

Proposal from the Environment and Transportation Select Committee for review of the co-ordination and regulation of all works on Hampshire County Council's highways

Cllr Sharyn Wheale, Chairman of Environment and Transportation Select Committee

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. A scrutiny of the co-ordination of roadworks on Hampshire County Council's highways as required by the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (hereafter referred to as 'all works') has been identified by the Environment and Transportation Select Committee. The purpose of this report is to obtain endorsement for the review proposal prior to the review being carried out in late 2010 to early 2011.

2. Contextual Information

- 2.1 In June 2010, the Environment and Transportation Select Committee were prompted to review road works by the real-time scrutiny of the topic at their formal Committee meeting.
- 2.2 During this meeting, the Committee were informed that recent changes in legislation had enabled local authorities to review and possibly alter the way they regulate and co-ordinate works.
- 2.3 This review would therefore seek to ensure that the methods used by Hampshire County Council are still the most effective and appropriate, given such recent legislation.

3 Proposed Review

- 3.1 The subject of the review is to review the opportunities available to Hampshire County Council to better co-ordinate works on the highway as defined by the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (and thereafter referred to as 'all works'); and to explore best practice in comparative local authorities.
- 3.2 It is hoped that the main outcomes of this review would be:
 - 3.2.1 To measure the effectiveness of Hampshire County Council's current methods of co-ordinating and regulating all works, to include communication with external organisations.
 - 3.2.2 To assess the models used by comparative local authorities to co-ordinate and regulate all works, including the procedures used by those excavating the highway to inform the local street authority of their plans, and the level of inspection levied by the local street authority on the reinstatements of completed works.
 - 3.2.3 To explore the merits of using an alternative means of co-ordinating and regulating all works on Hampshire's highways.
- 3.3 The key questions the review will consider are:

3.3.1 How effective are the current methods employed by Hampshire County Council to co-ordinate and regulate all works, specifically in relation to minimising:

- traffic disruption;
- compliance failures;
- public dissatisfaction;

And to maximising:

- opportunities for efficiency gains and innovative working, particularly in areas of highway congestion.

3.3.2 What procedures do comparative local authorities use to regulate and co-ordinate all works on the highway, and how successful have these been in minimising:

- traffic disruption;
- compliance failures;
- public dissatisfaction;

And to maximising:

- opportunities for efficiency gains and innovative working, particularly in areas of highway congestion.

3.3.3 What are the merits of the alternatives schemes available to Hampshire County Council to regulate and co-ordinate all works?

3.4 Additional information relating to the review is contained in the attached Proposal document.

4 Membership

4.1 The Membership of the scrutiny review will be taken from the Environment & Transportation Select Committee, and will number six Members, following usual scrutiny practices. Following proportionality rules, the review group will have four conservative and two liberal democrat positions.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The topic is timely, given that the opportunity to review different methods of regulation and co-ordination of works has recently been made available through legislation. Pilot comparative authorities are now also able to share learning on the permit scheme and whether this has aided them in minimising traffic disruption.

5.2 The review, as proposed, sits comfortably alongside the other elements of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee forward work programme.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That the proposal for the 'co-ordination and regulation of all works on Hampshire County Council's highways' scrutiny review is agreed.

6.2 That the Membership of the review group is agreed at the meeting, based on proportionality rules.

PROPOSAL FOR THEMATIC SCRUTINY REVIEW – 05.10.10

* Delete as necessary

1. Name of Proposer:	Chairman of Environment and Transportation Select Committee
2. Subject of Review:	The co-ordination of roadworks on Hampshire County Council's highways as required by the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004
3. Objective of Review:	To review the opportunities available to Hampshire County Council to better co-ordinate works on the highway as defined by the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (and thereafter referred to as 'all works'); to explore best practice in comparative local authorities.
4. Type of scrutiny*:	Policy Development / Policy Review / Decision Impact Review / Performance review / External Review

Please comment on all of the following:

5. What caused you to suggest this topic ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Real-time scrutiny of the topic at the June 2010 formal Select Committee meeting. ▪ Recent legislation has allowed local authorities to review and possibly change the way they regulate and co-ordinate road works.
6. What questions does the review need to answer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How effective are the current methods employed by Hampshire County Council to co-ordinate and regulate all works, specifically in relation to minimising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ traffic disruption; ○ compliance failures; ○ public dissatisfaction; And to maximising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ opportunities for efficiency gains and innovative working, particularly in areas of highway congestion. ▪ What procedures do comparative local authorities use to regulate and co-ordinate all works

	<p>on the highway, and how successful have these been in minimising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ traffic disruption; ○ compliance failures; ○ public dissatisfaction; <p>And in maximising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ opportunities for efficiency gains and innovative working, particularly in areas of highway congestion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the merits of the alternatives schemes available to Hampshire County Council to regulate and co-ordinate all works?
<p>7. What do you hope the outcome of the review would be?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To measure the effectiveness of Hampshire County Council's current methods of co-ordinating and regulating all works, to include communication with external organisations. ▪ To assess the models used by comparative local authorities to co-ordinate and regulate all works, including the procedures used by those excavating the highway to inform the local street authority of their plans, and the level of inspection levied by the local street authority on the reinstatements of completed road works. ▪ To explore the merits of using an alternative means of co-ordinating and regulating all works on Hampshire's highways.
<p>8. What evidence do you have that this review is necessary?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The review would seek to ensure that the methods used by Hampshire County Council are still the most effective and appropriate, given recent legislation which sets out new powers for those co-ordinating and regulating all works. ▪ The review would also compare the procedures used by Hampshire County Council and similar local authorities, enabling members to investigate areas of best practice. ▪ The review could also improve public perceptions of how traffic disruption is tackled in Hampshire. For example, good practice could be highlighted in current processes, or, if it is found that an alternative method minimises traffic disruption, this could resultantly mean an increase in public satisfaction.

