

# Highways service

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Improvement Action Plan  
January 2025 [DRAFT, subject to DMT approval]

Open

Fair

Green

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## Introduction

In April 2024, the Highways service commissioned the Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) to conduct a review of the council's Highways service using its value for money assessment tool.

FHRG's report was presented to the Highways and Transport Committee (H&TC) on 19 July 2024. The H&TC approved that the Director of Transport and Infrastructure should prepare an action plan to respond to the report. The report to the Committee (including FHRG's report and the relevant background to the review) can be found on the council's web page [here](#).

This action plan contains a comprehensive set of actions that officers will take to improve the service in line with FHRG's recommendations. We consider that implementing this action plan will support transformation within the council's Transport and Infrastructure services.

### How this plan is organised

**What we plan to do** is set out as a series of specific actions. These are grouped into themes, for which we have used the ten features of top performing highway authorities that FHRG identifies. These are as follows:

- A. Adequate **investment**.
- B. Appropriate **elected member** behaviour and support:
  - Informed, knowledgeable and supportive lead member.
  - Constructive and proportionate challenge.
  - Adherence to formal mechanisms and protocols for communications.
  - Advocates for the service.
- C. Culture of **collaboration and mutuality**. Collaborative behaviours championed by all partners.
- D. Good **governance**:
  - Comprehensive policies and strategies that flow through to operational delivery plans.
  - A clear understanding of and accountability for roles and responsibilities across all partners.
- E. Effective **stakeholder management**.
- F. Robust **budgetary control** and financial management.
- G. Properly resourced intelligent **client function**. Including adequate commissioning, contract management and commercial skills and capacity.
- H. Robust **performance management** framework with productivity and outcome measures that span the whole service and cascade from strategic objectives to team and individuals' targets.
- I. Fit for purpose, fully functional and integrated **information technology systems**.
- J. Comprehensive **forward programming** with robust, joint planning and risk management.

To show how each of these actions links back to the original recommendations of FHRG, we have linked these in **Table 1** in [Appendix 1](#).

In developing this plan we have also identified some **Further Actions**. These are beyond FHRG’s recommendations but are important elements that we consider are needed to improve Transport and Infrastructure services. These are shown in **Table 2** in [Appendix 1](#) and for ease have been grouped into the FHRG themes.

### Improvement actions

Each of the following sections sets out, by theme, the improvement actions we are taking to implement the recommendations from FHRG. These are organised as follows.

<b>Improvement actions</b>	What we are doing
<b>Target date</b>	The current target date for completion. If this has changed, the original target date is shown in brackets.
<b>CEC Lead</b>	Who is responsible for implementing the action. All leads are senior managers in CEC’s Transport and Infrastructure Directorate and the Highways service.
<b>CEH Lead</b>	Who is responsible for implementing the action. All leads are senior management team members in CEH.
<b>Progress</b>	A summary position on the current progress.
<b>Status</b>	<p><b>Red:</b> At risk of not being achieved.</p> <p><b>Amber:</b> Not achieved, beyond timescale.</p> <p><b>Green:</b> Achieved.</p> <p><b>Blue:</b> Not achieved but not beyond timescale.</p>

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## Managing delivery of this plan

This plan is jointly owned between Cheshire East Council (CEC) and our service delivery partner, Cheshire East Highways (CEH).

Senior managers within CEC's Transport and Infrastructure Directorate and Highway service and CEH's senior management team are identified to lead on the implementation of the actions. The leads are:

<b>Cheshire East Council</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Cheshire East Highways</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Director of Transport and Infrastructure	DT&I	Managing Director, Ringway-Jacobs	MDRJ
Head of Highways	HoH	Contract Director	CD
Contract Asset Manager	CAM	Contract Manager, Asset	CM(A)
Contract Operations Manager	COM	Contract Manager, Operations	CM(O)
Contract Performance and Customer Experience Manager	CP&CEM	Commercial Manager	CM
Head of Infrastructure	HoI	Head of Planning and Communications	HoP&C
Head of Strategic Transport	HoST	Management Accountant	MA

The plan will be managed through the boards within the Highway Service Contract governance structure.

Progress will be reported periodically to the CEC Place Directorate Management team.

