



CABINET

TUESDAY, 26 APRIL 2016

10.00 AM COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Keith Glazier (Chair)
Councillors Nick Bennett, Bill Bentley, Chris Dowling, David Elkin (Vice Chair), Carl Maynard, Rupert Simmons and Sylvia Tidy

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2016 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Disclosures of interests
Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- 4 Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
- 5 Countryside Access Strategy (*Pages 7 - 66*)
Report by Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
- 6a Scrutiny Review of Highway Drainage - report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee (*Pages 67 - 100*)
Report by Assistant Chief Executive
- 6b Highway Drainage: Observations of the Scrutiny Committee's report (*Pages 101 - 104*)
Report by Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
- 7 External Audit Plan 2015/16 (*Pages 105 - 122*)
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
- 8 Any other items considered urgent by the Chair
- 9 To agree which items are to be reported to the County Council

PHILIP BAKER
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18 April 2016

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CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 March 2016 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair)
Councillors Nick Bennett, Bill Bentley, Chris Dowling, Carl Maynard,
Rupert Simmons and Sylvia Tidy

Members spoke on the items indicated

Councillor Barnes	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Carstairs	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Clark	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Daniel	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Claire Dowling	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Ensor	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Field	-	items 7 and 9 (minutes 53 and 55)
Councillor Shuttleworth	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor St Pierre	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Standley	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Tutt	-	item 5 (minute 51)
Councillor Ungar	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Webb	-	item 7 (minute 53)
Councillor Whetstone	-	items 7 and 9 (minutes 53 and 55)

48 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2016

48.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

49.1 Councillor David Elkin

50 REPORTS

50.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book

51 SOUTH EAST SEVEN UPDATE

51.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive

51.2 It was RESOLVED to note the progress of the South East Seven Partnership

Reason

51.3 The report provides an update on progress of the South East Seven Partnership

52 THREE SOUTHERN COUNTIES DEVOLUTION - UPDATE

52.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive

52.2 It was RESOLVED to note the report

Reason

52.3 The report provided an update on the progress of the Three Southern Counties devolution activity and outlined the next steps

53 COUNCIL MONITORING: QUARTER 3 2015/16

53.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive

53.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council;
- 2) note the proposed transfer of the projected underspend on the contingency budget to the Capital Programme as set out at paragraph 2.4 of the report; and
- 3) agree the proposed amendments to fees and charges for Children's Services set out on the final page of Appendix 4

Reason

53.3 The report sets out the Council's position and year end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, savings plan together with risks for quarter 3.

54 WASTE AND MINERALS SITES PLAN - REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION - RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

54.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

54.2 It was RESOLVED to:

(1) agree, subject to the endorsement of Brighton & Hove City Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, to the proposed approach to the Objections to the Pre-Submission Waste and Minerals Sites Plan and, to the submission of draft Main Modifications to the Inspector as included in Appendix 3, and thereby, alter the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme to reflect the revised programme;

(2) authorise the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to agree, in consultation with Brighton & Hove City Council and South Downs National Park Authority, for subsequent public consultation, the draft Main Modifications and any further Main Modifications arising from the Public Examination necessary to make the Waste and Minerals Sites Plan sound, except where any subsequent change would involve a significant shift in the policy approach whereby this would be referred to Cabinet for approval prior to public consultation;

(3) authorise the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to make, if necessary, minor changes to the document arising from any views of the City Council and National Park Authority, or, arising from the Public Examination; and

(4) note that all Main and Minor Modifications to the Plan will ultimately be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in due course as part of the Adoption of the Waste and Minerals Sites Plan

Reason

54.3 The analysis of the representations on the Pre-Submission Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (WMSP) should be noted. Appraisal of the objections received indicates that the flexible approach to options to meet the requirements for additional waste recycling and recovery facilities identified in the Plan should be retained, but certain refinements and strengthening of the wording of Policies should be agreed for submission to the Public Examination. Main Modifications should be agreed to extend the Area of Search at Land at Burgess Road on Hastings fringes, withdraw the Whitworth Road Area of Search and Sackville Goods Yard Waste Site Allocation, and, strengthen some of the Policies in the WMSP. Authority was given to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to agree all the Main Modifications arising from the Public Examination for public consultation. The Minerals and Waste Development Scheme would be revised to indicate the new timetable for the document. All the Main and Minor Modifications to the Plan will ultimately be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in due course as part of the Adoption of the WMSP.

55 THE INSPECTION OF EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

55.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Children's Services

55.2 It was RESOLVED to note the outcomes of the inspection and that an action plan is being developed to address the areas identified for improvement

Reason

55.3 It was noted that an action plan will be developed to address the areas identified by Ofsted for improvement. The action plan will be incorporated into Excellence for All and will be shared with Ofsted.

56 ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

56.1 The Cabinet agreed that items 6 and 7 should be reported to the County Council

[Note: The items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 52 and 53]

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 26 April 2016

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Countryside Access Strategy

Purpose: To consider the development of the draft strategy and the implementation plan for how it will be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) note the draft strategy and agree that it is publicly consulted on for a 12 week period ;
and
 - (2) agree to increase the car parking charges as set out in Appendix 5
-

1. Background Information

1.1. In March 2014, the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee endorsed the development of a commissioning strategy for public rights of way (PRoW) and countryside site (CS) management. At the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 March 2015, a Scrutiny Review Board was created to assist in the development of the draft commissioning strategy. It has met on four occasions, working alongside the commissioning strategy Project Team on the development of the draft strategy.

1.2. The draft strategy sets out how the County Council proposes to secure the best outcomes for East Sussex residents, discharging its statutory responsibilities and maximising the contribution that PRoW and CS can make to Council priorities. This report gives a brief summary of the development of the draft strategy, and the proposed implementation process.

2. Supporting Information

A commissioning approach

2.1 In developing the draft strategy (set out in Appendix 1) a commissioning approach has been adopted. Central to the 'needs assessment' (the first stage in the commissioning cycle) is the County Council's statutory obligations. As Highway Authority, the County Council has a statutory duty under the Highways Act to ensure that the 2,000 mile PRoW network is accessible and maintained. It also has a duty as landowner to conserve the wildlife value of 10 countryside sites (including Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves) totalling 1,160 hectares (see Appendix 2) and to ensure safe public access to these sites.

2.2 In addition to considering the County Council's statutory responsibilities, the engagement activity sought to establish what contribution PRoW and CS make to the Council's priorities. Survey responses, together with stakeholder events, have shown that PRoW and CS are used for fresh air, health benefits and to enjoy scenery and walking. National research has also documented the health benefits of exercise and in particular green exercise (i.e. outdoors in green areas).

2.3 The maintenance of PRoW and conservation work at CS generates a significant amount of community involvement and there are numerous examples of community groups forming to support such activities. This contributes to community cohesion and results in communities taking pride and ownership in their local area and green spaces which supports our priority of helping people to help themselves.

2.4 It is difficult to quantify the contribution that PRoW and CS make to the economy. Tourism is valued at £1.35bn in East Sussex, and accounts for 22,483 jobs. Whilst not easily measured, it is estimated that the countryside accounts for roughly 10% of tourist related business, i.e. £134m and 2,250 jobs. However the link between this and the PRoW network and CS is difficult to assess.

2.5 Intelligence gained from our research and engagement work has led us to define four strategic outcomes in the draft strategy:

- Enable residents and visitors to safely use our public rights of way and countryside sites;
- Support and enable landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities;
- Achieve the most efficient and effective management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife;
- Enhance local communities through engagement with our public rights of way and countryside sites.

2.6 The first two outcomes reflect the need to discharge our statutory responsibilities and the third and fourth recognise the contribution that appropriate management of our assets can make to the Council's priorities. The vision and strategic outcomes are shown with more detail on pages 9 and 10 of the strategy.

2.7 Continuing with a commissioning approach, the review then considered the range of options for management of these assets to ensure that we make the best use of our resources. A range of models were explored including use of contractors, management by charitable organisations, creation of a trading company or social enterprise, transfer or sale of land, in-house provision and partnership arrangements. Each was considered against cost, risk and interest criteria as well as how well they could deliver the strategic outcomes (benefit). See Appendices 3 and 4.

2.8 The draft strategy recommends a differentiated approach and considers PRoW separately to CS concluding:

- PRoW are recommended to be managed in-house, this covers areas such as maintenance, enforcement and legal record keeping. A number of areas of improvement are identified including how we prioritise Public Health objectives, work with those developing new paths and the contribution of our volunteer offer.
- The management of CS is recommended to change. It is proposed that, by changing how the sites are managed, there may be an improvement to both the visitor experience and conservation work. By seeking to pass the sites to other organisations experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement, it is anticipated that there will be improvements in what the sites have to offer. The Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way are more like Public Rights of Way in their appearance and use, so they require different management arrangements to green open space. Consequently, it is proposed that the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way continue to be managed in-house.

2.9 In tandem with the development of this approach, the Council should seek to maximise the income generated to support the Council's duties in relation to PRoW and CS; in particular, by reviewing parking charges. As part of preparation of the draft strategy, we have identified that the parking charges at Seven Sisters Country Park ('SSCP') have not been increased since 2009. It is therefore proposed to increase the tariffs by the equivalent of CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation, which rose by 16.9% between 2009 and 2014. The proposed increase will raise approximately £23,000 additional income. This extra income will contribute towards meeting wider savings targets and offsetting the inflationary increase in site management costs since 2009. The details of the proposed increase in parking tariffs are shown in Appendix 5.

Market development and implementation

2.10 The implementation of the strategy, particularly the aspects relating to CS, is likely to have a lengthy timeframe reflecting the complexities associated with land deals and the range of stakeholders likely to be involved. The draft implementation plan is shown in Appendix 6. Each site can be considered separately or as part of a package. The choice of recipient and governance model will be determined on a site by site basis reflective of such considerations as the statutory environmental designation. Initial engagement with interested parties will commence at the end of April 2016 and information gathered through this process will, along with the consultation responses, be used to inform the final strategy.

2.11 A targeted marketing campaign will only commence once the final strategy has been approved. Only organisations appropriate to each site will be invited to bid and bids will be assessed against a matrix model to understand relative benefits of each. The sites will not be passed to organisations if this is not found financially viable for the County Council.

Scrutiny Review Board comments and recommendations

2.12 A Review Board of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee has worked alongside the commissioning strategy Project Team to provide elected Member input into the development of the draft Countryside Access Commissioning Strategy. The comments and recommendations of the Review Board on the development of the draft strategy are contained in the report of the Review Board in Appendix 7. The Review Board supports the development of the draft strategy and endorses the differentiated approach to commissioning services for PRow and countryside sites outlined in paragraph 2.8 above.

3. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The draft strategy sets out how the County Council proposes to meet its statutory obligations in respect of PRow and CS while maximising the contribution that they can make to the Council's stated priorities. It is based on a solid evidence base developed from a thorough engagement process, as well as specialist research and internal review. Cabinet is recommended to note the draft strategy and to approve that it is publicly consulted on for a 12 week period.

3.2. The parking tariffs at SSCP have not been increased since 2009. Cabinet is recommended to approve the increase in parking charges as set out in Appendix 5.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All County Council Members will have PRow in their electoral divisions

The below table sets out the County Council Members that have countryside sites in their electoral divisions.

Site	Local Councillor
Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson's Field	Cllr Keith Glazier (40)
Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve	Cllr Jim Sheppard (8)
Cuckoo Trail	Cllr Laurence Keeley (Hailsham) (21)

	Cllr Bill Bentley (Hailsham) (21)
	Cllr Mike Blanch (Hampden Park) (11)
	Cllr Rupert Simmons (Heathfield) (30)
	Cllrs Daniel and Stephen Shing (Polegate) (37)
	Cllr Chris Dowling (Horam) (20)
	Cllr Nick Bennett (Hellingly) (1)
Ditchling Common Country Park	Cllr Jim Sheppard (8)
Forest Way Country Park	Cllr Francis Whetstone (18)
Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve	Cllr Peter Charlton (34)
Riverside Park	Cllr Carla Butler (32)
Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP)	Cllrs Daniel and Stephen Shing (37)
Shinewater Park	Cllr Alan Shuttleworth (Langney) (12)
	Cllr Mike Blanch (Hampden Park) (11)
Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve	Cllr Francis Whetstone (18)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Technical appendices of the draft Countryside Access Strategy.
- EqIA of the draft Countryside Access Strategy.



Countryside Access Strategy

East Sussex public rights of way
and countryside sites 2016

DRAFT: proposals for consultation



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Foreword by Councillor Maynard

Lead Member for Transport and Environment

As East Sussex residents we are fortunate to have such beautiful countryside on our doorstep. Two thirds of our county is either National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We have everything, from the stunning iconic cliffs at Seven Sisters to the rolling hills of the South Downs, the farmland and villages of the Low Weald and the woodland of the High Weald.

The network of 2,000 miles of public rights of way (PRoW) and the ten countryside sites currently managed by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) help to provide access for the public to this wonderful countryside, and to maintain and broaden our wildlife.

The purpose of this Countryside Access Strategy document is to examine and set out how we should manage those PRoW and countryside sites in the future. In preparation, we have consulted widely. We have talked to residents, visitors, landowners, user groups and partners. Their responses have been used to improve our understanding of how and why the community uses these assets. This will inform our future working plans and has contributed to Our Vision:

To ensure that our public rights of way and countryside sites are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted; meeting the needs of our residents and visitors in the most efficient, affordable and effective manner.

To achieve this vision we will need to change how we work. From our research, we have found that we manage cost well in many areas. We are efficient and work well within the resources we have. In making our money go further, we will work closely with our council colleagues, with partners, stakeholders and other authorities to make sure we are as efficient as possible. By applying a strategic commissioning approach, we can ensure we make the best use of our resources when meeting our statutory duties, and maximise how PRoW and countryside sites contribute to our council priorities.

This strategy marks the first step in a long journey. Over the next two years we will be working to identify delivery partners who will be able to enhance community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement at the countryside sites.

How we manage the PRoW and countryside sites is essential to their long term protection. I am excited by the prospect of how we could manage them in the future and I'm proud to support this plan. It is based on an improved understanding of what our communities in East Sussex expect from PRoW and countryside sites and how and why they are used. It also sets out how we will structure our resources to deliver against the strategic outcomes set out in this document.

Executive Summary

Public rights of way and countryside sites

In East Sussex we have 2,000 miles of public rights of way (PRoW), made up of footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways. We are also involved in managing ten countryside sites.

PRoW enable free access to our county, crossing through towns and the countryside. Depending on their type they can be used on foot, bicycle, horse (and carriage) or in a vehicle. The ten countryside sites are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson's Field• Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve• Cuckoo Trail• Ditchling Common Country Park• Forest Way Country Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve• Riverside Park• Seven Sisters Country Park• Shinewater Park• Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve
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These are open spaces managed for their value to wildlife and the wider communities. You can walk across all of them and at some you can ride a bike or horse.

To manage the PRoW and countryside sites we have a range of responsibilities. These include the maintenance of furniture (such as bridges and gates) as well as legal record keeping. We also do clearance and resurfacing, coppicing and grazing and we work with various local community partners to help deliver all the work. In 2015/16 it cost us over £1.8m to do this.

It is very important that we make the best use of the resources we have. This Countryside Access Strategy is being prepared at a time of unprecedented change and severe financial pressure. Like many other local authorities across the country, we are dealing with cuts in government funding. We are facing the challenge of saving between £70m and £90m in the next three years whilst keeping council tax as low as possible.

To develop this strategy, we have completed a wide engagement process to understand how and why people are using PRoW and countryside sites. In doing so, we have spoken to user groups, landowners and partners about their involvement and plans for the future.

The feedback has enabled us to establish what contribution PRoW and countryside sites make to our Council priorities. Most notable is the contribution to our priority: "Helping people to help themselves". This can take many forms and includes:

- Helping people to be healthy, stay active and independent and particularly enjoy the benefits of green exercise (exercise outdoors in green areas);
- Improving community involvement and community wellbeing through locally established volunteer and interest groups set up to look after stretches of the PRoW network or for conservation work.

There is also undoubtedly a contribution to the economy of the county. Tourism in East Sussex is valued at £1.35bn and accounts for 22,483 jobs. It is estimated that countryside accounts for roughly 10% of tourist related business, though it remains difficult to assess the link between this figure and the PRoW network and countryside sites.

An analysis of how we structure the service, together with an examination of our costs, resource availability and achievements, demonstrates how effective we are at providing the service. This information along with the insight from our engagement activity, has been used to set out our vision for the future.

Our Vision

To ensure that our public rights of way and countryside sites are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted; meeting the needs of our residents and visitors in the most efficient, affordable and effective manner.

This vision is supported by four strategic outcomes that will be used to structure and prioritise our spend to ensure the contribution to Council priorities is maximised.

How we will manage public rights of way and countryside sites:



We propose that how we manage the countryside sites should change. By working to pass most of the sites to others more experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement, we hope to improve what the countryside sites have to offer. We will work to identify the right organisations and arrangements to achieve this. The Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way are more like Public Rights of Way in their appearance and use, so they require different management arrangements to green open space. Consequently we propose that the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way continue to be managed in-house by East Sussex County Council.

This strategy document sets out the information we have researched, why we have reached our conclusions and recommendations, and how we propose to develop our services in the future. The plan is devised to ensure PRow and countryside sites are managed to meet the strategic outcomes set out in this document and to make best use of our limited resources.

Introduction

In this strategy document we set out how we will manage public rights of way (PRoW) and countryside sites for East Sussex residents and visitors. In developing the plan, we have looked at our statutory obligations and the contribution that PRoW and countryside sites make to council priorities. We have also explored a range of options for their future management.

What are public rights of way (PRoW) and countryside sites?

We have a network of 2,000 miles of PRoW across East Sussex. PRoW are mostly in the countryside but can also be found in towns in the form of alleyways or twittens. They provide access to the countryside, as well as helping people go about their everyday lives. Their use varies depending on their designation and can include walking, cycling, horse-riding and driving. As PRoW cross many different areas, you may come across stiles, gates and bridges when using them.

Most PRoW run across private land, so we work closely with landowners to manage them. The landowner is responsible for making sure paths are not obstructed, and to maintain gates and stiles. We look after legal records in relation to public access; for example, the Definitive Map and Statement and the registers of Town & Village Greens and Common Land. Where we maintain the PRoW, our work includes installing signposts, buildings, bridges and path clearance.

We are also involved in the management of ten countryside sites:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson’s Field• Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve• Cuckoo Trail• Ditchling Common Country Park• Forest Way Country Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve• Riverside Park• Seven Sisters Country Park• Shinewater Park• Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve
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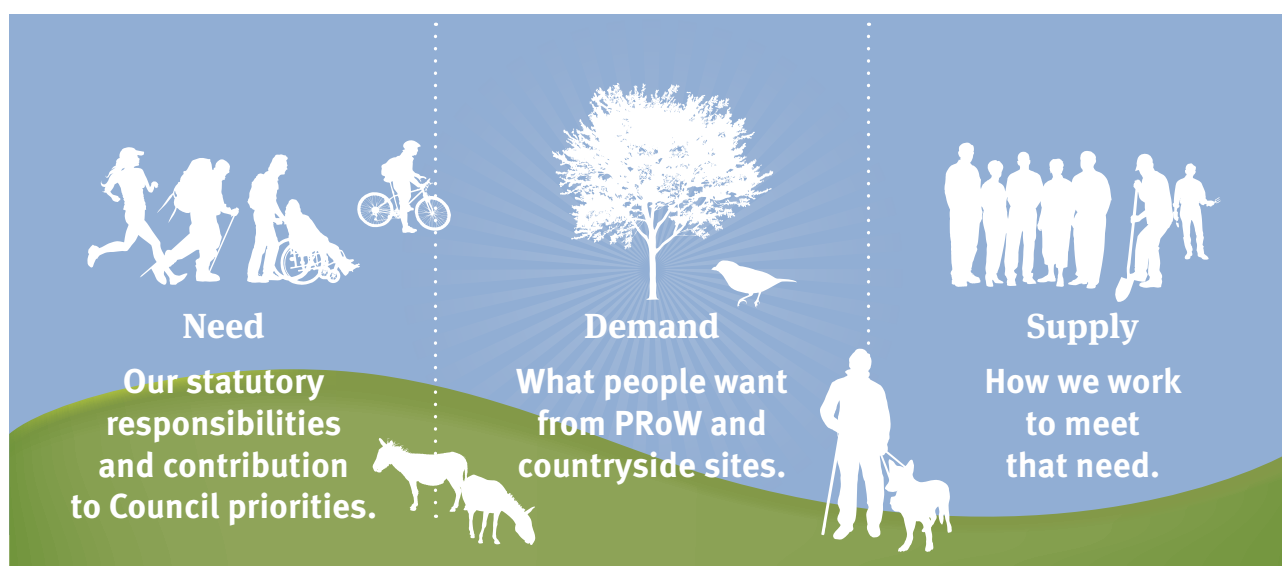
The countryside sites provide an important way to access our county. You can walk across all of the sites and at some you can ride a bike or horse. Most have parking facilities and offer open access instead of one path to follow. As well as the sites, they usually have a designation which means they are vital for conservation and the local environment. Their management follows the regulations set out in legislation, which helps nature thrive and enhances biodiversity in East Sussex. Each countryside site is different, so we can be involved in a range of activities, from scrub clearance, habitat management and coppicing, to litter picking and visitor information. Partnership working is a feature in much of our work.

You can find more information on the PRoW and countryside sites in the Technical Appendix and on our website.

What is strategic commissioning?

We want to make sure our strategy is designed properly and provides a long term focus on what is important for East Sussex residents. To develop the plan we are using the ‘strategic commissioning framework’ (framework). This ensures a clear understanding of ‘need’, before identifying the best way to meet it. It also sets out a clear rationale for the review and decision making process.

Adopting the framework approach enables us to understand three key areas:



Developing our understanding of ‘need’ (the first stage in the commissioning cycle) was a very inclusive process. Alongside our knowledge of our statutory responsibilities, we spoke with stakeholders, partners and residents to seek their views. We also researched the impact of PRow and countryside sites on the Council’s priorities, on health benefits, conservation and our economy.

Developing the strategy involved an in-depth review of all of our activities to see, for example, how much it costs us to build a bridge, take enforcement action or clear a path.

The information and insights we have gathered includes how well we’re currently doing and helps us understand how we should structure our services in the future, i.e. the ‘supply’ aspect of the framework. We have used this to develop the vision and set out four strategic outcomes that represent our statutory obligations and the benefits that PRow and countryside sites bring. This underpins our long term planning.

But it won’t stop there. Strategic commissioning is a cyclical process. We will monitor our plans to ensure they are effective and that our work remains focused on maximising the benefits of PRow and countryside sites.

In this document, we set out how we will prioritise our work in the future as well as all the research used to develop the strategy.

By developing this Countryside Access Strategy we are making sure our service is designed to meet our statutory duties, get the maximum benefit from these assets and reflect the expectations of our community.

The Strategy

To develop the Strategy we have used a range of information to improve our understanding of how and why people use PRoW and countryside sites, the health and economic benefits they generate and how stakeholders are involved.

For example, we found:

- Being active has a wide range of benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing. It reduces the risk of heart disease by 35%, breast cancer by 20% and depression by 30%.
- Exercise, and in particular ‘green’ exercise (exercise outdoors in green areas), can improve self-esteem, mood disturbance, stress and anxiety.
- Green space can be a contributor to social cohesion.

