the Cabinet to be proactive, to seize the opportunity and to actively support this important work programme. We fully supported our highways team by collaborating with HMEP, our network and supply chain to listen, learn and adapt our ways of working. Our situation is not unique; I would actively encourage every Local Authority in England to learn from us and to adopt a similar approach.”

John Furey is Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment at Surrey County Council.

Jason Russell is Assistant Director Highways at Surrey County Council

HMEP: improving highways efficiency

- HMEP is here to support the sector on its journey to transform highway services.
- It does this by working collaboratively, for the sector by the sector, enabling leaders and managers to understand and implement transformational change to achieve greater efficiencies so the money can go even further to plan and deliver improved roads and services.
- To do this well requires the support of clients and providers across the highways sector - sharing, collaborating and working together to help make England's roads fit for the future. Everyone in the sector has their part to play - we need to work better, together.

The HMEP Strategic Peer Review

The HMEP Strategic Peer Review plays a key part to help authorities on their journey to greater efficiencies alongside improved roads, helping to transform future highways services.

The process offers a really powerful way of improving understanding and achieving transformational change in highways services helping to identify and deliver significant improvements.

Benefits of the Strategic Peer Review:

- Helps place highways services on the corporate agenda and enhance the process of improving highways delivery to realise transformational efficiencies and change
- Allows an authority to understand potential improvements set within the wider strategic context of council operations
- Informs decision-making and provides (re)assurance from fellow professionals or 'peers'
- Encourages engagement, collaboration and commitment to action across the council and service provider
- Promotes the sharing of good practice through peer-to-peer engagement as well as empowering individuals to collaborate across authorities

Get involved with, and contact HMEP:

- For more information and to get involved with HMEP: www.highwaysefficiency.org.uk
- To download a copy of the HMEP Annual Plan for 2014/15: www.highwaysefficiency.org.uk/our-plan
- Send an **enquiry form** or go to the HMEP website by clicking [here](#)
- Sign up for HMEP email updates. Send an email to highwaysefficiency@dft.gsi.gov.uk