



Business Plan 2015-2021

Devon's highway network is vital – This is recognised in Devon's Strategic Plan, '[Better Together](#)'.

Our Purpose: Our service maintains, operates and improves the highway network to enable safe and resilient links for people to connect with their communities, to lead to healthy, prosperous lives; to get to work, to get to education, to get to health services, to participate in exercise and leisure activities, to bring people to Devon to enjoy our beautiful county, to bring goods in and connect Devon's people and produce to the rest of the world.

- We are Devon's Highways and Traffic Management Service
- We are the Highway Authority for Devon*
- We are a multi-skilled team, working together to deliver our service
- Our aims and objectives are to **maintain, operate and improve** the highway network in Devon safely and efficiently for the benefit of all users
- Our business plan sets out how we aim to do this.
- Excluding Torbay and Plymouth unitary authority areas and the Motorway and Trunk Road network operated by Highways England

The **highway network** includes the infrastructure of roads, bridges, pavements, [cycle ways](#) and [public rights of way](#) that connect the communities of Devon together. We also operate and maintain the two country parks (Stover and the Grand Western Canal).

The highway network, together with things you can see such as street lights, traffic signals, bollards and signs, and things less obvious such as drainage systems and retaining walls, are the **highway assets**:

"Highways are ...vital to the economic, social and environmental well being of your area." (Highways – Maintaining a Vital Asset, Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme)

Our purpose: To maintain the highway network

We aim to maintain the highway network so it is as [safe](#) to use as possible with the funding available.

To do this we undertake:

- regular [inspections](#) to identify and repair [safety issues](#)
- regular surveys of the network to provide information on the condition
- routine cycles of general maintenance, such as gully emptying
- planned maintenance to drainage systems and ditches, minor road repairs, traffic signals, [street lighting](#), [road markings and signage](#).

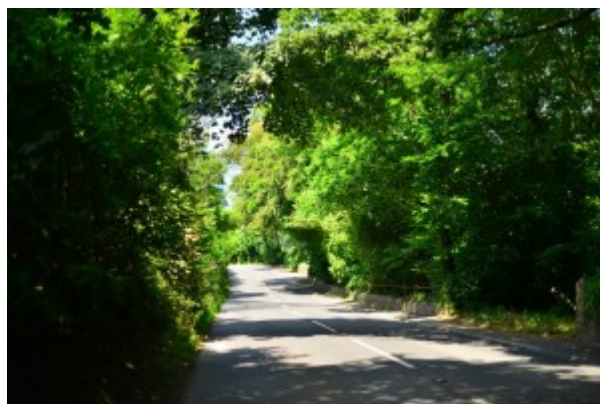


Photo credit Julian Roskilly

We also encourage trained volunteers from [communities](#) across Devon to get involved to do minor maintenance works in their area through the long-established [Parish Paths Partnership](#) (P3) and our more recent road warden initiative and [self-help schemes](#).

We work with the Community Payback service to enable offenders to give back to the community by spending community service hours maintaining public areas, such as clearing overgrown vegetation from paths, cleaning graffiti and painting fences and railings.

Asset Management: We take a long-term approach to the maintenance of all highway assets, as set out in our [asset management plan](#), and we work together to identify what needs to be done and the best way to do it with the limited funds available to us. We collect and analyse data so we can see how well our maintenance policies and maintenance processes are working and use that information to design our future policies and processes.

Our purpose: To operate the highway network

We aim to operate the highway network to enable the flow of traffic.

We proactively manage the movement of traffic on the highway network. Our 24 hour service deals with incidents and emergencies affecting the highway network, monitors traffic and congestion on major routes, and plans our response to forecasted weather emergencies.

We also:

- coordinate dates and timing of works to minimise disruption to traffic
- manage and enforce [parking](#) restrictions
- supervise and enforce highway activities including works and events



Photo credit Julian Roskilly

When agreeing any work or activity on the highway network, we focus on safety of the workforce and all highway users.

Traffic includes pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, as well as all types of vehicles.

We try to [let people know](#) what we and others, are planning to do and when, by publishing our work programmes and our policies.

We enable the use of the highway to support the economy and local community by provision and supervision of a variety of [licences](#). For instance skip and scaffold licences, street cafes, and special events. The Public rights of way network, together with [Stover Country Park](#) and the [Grand Western Canal](#), support the tourism economy and contribute to health and wellbeing for locals and visitors alike.