If you want to know more about our research and findings, these are summarised in the later sections ‘Understanding Need’, and the ‘Technical Appendix’.

While it is not easy to draw a direct link or conclusion between the above findings and the role of PRoW and countryside sites in the county, feedback from stakeholders confirms that they are used to enjoy fresh air, health benefits and to enjoy scenery and walking. We can therefore conclude that they make a contribution to our Council priority: ‘Helping people to help themselves’ in the following ways:

- Helping people to be healthy, stay active and independent and particularly enjoy the benefits of green exercise (exercise outdoors in green areas);
- Improving community involvement and community wellbeing through locally established volunteer and interest groups set up to look after stretches of the PRoW network or for conservation work.

This research shows how PRoW and the countryside sites are important for people who use them. They help us to maintain a healthy lifestyle, through getting out and about, as well as experiencing and learning about nature. They give us the opportunity for group activity, or the chance for quiet personal enjoyment. As a county of mixed rural and urban communities, PRoW and countryside sites provide a rounded visitor experience and enhance our tourism offer. An estimated 10% of our tourist related business in East Sussex is related to the countryside, generating some £135m a year for the local economy (although it remains difficult to assess the direct relationship between this and PRoW and countryside sites).

The range of biodiversity at the countryside sites is important for the wildlife that is able to thrive there, or pass through on migration, as well as for the enjoyment of visitors. The record keeping of our PRoW network and countryside sites enables us to stay up-to-date with changing wildlife and communities.

As well as establishing a better understanding of how PRoW and countryside sites contribute to our priorities and communities, we reviewed how we manage them i.e. our ‘supply’. This aspect of the review covered a wide range of work to understand how much we spend on the service, as well as individual pieces of work, such as building a bridge or taking enforcement action if a path is blocked. Our costs were also compared with other authorities and external contractors.

We found that in many areas we are achieving well, particularly in managing the 2,000 mile PRoW network, but that some changes could bring improvements. This is particularly the case for the countryside sites.

We are drawing a distinction between the management of PRoW and countryside sites due to their differing requirements and the differences in our responsibilities. County Councils have a statutory Countryside Access Strategy obligation in respect of PRoW and, while varying models can be considered in the delivery of that obligation, (e.g. the use of contractors) the obligation will

ultimately always remain with us. This is not true of countryside sites where, for example, duties in relation to the conservation of wildlife rest with the landowner. We have no statutory obligation to retain a network of sites. We can therefore consider passing the sites to others more experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement. Such organisations may be better placed to take long-term responsibility for the countryside sites and improve what they have to offer. The only exception relates to countryside sites where we are the declaring authority and, in these cases, we retain some duties ourselves regardless of ownership.

This distinction between PRow and countryside sites has given us clarity and options in reaching our recommendations for the respective future management arrangements as set out below.

Setting out our future plan

In creating a Countryside Access Strategy, we are determining what we want our PRow and countryside site service to look like. Our aspiration is that we continue to provide a network of PRow and that the county should continue to benefit from its countryside sites. The whole offer needs to be safe and welcoming to residents, visitors and wildlife. The proposed service model will enable us to meet our statutory obligations, as well as maximise the community, health and economic benefits.

By setting this out in a clear and simple form, we can define what we will be working towards.

This is **'Our Vision'**:

To ensure that our public rights of way and countryside sites are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted; meeting the needs of our residents and visitors in the most efficient, affordable and effective manner.

This 'vision' is supported by four 'strategic outcomes'. These will be used to structure and prioritise our spending. They also provide a means to monitor and measure service performance to ensure maximum benefit is gained and best use of resources is achieved.

Strategic outcome 1: Enable residents and visitors to safely use our public rights of way and countryside sites.

We will use an effective and efficient Asset Management Programme (a plan for maintaining assets such as structures and countryside site condition). We will use it to manage the maintenance requirements of the PRow network and countryside sites. The same asset management approach will be used to plan and prioritise PRow legal and enforcement work. To deliver this programme, our main areas of focus will be to:

- Use reports, surveys and information from partners and volunteers to inform the PRow and countryside site asset management plan.
- Work to minimise cost, by understanding the balance between materials, maintenance and repair.
- Source work externally where it is shown to be better value. This will be put in place immediately.

Strategic outcome 2: Support and enable landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.

Public access on the PRow network and countryside sites is dependent on good working relationships between landowners, stakeholders and residents. To maintain and improve these relationships, our main areas of work will be to:

- Maintain legal records including the Definitive Map and Statement, and the Town and Village Greens and Common Land Registers. They are made available publically and can be viewed at our offices free of charge; informing land purchase as well as legal responsibilities.

- Work with landowners to help them understand and meet their responsibilities in maintaining the PRoW network. We will also provide advice to help landowners manage public access on their land.
- Improve the processing of landowner diversions to raise more income and create more capacity within the Public Rights of Way and Countryside Team. The diversion of a PRoW is a County Council power which can also be carried out by borough and district councils. Diversions can be made in the interests of the public (e.g. to improve access) or in the interests of the landowner (e.g. to improve privacy or security). There is a high demand from landowners for path diversions.

Strategic outcome 3: Achieve the most effective and efficient management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.

It is important that we utilise our assets appropriately to maximise the benefits that can be gained from them, to reflect the expectations of residents, visitors and users and to make the best use of our resources. This could mean charging for services to generate income, or putting in place different management arrangements. From our research and consultation work, we have found that we could achieve a better service by managing the countryside sites differently. We have also found that charging for services we provide, and how we work with internal and external colleagues, can be improved. We have set out our next steps below.

- We believe that, by changing how the countryside sites are managed, we would be able to improve overall effectiveness. By working to pass the sites to others more experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement, we may improve what the countryside sites have to offer for health and wellbeing, conservation and to contribute to a sustainable economy. We will work to identify the right organisations and arrangements to manage our countryside sites. This will be done in 2016 and, if found appropriate, put in place by summer 2018.
- Expand and improve how we charge for our services – for example, PRoW diversions. This will ensure that our costs are covered whilst minimising the impact of non-statutory work or other ‘powers’ on our capacity to meet statutory duties. We will have set an improved fee and charges structure and employed additional capacity by spring 2017.
- We will work proactively with internal colleagues (including Public Health and Infrastructure Development) and external colleagues (such as local authorities and community organisations) to develop partnerships and the network. This will enable us to ensure our infrastructure and health programmes work in harmony to make them as effective as possible. We will meet quarterly and embed each other’s priorities in our working practices by spring 2017.

Strategic outcome 4: Enhance local communities through engagement with our public rights of way and countryside sites.

Volunteer opportunities play an important role in developing a community, enabling healthy activity and, in turn, maintaining the PRoW and countryside sites. Whilst volunteers work for free, facilitating and running volunteer activities carries a cost and we must ensure that all our work is as efficient and effective as possible. To meet this outcome, we will:

- Work with council colleagues to effectively link our programs for outdoor and volunteer activity where possible. We will set an annual plan for review by spring 2017.
- Work with the partners who excel at working with volunteers, visitors and the wider community. This will improve both the involvement and experience of volunteers, and help ensure PRoW and countryside sites are developed to provide the best possible offer for residents in the community and visitors. Additionally, increased engagement will protect the PRoW and countryside sites in the longer term. We will have identified partners and put arrangements in place by summer 2018.

Glossary

Asset management approach. Each countryside site and item of furniture (such as a bridge or signpost) is an asset. We use surveys to monitor the condition of our assets and a priority system to determine which work should be done first – our Asset Management Programme. This helps us balance reactive and proactive requirements. The priority system is set out in the appendix 7 of the Technical Appendices.

Asset Management Programme. A plan for managing assets (such as structures and countryside sites) to an agreed standard through monitoring and maintenance.

Benchmarking. Learning how effective you are by comparing with others. This can be done in any area (such as unit costs or customer satisfaction) if the data is recorded.

Countryside Access Strategy (also called strategy or plan). This is a document that tells people what we have decided to do and why we have decided to do it (Our Vision and priorities). It contains a detailed plan describing the things that we will do to deliver the service and monitor how effective it is.

Countryside site. There are ten countryside sites that we are involved in managing, these are: Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson’s Field, Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve, Cuckoo Trail, Ditchling Common Country Park, Forest Way Country Park, Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve, Riverside Park, Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP), Shinewater Park, Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve. They vary in form; some are open space with conservation designations while others are long thin sites largely used for walking, cycling or horse riding.

Declaring Authority. As a Local Authority we have powers to acquire, declare and manage Local Nature Reserves (LNR). To qualify as an LNR a countryside site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment. You can get more information about LNRs on page 29 of this strategy.

Delivery model. How a service is provided. By completing our options appraisal process we analyse a number of different models and determine which ones are best for East Sussex. Until the model is agreed with Councillors we call it the preferred model.

Legal records and maps. The Council is responsible for the maintenance and update of a number of legal records and maps, these include:

- **The Definitive Map and Statement** – which records the routes of PRoW.
- **The Town and Village Green Register** – which records the location and boundaries of town and village greens.
- **The Common Land Register** – which records the location and boundaries of common land.

Our Vision. This is our idea for what we think the service should be like in the future, set out in a short, clear and simple form.

Priorities. These are the most important things that we need to do.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW). PRoW enable free access to our County, crossing through towns and the countryside. Depending on their type they can be used on foot, bicycle, horse (and carriage) or in a vehicle. You can get more information on page 30.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Some of our countryside sites have this designation as they are very important for wildlife. You can get more information on all the different designations on page 34.

Stakeholder. An individual, group or organisation that has an interest in the Strategy. As an example this includes: residents, visitors, landowners, councils (such as districts, boroughs, parishes and towns), tenants, councillors, the Environment Agency, Natural England, local communities and users groups. This list is not exhaustive.

Strategic Commissioning Framework (framework). This is a way of working that we use to help ensure all Council departments follow the same process to make decisions about the services that we provide. The process has four groups of tasks (analyse, plan, do and review) that we carry out to find out what residents need and how our services are provided to meet those needs. There are three key terms:

- **Need** – our statutory responsibilities and contribution to Council policies.
- **Demand** – what people want from PRow and countryside sites.
- **Supply** – how we work to meet need.

There is more information on the framework in the Technical Appendix.

Background Information

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How we developed the Strategy

Introduction

As previously described, to develop our Countryside Access Strategy, we adopted the Strategic Commissioning Framework approach. The following sections summarise the information we gathered, and its analysis, as we applied this process. This includes:

- research to better understand how and why PRow and countryside sites are used, and the benefits users get from them
- information reviewed to understand how we provide the service and how our methods compare to others
- a gap analysis looking for any differences between the two above
- some information on how we will model our service in the future.

More detailed reports are shown in the Technical Appendix starting on page 24.

Understanding ‘Need’:

Our statutory responsibilities and contribution to Council priorities

To understand this we looked at a range of information and spoke to a number of groups.

The findings of this research are summarised on the next three pages while the Technical Appendix has more detail.

We looked at all the information we had collected, as well as legislation and guidance that sets out our statutory obligations. We also identified how PRow and countryside sites contribute to our council priorities and what residents and visitors expect. These have been used to underpin our vision and the strategy. Our strategic outcomes set out how we will meet them and prioritise spend in the future.

Health Benefits



Promoting active lifestyles can help us address some of the important challenges facing the UK today. Increasing activity has the potential to improve the physical and mental health of the nation, reduce all-cause mortality and improve life expectancy. It can also save money by significantly easing the burden of chronic disease on the health and social care services.

We looked in to the health benefits of activity. Appendix 1 (A Review of the Potential to Contribute To Improving Health) highlights a range of research.

Being active has a wide range of benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing. It reduces risk of heart disease by 35%, type II diabetes by 40%, breast cancer by 20%, depression and dementia by 30%.

To live a healthy lifestyle each week adults should do:



150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity



An activity to improve muscle strength twice



Minimise extended sedentary periods

Research has found that green exercise (i.e. outdoors in green areas) can provide additional benefits by improving self-esteem, mood disturbance, stress and anxiety. Furthermore, early indications from research identify green space as a contributor to social cohesion.

We also know that children should:

- Engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) every day.
- Undertake vigorous activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, at least three days a week.
- Minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

By maintaining our PRow and countryside sites we are providing key infrastructure which can support people to meet their need for outdoor activity. By working with council colleagues we can ensure that our Countryside Access Strategy takes into account the health benefits that can be achieved through improving access to green spaces. It can also prioritise supporting access for people with poorer health outcomes, maximising our positive impact as a Council.

Usage



We employed various methods to gather information to understand how and why people are using the PRow and countryside sites. The Consultation Reports (appendices 3 and 4 of the Technical Appendix) show all of our results.

Individual survey

A survey asking people how and why they use PRow and our countryside sites.

This was advertised across East Sussex and we received 886 responses. 97% of respondents had used PRow and 85% a countryside site in the last two years. 60% said they used them to get fresh air, for their health and to enjoy scenery and walking. We learnt that over 80% of those visiting a countryside site travelled there by car.

We had 405 additional comments about PRow which told us: they are a valued asset (14%), where accessibility (15%) and maintenance (26%) is important.

We had 141 additional comments on countryside sites: 18% said they were a valued asset; 12% said maintenance and management was important; 15% praised our management; 85% said the countryside sites were important for wildlife conservation; 18% wanted easier access; and 13% wanted more information.

Stakeholder engagement

We also asked our stakeholders how they are involved and what their plans are for the future.

We received 126 replies to our survey and had 65 attendees at our meetings. We spoke to a range of stakeholders including landowners, user groups, partners and organisations. 10% were from the private sector, 14% voluntary, 18% public sector and 42% association or society.

The top reasons respondents were involved in PRow and countryside sites were:

- Enjoyment of the countryside
- Health and exercise
- Monitoring and management.

20% were involved with Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP), 27% with the Cuckoo Trail and 64% in walking.

When asked about the future, the main issues cited were: financing (12%), co-ordination (12%), change (13%) and information (12%).

Other usage data

Recordings of visitor numbers give some indication of use across the network. SSCP visitor centre numbers show relatively consistent use of between 45,000 and 65,000 per year except for one dip of roughly 25% in 2012. (It should be noted not all visitors enter the centre).

In 2014/15 we received 3,705 reports in relation to maintenance of the PRow network. These are fed into our 'asset management system', so work can be reviewed, prioritised and action taken where appropriate.



<p>Economy</p> 	<p>Tourism is important to rural communities and the countryside can be a key driver for influencing visitor behaviour.</p> <p>Tourism is valued at £1.35bn for East Sussex, and accounts for 22,483 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) jobs. The countryside is estimated to account for roughly 10%, i.e. between £134m/2,250 FTE and £147m/2,600 FTE. While the exact draw of the PRoW and our countryside sites to the countryside of East Sussex is not known, it is certainly an important aspect.</p> <p>By maintaining our PRoW and countryside sites we are providing key infrastructure that has a direct impact on visitor attraction and experience of East Sussex.</p> <p>The ‘Strategy Assessment Report (Economic Impact)’ provides more information. See appendix 2 of the Technical Appendix.</p>
<p>Legislation and guidance</p> 	<p>The Council, as Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to assert and protect the public’s right to use the 2,000 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways in East Sussex. These public highways run predominantly across private land. The Highways Act 1980, along with other legislation, places obligations on both the Council and landowners to maintain the network.</p> <p>Managing the network covers a range of work. As well as completing maintenance (such as building bridges, installing gates and resurfacing paths) the Council works with landowners to help them understand and meet their responsibilities. In managing the network the Council also has a statutory responsibility to maintain legal records such as the Definitive Map and Statement, which records all PRoW, and the Town and Village Green and Common Land Registers. In updating these records, there may be objections from landowners and users, which can require legal advice and even Public Inquiries.</p> <p>As a landowner of countryside sites, the Council has a range of responsibilities which broadly involve: wildlife conservation in line with its designation; ensuring assets are safe; enforcement of bylaws; and providing suitable access.</p> <p>The Council is also the Declaring Authority at two countryside sites: Chailey Common LNR and Weir Wood LNR. Here the Council has further responsibilities, even though it is not the landowner.</p> <p>There is a wide range of national legislation and regional policy that affects how PRoW and countryside sites are managed. This ranges from planning policy on development to conservation policy on how works can be completed. It also includes local policy such as the Transport Plan and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). A strategy map is detailed in the Technical Appendix and anyone working in this field must be aware of this information.</p>

Understanding Supply: How we manage public rights of way and countryside sites



We looked at a range of information to review how we provide our services including costs and what outcomes are achieved.

A lot of the information we gathered was held internally, but some was collected from external partners, colleagues or businesses.

By analysing this information we are able to understand how well we are doing.

The findings of this research are detailed on these two pages while the Technical Appendix has more detail.

<p>Maintenance of PRow and countryside sites</p> 	<p>We have 2,000 miles of PRow and are involved in managing ten countryside sites (1,160 hectares).</p> <p>The Council operates an effective ‘asset management system’ to prioritise and balance reactive and proactive maintenance (see glossary and appendix 7). Each year over a quarter of the PRow and countryside sites are surveyed – inspecting and recording the condition of our assets. This data is then added to the Rights of Way Asset Management (RAM) system which is used to organise and prioritise work. Applying an asset management approach gives the Council a good understanding of the condition of PRow and countryside sites and flexibility in its maintenance.</p> <p>We are proud to report that over 99% of our PRow network is accessible by foot and 80% of the furniture is in a good condition.</p>
<p>Countryside site condition</p> 	<p>The countryside sites are important locally and nationally, which is reflected in their designations. The designations inform what can be done on the countryside site and how works should be arranged.</p> <p>There are species records and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations linked to the countryside sites. These show that ESCC, as landowner or manager of land, has a duty to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity at all of the countryside sites. The data collated shows that ESCC is currently meeting this duty. The five SSSI countryside sites it manages are meeting the national target of the land being within a ‘favourable’ or ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition. Additionally, rare and protected species continue to be recorded across all the countryside sites.</p> <p>80% of countryside site furniture, which is maintained by ESCC, is also recorded as being in a good condition.</p>
<p>Market analysis</p> 	<p>To understand our supply we have reviewed our staff cost, resource, equipment and depot arrangements, along with how much work we are able to complete each year. This has enabled us to develop a good understanding of the average unit costs across all our work, from clearance to building bridges, from letter writing to resurfacing.</p> <p>This information was compared to contractor costs for similar works and research findings reported by Surrey County Council (SCC) into the market in East Sussex.</p> <p>Our research found that we have a competitive unit price for our work.</p>

<p>Benchmarking</p> 	<p>We spoke to our neighbouring authorities to understand how they manage PRoW and countryside sites, as well as the benefits of different models.</p> <p>Each council arranges their services slightly differently, to suit the need of their local area. Some have more PRoW while others have more countryside sites, and we all record our work differently. This meant direct comparison of our outputs, such as the percentage of bridges that are in a good condition, was not possible.</p> <p>On a broad level, it was useful to appreciate the different arrangements in place, how income was secured and what benefits different models achieve. We found that ESCC is competitive in its management cost and level of maintenance, and leading in asset management techniques. We are the only Council in the south-east that has a joint PRoW and countryside site maintenance team.</p>
<p>Consultation</p> 	<p>As well as helping understand how and why people use the PRoW and countryside sites, the consultations helped us understand how well we manage them.</p> <p>Respondents told us that maintenance and accessibility were important issues and that in some cases if this was better it may encourage them to use PRoW and countryside sites more. However, more people said that there was nothing that we could do to increase their usage, while some said that location and time was a factor.</p> <p>This was repeated in the stakeholder survey, where respondents told us that the condition of the PRoW/countryside site plays an important role in its usage. Other comments let us know that our system is working well considering the level of resource that we have.</p>

Gap Analysis: understanding how well we are performing

With the information we have gathered about our supply we can see if we are meeting our statutory responsibilities, making the best use of our resources and helping people help themselves.

The gap analysis is summarised below. This shows that the current arrangements are working well (however we might be able to do more in some areas).

Meeting our statutory responsibilities as Highways Authority, landowner and declaring authority.

The Council operates an effective asset management system across the PRoW and countryside sites to balance proactive and reactive work. Health and safety is the key factor, ensuring a quick response to these issues. Prioritisation of works takes into account how much a path has been actively promoted to the public, as well as general usage and reports. This allows us to react to change of use over time (the priority statement is set out in appendix 4 of the Technical Appendix). Almost a fifth (**17.5%**) of our PRoW network is prioritised as ‘well used’ or promoted by the Council. On promoted routes, the furniture maintenance is carried out by the Council.

Another key factor for good works planning is having good survey data:

- Every year we survey **over a quarter (575 miles)** of the PRoW network
- Every countryside site is surveyed **every two years**

From the surveys we know that:

- **80%** of PRoW and countryside site furniture is in ‘good condition’
- **Only one percent** of the PRoW network is ‘not available’. This is due to legal issues or fundamental obstruction (for example, cliff falls or major developments)

Natural England’s target of **95%** of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) being in a ‘favourable’ or ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition is met on the countryside sites that the Council has involvement with.

The Sussex Rare Species Inventory (Sussex RSI) and Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan Species Inventory (Sussex BAPSI) show a good range of species at the countryside sites. This is an indication of the effective management of the countryside sites and applies to all countryside sites including the SSSIs.

Making the best use of our resources

Four countryside sites are supported by Higher Level Stewardship schemes; the funding is invested in the countryside sites to improve their condition further.

Where possible, funding is secured from developers and used to improve the condition of the countryside and mitigate the impact of development.

Where financially viable and possible, we use Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) contractors and local produce. Business opportunities are created on our countryside sites for SMEs where appropriate.

The asset management system ensures the maintenance of PRoW and countryside sites is well managed. It also ensures the team takes into account the level of use that an individual PRoW or countryside site has and how heavily they are promoted.

Land searches are an important aspect of property purchase, especially in rural communities. We have a public commitment to provide a quick response, which is met.

Helping people help themselves

People like to enjoy the countryside in different ways. **22%** of our PRow network is designated as a multi-user route, e.g. can be used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

In addition to an accessible network, there are active volunteering opportunities in 14 parishes and at six countryside sites. There is also the ability to create a volunteer group in any area if people are interested and their work is appropriate for the PRow network and countryside sites.

886 people replied to the individuals' survey. **97%** had used the PRow in the last two years and **85%** a countryside site. **16%** stated maintenance as a reason that would encourage them to use PRow and countryside sites more.

In a survey completed by a total of **126** groups or organisations, maintenance was rated **7th** out of 16 in the analysis of comments from meetings.

PRow and countryside sites are promoted on our website, in electronic leaflets, as well as via an online interactive map and a smartphone app. This gives residents and visitors easy access to maps and the countryside. The Visitor Centre at SSCP is open for nine months a year.

Options Appraisal Process: analysis of management options

As a result of the review process the strategic outcomes were developed. These are:

1. Enable residents and visitors to safely use our public rights of way and countryside sites.
2. Support and enable landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.
3. Achieve the most efficient and effective management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.
4. Enhance local communities through engagement with our public rights of way and countryside sites.

These strategic outcomes set out how we will prioritise our work in the future to deliver against our statutory responsibilities and maximise the contribution to Council priorities. There are a number of ways to provide a service, such as 'in-house' staff or external contractors. We applied a thorough options appraisal process to look at all the different delivery models. This is summarised, with the preferred model, on the next page.