<p>9. Please comment on any factors that should affect the timing / reasons why this is good timing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recent legislation has enabled local authorities to review and possibly alter the way they regulate and co-ordinate works. ▪ Learning is available from pilot local authorities using alternative methods to regulate and co-ordinate works.
<p>10. Who are the key stakeholders in this area ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environment Department, Hampshire County Council, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal works promoters ▪ Street works manager ▪ Comparative local authorities – both with alternative and similar regulation and co-ordination functions. ▪ District and Borough Councils within the Hampshire County Council boundary. ▪ Utility companies / South East Joint Utilities Group
<p>11. To what extent would the people of Hampshire or the reputation of Hampshire County Council be at risk if this area is not improved?</p>	<p>Road works and any resulting disruption or inconvenience are often the mainstay stories of local media. By reviewing ways of minimising traffic disruption by scrutinising the effectiveness of the current method of regulating and co-ordinating all works, looking at the models used by comparative authorities, and exploring new options available through recent legislation, Hampshire County Council would ensure that its residents are experiencing the least disruption possible by works on the highway.</p>

Please add any information you have about the following:

<p>12. Please give details of any previous or planned reviews of this topic area that you know of.</p>	<p>Workshop session on the ‘State of Hampshire’s Roads’ (2008) touched on aspects of road works, with one of the recommendations requesting that Hampshire County Council explored ‘powers under the Traffic Management Act to co-ordinate the work of the utility companies in order to give this higher priority’. Consideration was given to this recommendation, but it was felt at the time that this did not need to take place. The Committee feels that with learning available from comparative local authorities on the permit scheme, amongst other methods, it would be a pertinent time to now explore this area.</p>
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<p>13. Are there any imminent changes locally or nationally which are likely to have impact on this area?</p>	<p>A change in government has seen a coalition agreement form between the conservatives and liberal democrats. This has led to a quicker timetable for reducing the national deficit, resulting in reviews of spending in all government departments, and reviews and changes in legislation to meet the direction of travel set out by the new government.</p> <p>The conservatives set out in their pre-election manifesto that they wished to ‘crack down on road works, introducing lane rental for some of our busiest roads’ and to ‘give more powers to local councils to get traffic moving’. These promises have not yet emerged in Bills before parliament, (and according to current reports, may not be carried forward from the manifesto), but it remains a possibility for such themes to be included in future legislation. The review group will be kept abreast of any changes to the co-ordination and regulation of works in legislation throughout the period of the review.</p>
<p>14. What is the financial significance of this review area?</p>	<p>Recommendations made in the course of the review would need to be costed, i.e. a suggestion to move to a different method of regulation and co-ordination of all works would require the input of financial teams in the Environment Department for affordability in the current financial climate.</p>
<p>15. Any ideas about who should be involved in this review.</p>	<p>See paragraph 10.</p>
<p><i>Please add any additional comments / information you want put forward in support of this proposal:</i></p>	

Scrutiny Officers will do any additional research necessary to complete this section:

<p>16. Freshness of subject</p>	<p>Subject is current, as the opportunity to scrutinise different methods of regulation and co-ordination has only recently been made available through legislation. Pilot comparative authorities are now also able to share learning on the permit scheme and whether this has aided them in minimising traffic disruption.</p>
<p>17. Recent or imminent similar reviews</p>	<p>n/a</p>

18. Fit with Corporate priorities	Enhancing our quality of place: exploring the opportunities for better co-ordination and regulation of works could reduce the inconvenience caused to Hampshire residents in their everyday travel.
19. Financial management issues	Scrutiny team budget to be available to support expenditure incurred during the review e.g. refreshments. Will use in-house expertise rather than an external expert co-opted to the review panel to save on cost.
20. Estimated size of review, proposed method (& size of group) with rationale	Group size to be half of formal select committee (6 members), to be recruited based on interest in topic matter. Review will be in-depth, with scoping, initial meetings and evidence collection in the autumn/early winter and reporting and recommendations in late winter 2010/11. The review is foreseen to be based on written evidence from witnesses and background research.
21. Suggested scope of the review	(see paras 5,6,7)
22. Possible Success Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the provision of answers to the questions posed - the achievement of outcomes identified (para 7) - the formulation of recommendations, as appropriate, that are communicated to relevant decision making agencies and individuals - considered response to the review group's recommendations by decision making individuals and agencies

Name of Scrutiny Officer: Katie Benton