To keep the most important roads open when there is [ice and snow](#); we do precautionary salting (gritting), and work with local communities to enable self-help through our snow warden scheme. With the help of our Parish Paths Partnership scheme we also keep public rights of way clear for locals and visitors to use all year round.

Our purpose: To improve the highway network and delivery of our service

We consistently work towards improving the highway network and the way we deliver our service, despite ongoing funding reductions.

Our approach to the financial challenge includes:

- robust [strategies for management of highway assets](#)
- the ability to successfully apply for government funding, such as the [Pothole Action Fund](#), to deliver improvements
- working with other authorities and partner organisations to design good highway maintenance solutions
- developing a flexible workforce
- working with [communities](#) and partners to identify and deliver local priorities for improvement schemes
- developing and implementing Town Traffic Management Plans in consultation with communities
- delivering the requirements of legislation affecting public rights of way
- using modern technology to reduce costs
- training volunteers to assist us with the delivery of improvements to our Highway network



We are currently working towards:

- Introducing LED street lighting on all main roads, which will reduce carbon emissions and save on running costs
- Using alternative materials and methods of maintenance
- Improving our website content to enable people to easily find and understand information provided about our service, policies and priorities
- Replacing cumbersome paper-based application processes for various licences with web-based alternatives.
- Developing a new approach to the amendment of waiting restrictions with County Councillors
- Introducing new ICT solutions
- Implementing the provisions within the Deregulation Act which affect Public Rights of Way
- Applying for Heritage Lottery Funding for [Stover Country Park](#)

Business model

In this Business Plan we are focussing on the way we work with the aim of delivering the best we can with the resources we have.

Our business model is built from the central core that we are one large multi-disciplined and diverse team, who communicate together to deliver our strategic aims of efficiency, community mobilisation and management of demand. Our three guiding principles underpin how we think and what we do:

- **Intelligent use of information**
- **Innovative delivery of services**
- **Strong business focus**

Our thinking will challenge the current ways of working and influence how we design and adapt our systems and processes to deliver our service through to 2021



One team: Communicating together

Despite a diverse range of activities within our service, we aim to work together as one cohesive team to deliver the best service we can with the resources we have. Central to this is our commitment to communicate our business clearly and consistently, with one voice.

We aim to explain **what** we do, **why** we do it and **when** we will do it, so that people affected by our decisions are kept informed.

We will say what we do and do what we say.

We aim to communicate our policies, plans, priorities and programmes of work effectively, consistently and at the most suitable time.

When we cannot meet the expectations of the communities we serve, we will explain why not.

We work with colleagues across the county council to deliver Devon County Council's strategic aims.

We are focussed on developing our digital information to enable information to flow in and out of our business by:

- making data available for sharing, with the community and industry, through our Open Data portal
- providing online facilities for reporting highway problems, submitting licence applications and making payments for services
- ensuring web pages have clear explanations of what we do, what we do not do and options for community self-help alternatives
- consulting on legal changes to the public rights of way network and the upkeep of statutory on line registers

The Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme highlights the importance of taking **'a long term view of how highways may be managed, focusing on outcomes by ensuring that funds are spent on activities that prevent expensive short-term repairs'**. Explaining this message is a key challenge to reduce public pressure for 'short-term fixes, ... rather than properly planned and implemented longer-term solutions' (HMEP).

Our strategy

We have a strong and consistent message on how we will approach delivery of sustainable and resilient services for the next six years in support of [Better Together, Devon's Strategic Plan](#).

We have three clear objectives to:



drive efficient delivery of the service

“Managing our highways is now a **critical challenge** to local councils, who have to manage an ageing network with high public expectations for **safe, reliable** and comfortable travel. At the same time, **resources are reducing**, with less funding available, increased pressure for other local government services and skills shortages.” (Highways – Maintaining a Vital Asset, Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme)



mobilise community support



manage demand for highway services

Guiding principles: Intelligent use of information

We use information available to us to identify opportunities for improving our service and:



- **Make decisions**
- **Be aware of new and developing ways to do things**
- **Enable our people to deliver their best for Devon**

Examples of data from other sources:

- How successfully new highway maintenance techniques have been introduced elsewhere and how other authorities are approaching similar challenges.
- Collision data which enables us to identify areas where highway safety may be a concern and prioritise schemes.
- Daily weather forecasts which enable us to plan ahead for conditions that may affect the travelling public, such as flooding.