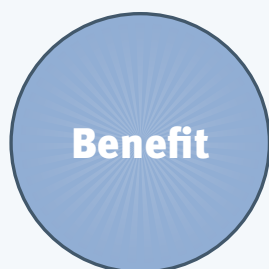
Delivery model options

Each delivery model was analysed against four categories: benefits, costs, risk and interest.

To see how PRow and countryside sites could be managed in the future we have looked at how other authorities provide a range of functions and evaluated a number of delivery models. These included: the use of contractors; management by charitable organisations, creation of a trading company or social enterprise; transfer or sale of land; in-house provision; and partnership arrangements.

Analysis: benefit, cost, risk, interest

Each area of analysis was defined before the process began and included:



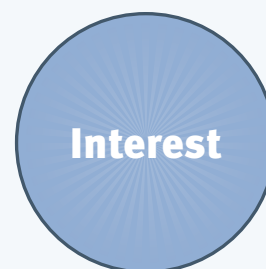
The four strategic outcomes identified



If there was no additional cost or a saving anticipated



If the model might be unsustainable or there was no market capacity or interest



The level of interest from relevant parties such as councillors, staff, partners, the local community and business

This analysis enabled us to identify the best models available for East Sussex from a wide number of options. These were explored in more detail and the final delivery model developed for the strategy.

Preferred model

Broadly, the Council has determined two models for the functions:

1. **PRow will be managed in-house.** This covers areas such as maintenance, enforcement and legal record keeping. The research found that our current Asset Management Programme efficiently and effectively balances reactive and proactive maintenance and enforcement requirements. The research also found that we operate at a competitive cost when measured against external providers. By managing the service in-house, we maintain a high level of flexibility in planning how we meet the strategic outcomes. In a small number of areas, modifications were identified that may bring improvements. These include: how we structure our work with consideration of Public Health objectives; how we communicate and work with our colleagues developing new paths, and the delivery of our volunteer offer. Our Rights of Way and Countryside Team will use the findings of the research to improve how we manage our resources in the future.
2. **How we manage our countryside sites should change.** We believe that by changing how the countryside sites are managed, we may be able to improve what they have to offer. By working to pass most of the sites to others experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement, we hope to improve the contribution that countryside sites make to Council objectives and in meeting the expectations of users. If we are able to enhance their financial management they may also have long-term protection from the continued financial pressures all organisations are experiencing. The Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way are more like Public Rights of Way in their appearance and use, so they require different management arrangements to green open space. Consequently, we propose that the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way continue to be managed in-house.

Implementation and Review: next steps

In April 2016 this draft Strategy will be submitted to the County Council's Cabinet (a group of Councillors) for approval. After this we will hold a public consultation asking what people think of the Strategy. There will be a survey published on our website (www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay). We will use this time to speak to a range of stakeholders to understand what people think of our plan and their interest in it. The survey will be open to everyone, including residents, visitors, partners and businesses.

We will use the information that we gather during this period to finalise the strategy. The final strategy will be approved by Cabinet before it is implemented.

As there are a number of changes proposed, if they are approved, we will take a staged approach to implementation. We have developed a draft implementation plan which sets out who we need to speak to and when, as well as what processes we need to follow to make sure all the changes follow the right legal process.

The information we have gathered has given us a good understanding of our current position and we will use this to monitor the changes that we put in place. Our Rights of Way and Countryside Team will work to embed these changes into their working practices. As changes are put in place they will monitor the impact of those changes. Our Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and the strategic outcomes will be used to make sure that all changes continue to meet the objectives we have identified.

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Strategic Commissioning Framework (framework): the process used to develop our plan

The framework sets out how the Council will secure the best countryside access for East Sussex residents. By focusing on outcomes, not just the existing services, it will enable us to make the best possible use of resources, manage markets and design services to ensure a balance of cost, health, social, economic and environmental benefits for East Sussex.

The Strategy builds on existing best practice and reflects our past achievements, and will enable us to understand better the long term contribution that PRow and countryside sites make in East Sussex. From that understanding we will identify the best approach and methods available to us to gain the most benefit.

The Strategy has been developed using our commissioning framework to provide a clear rationale for the commissioning decisions that we have to make. It also provides the basis for our decision-making, in a way that is consistent across different services.

Strategic commissioning is a cyclical activity, (ie: an ongoing process) and not a one-off event. The activities involved in strategic commissioning and the relationship with procurement is shown below.



The strategic commissioning cycle (the outer circle in the diagram) drives the procurement and contract management activities (the inner circle). The contracting experience must, however, inform the ongoing development of strategic commissioning. It is our intention that our commissioning process should be equitable and transparent, and open to influence from all stakeholders through dialogue with customers, service users and service providers.

In developing this Strategy we have sought to establish clearly what we want the network of PRoW and countryside sites in the county to look like in the future; this is 'Our Vision'. We also need to be clear about how this Vision will be achieved – the implementation process. Our Strategy for PRoW and countryside sites reflects and contributes towards the delivery of our wider strategic objectives.

Population Needs Assessment: understanding how and why people use public rights of way and countryside sites

To understand the 'need' for public rights of way (PRoW) and countryside sites we decided to research information on:

- **Health benefits**
- **Economic impact**
- **Usage**

The health benefits were investigated and reported by Peter Brett Associates. They are briefly summarised on page 15 in 'Understanding Need' and the full report is published in appendix 1.

The economic impact assessment was completed by Nairne Ltd and Venuesadvisor Ltd. Page 17 in 'Understanding Need' gives a brief summary and the full report is published in appendix 2.




We investigated usage in a number of ways:

1. **Held data.** This included data from counters showing how many people use the PRoW and countryside sites as well as recorded reports, complaints, compliments and website usage. This is summarised in the table below (Table 1A).
2. **A survey for individuals.** This was widely publicised in East Sussex and could be completed by anyone who wanted to tell us how and why they use PRoW and countryside sites. It was open to everyone, including people that didn't live in East Sussex and those that didn't use PRoW and countryside sites. The consultation report is published in appendix 3.
3. **Stakeholder engagement.** Here we spoke to a range of interested parties and groups including landowners, user groups, partners and organisations. We issued a survey and held five meetings where we explored how these stakeholders are involved and their future plans. The consultation report is published in appendix 4.

There is a small amount of data held by the Council and its partners that provides some useful context to PRoW and countryside site use. One area is the number of reports, complaints and compliments that we receive each year.

Another form of data is gathered by counters on some PRoW and at the Visitor Centre at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP). There are counters on the South Downs Way (SDW) and 1066 Route. Both routes pass through East Sussex and are funded by South Downs National Park and Rother District Council respectively. We only have access to a small number of counters as they have a cost to maintain and can be damaged in poor weather. It is also important to be aware many people visiting SSCP do not go into the Visitor Centre.

Table A1: Summary of some data sets

Area	Findings
<p data-bbox="161 297 456 405">Counters on 1066 and SDW, SSCP visitor numbers</p> 	<p data-bbox="472 297 1428 371">Counters give some indication of use across the network but due to cost we only have them on two main promoted routes. In summary:</p> <ul data-bbox="507 387 1428 757" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 387 1428 539">• 1066 Route – usage ranges from approx. 1,000 to 6,000 counts per year depending on the area. The highest recorded number has been found at Guestling in 2011 and the lowest in Sedlescombe in 2003. Usage was highest in 2007/8 and 2011/12 with troughs in between. <li data-bbox="507 555 1428 757">• South Downs Way (SDW) – there are three counters in East Sussex and in 2013/14 they recorded <ul data-bbox="536 645 995 757" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="536 645 911 680">• 26,217 users at Itford Farm <li data-bbox="536 685 995 721">• 40,367 users at Jevington Church <li data-bbox="536 725 895 757">• 61,191 users at Streat Hill. <p data-bbox="536 775 1428 965">These are records of walkers (by far the highest), cyclists and horse riders. It could be assumed that most of those at Streat Hill and Jevington Church are different people while most of those at Itford have visited one or the other. Streat Hill is shown to be consistently the busiest across the South Downs.</p> <ul data-bbox="507 983 1428 1095" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 983 1428 1095">• Seven Sister Country Park (SSCP) – visitor centre numbers show relatively consistent use of between 45,000 and 65,000 per year except for one dip of roughly 25% in 2012.
<p data-bbox="161 1115 456 1223">Complaints, compliments and reports</p> 	<p data-bbox="472 1115 1428 1227">Reports are received to let us know about path and furniture condition. These can come from anyone, such as user groups, parish and town councils and members of the public.</p> <p data-bbox="472 1245 1428 1357">In 2014/15 we received 3,705 reports in relation to PRoW. These are fed into the asset management system for review, and action where appropriate.</p> <p data-bbox="472 1375 1428 1449">In 2014/15 the contact centre received 32 compliments across the service, and only six complaints.</p>
<p data-bbox="161 1469 456 1514">Website usage</p> 	<p data-bbox="472 1469 1428 1547">Another useful source of information that gives an indication of usage and interest is the number of times a page on our website is visited.</p> <p data-bbox="472 1565 1428 1877">For example, between April 2014 and March 2015, there were approximately 217,000 visits to the SSCP website. In the same period, the highest visited countryside walks page on the Council’s website was the Cuckoo Trail with over 20,000 visits. This is over double the number of visits to the Forest Way page, which received just under 9,000. Our webpage detailing information on circular walks was visited over 13,000 times and visits to Camber Sands and beaches together totalled over 19,000.</p>

Current Legislation, Guidance, Policy and Practice


There is a wide range of national legislation, guidance and regional policy that affects how PRoW and countryside sites are managed. This ranges from planning policy on development to conservation policy on how works can be completed. It also includes local policy such as the Transport Plan and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). A strategy map is shown in appendix 5 and anyone working in this field must be aware of this information.

The Council has key areas of responsibility in its role as Highways Authority, landowner and Declaring Authority. These are set out in Table A2.

There are three areas where future legislation change will affect the Council:

- **Finalising the Definitive Map.** The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that any unrecorded PRoW in existence before 1949 and not on the map by 2026, will be extinguished. This is likely to generate an increase in requests to have new paths recorded in the lead up to 2026. Public Inquiries are often necessary to resolve disputed requests.
- **Coastal Path.** Under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill 2009, the path must be completed by 2020 with East Sussex sections being timetabled by Natural England for 2016-2018. This will require some resource to map, formalise and create.
- **High Level Stewardship (HLS) funding.** The HLS provides a significant income for some of the countryside sites. The fund is issued by Natural England and due to be replaced in 2016 by a new scheme, Countryside Stewardship. It is anticipated, but not certain, that once our HLS ends we will be successful in applying for Countryside Stewardship.

Table A2: Summary of key responsibilities in legislation and guidance.

	Responsibility
<p>Countryside site landowner</p> 	<p>As a landowner of countryside sites the Council has a range of responsibilities which broadly involve the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife/heritage conservation in line with its designation (see tables A4 and A5). This involves managing the land in a way that conserves and enhances its wildlife value. In addition we must ensure our work, and that of others, does not damage the habitats. • Ensuring all assets (such as access structures, car parks, buildings, etc) on the countryside sites are monitored and maintained to a suitably safe standard. • Enforcement, e.g. making sure all bylaws are followed. • Providing suitable access for all users. <p>These are set out in various legislation including: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006.</p>

(Continued on the opposite page.)

Table A2 (Continued): Summary of key responsibilities in legislation and guidance.

	Responsibility
<p>Highways Authority</p> 	<p>The Council, as Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to assert and protect the public’s right to use the 2,000 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways in East Sussex. These public highways run predominantly across private land. The Highways Act 1980, along with other legislation, places obligations on both the Council and landowners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners are responsible for preventing the obstruction of a path. They must maintain stiles or gates (as they enable a user to pass over or through a fence), adjacent vegetation or structures and crops. • The Council is responsible for the maintenance of a path, i.e. the surface (including vegetation), signage, bridges and legal records. <p>If the Council owns the land that the PRoW passes over, it is responsible for both areas.</p> <p>The Council is required to provide a 25% contribution to the upkeep of gates and stiles. Also, if the stile or gate is on a walk promoted by the Council, we will usually maintain it on the landowner’s behalf.</p> <p>The Council must maintain legal records, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Definitive Map (DM), which sets out all PRoW • the Common Land (CL) Register • Town and Village Green (TVG) Register. <p>These records are essential to a range of duties in relation to maintaining the network, such as completing property searches, temporary closure orders, diversions and responding to planning applications. Requests for paths to be added to the DM must be considered.</p> <p>The Council must also provide a Rights of Way Improvement Plan and facilitate a Local Access Forum.</p>
<p>Countryside site Declaring Authority</p> 	<p>A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation made under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. We, as a Local Authority, have powers to acquire, declare and manage LNRs. To qualify as an LNR a countryside site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment. As Declaring Authority we have a responsibility towards the management of Chailey Common LNR and Weir Wood LNR.</p>

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations. We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment on this Strategy which can be found in appendix 6 of the Technical Appendix. The assessment also includes further information on the Equality Act 2010.

Provision, Resource and Financial Analysis

Provision

We have 2,000 miles of public rights of way (PRoW) across East Sussex covering both rural and urban areas. Many PRoW were created for rural travel – typically between towns, farms, pubs and churches. Since the 1950's, these routes have largely become recreational in nature – allowing people to access the countryside for personal enjoyment as well as their day-to-day activities.

Whilst PRoW are often rural, around 50 miles of the PRoW network runs through urban areas. This urban network is typically made up of twittens – providing routes between shops, schools and housing. Map one, on the next page, shows the distribution of PRoW across the County.

There are four different types (or status) of PRoW and they are usually marked by different symbols, most commonly found on wooden signs (or fingerposts).



1. Footpath

Where you can walk



2. Bridleway

Where you can walk and ride a horse or bicycle



3. Byway

Where you can walk, ride a horse or bicycle and drive a motor vehicle



4. Restricted byway

Where you can walk, ride a horse or bicycle and drive a carriage

Table A3. Summary of PRoW designation at other authorities (miles)

	Footpath	Bridleway	Byway	Restricted Byway	Total PRoW
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)	1,563	364	45	28	2,000
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	2,060	471	178	146	2,855
Kent County Council (KCC)	3,622	472	143	96	4,190
Surrey County Council (SCC)	1,388	690	123	1	2,079
West Sussex County Council (WSCC)	1,722	727	8	78	2,535

PRoW are used by a range of people who want to access the countryside in different ways. Walking is the main activity, and bridleways are often the only off-road access for horse riders and cyclists.

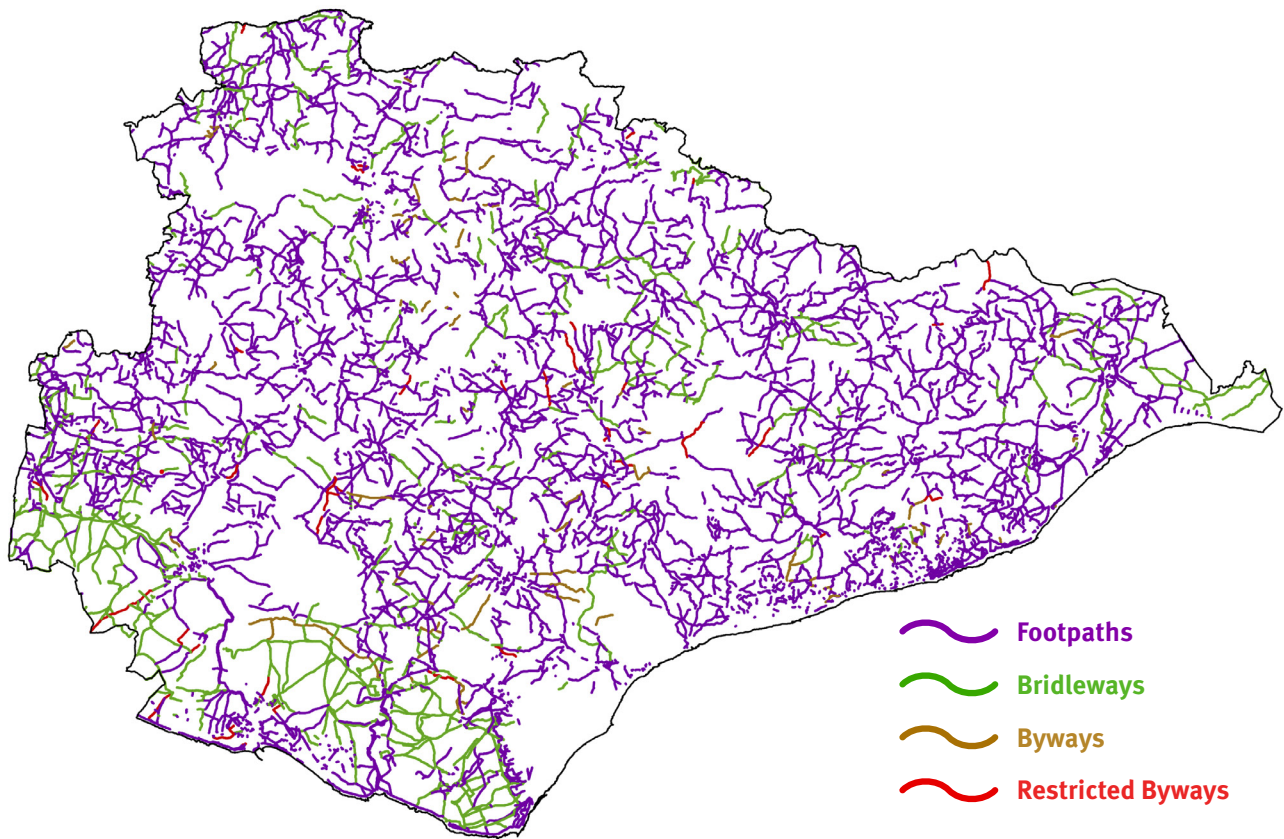
The Council's website provides an online PRoW map, showing paths, gates, stiles and bridges. This map can be used by the public to find paths in their areas, or to report issues to the Council.

Whilst many PRoW users prefer to plan their own routes, either using the online PRoW map or Ordnance Survey maps, the Council also provides 38 self-guided circular walks. These routes provide walkers with a range of well-maintained walks around the County, which are typically accessible via public transport. Leaflets providing maps and walk directions as well as gates, stiles and road crossing information, can be downloaded from our website.

There are ten long distance linear paths that run through East Sussex – for example, the South Downs Way or Weald Way. Long distance routes typically run across county boundaries. Where PRoW pass through farms or cross water, bridges, gates and stiles are installed so that the path can be used safely and livestock are controlled. In East Sussex, there are:

2,803 bridges, **4,954** gates, **1,164** steps, **6,103** stiles, **10,853** fingerposts.

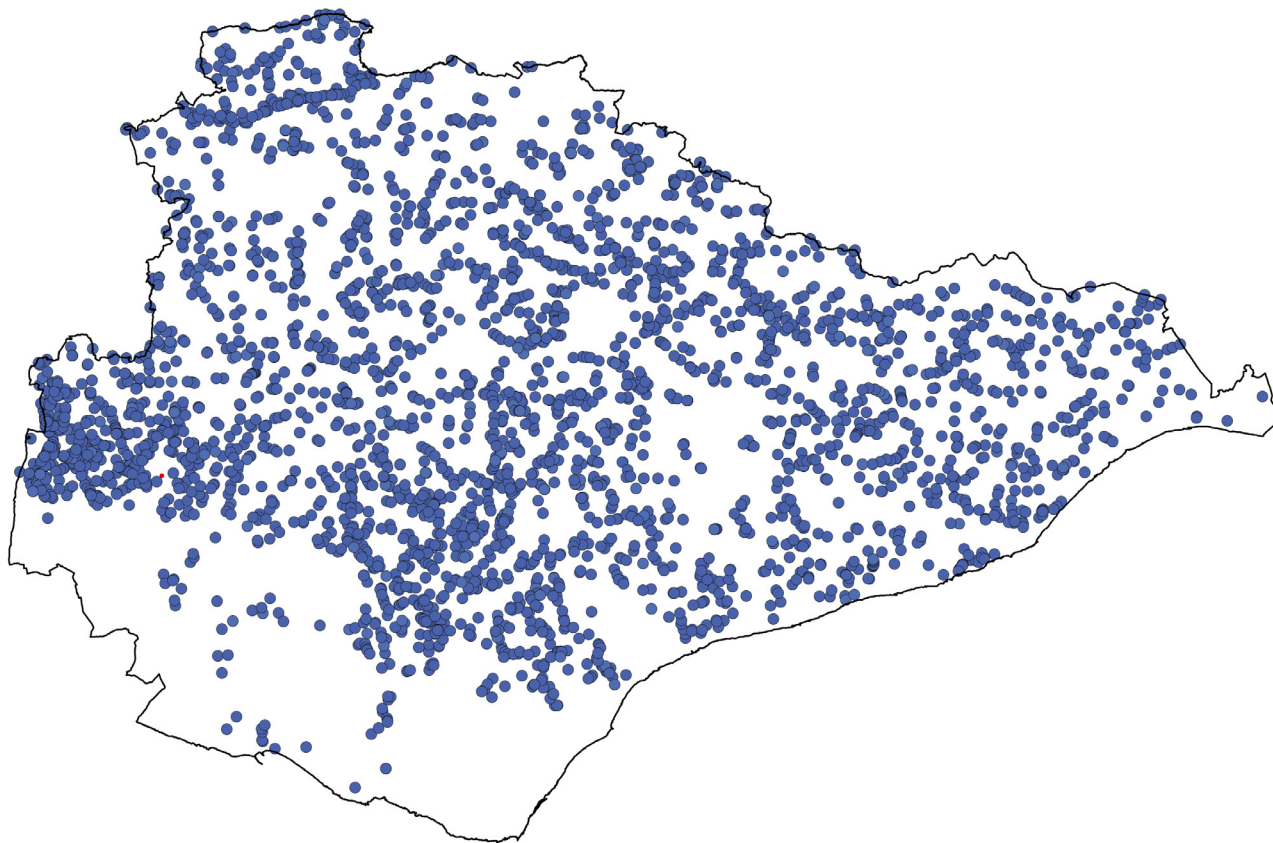
**Map 1:
Distribution of different PRow in East Sussex**



Like main highway networks, the mileage and status of PRow varies between counties – often due to geographical or historical reasons. For example, the South Downs of East Sussex features a higher percentage of bridleways than the rest of the County. There are also very few bridges in the South Downs area compared to the Weald.

These differences can affect the type of work required in a particular parish or area of the County. For example, a bridge on a bridleway will require more resource to replace compared to a footpath. Table A3 shows a comparison of PRow in East Sussex with other authorities.

**Map 2:
2,803 bridges in East Sussex**



Map 2 gives an overview of the 2,803 bridges in the County – each blue circle is a bridge. Our Rights of Way Asset Management System (RAM) records each item of furniture as well as its condition. This is informed by the definitive map, our network survey and reports from path users or landowners.

The Rights of Way and Countryside Team are involved in the management of ten countryside sites in East Sussex; their location in the County is shown in map three. The countryside sites have become the responsibility of the County for a range of reasons, such as conservation importance or development requirement. The countryside sites are open spaces where visitors are free to follow paths or roam the area. You can walk all of them and ride a bike at two, the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way Country Park.

Map 3: Countryside sites managed by the Rights of Way and Countryside Team



There are a number of protected species at the countryside sites. Our responsibility and management varies depending on the countryside site designation and how we are involved. Countryside sites are usually managed by a plan which sets out what our priorities are and how they will be achieved. In some cases, due to the importance of species on the countryside site, this is in agreement with Natural England. This is summarised in Table A4 (each countryside site name links to our website with more information).

There are other countryside sites which the Council has some involvement in, such as Ashdown Forest and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (RHNR). These are not managed by the Rights of Way and Countryside Team and are not included in this Strategy.

Table A4. The countryside sites

Countryside Site	Wildlife Conservation Designations (More information on table A5)	Area (Hectares)
Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson’s Field	SSSI, SNCI, SPA	27
Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve*	LNR, SSSI, ANA	450
Cuckoo Trail*	Part of NCN21	39
Ditchling Common Country Park	Country Park, SSSI, ANA	78
Forest Way Country Park	Country Park, Part of NCN21, AONB	30
Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve	SNCI, NR, SDNP	43
Riverside Park	SNCI	18
Seven Sisters Country Park	Country Park, SSSI, SDNP, ANA	280
Shinewater Park	ANA	43 (part water)
Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve*	LNR, SSSI, ANA , AONB	152 (mostly water)

*Chailey Common LNR and Weir Wood LNR are not owned by the Council, the Cuckoo Trail and Shinewater are part owned by the Council.

The Council works closely with government agencies and non-governmental organisations, to ensure that the protection of its important assets is consistent with national and international environmental policy and associated land designation. The designations are set out in more detail in Table A5.

Table A5. Countryside site designation and legislation

Designation	Legislation
<p>Local Nature Reserve (LNR)</p> <p>As Declaring Authority we have a responsibility towards the management of Chailey Common LNR and Weir Wood LNR.</p>	<p>A Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. As a Local Authority, the Council has powers to acquire, declare and manage LNRs. To qualify as an LNR a countryside site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment.</p>
<p>Country Parks (CP)</p> <p>We currently own and manage the Forest Way Country Park, Seven Sisters Country Park and Ditchling Common Country Park.</p>	<p>Country Parks are designated under the 1968 Countryside Act with the purpose of providing a green space for the public for quiet recreation. They are normally situated on the edge of urban areas.</p>
<p>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</p> <p>Relevant at Ditchling Common Country Park, Camber sand dunes, Weir Wood LNR, Seven Sisters Country Park and Chailey Common LNR.</p>	<p>A Site of Special Scientific Interest is designated under the Countryside & Wildlife Act 1981 and the regulations covering these areas were strengthened under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Natural England is responsible for overseeing the positive management of SSSIs and under this designation the Council has a responsibility to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs both in carrying out its operations and in exercising its decision making functions.</p>

Further designations include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNCI – Site of Nature Conservation Importance • SPA – Special Protected Area • NCN21 – National Cycle Route 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANA – Archaeological Notification Areas • AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • SDNP – South Downs National Park
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Resources

We are very proactive in how we manage our workload. When a report is received from the public, the relevant Officer will assess how quickly a response is needed. The Rights of Way Priority Statement (see appendix 7) details how maintenance is prioritised. In summary, dangerous problems on the most popular paths are given the highest priority for inspection and resolution. (For example, a fallen tree hanging over a town-centre route to school.) Total path obstructions, where no alternative route is available, are also usually given a high priority, particularly on well-used or potentially useful paths.

At the other end of the scale, inconveniences (for example, minor problems where no risk is caused to the public) are regarded as a lower priority. This is especially the case where a suitable alternative route around the problem is available or if the path is not well-used due to its location in the network.

As well as employing staff and contractors we have 15 PRoW Parish volunteer groups with a total of over 220 members, over 110 volunteers working on our countryside sites (including SSCP Visitor Centre) and 10 PRoW Path Warden Volunteers.

From the budget for PRoW and countryside sites the Council completes a range of work, including:

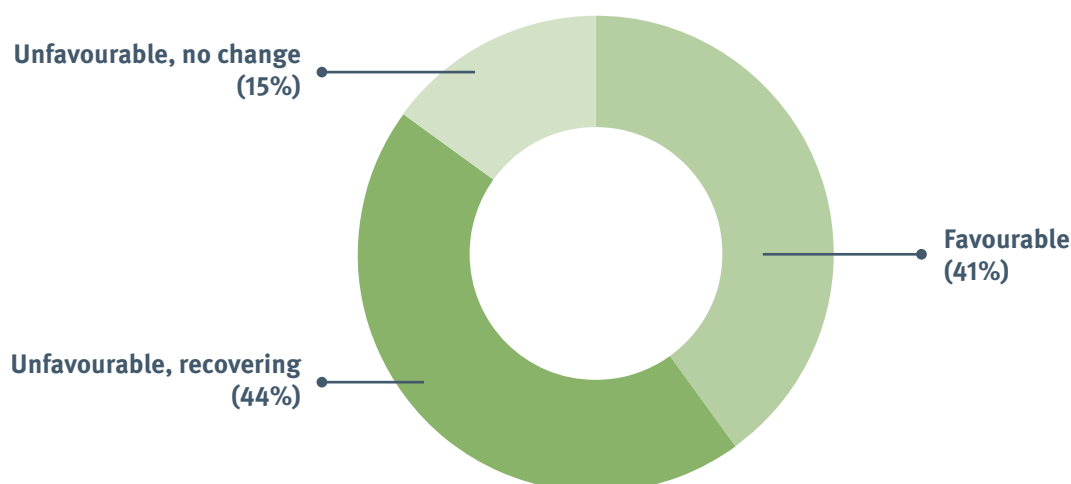
- Receipt, investigation and response to reports from members of the public, user groups and organisations
- Monitoring of PRoW and countryside sites
- Working with landowners to understand and meet their responsibilities
- Maintaining PRoW (that are either promoted, our responsibility or as enforcement action)
- Maintaining the countryside sites
- Working with volunteers
- Maintaining, reporting and updating our legal records for the Definitive Map, Town and Village Greens and Common Land registers
- Responding to property searches and planning applications
- Network management – for example, temporary closures or path diversions.

All the countryside sites are maintained to encourage wildlife. We work closely with government agencies and non-governmental organisations, to ensure that the protection of countryside sites is consistent with national and international environmental policy and associated land designation.

Natural England has a national target to ensure that 95% of SSSIs are in a 'favourable' or 'unfavourable and recovering' condition. The most recent data available from Natural England summarises the five Council owned or managed countryside sites within a SSSI. It indicates that 85% (839 ha) of countryside sites the Council owns or manages are in a favourable or recovering condition. See chart one.

However, the remaining 15% (148 ha) includes an anomaly; a large body of water at Weir Wood LNR that the Council is not responsible for. The water body accounts for 74% of the 'unfavourable – no change' rated area. If this area is excluded, the Natural England target of 95% is met.

Chart 1. Countryside site SSSI condition summary



All the countryside sites require a range of other management, depending on where they are placed and how they are used. This work can include partnership working, litter picking, visitor engagement, managing leases as well as repairing and maintaining property. Rare and protected species continue to be recorded across all the countryside sites. 80% of assets on all countryside sites are in a ‘good’ condition.

As part of the commissioning review we have spoken with other councils to understand how they manage their PRow and countryside sites, the table below shows a comparison.

Table A6. Summary of delivery at neighbouring councils

	Public rights of way		Countryside sites	
	Office staff	Maintenance	Office staff	Maintenance
BHCC	In-house	In-house	In-house	In-house
ESCC	In-house	In-house	In-house	In-house
HCC	In-house	In-house	In-house	In-house
KCC	In-house	Out-sourced	In-house	In-house
SCC	In-house	Out-sourced	In-house	Long-term lease
WSCC	In-house	Out-sourced	In-house	Mix

In this review we found that we have different focuses which determine our respective spend and outputs. Some authorities are beginning an asset management review similar to the one we began in 2008, while others have completed an assessment of their unit cost and are exploring contract arrangements. The discussions were useful to understand how our unit cost compared to others, both locally and in the commercial market.

Financial Analysis

Income is collected from a range of sources including:

- Various rents and licensing for those using our land
- Ranger agreements for work on the Cuckoo Trail and at Weir Wood LNR
- Sale of stile kits to landowners
- Property searches for PRoW, TVG and Common Land and landowner depositions
- PRoW diversions in a landowner's interest
- Temporary path closures
- Car parking charges and pass schemes

Each year £55k is secured from grants from Natural England in the form of Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding.

Table A7 summarises the total budget for the management of PRoW and countryside sites in 2015/16. The total budget for managing the functions is £1,384,100 per year. The team are able to realise a range of income opportunities totalling £565,900. This creates an overall cost to the Council of £818,200.

In addition to the annual revenue spend a short term capital budget is used to fund one-off large pieces of work. Each year a bid is submitted to the central capital programme, in 2015/16 the budget allocated was £418,000.

Table A7. Summary of the Council's costs and income for PRoW and countryside sites (2015/16)

	PRoW/C Site Maintenance	PRoW Officer	SSCP	Total
Net Revenue Budget	£557,100	£284,900	-£23,800	£818,200
External income and one-off projects	£284,300	£62,500	£219,100	£565,900
Total Budget	£841,400	£347,400	£195,300	£1,384,100

During the period 2010 to 2012, the delivery of the PRoW and countryside sites maintenance functions was subject to a series of changes which have improved service delivery and achieved financial savings. In this period there was an overall reduction in team size of 27% and revenue savings of £384,000 were achieved.

These savings were met whilst taking on the management of SSCP and an extra 311 miles of PRoW network in April 2011 due to the creation of the South Downs National Park. As a result of the reduced resources available, it has been necessary to more strictly prioritise activities in relation to routine maintenance and enforcement on both countryside sites and the PRoW network.

During the period of 2014 to 2016 further planned changes were implemented which saved £140,000. This was achieved by changing how we manage our vehicle fleet, a small reduction in staff and a stricter prioritisation of enforcement work.

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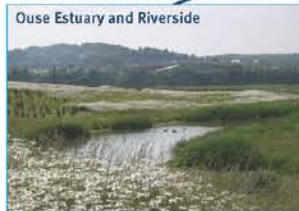
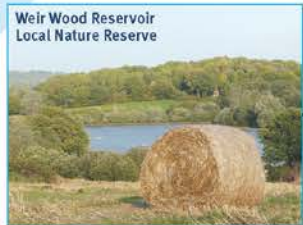
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Website: eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus

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Appendix 2 – Map showing the 10 countryside sites



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Appendix 3 - Options Appraisal Definitions

This document defines each model, grouping of functions, interest and analysis category in the options appraisal.

Area/category	Definition
Delivery models	The delivery models that could be applied to the functions:
Private company	The function is managed by a private company either by competitive tender or long term lease
Association	Similar to private company but with organisations in the Voluntary and Charity Sector (VCS), Local Government or community groups managing the function
Partnership	Where a partnership with a neighbouring local authority is created to manage certain functions together
Spin Out/LATC	ESCC staff are 'spun out' into an external organisation (e.g. staff mutual), or a Local Authority Trading Company is created to manage the function, the governance remains within ESCC
In-house	Staff are employed directly by the Council, as in the current model
Site handover	Permanent countryside site handover (through sale, gift or endowment) to private companies, charities or communities
SSCP	Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP)
All owned sites	8 sites: Camber Sands (Inc Johnsons Field and Broomhill car park), 20% Cuckoo Trail, Ditching Common, Forest Way, Ouse Estuary Park, Riverside Park, Shinewater Park, Seven Sisters Country Park
Some owned sites	Selection of some of the above 8 sites
Function bundles	The functions that are or could be provided by the council:
All functions	All functions in the Rights of Way and Countryside Team. This does not include support from other ESCC teams such as HR, finance, property or legal
All except legal	As above but excluding work relating to: Definitive Map, Common Land and Town and Village Green and Public Inquiries
Only legal	Legal functions such as managing the Definitive Map, Common Land, Town and Village Green and Public Inquiries
Only sites	Only the countryside site management functions (maintenance, onsite management, litter picking, signage, site management plans, partnership working, public enquiries) at all 10 sites (inc Chailey Common and Weir Wood Reservoir)
Only PRoW management	Includes network survey, public enquiries, maintenance, capital program, landowner engagement, temporary closures. This area includes working with landowners to meet their responsibilities and enforcement (inc legal notices and prosecution)
Income generation	Opportunities that are currently employed (such as agreements with landowners) and other identified opportunities (such as holiday lets)
All functions and income	All 'functions' and 'Income generation' as defined above
Analysis	The cost, benefit and risk analysis categories each option is be scored on:
Benefit. Achieves strategic outcomes (1-4)	How well it achieves the outcomes set out in the strategy. These are scored against separately
1: Safety	Enable residents and visitors to safely use our rights of way and countryside sites.
2: Rights and Resp	Support and enable landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.
3: Optimal	Achieve the most efficient and effective management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.
4: Community	Enhance local communities through engagement with our rights of way and countryside sites.
Cost	
No additional cost anticipated	There would be no additional cost to the council if this model was implemented
Savings anticipated	Savings could be expected if this model was implemented
Risk	
Model unsustainable	The level of risk that the model is not sustainable in the long term
No market capacity	An indication of the risk that there is no capacity in the market for the model
No market interest	The level of risk that there would be no interest from the market
Interest	The interest of certain groups in different models, some of which are essential to come models:
Members	ESCC Councillors
Staff	Staff within the Rights of Way and Countryside Team
Chief Officers	ESCC Chief Officers
Community	Residents of East Sussex and wide ranging stakeholders such as special interest groups or town and parish councils
Association	Charity, independent organisation or local authority
Commercial	Businesses including tourist industry and landowners
Scores	The score system for each area:
Interest, cost and benefit	
Assessment findings	Gives an indication of the research findings regarding the area. Scored 1 to 5, with 5 being positive and 1 being negative. For example, a score of 5 on 'staff interest' and 'social business' would indicate a high level of interest in the model, a score of 1 would indicate a high level of reluctance from the staff in that model
Confidence in assessment	Scores the level of confidence in the findings of the data gathered. Scored 1 to 5, with 5 being positive and 1 being negative. For example a 5 would indicate a high level of confidence that the data is correct whereas a score of 1 would show a high level of concern that the data is flawed.
Risk	The council scoring system is used here:
Likelihood	1 = unlikely/rare, 2 = moderate, 3 = likely, 4 = almost certain
Impact	1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high, 4 = extreme

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Appendix 4 – Options appraisal findings

A thorough options appraisal was applied to a number of models and functions. Appendix 3 summarises the process and scoring. By completing this process, some models were discounted and others included in the draft strategy. This paper summarises the options appraisal findings.

Private Company

In this option, a private company is employed to do some or all of the functions and/or secure income. This would be achieved either via commercial leases or contracts. In all cases, some internal resource would be required to ensure that the company meets its agreed responsibilities. The level of requirement would vary depending on the number of contractors in place.

Unit costs were calculated across all functions. A Request For Information (RFI) was issued and completed by eight Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in East Sussex. This enabled comparison of cost on estimates for fingerposts, kissing gates, stiles, bridges, clearance and surfacing. Costs were also compared with the Surrey County Council (SCC) procurement framework and SCC's Commercial Insight Team completed a Market Analysis Report on East Sussex.

None of these options are proposed for progression to the next stage for two main reasons:

- 1) Assessment of the market has found that employment of an SME contractor would be largely comparable to the current cost. In addition to this it is unlikely one SME would have the capacity to do all the work. Therefore a larger client resource would be required to manage and appoint as required, further reducing the likelihood of savings.
- 2) A larger contractor would be expected to subcontract some of the work, which would increase costs. Furthermore large companies interested in conservation work as well as maintenance have not been identified. If this remained the case at tender stage, a large amount of the work would be subcontracted.

Association

Here 'Association' represents an organisation in the Voluntary and Charity Sector (VCS), Local Government or community groups.

The level of ESCC resource required for this model would depend on the mechanism employed and conditions negotiated during the proposed transfer.

Understanding a variety of information was necessary for this model including unit costs, a range of site specific information, how well this model worked in different areas and the level of interest.

The proposal to work to identify the right delivery partner to manage the sites in the future is included in the draft strategy. This is because the sites may be better managed by alternative organisations that are able to prioritise community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement.

Partnership

In this model, a partnership is created with another Local Authority (LA) for the various functions.

Understanding a variety of information was necessary for this model, including unit costs, commercial analysis and benchmarking results.

A partnership was found to be inefficient as it would generate longer travel times and distance staff from local knowledge and experience. We intend, however, to work closely with LAs to learn the strengths and weaknesses of their respective working practices.

Spin Out and Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

Spin Out: In this option an independent company is created to manage the functions. It then operates separately to the Council, which retains control of function provision via a contract or lease. The company can take any form, such as private, charity or community interest company (CIC) and can trade privately. Staff interest from those that would be within and leading the company is essential.

LATC: In this option a trading company is created to manage the function. A LATC is able to trade and make profit. Again staff interest is essential.

It is proposed that these models are not progressed due to the lack of interest from staff and furthermore because no benefits or enhancements to the way in which the Council meets need were identified from this option.

In-house

With the in-house model, staff are employed directly by the Council to complete work. This is the model currently operated by the Council.

The unit cost and market analysis has been essential to this work, as has benchmarking and assessment of our network and site condition.

The current model meets need, but changes may enable increased impact and better use of resource. A modified in-house provision model for PRoW should be progressed to the next stage.

Site handover

In these models, the site(s) are passed to another organisation permanently. This would reduce ESCC responsibility and ongoing resource requirement. No in-house resource would be needed for the sites as there would be no contract or lease to monitor. Sites would only be passed to organisations which can meet the need and are experienced in community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement.

This model should be considered as a method for the right delivery partner to be able to manage the sites.

A high level of care would be required to ensure need can be met in the future and demonstrate best value. There may be private buyers interested; however, the sale of sites on the open market is not proposed. It is the preference of the County Council to consider organisations which prioritise community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement.

Appendix 5 – Proposal car parking charge increase

Paid parking is in place at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP). The current parking tariffs were last increased in 2009. Having reviewed the charges it is proposed to increase the tariffs by the equivalent of CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation, which rose by 16.9% between 2009 and 2014. Since 2009, our costs of managing the park have also increased by the same rate of inflation, which has not, to date, been matched by an increase in parking fees and car park income.

The proposed increase will raise approximately £23,000 additional income. This extra income will be reinvested back into the management of the park itself. It will also contribute towards meeting wider savings targets and offsetting the inflationary increase in site management costs since 2009.

Table one below sets out the car parking charges in 2015/16 and the income secured through the charges. Table two shows the proposed increase as well as the projected income, assuming the same vehicle usage as 2014/15.

Table one. 2015/16 car parking tariff and income, assuming 2014/15 vehicle usage

	Tariff period	Vehicle usage (14/15)	Current tariff (15/16)	Anticipated Income (15/16)
Car	up to 2 hrs	25,869	£2.50	£64,673
Car	over 2 hrs	20,241	£3.50	£70,844
Coach	up to 2 hrs	336	£5.00	£1,680
Coach	over 2 hrs	152	£10.00	£1,520
Minibus	up to 2 hrs		£5.00	£0
Minibus	over 2 hrs		£10.00	£0
TOTAL				£138,716

Table two. Proposed 2016/17 car parking tariff and income, assuming 2014/15 vehicle usage and retrospective increase in line with CPI inflation

	Tariff period	Proposed increase	Proposed tariff (16/17)	Projected income (16/17)	Projected income increase (16/17)
Car	up to 2 hrs	£0.50	£3.00	£77,607	£12,935
Car	over 2 hrs	£0.50	£4.00	£80,964	£10,121
Coach	up to 2 hrs	£1.00	£6.00	£2,016	£336
Coach	over 2 hrs	£2.00	£12.00	£1,824	£304
Minibus	up to 2 hrs	£1.00	£6.00	£0	£0
Minibus	over 2 hrs	£2.00	£12.00	£0	£0
TOTAL				£162,411	£23,695

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Appendix 6 - Draft implementation plan

This documents provides a high level summary of the steps required to achieve the Countryside Access Strategy

To achieve implementation, a staged approach is proposed. This enables the County Council to ensure all changes are based on the right information and governance process, whilst taking advantage of the benefits that can be achieved by interim measures as soon as possible. In summary these are:

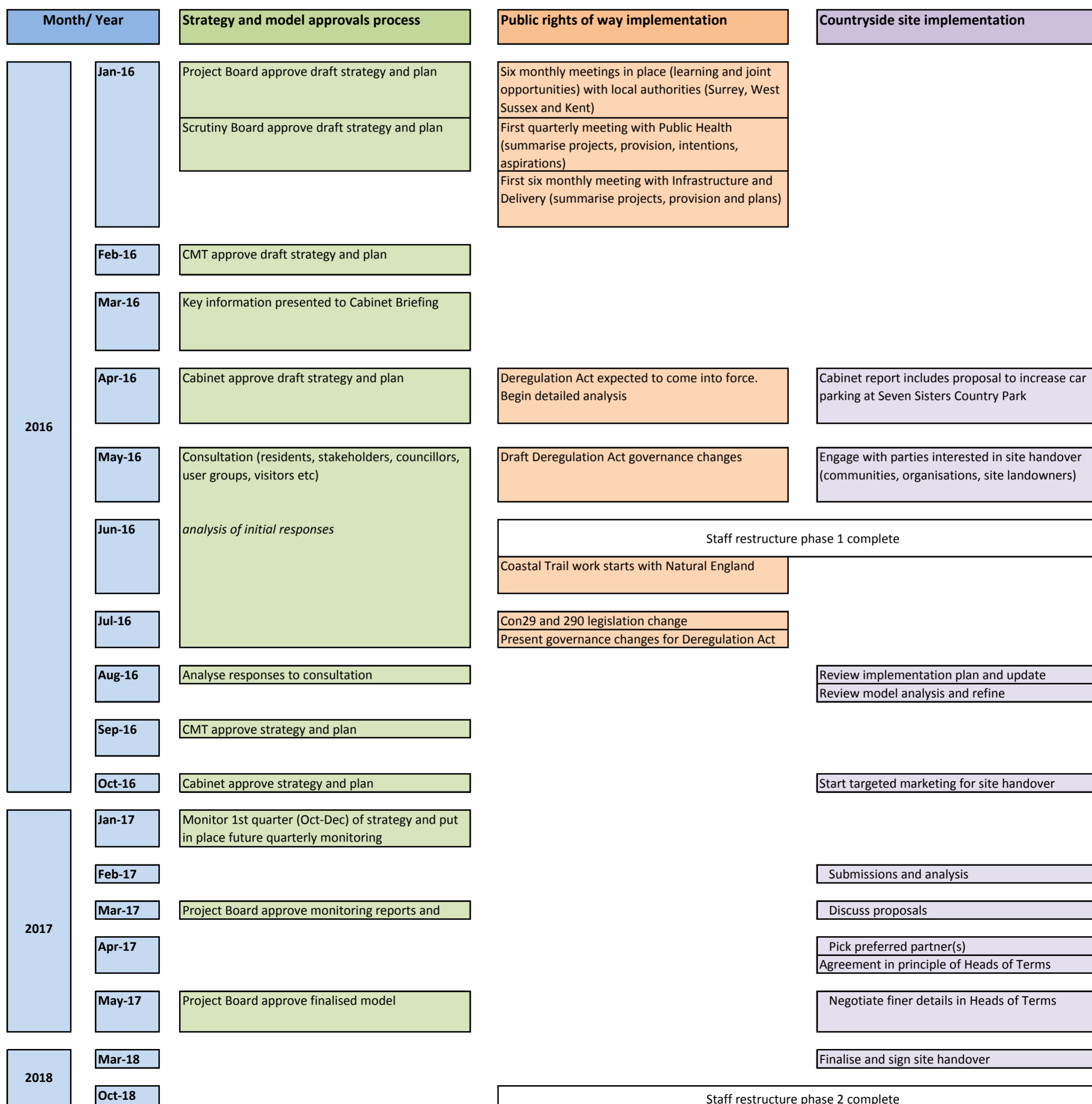
Interim measures. These are measures proposed to start before Cabinet approval of the final strategy and include:

- Meetings with local authorities (Surrey County Council, Kent County Council and West Sussex County Council) to learn from different operational models and identify improvements that can be made at our respective organisations
- Meeting colleagues in Public Health to explore how we can work together to maximise the County Council's impact against our strategic outcomes and behaviour change prog
- Increasing the car parking charges at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) in line with restrospective inflation.
- Presentation of proposed governance changes with consideration of the expected Deregulation Act to County Council in summer 2016.