Examples of our data:

- what the people of Devon say about our service and what they need from us
- the inventory of our highway assets (roads, bridges, drainage systems, street lights, signs and lines, etc)
- the condition of our highway assets
- the amount and type of traffic regularly using the roads
- what we spend our budget allocations on
- the knowledge and skills our people possess
- the effectiveness of the treatments we use to maintain and build the highway network
- the network of public rights

of way and [Definitive Map](#)

Guiding principles: Innovative delivery of services

To meet our service and budgetary challenges we aim to find **alternative ways to get things done.**



Where we are unable, due to funding constraints, to do work that is important to a local community, we will try to work with that community to look for ways for them to undertake the work themselves or support them to find alternative sources of funding.

Work with others:

We are actively seeking opportunities to work with other authorities and service providers to design and deliver shared solutions to shared challenges

Research and development:

We are working to identify the best ways to deliver our services identifying, understanding and using emerging technology solutions in software, hardware, traffic and highway maintenance equipment, materials and maintenance treatment, where appropriate.

Responsive and adaptive:

We are encouraging our team to meet the challenges we will face in the next six years by:

- thinking differently
- challenging existing working methods

- building innovative solutions

Self-supporting and sustainable:

We are exploring opportunities to sell the services we offer, and our industry expertise, to third parties to generate income to offset the ongoing financial reductions

Design to manage demand:

We aim to design our services to enable individuals and communities to find information and access services through digital media where appropriate.

Guiding principles: Strong business focus

To deliver our service with reduced funding in an ever changing world, we need to be a robust, effectively managed, highly capable team.



We are working towards this by:

Evaluation – Critical evaluation of our service delivery.

Opportunity – Identifying and maximising opportunities to acquire funding and to secure sources of revenue.

Involvement – Active involvement at regional and national level with industry groups.

Knowledge and skill – Having a strong plan to develop our people to meet the service needs.

Management – Managing projects, change and performance.

Discipline – Being disciplined, consistent and with clear accountabilities

Financial Control – Robust processes to manage service finances.

Opportunity:

- working with local communities, community groups, local businesses and other agencies to identify opportunities for self-help schemes or match-funding to deliver improvement schemes to meet local needs
- recovering our reasonable costs and seeking opportunities to generate income

Involvement: To ensure we are:

- keeping ahead
- collaborating with others and
- influencing the development of professional thinking and practice.

Evaluation: To ensure that we are:

- using the resources available to us as efficiently as possible
- learning from our experiences
- understand how we are performing compared to other authorities facing similar challenges
- sharing experiences and working with others to maximise opportunities
- listening to and supporting our parish and town councils and communities

Knowledge and skill: To ensure that our people:

- are equipped with the knowledge and skills the business needs
- apply their skills throughout the service
- understand their role and responsibilities and are supported to deliver them
- are empowered to think creatively and bring about effective changes in support of our highway strategy

Management: To ensure that business improvements are:

- implemented in a controlled manner
- delivered at appropriate speed
- achieving what we set out to do
- action is taken when we identify issues comfortable

Our Business Plan Framework 2015-2021

To develop a meaningful and current business plan that will last six years, we have created a Business Plan framework that breaks it down into key elements.

The aim of this framework is to provide:

- **business stability** and continuity to support the delivery of longer term projects
- **business agility** so that adaptations can be made to take account of challenges and opportunities arising during the life of the plan.



The business plan framework includes:

1) The Business Plan 2015-2021

- explains the purpose of our service
- introduces our business model that will guide how we do things
- explains how we will use our business model meet the challenges ahead
- provides a platform that links to specific plans, projects and priorities
- will be updated when things change

2) Who We Are

- sets out job roles and responsibilities
- explains how we work together to deliver the highway service

3) [Financial Framework](#)

- explains our sources of funding, how we plan our spending and allocate budgets and our processes for monitoring the effectiveness of our financial management.

4) [Annual Report 2016-17](#)

- recognises our achievements in the previous year and the people who have made success happen
- outlines challenges faced and how they were overcome
- examines lessons learned which will shape future service delivery.

5) [Annual Action Plan 2017-18](#)

- details the specific plans for service delivery in the year ahead
- lists milestones for longer term projects
- lists measurable objectives

6) Team Development Plan

- sets out training and development pathways and succession planning
- provides a strong performance management framework so our people are supported to deliver their best for Devon
- focusses on identifying our strengths, sharing skills and knowledge across the service to develop our capability across the whole highway team.