Identifying the right delivery partners and future countryside site (CS) management arrangements. Landownership and environmental designations (which help protect the CS and provide an enforcement framework for the relevant authority) are important aspects of ensuring that needs are met in the future. The designations at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) are relatively strong but this is not the case at many of the remaining CS. It is therefore proposed that targeted marketing, where only suitable organisations are invited to bid, is used for the handover of the CS.

Successful negotiations will rely on a good relationship with interested stakeholders, so that each party understands the respective objectives and governance arrangements. This will ensure that the right model is designed. The implementation plan proposes that initial meetings are held in spring 2016 to understand interest, and enable the refinement of models and plans by autumn 2016. This will be used with other information and the findings from the public consultation to finalise the strategy. The targeted marketing process will only begin after the final strategy is approved by Cabinet

The diagram below summarises the key steps



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Countryside Access Strategic Commissioning Strategy

Draft Report of the Review Board

of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee members:

Councillor Richard Stogdon (Chair)

Councillor Claire Dowling

Councillor John Hodges / Councillor Trevor Webb

Councillor Mike Pursglove

Councillor Pat Rodohan

Councillors Rosalyn St. Pierre

Councillor Barry Taylor

March 2016

Cabinet – 26 April 2016



1. Background

1.1 A Review Board was established by the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2015, to provide advice, guidance and critical challenge in the development of the Countryside Access strategic commissioning strategy.

1.2 The Review Board has met on four occasions, to work alongside the commissioning strategy Project Team to develop an understanding of need, strategic outcomes and delivery models for Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Countryside Sites. The work, findings and recommendations of the Review Board are summarised in the sections below. Many of the Board's recommendations have been incorporated in the formulation of the draft strategy.

2. Strategic Commissioning

2.1 The strategic commissioning process is being applied to the services East Sussex County Council (ESCC) provides to manage the 2,000 mile network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and ten Countryside Sites (CS) in East Sussex. The report from the Review Board scrutinises the development of a draft commissioning strategy which is being presented to Cabinet for approval and public consultation.

Needs Analysis

2.2 Understanding how people use PRoW and countryside sites, what they think of the current services and what these services can contribute is fundamental to establishing the priorities for future service provision.

2.3 The Review Board examined the findings of the public consultation undertaken to ascertain user and stakeholder views, and the consultants' reports on the health benefits and economic impact of the service. The Review Board scrutinised the analysis of needs process and has taken evidence from Officers on this, and the development of service priorities. The Board noted the statutory requirement for ESCC to maintain the PRoW network and way in which PRoW and the countryside sites can support the Council's priorities for the benefit of residents, wildlife and the local economy.

Findings

2.4 The Review Board found clear and well-documented evidence of the health benefits to residents and visitors that arise from the use of PRoW and Countryside sites. It considers that although the Rights of Way Team carries out some promotion work, it would be more effective in future for them to focus on enabling access, whilst Public Health and other organisations (such as the National Park, voluntary groups, Parish Councils etc.) promote use.

2.5 The responses to the stakeholder consultation demonstrate the value residents and visitors place on nature conservation. The majority of countryside sites have a number of designations for their nature conservation value. The Board noted that most of the East Sussex countryside would be inaccessible without the PRoW network.

2.6 The evidence in the independent consultant's report on economic impact highlights the importance of PRoW network and countryside sites to the local economy, and in particular the enhancement of the East Sussex visitor offer to encourage tourism. Tourism is valued as being worth £1.35bn to the East Sussex local economy and the countryside is estimated to contribute between £134m and £147m each year.

Recommendations

2.7 As part of the development of the draft strategy the Board recommended that:

- The Rights of Way Team focuses its resources on enabling access to the countryside and leaves others to promote usage as this will make the most effective use of the resources available.
- The way in which the PRoW network contributes towards conservation and wider countryside access is highlighted in the draft strategy.

2.8 The Review Board endorses an approach that:

- Secures health and wellbeing benefits for residents and visitors through regular interaction with nature to maintain a healthy lifestyle and improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- Ensures the PRoW network and countryside sites are managed so that they are able to sustain and enhance wildlife biodiversity in East Sussex.
- Supports the local economy and enables local businesses to enhance the East Sussex visitor offer.

Vision Statement

2.9 The Review Board considered a Vision Statement for the Service should:

- Accurately encapsulate what the service currently does and some Review Board members felt it needed to be aspirational.
- be short and concise in order to convey clearly to residents, stakeholders and staff what sort of service ESCC intends to provide, within the resources available.

Strategic Outcomes

2.11 The commissioning process will develop strategic outcomes which describe how ESCC is going to provide services to meet the needs of residents, stakeholders and other service users. The Review Board was asked to comment the four strategic outcomes below:

- Enable residents and visitors to safely use our public rights of way and countryside sites.
- Support and enable landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.
- Achieve the most efficient and effective management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.
- Enhance local communities through engagement with our public rights of way and countryside sites.

Recommendations

2.12 The Review Board endorsed the four strategic outcomes which accurately describe what has to be done to manage the PRow network and countryside sites in a way that meets the identified needs of residents and visitors.

2.13 In reviewing the strategic outcomes the Review Board recommended that maximising income generation should be included within the strategic outcomes.

Future Service Delivery Models

2.14 Service delivery models describe the way in which ESCC could provide the PRow and countryside site management services in the future. An options appraisal process was undertaken by the project team to see which models would best deliver these services. The Review Board examined examples of the six potential service delivery models.

2.15 The Review Board also heard evidence from West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Surrey County Council (SCC) and Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) on the models they use to manage PRow and countryside sites. This included their experience of transferring the management of countryside sites to other organisations, and the SWT experience of taking over the management responsibility for Rye Harbour Nature Reserve from ESCC.

Findings

Rights of Way

2.16 The current service is comprised of two teams, the Rights of Way Access team and the Rights of Way and Countryside Maintenance team who carry out the maintenance work on the PRow and countryside sites. An opportunity has arisen since the review commenced, to combine the current Rights of Way teams under one manager. The Review Board heard evidence that external contractor costs are equal to or higher than the in-house cost of managing these services.

2.17 There is also a question over whether there is a sufficiently big enough pool of suitable contractors to provide these services due to the specialised nature of some of the work required. There are contractors who can carry PRow maintenance work, but this would require a larger client team to specify and direct the work. The options appraisal process did not find any companies that would manage countryside sites as a whole, or who could undertake the legal aspects of PRow work (e.g. maintaining the definitive map, dealing with diversions etc.).

2.18 The Review Board found that the current in-house service is meeting the identified needs. It provides an efficient, effective and responsive service, which has opportunities to improve and provide services differently to better meet those needs.

Countryside Sites

2.19 The Review Board examined a number of options for the future management of countryside sites. It found that there is a possibility that interested parties may not want to take over the management of all the sites. The Board considered it important that potential partners or other suitable organisations were not allowed to “cherry pick” the sites they wish to manage (e.g. those with most income generating potential or the lowest running costs) and leave ESCC with the other sites if this increases the management costs for ESCC. The Review Board supports an approach which seeks to identify suitable organisations that will safeguard public access and have the ability to provide enhanced nature conservation management.

2.20 The ESCC experience of transferring Rye Harbour Nature Reserve to SWT suggests that this approach can enable the nature conservation objectives of countryside sites to be achieved and the needs of the site users to be met. There is evidence to suggest that other organisations may be better placed to meet future site management requirements and be able to access funding opportunities not available to ESCC.

2.21 The Board found that lessons learned by other organisations when transferring countryside sites, would be beneficial to bear in mind when considering this option. The learning points are:

- The public consultation and any TUPE transfer can take a long time unless the consultation process is planned and issues such as pensions dealt with appropriately, to streamline the process.
- The negotiation of an agreement between parties is different from a commercial negotiation in the sense that economic issues are not the only consideration and things such as risk, reputation and fit with an organisation’s governing objectives and other activities may be equally important.
- There is a need to understand costs, which may be different from the budget for the site, where other skills, resources and economies of scale may be employed to manage a site which might not be available to other organisations (e.g. managing a play and display car park, enforcing byelaws etc.).
- Local perceptions of the partner organisation by residents and the perceived impact of a new site manager on community use are important considerations.
- In some models there is the need for some support from the local authority. The key is to adjust the level of local authority support whilst ensuring that the sites meet the strategic objectives.

Recommendations on delivery models

2.22 In scrutinising the potential service delivery models, the Review Board recommended that:

- A ‘mix and match’ approach be taken to find the best future service delivery model, as some models were best suited to managing PRoW and others were better for managing the countryside sites.

- A further option of providing some or all of the services in partnership with other local authorities or organisations be included in the option appraisal process, but this was discounted as there was little interest from other local authorities in pursuing this option.
- The option to form a staff run Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) or Social Business be discounted because consultation with staff revealed there was no interest in forming a Social Business or LATC to provide services.
- There should be sufficient flexibility in the service delivery model to allow for the management some countryside sites to be retained in-house, and the other sites to be transferred to an appropriate organisation or organisations.
- Care is taken in how the countryside sites that may be transferred to other suitable organisations are grouped together, to ensure the net cost of managing these sites does not increase.
- Suitable organisations are approached to test the possibility of transferring sites, to see what may be possible.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The Review Board heard that there are private contractors who provide a Rights of Way maintenance services but are more expensive than the current in-house team. There was little appetite from other local authorities to enter into partnerships or shared services for the Rights of Way and countryside site management. The current in-house team provide a good, cost efficient, flexible and reliable service, as evidenced by benchmarking, cost comparison and market testing carried out as part of the options appraisal process.

The Review Board supports a service delivery model that retains the in-house management of Rights of Way, with a re-shaping of the service to enhance income generation opportunities and maximise efficiency. This approach builds on the strengths of current service and meets the needs identified in the draft commissioning strategy.

3.2 The Review Board considers that transferring the management of the countryside sites to other suitable organisations represents the best option for this part of the service. This approach recognises the specialist nature of the management requirements of these sites and the ability of other organisations to better meet future needs and access funding not available to ESCC. It is also consistent with the findings and recommendations of a previous Scrutiny Review of Countryside Management which reported in March 2007.

The Review Board supports an approach which seeks to find the best option for each countryside site by transferring them to a suitable organisation, bearing in mind the safeguards required to ensure public access and appropriate wildlife management.

Appendix

Scope and terms of reference

On 17 March 2014, the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee endorsed the development of the commissioning strategy for the management of Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites (CS) in East Sussex. A Project Manager was appointed in August 2014 and data gathering commenced. At the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 March 2015, a Board was created to assist in the development of the commissioning strategy. Its aim is to support and advise on the understanding of need, strategic outcomes and delivery models for Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Countryside Sites.

The Review Board terms of reference include:

- Providing guidance on the appropriateness of the definition of need and strategic outcomes.
 - Providing advice on how best to balance identified needs against value for money, deliverability, risks and implementation timescales.
 - Providing critical challenge to the Commissioning Strategy identified in terms of meeting the needs of East Sussex.
 - Help to disseminate information on this strategic commissioning process amongst fellow stakeholders and all ESCC Members.
 - Referring matters back to Cabinet and/or other Scrutiny Committees where necessary.
- There are 10 Countryside Sites included in the commissioning strategy but Ashdown Forest and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve are excluded from this work as they are not managed by the Rights of Way and Countryside Site management teams.

Review Board Members

Councillors: Richard Stogdon (Chair), Claire Dowling, John Hodges/Trevor Webb, Mike Pursglove, Pat Rodohan, Rosalyn St. Pierre, and Barry Taylor.

Support to the Board was provided by the following officers:

Karl Taylor, Assistant Director, Operations

Alice Henderson, Project Manager Strategic Commissioning

Witnesses

Andrew Le Gresley, Team Manager, Rights of Way and Countryside

Simon Fathers, Team Manager, Rights of Way and Countryside Sites Maintenance (RoWCM)

Charlotte Weller, Countryside Services Manager (West Sussex County Council)

Steve Mitchell, Countryside Access Team Manager (Surrey County Council)

James Power, Strategy Lead – Land Management (Sussex Wildlife Trust)

Review Board meeting dates

29 May 2015

21 July 2015

25 November 2015

25 January 2016

List of evidence papers

Item	Date
Draft Countryside Access Strategic Commissioning Strategy	January 2016
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites: Service Delivery Model Examples	July 2015
Options Appraisal Process: Process Map and Findings	July 2015
Summary of Service Provision: Rights of Way and Countryside Sites	May 2015
Public Rights of Way & Countryside Sites Commissioning Strategy: A Review of the Potential to Contribute To Improving Health Final Report. Peter Brett Associates.	April 2015
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites Commissioning Strategy Assessment Report (Economic Impact). Nairne Ltd. in partnership with VenuesAdvisor.	April 2015
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites Commissioning Strategy: Consultation Results Individuals' Survey (18 November 2014 to 20 February 2015).	March 2015
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites Commissioning Strategy: Consultation Results Stakeholders (5 December 2014 to 20 February 2015).	March 2015
Rights of Way Priority Statement	October 2011
Scrutiny review of countryside management	March 2007

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West E
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes BN7 1UE

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 26 April 2016

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Highway Drainage

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 Highway drainage has a role to play in prolonging the life of the carriageway surface, preventing flooding and ensuring road safety. The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee therefore established the scrutiny review of Highway Drainage to consider the maintenance, repair and investment in the system of drains, gullies and ditches forming the underlying infrastructure of the East Sussex roads. The review examined the factors that lead to the efficient and effective management of highways drainage infrastructure. The review looked at a number of factors including:

- The arrangements for gulley emptying
- Maintenance of drainage ditches and grips
- Maintenance and renewal of highway drainage pipes and culverts
- The impact of street cleansing on highway drainage.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of Highway Drainage.

2.2 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 10 May 2016 and a copy is attached in appendix 1. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on the agenda (Item 6b) there is a separate report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

PHILLIP BAKER

Assistant Chief Executive

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Local Members - All

Background Documents: None

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Scrutiny review of highway drainage in East Sussex

Report by the Review Board

of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Richard Stogdon (Chair)

Councillor Michael Pursglove

Councillor Pat Rodohan

Councillor Barry Taylor

March 2016

Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee – 16 March 2016

Cabinet – 26 April 2016

Full Council – 10 May 2016



Report of the scrutiny review of highway drainage in East Sussex

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Introduction by the Chair of the Review Board

Councillor Richard Stogdon

Since 2010, the combined effect of hard or exceptionally wet winters has taken its toll on all parts of the network of our roads in East Sussex. In some cases, the impact of failure in the drainage network can be almost alarming. Whatever cleaning qualities water may have, the overall effect of its activity in regard to our roads in more recent years has been damaging and inimical to the overall lifespan of the network. Nor is damage to our road system the whole of the story. The effect of run-off from our roads on residential property has given rise to claims in the past five years of £64,000.

As far as the County's highways asset is concerned, one of our Senior Highways Officers told us that "***the drainage network is the most important asset we have***".

With all that in view, a Review Board was set up by the County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee to consider the maintenance, repair and investment in the systems of drains, gullies and ditches forming the underlying infrastructure of East Sussex roads.

When Scrutiny looked at these issues prior to 2010, the Committee was made aware of the extent to which records and data relating to the location and specification of large parts of our highways drainage network had either been lost, or, was missing. While physical damage arising through either fire or flooding was, in part, responsible for destroyed data, a further factor related to the significantly diminished workforce having long term, but unrecorded knowledge, skill and experience of the maintaining the network. By way of further background, in the context of diminishing resources, the Council's policy of blanket routine maintenance changed to a risk based approach based on the known requirement for intervention.

While the locations of gullies and ditches are mostly known along with the function they perform, what is not known relates to the dimensions of pipework, the condition of the drainage pipes and most particularly, where they outfall. The Department is taking steps to complete a satisfactory survey to create a detailed "map" for effective maintenance purposes of the highway drainage infrastructure. The Review Board greatly regrets that the full picture of the road drainage network in East Sussex is not available to those charged with the maintenance and care of our roads and recommends further investment to speed up the completion of survey information.

The beneficial effect of the investment made over the past six years of increased re-surfacing of East Sussex roads was noted with favour by the Review Board. Prior to that, East Sussex was one of the worst performing Local Highway Authorities in the UK. Since then, the County Council's significant investment in road re-surfacing has borne fruit, placing the County in the top quartile for Authorities such as ours. All that illustrates the point that, if we regard our road network as a significant asset, then, investment is what is now required for that which underpins it, namely the drainage network. It is for that reason the Board recommends such capital investment as part of an "invest to save" programme. This would also help correct some of the historic under investment in the highway drainage infrastructure.

The Review Board's recommendations are grouped under four principle headings below.

Councillor Richard Stogdon Chair

Recommendations		Page
1	<p>Maintenance arrangements for highway drainage</p> <p>The Board recognises the value of the Council’s changed approach away from routine maintenance of drains and gullies to a risk based approach which focusses on actual need. The Board endorses the following key performance indicators in the new Highway Maintenance contract (below) which incentivise actions to keep the drainage infrastructure in good working order:</p> <p>(1) The percentage progress of gully cleansing against the agreed (Accepted) Service Delivery Programme. (2) The percentage of emergency response incidents attended within the specified timescales. (3) The percentage of safety intervention defects (including drainage related) repaired within required response time.</p> <p>It therefore recommends that the department ensures the new Highways Maintenance contractor develops this approach, and uses all the contractual tools available. The department should also check satisfactory performance of the highway drainage network and that all elements of the highway drainage system work effectively, to ensure surface water is captured and discharged efficiently.</p>	10
2	<p>Responsibilities of adjacent landowners</p> <p>The Review Board considers that clear information needs to be communicated to residents regarding their responsibilities as adjacent landowners and householders to the Highway drainage network. The Board recommends that clarification is provided as to that for which the County Council is responsible, and that for which landowners and householders are responsible.</p>	10
3	<p>Investment in the highway drainage infrastructure</p> <p>The Board:</p> <p>(1) recommends that measures are taken accelerate the projects underway to ascertain a fully and more detailed knowledge of the scope, condition and location of the East Sussex highway drainage infrastructure including its connecting pipework and outfall arrangements;</p> <p>(2) advocates and wholly supports the application of additional capital investment in the highways drainage infrastructure – invest to save – as part of the Department’s capital financing process; and</p> <p>(3) endorses the principles of the draft Highways Asset Strategy Management Drainage Strategy 2015-2018 (appendix 2) and recommends its adoption.</p>	12 13 13
4	<p>Working with others</p> <p>The Board considers the Director of Communities, Economy & Transport and the County Council generally are well placed to co-ordinate its strategy in regard to flooding with the strategies of different organisations and agencies charged with responsibility within East Sussex for flood management. That particularly applies, to Southern Water, Environment Agency, Boroughs, Districts, Town & Parish Councils along with the local drainage boards. The Review Board therefore recommends:</p> <p>(1) The creation of a forum to include such organisations to align strategies and increase local knowledge of highway drainage assets and the impact on them from the surrounding land and built form;</p>	14 14

	<p>(2) In the County Council's capacity as statutory consultee with regard to planning applications and as Lead Local Flood Authority, the County Council needs to focus particularly on securing adequate highway drainage in respect to new development within East Sussex;</p>	14
	<p>(3) By working with the Joint Waste Partnership the County Council needs to establish pilot projects to tackle flooding "hot spot" areas to gauge the impact of street and road cleaning activity on flooding events and frequency of gulley blocking.</p>	16

Overview

1. The maintenance and improvement of the road network, and the drainage networks that run alongside and beneath it, are vital to the prosperity of East Sussex. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has a statutory duty to maintain the adopted highway within East Sussex. This includes 'A', 'B', and 'C' roads as well as unclassified roads, but excludes the strategic road network, which is the responsibility of Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency).
2. The Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Scrutiny Committee, through its work on the Highways contract re-procurement, understands the important role that highway drainage has in prolonging the life of the carriageway surface, preventing flooding and ensuring road safety. The current highways drainage asset is comprised of:
 - 98,000 gullies (N.B. there are a number of different types of gully pot);
 - 500 kilometres of ditches;
 - 10,000 grips;
 - an unknown number of soakaways; and
 - unknown lengths and specification of connecting pipework.
3. Given the extent to which elected Members receive complaints from residents about blocked gullies, drains and local highway flooding within their Divisions, the Scrutiny Committee considered that it would be worthwhile to conduct a Scrutiny Review of this service area.
4. The Review has examined the factors that lead to the efficient and effective management of highways drainage infrastructure in order to prolong the life of the carriageway surface, prevent flooding and ensure road safety. The review examined all the factors involved with highways drainage including: the arrangements for gully emptying; maintenance of drainage ditches and grips (grips are small channels which are cut through the verge to connect the drainage ditch with the edge of the road); maintenance and renewal of highway drainage pipes and culverts; and the impact of street cleansing on highway drainage.
5. Officers are undertaking work to improve the highway drainage infrastructure and the information the department holds on the highway drainage assets. A Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy has been developed which outlines the work needed and makes the case for additional investment in highway drainage infrastructure.
6. The new Highways Maintenance contract has incorporated improvements to the routine maintenance of the drainage infrastructure including the maintenance of drainage ditches and grips. The use of 'outcome based' specifications in the new contract (e.g. the requirement for all gullies to be kept free flowing) will also improve highway drainage condition and performance.
7. The Board is conscious of the financial challenges ESCC faces, and in particular, the constraints on the future capital programme. However, without additional investment, the pace of improvement will be slower, and the backlog of known drainage problems will not be tackled as quickly as residents and Members would like.
8. This report makes a number of recommendations to address the issues identified in the review, with some focussed on how ESCC uses existing resources and works with other organisations. Having a complete knowledge of the highway drainage asset is of key importance as this will ensure ESCC makes the most effective use of any investment available.

1. Highway drainage budget and maintenance contract arrangements

9. At present £3.1m a year is spent on highway drainage maintenance. The service includes an emergency flood response, which operates during periods of heavy rainfall and extreme weather events. Two high-pressure jetting machines are available to respond to reported incidents.
10. The department spends £1.7m from the revenue budget on routine maintenance. This is split between:

- Gulley emptying: £1.3m
- Ditch and grip clearance: £400,000

There is a £1.4m capital budget. This is spent on:

- Drainage investigation and improvement: £1.2m
- Surveys: £200k

11. The majority of the gulley emptying budget, approximately £1.1m is spent on routine maintenance. This breaks down to a cost of approximately £7 per gulley, which includes the disposal cost of the waste taken out of the gulley.
12. The current Highway Maintenance contractor (running until 30th April 2016) is Kier Ltd. (formerly May Gurney) who have operated the contract since September 2005. Under this contract, Kier is required to empty gullies and provide an emergency flooding response service. Kier sub-contract the specialist gulley cleansing work to FM Conway Ltd. The new Highway Maintenance contract starts on the 1 May 2016 and will be operated by Costain Ltd. Under the new contract arrangements, Costain will be responsible for the routine maintenance of highway gullies, ditches and grips, as well as an emergency flooding response service.

2. Quality and frequency of gulley maintenance

Gulley emptying frequencies

13. The Board identified the area of most concern was road flooding and the initial focus of the review was on highway gullies and the frequency that they are emptied. The current highways contract includes a schedule of rates for gulley emptying and other maintenance activities and a contract requirement to attend all gullies on a fixed frequency. The department's approach to gulley emptying was changed in 2013 to a risk based approach in order to achieve departmental savings targets so that:
 - Only gullies that need cleaning are emptied through revised maintenance frequencies, rather than emptying all gullies at fixed intervals whether they need it or not.
14. This 'intelligent' approach means the frequency of maintenance is based on recorded silt levels in the drains. Data on silt levels has been collected over the last two years, and is added to on an ongoing basis. The frequency of emptying has been adjusted to reflect how quickly the drain fills up with silt, or are known to be prone to flooding, as part of a two year programme of routine maintenance. Gullies will usually be emptied when they are 50% full. Over a two year period, gullies are emptied on one of the following frequency levels:

- Once every 3 months
 - Once every 6 months
 - Once every 12 months
 - Once every 24 months
15. These frequencies are applied to whole sections of road, rather than on a drain by drain basis. The gullies that are emptied once every 24 months tend to be the ones in urban areas e.g. residential roads where evidence suggests that a reduced frequency of maintenance is appropriate. The contractor is required to jet the connecting pipe five metres either side of the gully when it is emptied. If the drain is still blocked it is reported for further investigation by a specialist team. By the start of the new Highway Maintenance contract in May 2016, all of the gullies will have been emptied at least once since 2014.
16. The Board heard that in order to reduce the revenue cost of cyclical maintenance (the number of times the gully has to be emptied within the two year maintenance programme period) there is a need to invest in the drainage infrastructure (mainly capital) to bring it up to a maintainable standard.

Gulley emptying performance

17. Prior to the changes introduced in 2013, the gully emptying maintenance was not wholly effective. This is because the benefits of cyclical maintenance were not fully understood and teams were diverted from cyclical maintenance operations towards reactive maintenance. This practice has stopped and Kier believe this has improved the overall standard of maintenance. This ensures the cyclical maintenance plan is delivered without hindrance whilst a separate team deals solely with reactive maintenance.
18. Kier holds a weekly meeting to monitor performance by looking at whether it is following the cyclical maintenance plan and whether the work has been carried out properly. Kier also carries out a programme of random inspections to check the quality of work.
19. The Board heard that the industry has raised the standard of services on offer in order to secure more contracts and are offering 'intelligent' emptying services. Kier sub-contracts the gully emptying work in East Sussex to FM Conway which is offering high levels of service and, importantly, has invested in recycling facilities for gully waste. This has led to the company tendering and winning a significant number of gully emptying contracts in the South East.
20. The new Highway Maintenance contract specification is outcome based meaning that, amongst other things, the contractor will be required to keep all gullies free flowing at all times. The new contractor will have responsibility for all aspects of highways drainage. The department will have a greater ability within the new contract to incentivise good performance including financial penalties for non-performance.

Gulley waste

21. The debris removed from gullies tends to be mostly silt and organic matter such as leaves. Silt levels are usually highest where there is run-off from fields and adjacent land. Officers gave evidence that there is a relationship between the frequency of street sweeping carried out by the Boroughs and Districts, and the frequency with which gullies need to be emptied. This is explored in detail in section 6.
22. FM Conway has invested in the specialist vehicles and disposal facilities needed for gully emptying work and carry out gully emptying for a number of local authorities. The waste collected in gully sucking machines is taken to a site in Dartford, Kent for processing.

23. Typically, between 25 – 50 kg of waste taken out of each gully which is contaminated with harmful residues requiring specific treatment, recycling, and disposal as set by the Environment Agency (EA). Environmental regulations have changed over the years and gully waste now has to be disposed of in line with these regulations. The cost of waste disposal and transport makes up a significant part of the cost of gully emptying work.
24. Whilst there are other gully emptying contractors, FM Conway currently provides the most cost effective overall solution for East Sussex. Alternatives would require investment in specialist waste treatment facilities.

Ditch maintenance

25. The current revenue budget allocated for drainage ditch maintenance work is £400,000 - £500,000 per year. The department has an inventory of all the ditches and has established a two year maintenance programme for ditches. Ditch clearing work is done by teams who clear whole lengths of ditch. In rural areas the material taken out of the ditch will be placed next to the ditch on the verge if there is room.
26. The Board heard that the drainage revenue budget has reduced over recent years. Ditching maintenance work was stopped in 2007 due to budget constraints and was started again in 2010. A consequence of the pause was that more work has to be carried out now to get ditches back into a maintainable condition. The target is to get all ditches on 3-4 year programme of cyclical maintenance, with flooding hot spots cleared annually.

Adjacent Landowners and householders

27. The Board heard evidence that adjacent landowners and householders have a role to play in clearing gullies and ditches, but are generally unaware of their responsibilities and opportunities to help. Landowners should be made aware that it is illegal to discharge water onto the highway and should take steps to maintain their drainage ditches and systems. They should also be encouraged to adopt land management practices that reduce the run-off of water and silt from their land onto the highway.
28. Householders (and Parish Councils) could be encouraged to adopt highway verges to maintain drainage ditches and enhance the visual amenity of their local area. This could operate in the same way as householders who maintain grass verges outside their homes. Better awareness of their responsibilities, together with advice on safety and liabilities, could help encourage people to maintain highway drainage (as was the case with snow clearance). As with anyone working on the highway, householders should only be encouraged to carry out work where it is safe to do so.
29. Information on landowners and householders responsibilities could be provided via the ESCC web site and Your County. Evidence suggests that this would be more cost effective than taking enforcement action against individual landowners, due to the staff resources needed and the costs involved in undertaking prosecutions. Householders and other community organisations could be encouraged to undertake the drainage management and 'adopt' highway verges as part of a community action scheme in a similar way to some of the schemes in the current Community Match programme.

Findings

30. Regular gully emptying reduces highway flooding problems but does not, of course, deal with pipework damaged by tree roots or other pipework breakdown. For that reason the requirement for intelligence led gully emptying programmes, is approved by the Board. Work to repair and replace non-working drains is examined in more detail in section 4 (below).

31. The quality of gully emptying operations has improved and there are provisions in the new Highway Maintenance contract to incentivise good contract performance. The current gully emptying operations are cost effective and it is unlikely that further efficiencies can be achieved without additional, significant investment in local gully waste treatment facilities.
32. The Board welcomed the incorporation of regular, routine ditch and grip maintenance into the new Highway Maintenance contract. Evidence from Dorset County Council indicated that this is a significant factor in reducing localised highway flooding in rural areas.
33. The Board considered that it would be beneficial for adjacent landowners and householders to be made aware of their responsibilities in respect of highway drainage and the role they can play in reducing run-off and keeping drains, ditches, grips etc. in good working order.

Recommendations

1. The Board recognises the value of the Council's changed approach away from routine maintenance of drains and gullies to a risk based approach which focusses on actual need as indicated by the following key performance indicators (below) in the new Highway Maintenance contract:

(1) The percentage progress of gully cleansing against the agreed (Accepted) Service Delivery Programme;

(2) The percentage of emergency response incidents attended within the specified timescales;

(3) The percentage of safety intervention defects (including drainage related) repaired within required response time.

It therefore recommends that the department ensures the new Highways Maintenance contractor develops this approach, and uses all the contractual tools available. The department should also check satisfactory performance of the highway drainage network and that all elements of the highway drainage system work effectively, to ensure surface water is captured and discharged efficiently.

2. The Review Board considers that clear information needs to be communicated to residents regarding their responsibilities as adjacent landowners and householders to the Highway drainage network. The Board recommends that clarification is provided as to that for which the County Council is responsible, and that for which landowners and householders are responsible.

3. The asset management approach to maintaining the highway drainage infrastructure

Knowledge of the highway drainage infrastructure

34. Silt removal, gully and ditch clearing has been rationalised over recent years. However, challenges remain due to underinvestment in the highway drainage infrastructure and its maintenance over a number of years. The condition of drainage assets has deteriorated. The department and contractor currently have an incomplete knowledge of the condition and location of all the highways drainage assets, in particular the connecting pipework. Without this information, it is difficult to determine the optimum future maintenance requirements. Plans are therefore in place to capture the missing information through the new highway maintenance contract.
35. While the department's knowledge of its gullies, ditches and grips is extensive, it can realistically only establish the location of any connecting pipework via survey work and excavation on finding a drainage problem. The survey team is gradually building up knowledge of the drainage infrastructure as it undertakes reactive and investigatory work into blocked drains. All this information is systematically being added to the asset management database.
36. An inventory survey of drainage ditches and grips was completed in the summer of 2014. In the spring of 2015 a survey of all newly adopted roads identified a further 2,000 gullies.
37. ESCC is still in the process of establishing the location and condition of some of its drainage assets and the connection to outfalls. The next step is to survey the pipes and soakaways and establish how they are connected to outfalls. Outfalls could be a connection to Southern Water's sewer network, a field drain system, a natural watercourse, or some other drainage feature.

The asset management approach

38. The Board considered the draft Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy 2015 – 2018, and the Highway Asset Management Strategy 2015 – 2022, as part of the Review. There is a significant commitment to improve our understanding of the drainage network in order to target investment effectively and develop intelligent routine maintenance programmes.
39. There is evidence that ESCC is advanced in its approach to highways drainage and is in a similar position to many other local authorities. For example, a scrutiny review by Manchester City Council (July 2014) endorsed a proposal to adopt a cyclical intelligence-led approach to drainage cleansing and to target priority gullies for the programme of repair work, based on agreed criteria and in consultation with Members.
40. The process of involving Members was explained in a follow up report: *"We were awarded £800,000 of Clean City funding to undertake drainage repairs and a programme has been developed identifying known problem locations in each ward. This information has been sent to ward Members for them to review and add any additional schemes that may be required. Work has already begun on a number of known and high priority locations across the city and once all feedback is received from ward Members, we will begin by cleaning all of the drains to better understand the exact nature of the problem and arrange for camera surveys and begin construction repairs."*

Findings

41. The evidence presented to the Board indicates that most highway authorities do not have a complete picture of the drainage system they are managing. It can be very expensive to carry out a complete survey of all drainage assets all in one go and yet without this picture, it is difficult to target maintenance work effectively and efficiently. For example, Hampshire County Council estimated that it would cost £500,000 to camera survey all the pipes and soakaways. ESCC is similar position to many highway authorities in tackling this issue because of its established asset management approach.
42. There is clear evidence of the continuing work by ESCC to gain a better knowledge and understanding of the drainage asset. However, Officers acknowledged that further work is required. The Board consider that developing a full knowledge of the drainage asset is a priority and steps should be taken to accelerate this process.
43. The Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy is a long term plan to invest in the drainage infrastructure over a ten-year period. If the department is able to secure additional investment (see also section 4, below) it may reduce the need for cyclical maintenance over the term of the plan.

Recommendations

3. (1) The Board recommends that measures are taken accelerate the projects underway to ascertain a fully and more detailed knowledge of the scope, condition and location of the East Sussex highway drainage infrastructure including its connecting pipework and outfall arrangements.

4. Work to repair and replace non-working drains

Investment to bring the highway drainage infrastructure up to a maintainable standard

44. The department estimates that a further investment of £27.3m over the next seven years is required to bring the highway drainage asset up to a maintainable standard. This is based on the current capital expenditure of £1.4m per year plus an additional £2.5m per year over the next seven years. This is the amount that the department estimates is needed to survey and improve the drainage infrastructure based on an extrapolation of existing costs of undertaking the surveys and the associated costs of fixing and repairing blocked drains. The seven year term is based on the term of the next Highways contract.
45. The current the capital programme for drainage is £1.4m per year. With this level of investment it has not been possible to target all the flooding hot spots. At present the team are trying to deal with these problem areas in a prioritised way, and give priority to those issues that are likely to represent a safety issue for road users and cause flooding damage to property. The Review Board was informed that the department is seeking an additional £2.5m per year of capital funds.
46. The Board heard evidence from ESCC's current Highway contractor was that if the drainage network is in good condition then the need for cyclical routine maintenance may be lower.

Findings

47. There are currently 4,000 – 5,000 outstanding drainage problems, where repair work is needed to fix damaged or blocked drains, logged on the fault reporting system. Many of these have been reported as a result of routine maintenance work, where the gulley emptying teams have been unable to get the drainage working.
48. The department is developing a prioritisation policy for dealing with drainage problems, and currently takes a risk based approach to prioritising remedial work. Those problems where there is a risk of household flooding, or damage to other property, are given a higher priority.
49. It was confirmed that if additional capital investment is not forthcoming, the department would continue with the current maintenance regime which will only deal with the most urgent problems where houses or property are at risk.
50. Further investment is needed in the highway drainage infrastructure to reduce flooding and routine maintenance costs.

Recommendations

- 3. (2) The Board advocates and wholly supports the application of additional capital investment in the highways drainage infrastructure – invest to save – as part of the Department’s capital financing process.**
- 3. (3) The Board endorses the principles of the draft Highways Asset Strategy Management Drainage Strategy 2015-2018 (appendix 2) and recommends its adoption.**

5. Working with other organisations

51. In order to achieve an effective solution to drainage problems, a co-ordinated approach needs to be taken with other organisations e.g. the Environment Agency (EA), Southern Water, land owners and Borough and District Councils. For example, strategies need to be aligned so that work undertaken by the different organisations supports the resolution of drainage problems and shares information on the drainage system. The Assistant Director, Operations is currently involved in a project where the Environment Agency and the water utility companies are working with Highways Authorities across the South East to develop their understanding of drainage infrastructure and work on drainage issues.

Involvement of volunteers and Parish Councils in drainage work

52. There is an opportunity to involve Parish Councils and volunteers in addressing some of the drainage issues. The Board heard how Hampshire County Council operates a “Parish Lengthsman” scheme to carry out certain types of drainage work (e.g. keeping ditches free flowing). In particular, communities can assist by clearing leaves and other debris from gulley covers and drains. A notice requesting community help with this has been included in the latest edition of Your County.

Future drainage requirements

53. Highway experts maintain that no drainage system is designed to cope with severe weather events and periods of extremely heavy rain (such as one in a fifty year rainfall events). The Board heard evidence that it appears that unusual weather events are becoming more frequent. This may have design implications for drainage systems in the future.
54. Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) are a requirement for many new developments as Southern Water will no longer allow surface water from housing developments to be discharged into the sewer network. SUDs are designed to reduce surface run-off and often feature permeable surfaces. These surfaces still require positive drainage systems to transport water away and have a maintenance cost associated with them. ESCC is not responsible for the maintenance of SUDs, but is now the consenting authority through its role as Lead Local Flood Authority.

Findings

55. The Board considered that there would be benefits in establishing a forum with other organisations to focus on improving highway drainage and flooding issues, as well as sharing information on drainage infrastructure. Work could involve aligning strategies for investing in drainage infrastructure and tackling flooding problems in East Sussex.

Recommendations

Working with others

4. The Board considers the Director of the Communities, Economy & Transport and the County Council generally are well placed to co-ordinate its strategy in regard to flooding with the strategies of different organisations and agencies charged with responsibility within East Sussex for flood management. That particularly applies, to Southern Water, Environment Agency, Boroughs, Districts, Town & Parish Councils along with the local drainage boards. The Review Board therefore recommends:

4. (1) The creation of a forum to include such organisations to align strategies and increase local knowledge of highway drainage assets and the impact on them from the surrounding land and built form.

4. (2) In the County Council's capacity as statutory consultee with regard to planning applications and as Lead Local Flood Authority, the County Council needs to focus particularly on securing adequate highway drainage in respect to new development within East Sussex.

6. Street sweeping and highway drainage

Street sweeping operations

56. It is important to remove debris from the drainage channels of roads to reduce the need to empty gullies and to prevent gully covers from becoming blocked. Street sweeping is therefore a contributing factor in keeping drains clear and preventing flooding. In rural areas, street sweeping becomes more significant due to the increase in debris in these areas, but is less routinely carried out than in urban areas.

57. Sweeping operations are the responsibility of District and Borough councils and are undertaken in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (COPLAR), issued under section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Street sweeping includes the removal of litter (including dog excrement) and detritus from roads and other highways. The waste removed from streets is, in contrast to common perception, predominately detritus (i.e. dust, mud, soil, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, and fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials) and not litter.
58. Detritus, left unattended, blocks drains and poses a safety hazard if left on road surfaces. It is important to note that COPLAR sets out the standard of cleanliness that has to be met and does not specify the frequency with which areas have to be cleaned. The Code states that: *“It seeks to encourage duty bodies to maintain their land within acceptable cleanliness standards. The emphasis is on the consistent and appropriate management of an area to keep it clean, not on how often it is cleaned.”* COPLAR categorises land into four zones:
- High intensity of use
 - Medium intensity of use
 - Low intensity of use
 - Areas with special circumstances
59. Duty bodies (i.e. District and Borough councils) are expected to allocate all land into one of the four zones and manage it accordingly. The Code categorises the standard of cleaning required in the four zones depending on the type of environment. So for high streets (high intensity of use/zone 1) the standard to be achieved means it is typically swept once a day and sometimes twice a day (e.g. in Hastings town centre). For rural roads (low intensity use) the standard is lower and means sweeping might only be undertaken once a year or not at all.
60. The Board heard that on rural roads, it may be acceptable to have a level of detritus at the edge of road where there is no curb or defined edge of the metalled surface. It is better to let verges build up in order to have something to sweep up against and mark the edge of the highway. Rural roads are swept once per year, but the road will not be swept if it does not need it, and generally, rural lanes are not swept.
61. The Borough and District Councils set their cleansing standard (as per COPLAR) and the street sweeping contractor (usually same as the waste contractor e.g. Kier) then decide on frequencies. The Boroughs and Districts are responsible for policing and monitoring the condition of roads for litter and detritus.
62. Grass cutting (on verges) and leaf fall also need to be considered when looking at the factors relating to gullies and street cleansing.

Co-ordinating street cleansing and highway drainage routine maintenance

63. Borough and District Councils base sweeping frequencies on the visual appearance of an area (i.e. the amount of litter and detritus present), rather than need to keep drains clear. The Board explored whether it might be better if street sweeping was overseen by ESCC, so that sweeping frequencies could be better aligned with highways drainage needs.
64. The Board was informed that if the same contractor does both street cleaning and gully emptying it could lead to efficiencies, but the evidence shows that in practice it has proved difficult to effectively co-ordinate such different work (which requires different types of machinery) across such a large area as East Sussex.

Contractual and financial arrangements

65. The Joint Waste Contract includes the cost of street sweeping, as well as refuse and recycling collections, in the four areas covered by the Contract (Eastbourne, Hastings, Rother and Wealden). Contractual arrangements have changed from having two separate contracts (one for domestic refuse collections and one for street cleansing), to one contract, and then one combined contract under the Joint Waste Contract arrangements.
66. ESCC Officers believe that if it is possible to combine street sweeping and gulley emptying operations under one contract, it would then be possible to look at doing more of what is cheaper i.e. street cleansing. However, there are obstacles to doing this as the source of funding is with the Boroughs and Districts, and there are differing priorities to do with appearance and need. Evidence needs to be gathered to evaluate the cost benefit impact of increasing street cleaning frequencies in highway flooding “hot spots”.

Finding solutions

67. Officers believe there is enough flexibility in the existing contract arrangements to apply more resource in drainage problem areas, in an effort to find solutions. More could be done to co-ordinate work, but because councils have reduced client resources in contracts, it would probably need more client resources to bring about more co-ordination.

Findings

68. There are key differences between scheduled highways drainage maintenance work, and street sweeping teams which are deployed to react to the prevailing weather conditions and the condition of the streets. There are a number of practical difficulties in using one contractor for both types of work, but it would be worth exploring measures to better co-ordinate the two areas of work.
69. The Highways Team and the Joint Waste Partnership should set up a project to explore whether there is a correlation between an increase in street sweeping frequency and a reduction in the amount of detritus going into the gulley and subsequent reduction in highway flooding in flooding “hot spot” areas.

Recommendations

4. The Review Board recommends:

- 4. (3) By working with the Joint Waste Partnership the County Council needs to establish pilot projects to tackle flooding “hot spot” areas to gauge the impact of street and road cleaning activity on flooding events and frequency of gulley blocking.**

7. Concluding comments

70. If ESCC does nothing, the evidence suggests that the backlog of outstanding drainage problems will remain and will potentially undermine the investment in carriageway repairs and resurfacing. Without a full knowledge of the highway drainage infrastructure, ESCC may be spending more on routine and reactive maintenance. The capital budget that is available now for drainage work, is insufficient to get through the backlog of drainage problems.

71. It is clear that gaining a full knowledge of the location and condition of all highways assets is key to delivering improvements and ensuring any investment is targeted to get the most benefit for road users and residents alike. This approach has been demonstrated by the work the department has done to establish an Asset Plan for highway carriageways that has delivered both a reduction in maintenance revenue budgets and an improvement in road condition.
72. The Review Board is aware of the financial challenges that ESCC faces, but believes a long-term plan for investment in highway drainage infrastructure is essential, and offers the best opportunity to maintain the roads in East Sussex in a safe and useable condition. Without additional investment the pace of change will be slower and may present further financial challenges.

Appendix 1

Scope and terms of reference

Through its work on the Highways contract re-procurement, the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee understands the important role that highways drainage has in prolonging the life of the carriageway surface, preventing flooding and ensuring road safety.

The scope of the review is to examine the factors that lead to the efficient and effective management of highways drainage infrastructure. The review will identify and confirm what is known about the key factors involved in highways drainage infrastructure maintenance and assess the impact of measures already put in place to maintain drainage assets including:

- The quality and frequency of gulley maintenance;
- The progress of work to fully understand the highway drainage infrastructure;
- The programme of work to repair/replace non- working drains;
- The maintenance arrangements for other highways drainage assets; and
- The role of other organisations in ensuring the highways drainage works efficiently and in particular the role of the Borough and District councils in street cleansing.

Review Board Members

Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Michael Pursglove, Pat Rodohan and Barry Taylor

Support to the Board was provided by the following officers:

Karl Taylor, Assistant Director – Operations, ESCC

Witnesses

Madeleine Gorman, Partnership Manager, East Sussex Waste Collection Partnership
Bernard Hodgkinson, Contract Manager, Kier
Roger Williams, Head of Highways, ESCC

Chris Dyer, Team Manager – Asset Management, ESCC
Tom Crawshaw, Senior Asset Technician

Peter Mitchell, Highway Manager (Asset Planning & Delivery) Hampshire County Council

Mike Hansford, Asset & Performance Team Leader, Dorset County Council

Review Board meeting dates

29 May 2015

30 September 2015

2 November 2015

18 February 2016

List of evidence papers

Item	Date
Waste Management Licencing Regulations 1994	1994
Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (DEFRA)	2006
Traffic Signs Manual – Chapter 8 - Traffic Safety Measures and Signs for Road Works and Temporary Situations	2009
Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Guidance on the Management of Highway Drainage Assets	November 2012
Manchester City Council – Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee – Drainage Maintenance Task and Finish Group	July 2014
Manchester City Council – Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee – Drainage Maintenance Task and Finish Group – six month update	February 2015
ESCC Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy 2015-2018	October 2015
ESCC Highway Asset Management Strategy 2015-2022	October 2015
Your County - A notice requesting the community help to clear leaves and other debris from gully covers and drains.	Autumn 2015

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Appendix 2 Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy 2015 -2018

The highway drainage asset is critical to ensuring the controlled removal of water from the carriageway to allow customers to use it safely. The impact that failure of the drainage asset can have on other highway assets, wider transport infrastructure and private property is significant.

The challenge facing East Sussex County Council in managing highway drainage and local flood risk is defining the location, specification and condition of highway drainage assets in order to identify what is needed to improve their performance. With a focus upon outcome delivery and performance at the core of the new Highways Maintenance Contract, the Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy complements the new contract and sets the direction for collaborative working between both Client and Contractor.

The objectives and actions outlined in this strategy have been aligned to both deliver the council priorities and implement the industry guidance in order to achieve DfT capital funding for highway drainage improvements in East Sussex. By working to secure DfT capital funding and deliver drainage schemes, savings will be realised through reducing the maintenance cost to other highway infrastructure, especially carriageway which often suffers from accelerated deterioration as a result of failing highway drainage systems.

East Sussex County Council

Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy

2015 – 2018

Document History:

Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author / Reviser
31 July 2015	1.3		Tom Crawshaw

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Highways Asset Management

Drainage Strategy



Highway Drainage – A Critical Asset

The highway drainage asset is critical to ensuring the controlled removal of water from the carriageway to allow customers to use it safely. The impact that failure of the drainage asset can have on other highway assets, wider transport infrastructure and private property is significant.

The **Highways Act 1980** empowers highway authorities to construct and maintain drainage systems to remove surface water from the highway. More recently, the **Flood and Water Management Act 2010** gives local authorities a role for the management of local flood risk.

The biggest challenge facing highway authorities in managing highway drainage and local flood risk is **defining the asset to identify the need**. In many cases the location and condition of highway drainage assets are far from understood which presents real challenges in making the case for investment.

Highway drainage assets across East Sussex have suffered from significant under investment over many years. As a result **we have a dated drainage system that we have very little knowledge about** which is costing us more to maintain year on year. Our existing approach to maintaining highway drainage assets is largely reactive. This is very costly and does not address the issue of needing to understand where to invest to halt the deterioration.

Highways Asset Management Drainage Strategy



Council Priorities

The Highways Asset Management function and approach to highway drainage is following the '**One Council**' approach and will be steered by the Council's Priorities:

- **Helping People Help Themselves**
- **Driving Economic Growth**
- **Making Best Use of Our Resources**
- **Keeping Vulnerable People Safe**

The East Sussex County Council **Highway Asset Management Policy** establishes the Council's commitment to Highway Asset Management and demonstrates how this approach aligns with the Council Plan. The Policy has been published alongside the **Highway Asset Management Strategy** on the Council's website.

Drainage Objectives

To help deliver the Council Priorities and implement the relevant recommendations from the **Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) - Guidance on the Management of Highway Drainage Assets (2012)**, the objectives for highway drainage in East Sussex are as follows:

- **Define the Highway Drainage Asset**
- **Deliver an Efficient & Effective Highway Drainage Service**
- **Work in collaboration with People & Partnerships**

These objectives will guide the approach to highway drainage asset management in East Sussex and will focus the delivery of the actions identified within this strategy.

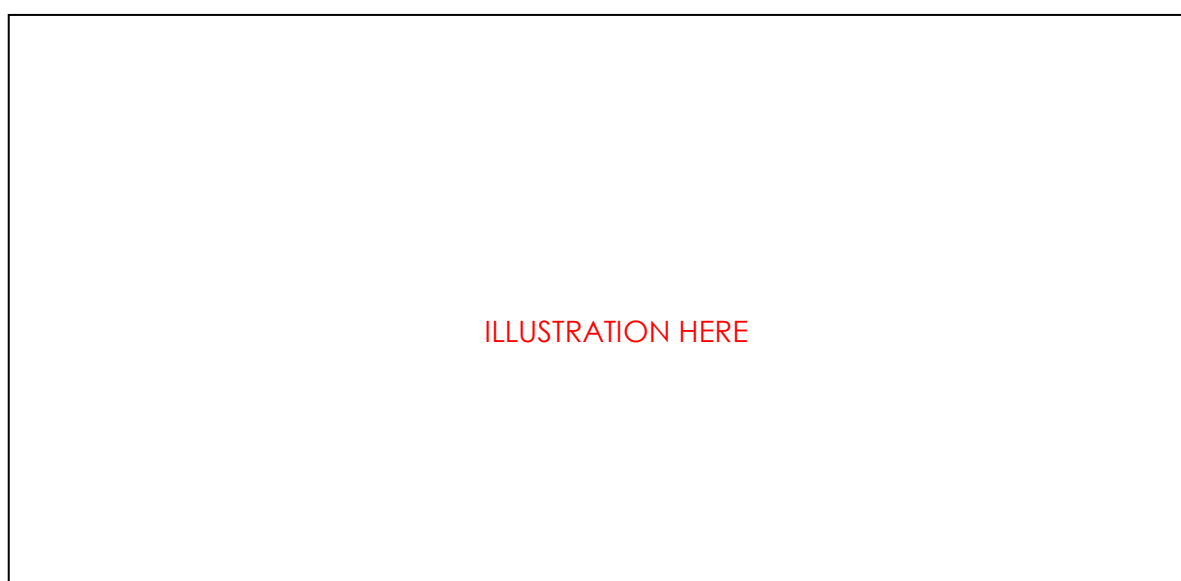
The Drainage Asset

Objective 1 – Define the Highway Drainage Asset

Improving our understanding

The current inventory of highway drainage assets across East Sussex includes approximately **98,000 gullies**, **10,000 grips** and **500km of drainage ditch**. In addition to details about the location and specification of these assets there is a good understanding of their condition from inspections and surveys. In particular, observation of silt levels in highway gullies at regular inspections provides useful statistics to help focus, support and inform a prioritised cyclical maintenance approach. What we do not know is the location, the specification and most importantly, the condition of the **pipes** connecting these assets (see **Figure.1**).

Figure.1 – Illustration of highway drainage system (known/unknown assets).



To direct resources to define the highway drainage asset in areas of **greatest risk first**, targeted surveys will be undertaken in areas of East Sussex which are at risk of local flooding. We use a **'whole system'** approach to build an inventory of drainage assets from inputs (e.g. gullies) to outputs (e.g. ditches) and every element in between (e.g. pipes). An understanding of the drainage asset as whole systems in areas at risk of local flooding will help to identifying issues and constraints while focusing, supporting and informing maintenance activities.

The Drainage Service

Objective 2 – Deliver an Efficient & Effective Highway Drainage Service

Historically, the approach in East Sussex to repairing and improving our highway drainage assets has been **predominantly reactive**, rather than pro-active.

We are now shifting our focus to proactively maintain our drainage asset and **deliver a safe, serviceable and sustainable drainage service** into the future.

To achieve an efficient and effective drainage service we will deliver the following:

- **Safety** – Ensuring the controlled removal of water from the carriageway to allow customers to use it safely.
- **Serviceability** – Maintaining the drainage asset to a condition in which it remains functional for draining the highway.
- **Sustainability** – Designing, constructing and maintaining drainage assets to meet both current and future needs in a changing environment while making effective use of limited budgets.

Future Delivery

The principles of Asset Management are at the core of the new Highways Contract beginning in May 2016. With a focus upon outcome delivery and performance, the new contract has been structured to accommodate the limited understanding of asset condition, meanwhile encouraging collaborative working between both Employer (County Council) and Contractor to improve this understanding through the life of the contract (2016-2023).

We will work with the incoming Contractor to deliver a safe, serviceable and sustainable drainage service while improving our understanding of the drainage asset.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

The two elements of efficiency and effectiveness must be balanced appropriately to ensure the effective use of limited budgets.

We are addressing this balance by ensuring that our gully cleansing operations are undertaken efficiently by targeting **all** gullies along a whole road instead of individual gullies (see **Figure.2**). Whole roads are visited on a prioritised basis informed by recorded silt levels. Effectiveness of the operation is monitored by recording silt levels after cleansing in addition to site audits.

Figure.2 – Illustration of cyclical gully cleansing operations.



We will continue to target our gully cleansing resource to areas where the gullies need cleansing more often. By **applying a risk factor to every one of our gullies based on flood risk and road hierarchy** we have been able to prioritise which gullies need to be fixed first when a problem is reported.

Data & Systems

It is recognised that effective Asset Management planning and decision making relies on having the appropriate data available to those who need it and for that data to be appropriate, reliable and accurate.

We have worked with external software providers to build a **Data Management System** which holds our current drainage inventory along with condition information.

Highways Asset Management

Drainage Strategy



We will continue to develop this system further by mapping know areas at risk of flooding (hotspots) which will focus maintenance activities. The development of this system will ensure that we address the causes of failing drainage assets rather than just the symptoms.

Working in Partnership

Objective 3 – Work in collaboration with People & Partnerships

County Council employees and other organisations responsible for drainage assets and flood risk management are a valuable source of asset management information. Therefore, both individuals and partnering organisations will be engaged and their knowledge captured and incorporated into data records.

We will be working with the Council's **Flood Risk Management Team** to draw upon flood history records from **Surface Water Management Plans**. These have been undertaken in areas at risk of local flooding across the County. Furthermore, we will assist in delivering the actions identified within the **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**.

External organisations such as the Environment Agency and Southern Water will be engaged to address water management issues and share information and data to help **achieve shared objectives**.

Highways Asset Management

Drainage Strategy



The Drainage Challenge

Due to historic under investment in the maintenance of our highway drainage systems there is a **significant backlog** of defective drainage assets across the county. Addressing this backlog will put pressure on limited revenue budgets and therefore we will **target capital investment** to resolve the cause of the drainage issues rather than just the symptoms.

By investing in capital drainage schemes, savings will be realised through reducing the maintenance cost to other highway infrastructure, especially carriageway which often suffers from accelerated deterioration as a result of failing drainage systems.

The immediate future (2015-2016)

Asset Management will be at the core of the new Highways Contract beginning in May 2016. In preparation for this, we will begin building our understanding of the drainage asset by undertaking a series of targeted inventory surveys in areas at risk of local flooding. We will work to co-ordinate maintenance activities across our teams and drainage assets whilst collecting on-the-go inventory and condition data for use in the future. This will improve the performance of this critical asset in the short term and begin to set the building blocks in place for **future programmes of prioritised maintenance**.

Department for Transport (DfT) - Future Funding

We will be improving our knowledge of drainage infrastructure across the county to develop **capital schemes of between £5-20m**. These schemes will demonstrate evidence based decisions on drainage improvements, enabling us to bid for capital funding under the **DfT Challenge Fund in 2017** and meet the requirements for the **DfT Incentive Fund**.

Action Plan (2015-2018)

To achieve the County Council's Priorities and the objectives for highway drainage asset management in East Sussex a plan has been developed which will be delivered between 2015 and 2018.

Action Plan (2015-2018)

Drainage Objectives	Action	Timescale	Links to County Council Priority Outcomes	Links to the HMEP - Guidance on the Management of Highway Drainage Assets (2012)
<p>Define the Highway Drainage Asset</p>	<p>Define investment required and areas at risk of local flooding for targeted inventory and condition surveys to be undertaken.</p>	<p>August 2016</p>	<p>Making Best Use of Our Resources Keeping Vulnerable People Safe</p>	<p>Recommendation 3 Recommendation 4</p>
	<p>Undertake targeted inventory & condition surveys in areas at risk of local flooding</p>	<p>December 2018</p>	<p>Making Best Use of Our Resources Keeping Vulnerable People Safe</p>	<p>Recommendation 3 Recommendation 4</p>
<p>Deliver an Efficient & Effective Highway Drainage Service</p>	<p>Complete the agreed two-year targeted cyclical gully cleansing programme on-time.</p>	<p>April 2017</p>	<p>Making Best Use of Our Resources Keeping Vulnerable People Safe</p>	<p>Recommendation 1 Recommendation 6 Recommendation 9 Recommendation 11</p>

Drainage Objectives	Action	Timescale	Links to County Council Priority Outcomes	Links to the HMEP - Guidance on the Management of Highway Drainage Assets (2012)
	Implement new process for prioritising investigation of drainage defects	October 2015	Making Best Use of Our Resources Keeping Vulnerable People Safe	Recommendation 1 Recommendation 6 Recommendation 11
	Develop prioritised programme of capital schemes in advance of DfT's Challenge Fund 2017 .	March 2017	Making Best Use of Our Resources	Recommendation 1 Recommendation 6
Work in collaboration with People & Partnerships	Engage with internal teams and external organisations especially in relation to flood risk management	December 2015	Making Best Use of Our Resources Helping People Help Themselves	Recommendation 2 Recommendation 7 Recommendation 8 Recommendation 10
	Develop existing Data Management System to include all known drainage asset inventory and mapped areas at risk of flooding to focus maintenance activities.	December 2018	Helping People Help Themselves	Recommendation 5

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Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **26 April 2016**

By: **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Title: **Scrutiny Review of Highway Drainage in East Sussex**

Purpose: **To note the opportunity to comment on the report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee Review on Highway Drainage, and the proposed response by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) note and welcome the report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee; and**
 - (2) recommend to the County Council that, in considering the report of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council be recommended to welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee and to approve the response of the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report.**
-
-

1. Background Information

1.1 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Review Board with the following aims: to examine the arrangements for the maintenance of highways drainage; to understand County Council responsibilities; examine recent improvements; and establish whether there is any scope to further improve this service.

1.2 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee examined the factors that lead to the efficient and effective management of highways drainage infrastructure in order to prolong the life of the carriageway surface, prevent flooding and ensure road safety. The review looked at all the factors involved with highways drainage including the arrangements for gully emptying; maintenance of drainage ditches and grips; maintenance and renewal of highway drainage pipes and culverts; and the impact of street cleansing on highway drainage.

1.3 The Scrutiny Committee, through its work on the Highways contract re-procurement, understands the important role that highways drainage has in prolonging the life of the carriageway surface, preventing flooding and ensuring road safety. The Scrutiny Committee has previously been told that:

- The Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) covers gullies and the County Council knows where all the (100,000) gullies are located, but does not have full knowledge of all the highway drainage infrastructure (such as drainage ditches, grips, pipe runs, soakaways etc.). Work is continuing to improve the knowledge of this asset.

- The County Council has moved away from a system where all gullies are emptied on a fixed frequency, to a frequency of emptying based on silt levels and the history of flooding (e.g. some problem gullies that become blocked easily are emptied more frequently, whilst others are emptied less frequently).
- The highways drainage is surveyed, tested and repaired/replaced before major road resurfacing work takes place as part of the capital project to resurface the road.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The Scrutiny Review of Highway Drainage is welcomed by the Department as it highlights the importance of the drainage asset, and aligns with our ambitions for our new highways contract around improving our drainage assets.

2.2 The action plan attached as Appendix 1, responds to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Scrutiny Review has provided a useful insight into Highway Drainage. It is recommended that Cabinet (1) note and welcome the Review and (2) agree to recommend the approval by Council of the implementation of the action plan detailed in Appendix 1.

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Roger Williams
Tel No: 01273 482272
Email: roger.williams@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HIGHWAY DRAINAGE IN EAST SUSSEX – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION		DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
R1	Maintenance arrangements for highway drainage	<p>Define investment required and areas at risk of local flooding for targeted inventory and condition surveys to be undertaken.</p> <p>Undertake targeted inventory & condition surveys in areas at risk of local flooding</p>	<p>September 2017</p> <p>December 2018</p>
R2	Responsibilities of adjacent landowners	<p>Work closely with National Farmers Union and parish councils to raise awareness of the responsibilities of landowners.</p> <p>Working with our new highways contractor we will take a more proactive approach to ensuring ditches are maintained through enforcement.</p>	<p>September 2016</p> <p>June 2016</p>
R3	Investment in the highway drainage infrastructure	<p>Develop prioritised programme of capital schemes in advance of DfT's Challenge Fund 2017.</p> <p>Implement new process for prioritising investigation of drainage defects</p>	<p>March 2017</p> <p>September 2016</p>
R4	Working with others	<p>Engage with internal teams and external organisations in relation to flood risk management and form a strategic board to ensure a multi agency approach.</p> <p>Develop existing Data Management System to include all known drainage asset inventory and mapped areas at risk of flooding to share with external parties ensuring a joined up approach.</p>	<p>December 2016</p> <p>April 2017</p>

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Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **26 April 2016**

By: **Chief Operating Officer**

Title of report: **External Audit Plan 2015/16**

Purpose of report: **To inform the Cabinet of the content of the Council's External Audit plan for 2015/16**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to approve the External Audit Plan for 2015/16.

1. Background

1.1 The Plan confirms the 2015/16 core external audit fee as £83,575. This is a reduction in audit fee, compared to 2014/15, of £27,857 (25%). The fee is based on a number of assumptions, including the Council providing the auditors with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with good quality supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The attached East Sussex County Council external audit plan sets out in more detail the work the external auditors will conduct in order to audit the Council's 2015/16 accounts. The Plan reflects relevant issues that have arisen as a result of the audit of the 2014/15 account and other work carried out by KPMG e.g. the Value for Money assessment.

2.2 KPMG's initial risk assessment has not identified any significant risks that are specific to the Council. Areas of audit focus, either due to their size, level of judgement or their influence on other balances within the financial statements, are:

- Accounting for Local Authority Maintained Schools;
- Fraud risk from management override of controls;
- Better Care Fund.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 KPMG overall audit approach remains similar to last year with no fundamental changes. Officers will continue to liaise with KPMG to ensure that their work is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible and that internal and external audit plans are complementary and make best use of audit resources. The External Audit Plan was considered by Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2016.

KEVIN FOSTER
Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer: Ola Owolabi, Head of Accounts and Pensions
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Email: Ola.Owolabi@eastsussex.gov.uk

Local Member(s): All
Background Documents
None

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External Audit Plan 2015/16

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East Sussex County
Council

March 2016

Appendix 1

Financial Statement Audit



There are no significant changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in 2015/16, which provides stability in terms of the accounting standards the Council needs to comply with.

Materiality

Materiality for planning purposes has set at **£8.5 million** (1% Expenditure). We base our materiality for planning purposes on last year's annual accounts.

We are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance and this has been set at £425,000 for the Council.

Significant risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error have been identified as:

- Accounting for Local Authority Maintained Schools – Accounting for school assets owned by third parties
- Fraud risk from management override of controls (required by ISAs)

Other areas of audit focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a material error but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding have been identified as:

- PPE Valuation.

See pages 3 to 5 for more details.

Value for Money Arrangements work



The National Audit Office has issued new guidance for the VFM audit which applies from the 2015/16 audit year. The approach is broadly similar in concept to the previous VFM audit regime, but there are some notable changes:

- There is a new overall criterion on which the auditor's VFM conclusion is based; and
- This overall criterion is supported by three new sub-criteria.

Our risk assessment regarding your arrangements to secure value for money have identified the following VFM significant risks:

- Better Care Fund
- Expenditure relating to the Bexhill –Hastings Link Road project

See pages 6 to 9 for more details.

Logistics



Our team is:

- Phil Johnstone - Director
- Scott Walker - Manager
- Sana Naqvi – Assistant manager

More details are on **page 12**.

Our work will be completed in four phases from January to September and our key deliverables are this Audit Plan and a Report to those charged with Governance as outlined on **page 11**.

Our fee for the audit is £83,572 (£111,429 - 2014/2015) for the Council. See **page 10**.

Background and Statutory responsibilities

This document supplements our Audit Fee Letter 2015/16 presented to you in April 2015, which also sets out details of our appointment by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA).

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice.

Our audit has two key objectives, requiring us to audit/review and report on your:

- *Financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement):* Providing an opinion on your accounts; and
- *Use of resources:* Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

The audit planning process and risk assessment is an on-going process and the assessment and fees in this plan will be kept under review and updated if necessary.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and Members for their continuing help and co-operation throughout our audit work.

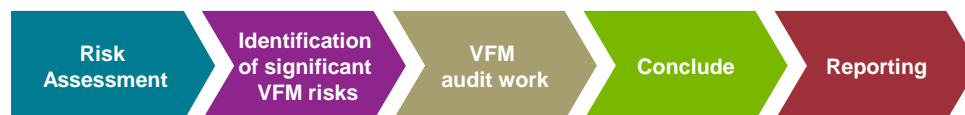
Financial Statements Audit

Our financial statements audit work follows a four stage audit process which is identified below. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the activities that this includes. This report concentrates on the Financial Statements Audit Planning stage of the Financial Statements Audit.



Value for Money Arrangements Work

Our Value for Money (VFM) Arrangements Work follows a five stage process which is identified below. **Page 6** provides more detail on the activities that this includes. This report concentrates on explaining the VFM approach for the 2015/16 and the initial findings of our VFM risk assessment.



Financial Statements Audit Planning

Our planning work takes place during January to February 2016. This involves the following key aspects:

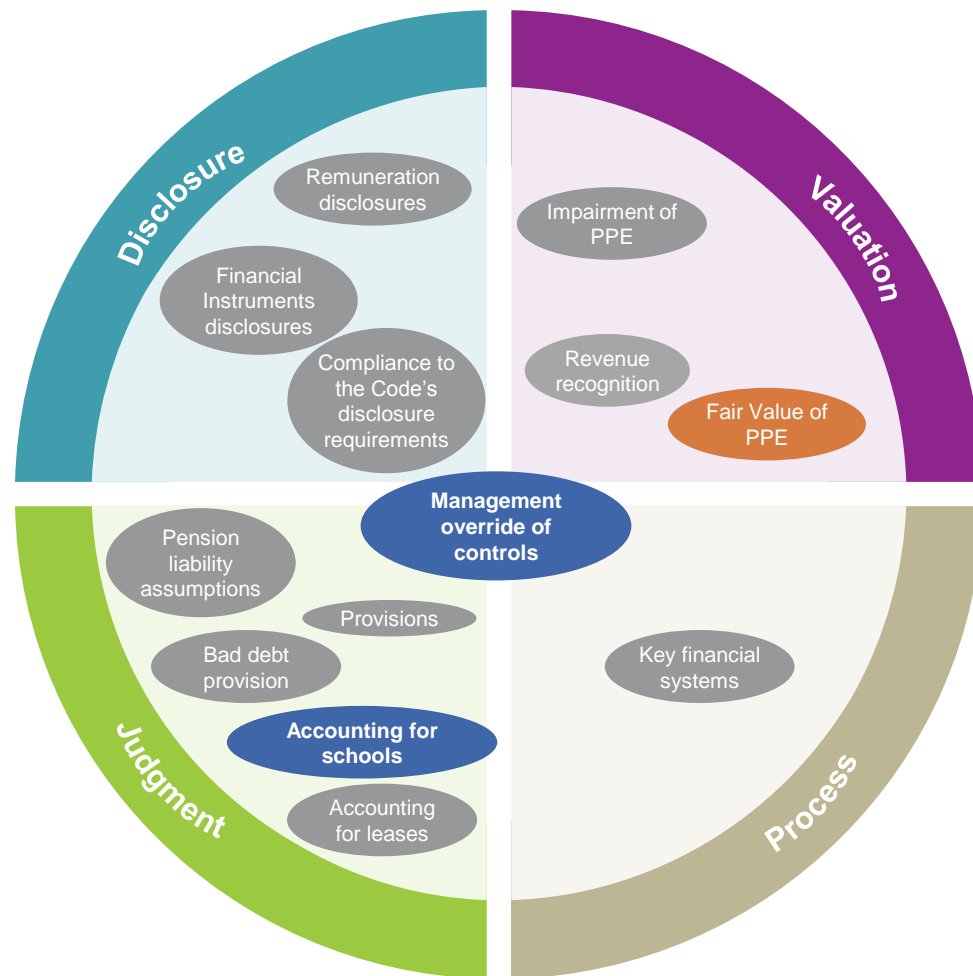
- Risk assessment;
- Determining our materiality level; and
- Issuing this audit plan to communicate our audit strategy.

Risk assessment

Professional standards require us to consider two standard risks for all organisations. We are not elaborating on these standard risks in this plan but consider them as a matter of course in our audit and will include any findings arising from our work in our ISA 260 Report.

- **Management override of controls** – Management is typically in a powerful position to perpetrate fraud owing to its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Our audit methodology incorporates the risk of management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.
- **Fraudulent revenue recognition** – We do not consider this to be a significant risk for local authorities as there are limited incentives and opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in this area over and above our standard fraud procedures.

The diagram opposite identifies, significant risks and other areas of audit focus, which we expand on overleaf. The diagram also identifies a range of other areas considered by our audit approach.





Significant Audit Risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error.

Accounting for Local Authority Maintained Schools

- Risk: LAAP Bulletin 101 Accounting for School Assets used by Local Authority Maintained Schools issued in December 2014 has been published to assist practitioners with the application of the Code in regard to accounting for Local Authority maintained schools. The challenges relate to school assets owned by third parties such as church bodies and made available to school governing bodies under a variety of arrangements. This includes assets used by Voluntary-Aided (VA) and Voluntary-Controlled (VC) Schools as well as Foundation Schools.

In the last financial year, management reviewed the agreements under which assets are used by VA/VC and Foundation schools and applied the relevant tests of control in the case of assets made available free of charge, or risks and rewards of ownership in the case of assets made available under leases. During the audit, we worked with the Authority to consider these schools fully in light of the applicable guidance and upon review of the newly acquired evidence, including additional legal documentation obtained from the Dioceses' and title deeds from the Land Registry. As part of this, the Council concluded that there was insufficient supporting evidence to confirm the ownership of the remaining 22 schools.

As a result, the Council included these 22 schools in the Council's financial statements where ownership is not currently certain. At that time, we also understood that the Diocese of Chichester was undertaking a process to review these schools and to register the Diocese as the legal owners where they can conclusively prove that they are legally theirs. It is therefore possible that some or all of these 22 schools may be removed from the Council's financial statements but this will only be done where ownership is conclusively proven. This is a key area of judgement and there is a risk that Authorities could omit school assets from, or include school assets in, their balance sheet.

- Approach: As part of our audit, we will discuss with the Authority the latest available information on the remaining schools and review the judgements it has made in this regard. This will include considering the Authority's application of the relevant accounting standards to account for these schools and challenging its judgements where necessary.

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Other areas of audit focus

Those risks with less likelihood of giving rise to a material error but which are nevertheless worthy of audit understanding.

Assuring the Fair value of PPE

- Risk: In 2014/15 the Council reported Property, Plant and Equipment of £842.5m. Local authorities exercise judgement in determining the fair value of the different classes of assets held and the methods used to ensure the carrying values recorded each year reflect those fair values. Given the materiality in value and the judgement involved in determining the carrying amounts of assets we consider this to be an area of audit focus.
- Approach: We will understand the approach to valuation, the qualifications and reports by the Council's valuer and the judgements made by the Council in response to the information received. Where valuations are made other than at the year end we will review the Council's judgement in assessing movements from the valuation date.



Materiality

We are required to plan our audit to determine with reasonable confidence whether or not the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An omission or misstatement is regarded as material if it would reasonably influence the user of financial statements. This therefore involves an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative nature of omissions and misstatements.

Generally, we would not consider differences in opinion in respect of areas of judgment to represent 'misstatements' unless the application of that judgment results in a financial amount falling outside of a range which we consider to be acceptable.

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Reporting to the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services

For the Council, materiality for planning purposes has been set at £8.5 million which equates to 1% percent of gross expenditure.

We design our procedures to detect individual errors. This is £6.375 million for the year ended 31 March 2016, and we have some flexibility to adjust this level downwards.

Whilst our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our opinion on the financial statements as a whole, we nevertheless report to the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services any unadjusted misstatements of lesser amounts to the extent that these are identified by our audit work.

Under ISA 260 (UK&I), we are obliged to report omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance, and to request that adjustments are made to correct such matters. ISA 260 (UK&I) defines 'clearly trivial' as matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any quantitative or qualitative criteria.

- We propose to report all individual unadjusted differences greater than £425,000 to the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services.
- We will also have regard to other errors below this amount if evidence of systematic error or if material by nature.

If management have corrected material misstatements identified during the course of the audit, we will consider whether those corrections should be communicated to the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services to assist it in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

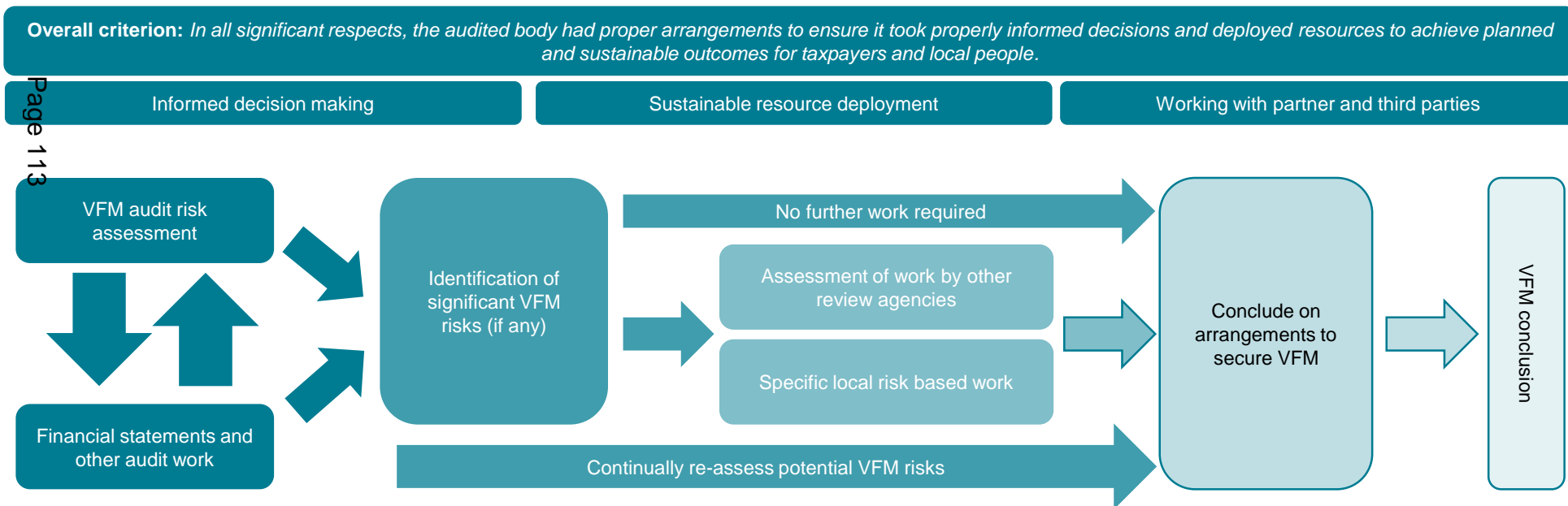


Background to approach to VFM work

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires auditors of local government bodies to be satisfied that the authority 'has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources'.

This is supported by the Code of Audit Practice, published by the NAO in April 2015, which requires auditors to 'take into account their knowledge of the relevant local sector as a whole, and the audited body specifically, to identify any risks that, in the auditor's judgement, have the potential to cause the auditor to reach an inappropriate conclusion on the audited body's arrangements.'

The VFM approach is fundamentally unchanged from that adopted in 2014/2015 and the process is shown in the diagram below. However, the previous two specified reporting criteria (financial resilience and economy, efficiency and effectiveness) have been replaced with a single criteria supported by three sub-criteria. These sub-criteria provide a focus to our VFM work at the Council. The full guidance is available from the NAO website at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>. Our approach to the value for money is recorded below:





VFM audit stage	Audit approach
VFM audit risk assessment Page 14	<p>We consider the relevance and significance of the potential business risks faced by all local authorities, and other risks that apply specifically to the Council. These are the significant operational and financial risks in achieving statutory functions and objectives, which are relevant to auditors' responsibilities under the <i>Code of Audit Practice</i>.</p> <p>In doing so we consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Council's own assessment of the risks it faces, and its arrangements to manage and address its risks; ■ Information from the Public Sector Auditor Appointments Limited VFM profile tool; ■ Evidence gained from previous audit work, including the response to that work; and ■ The work of other inspectorates and review agencies.
Linkages with financial statements and other audit work	<p>There is a degree of overlap between the work we do as part of the VFM audit and our financial statements audit. For example, our financial statements audit includes an assessment and testing of the Council's organisational control environment, including the Council's financial management and governance arrangements, many aspects of which are relevant to our VFM audit responsibilities.</p> <p>We have always sought to avoid duplication of audit effort by integrating our financial statements and VFM work, and this will continue. We will therefore draw upon relevant aspects of our financial statements audit work to inform the VFM audit.</p>
Identification of significant risks	<p>The Code identifies a matter as significant <i>'if, in the auditor's professional view, it is reasonable to conclude that the matter would be of interest to the audited body or the wider public. Significance has both qualitative and quantitative aspects.'</i></p> <p>If we identify significant VFM risks, then we will highlight the risk to the Council and consider the most appropriate audit response in each case, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Considering the results of work by the Authority, inspectorates and other review agencies; and ■ Carrying out local risk-based work to form a view on the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.



VFM audit stage	Audit approach
<p>Assessment of work by other review agencies</p> <p>and</p> <p>Delivery of local risk based work</p>	<p>Depending on the nature of the significant VFM risk identified, we may be able to draw on the work of other inspectorates, review agencies and other relevant bodies to provide us with the necessary evidence to reach our conclusion on the risk.</p> <p>If such evidence is not available, we will instead need to consider what additional work we will be required to undertake to satisfy ourselves that we have reasonable evidence to support the conclusion that we will draw. Such work may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting with senior managers across the Council; ■ Review of minutes and internal reports; ■ Examination of financial models for reasonableness, using our own experience and benchmarking data from within and without the sector.
<p>Concluding on VFM arrangements</p> <p>Page 15</p>	<p>At the conclusion of the VFM audit we will consider the results of the work undertaken and assess the assurance obtained against each of the VFM themes regarding the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.</p> <p>If any issues are identified that may be significant to this assessment, and in particular if there are issues that indicate we may need to consider qualifying our VFM conclusion, we will discuss these with management as soon as possible. Such issues will also be considered more widely as part of KPMG's quality control processes, to help ensure the consistency of auditors' decisions.</p>
<p>Reporting</p>	<p>On the following page, we report the results of our initial risk assessment.</p> <p>We will report on the results of the VFM audit through our ISA 260 Report. This will summarise any specific matters arising, and the basis for our overall conclusion.</p> <p>The key output from the work will be the VFM conclusion (i.e. our opinion on the Council's arrangements for securing VFM), which forms part of our audit report.</p>



Significant VFM Risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood that proper arrangements are not in place to deliver value for money.

Bexhill -Hastings Link Road

Risk: In 2015/16 the Authority made substantial expenditure towards the construction of the Bexhill – Hastings Link Road project, which was opened on 17th December 2015. Of this, £18m has been funded by the Department for Transport, and the remaining funded by the Authority. Total expenditure over the life of this project has been estimated at £124.3m.

We note that we have received a formal objection from an elector regarding this scheme, in which the objector raises a concern regarding the appropriateness of the project management arrangements and approval processes within the Council, and the wider value for money of the scheme.

Approach: We will review the project management and overall approval process utilised during the year, and consider the value of the overspend on the Link Road project and its comparability to the Authority's other projects.

Better Care Fund

Risk: The Better Care Fund was set up by Government to encourage joint work across health and adult social care to ensure local people receive better care. Joint arrangements have been established with NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS High Weald Havens Clinical Commissioning Group to administer the local Better Care Fund (2015/16 expenditure £42.214m). As the arrangements are new, crossing the health and social care boundary with organisations who have different legal structures there is a risk that the governance and accounting arrangements may not be well developed to manage this partnership arrangement appropriately.

Approach: We will review the legal, governance and accounting arrangements that have been put in place to govern and administer the Better Care Fund within East Sussex. These include the s75 agreement with NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS High Weald Havens Clinical Commissioning Group, and the functioning of the governance structure that has been put in place under the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to review your WGA consolidation and undertake the work specified under the approach that is agreed with HM Treasury and the National Audit Office. Deadlines for production of the pack and the specified approach for 2015/16 have not yet been confirmed.

Elector challenge

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gives electors certain rights. These are:

- The right to inspect the accounts;
- The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts; and
- The right to object to the accounts.

As a result of these rights, in particular the right to object to the accounts, we may need to undertake additional work to form our decision on the elector's objection. The additional work could range from a small piece of work where we interview an officer and review evidence to form our decision, to a more detailed piece of work, where we have to interview a range of officers, review significant amounts of evidence and seek legal representations on the issues raised.

The costs incurred in responding to specific questions or objections raised by electors is not part of the fee. This work will be charged in accordance with the PSAA's fee scales.

Our audit team

Our audit team will be led by Phil Johnstone (Director) and Scott Walker (Audit Manager) providing continuity at a senior level. Appendix 2 provides more details on specific roles and contact details of the team.

Reporting and communication

Reporting is a key part of the audit process, not only in communicating the audit findings for the year, but also in ensuring the audit team are accountable to you in addressing the issues identified as part of the audit strategy. Throughout the year we will communicate with you through meetings with the finance team and the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services. Our communication outputs are included in Appendix 1.

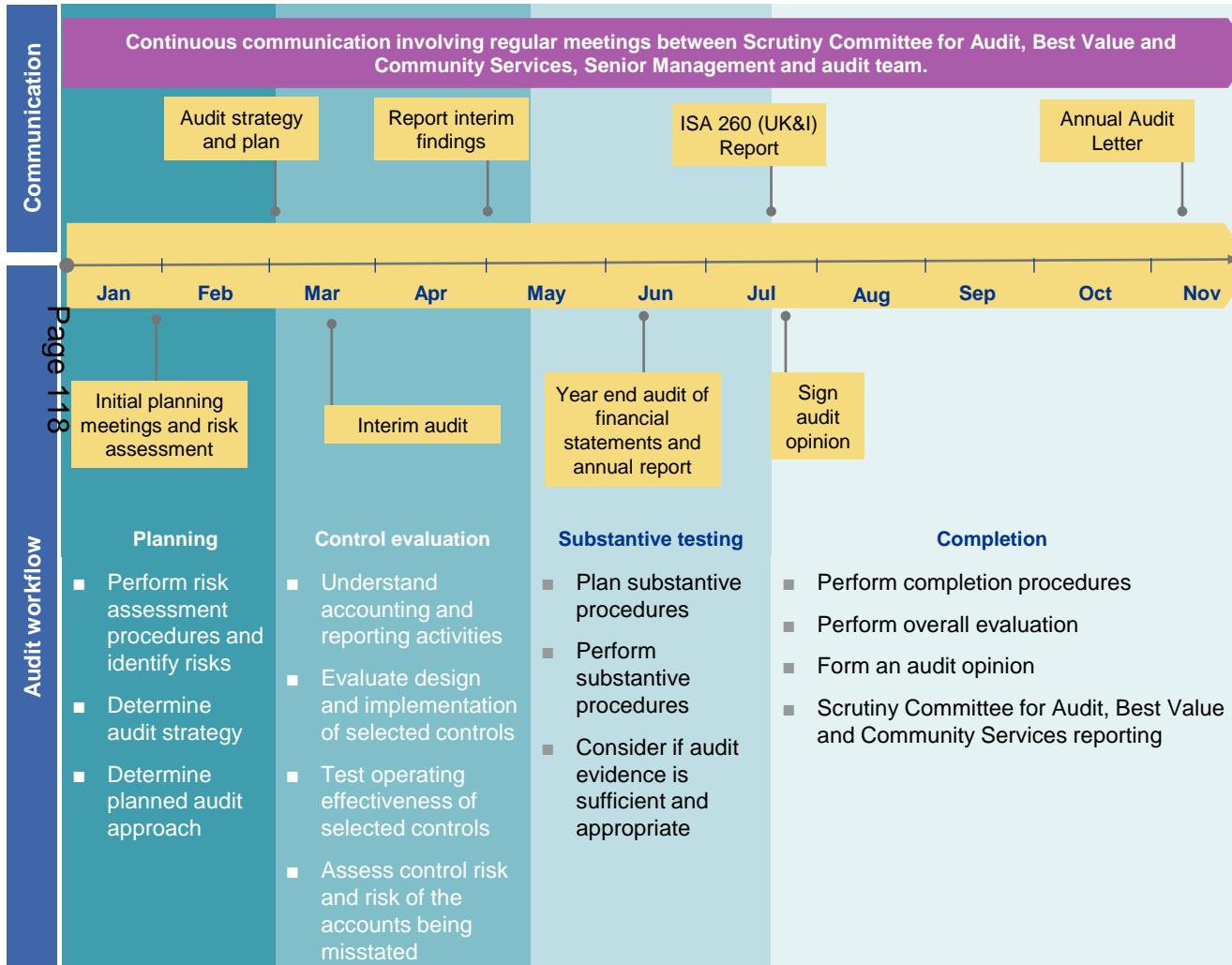
Independence and Objectivity

Auditors are also required to be independent and objective. Appendix 3 provides more details of our confirmation of independence and objectivity.

Audit fee

Our Audit Fee Letter 2015/2016 presented to you in April 2015 first set out our fees for the 2015/2016 audit. This letter also sets out our assumptions. We have not considered it necessary to make any changes to the agreed fees at this stage.

The planned audit fee for 2015/16 is £83,572 for the Council. This is a reduction in audit fee, compared to 2014/15, of £27,857 (25%).



Driving more value from the audit through data and analytics

Technology is embedded throughout our audit approach to deliver a high quality audit opinion. Use of Data and Analytics (D&A) to analyse large populations of transactions in order to identify key areas for our audit focus is just one element. We strive to deliver new quality insight into your operations that enhances our and your preparedness and improves your collective 'business intelligence.' Data and Analytics allows us to:

- Obtain greater understanding of your processes, to automatically extract control configurations and to obtain higher levels assurance.
- Focus manual procedures on key areas of risk and on transactional exceptions.
- Identify data patterns and the root cause of issues to increase forward-looking insight.

We anticipate using data and analytics in our work around key areas such as accounts payable and journals.



Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department. Phil Johnstone and Scott Walker provide continuity on the audit at a senior level. Sana Naqvi is new to the audit team this year, and brings a fresh perspective to our audit approach.



Name	Phil Johnstone philip.johnstone@kpmg.co.uk
Position	Director
	<p>'My role is to lead our team and ensure the delivery of a high quality, valued added external audit opinion.</p> <p>I will be the main point of contact for the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services, Chief Executive and Executive Directors.'</p>



Name	Scott Walker Scott.walker@kpmg.co.uk
Position	Manager
	<p>'I provide quality assurance for the audit work and specifically any technical accounting and risk areas.</p> <p>I will work closely with Phil to ensure we add value.</p> <p>I will liaise with the Chief Finance Officer, Director of Finance and the Finance Team'</p>

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Name	Sana Naqvi sana.naqvi@kpmg.co.uk
Position	Assistant Manager
	<p>'I will be responsible for the on-site delivery of our work and will supervise the work of our audit assistants.'</p>

Independence and objectivity

Professional standards require auditors to communicate to those charged with governance, at least annually, all relationships that may bear on the firm's independence and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff. The standards also place requirements on auditors in relation to integrity, objectivity and independence.

The standards define 'those charged with governance' as 'those persons entrusted with the supervision, control and direction of an entity'. In your case this is the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services.

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. APB Ethical Standard 1 Integrity, Objectivity and Independence requires us to communicate to you in writing all significant facts and matters, including those related to the provision of non-audit services and the safeguards put in place, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on KPMG LLP's independence and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and the audit team.

Further to this auditors are required by the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice to:

- Carry out their work with integrity, independence and objectivity;
- Be transparent and report publicly as required;
- Be professional and proportional in conducting work;
- Be mindful of the activities of inspectorates to prevent duplication;
- Take a constructive and positive approach to their work;
- Comply with data statutory and other relevant requirements relating to the security, transfer, holding, disclosure and disposal of information.

PSAA's Terms of Appointment includes several references to arrangements designed to support and reinforce the requirements relating to independence, which auditors must comply with. These are as follows:

- Auditors and senior members of their staff who are directly involved in the management, supervision or delivery of PSAA audit work should not take part in political activity.

- No member or employee of the firm should accept or hold an appointment as a member of an audited body whose auditor is, or is proposed to be, from the same firm. In addition, no member or employee of the firm should accept or hold such appointments at related bodies, such as those linked to the audited body through a strategic partnership.
- Audit staff are expected not to accept appointments as Governors at certain types of schools within the local authority.
- Auditors and their staff should not be employed in any capacity (whether paid or unpaid) by an audited body or other organisation providing services to an audited body whilst being employed by the firm.
- Auditors appointed by the PSAA should not accept engagements which involve commenting on the performance of other PSAA auditors on PSAA work without first consulting PSAA.
- Auditors are expected to comply with the Terms of Appointment policy for the Engagement Lead to be changed on a periodic basis.
- Audit suppliers are required to obtain the PSAA's written approval prior to changing any Engagement Lead in respect of each audited body.
- Certain other staff changes or appointments require positive action to be taken by Firms as set out in the Terms of Appointment.

Confirmation statement

We confirm that as of 15 March 2016 in our professional judgement, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and audit team is not impaired.



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This report is addressed to the Council and has been prepared for the sole use of the Council. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. We draw your attention to the Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies, which is available on Public Sector Audit Appointment’s website (www.psa.co.uk).

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body’s own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG’s work, in the first instance you should contact Phil Johnstone the engagement lead to the Council, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG’s work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Andrew Sayers, by email to Andrew.Sayers@kpmg.co.uk After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSAA’s complaints procedure by emailing generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

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