## Review

We provisionally propose to invite FHRG to review our implementation of this plan during the 2027-8 financial year and assess the council's progress against its value for money tool.

## A. Investment

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>A.1 Explore cross-service opportunities</b> Examine opportunities to combine and fund highway maintenance activity to deliver savings through other outcomes, such as reductions in slips, trips and falls.</p>	31 Mar 25	HoH	-	
<p><b>A.2 Asset Management Policy and Strategy</b> Review the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy through the Asset Management Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a working group to provide ownership and input from a wider section of the service into this process.</li> <li>• Revise the approach to the Asset Management Levels to include a fourth level of resurfacing.</li> <li>• Embed the asset management approach into day-to-day business, with regular staff briefings and improve visibility of asset data for teams.</li> <li>• Use the updated asset management approach as the starting point for business planning.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 26	CAM	CM(O) / CM(A)	
<p><b>A.3 Specification and design guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Cheshire East Highway Asset Specification and design guide and introduce on a phased basis.</li> <li>• Agree and implement through the Asset Management Board.</li> </ul>	31 Jan 26	CAM	CM(O) / CM(A)	

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>A.4 Asset management team</b> Review the Asset Management team / scheme development in CEH to identify roles, responsibilities, skills to ensure the focus and ownership of asset management is clear and embedded.</p>	30 Jun 25	-	CD / CM(A)	
<p><b>A.5 Asset data intelligence</b> Develop an Asset Data Intelligence Strategy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify all asset data;</li> <li>Undertake a gap analysis;</li> <li>Review our approach and options to collection highway asset data, including consideration of AI;</li> <li>Identify options costings and associated risks; and</li> <li>Ensure we are maximising the benefit of asset data that we hold.</li> </ul> <p>Agree and implement through the Asset Management Board.</p>	31 Oct 25	CAM	CM(A)	
<p><b>A.6 Zero-Base Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a Zero-Base Budget exercise to ensure that the agreed strategy and approach to budgets aligns to the strategic objectives of the service.</li> <li>Present the options and recommended changes to members for approval as part of the preparation of the 2025-6 budget.</li> <li>Develop an investment case to make the case for further capital investment, including benefits and approach, along with identifying the risks on revenue and reputation in not investing further capital.</li> </ul>	31 Dec 24	HoH	CD	<p>A zero-base budget exercise has been undertaken with CEH service managers to review costs, priorities, funding and opportunities.</p> <p>This is being fed into the 2025-6 corporate budget setting process. Ultimately, the decision on the budget rests with Council. However, where recommendations are not approved then the exercise will inform the level of service that can be expected by choosing the alternative.</p>

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>A.7 Depot strategy</b>            Develop the service's strategy in respect of its future requirements for depots, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for synergy between services;</li> <li>• Premises repair and investment requirements;</li> <li>• Capacity for the future service.</li> <li>• Approvals through Place DMT and corporate capital approval processes.</li> </ul>	30 Jun 25	HoH	CD	A high-level feasibility paper is being developed to look at potential synergies with other services as part of the Council's Asset Strategy.

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## B. Elected members

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>B.1 Strategic Board: Role of members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm the role of elected members and attendees on the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> <li>Agree the terms of references and focus for the Strategic Board across the highway and infrastructure service.</li> </ul>	31/1/25	DT&I	MDRJ	A proposed terms of reference for the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board has been developed and is being considered. This will provide for a two-part meeting agenda, distinguishing between the parts relevant to officers and officers and members.
<p><b>B.2 Improve information and data sharing to better inform Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and issue (via email and the members portal) information leaflets to members on key topics (e.g. Winter service, potholes, drainage, flooding and street lighting).</li> <li>Explore improved reporting and information updates for Members.</li> <li>Consider a management 'buddy' system to provide regular support and engagement.</li> </ul>	31 Jan 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Key leaflets were produced for the October 2024 member event and have been emailed to members. They are also available on the Councillor Hub within CEntranet. Road Safety, Patching and Resurfacing leaflets are also in progress.
<p><b>B.3 Increase performance focus – look ahead</b></p> <p>Create a one-page look ahead summary for Highways and Transport Committee on the measures for the forthcoming Performance Management Framework (PMF).</p>	30 Apr 25	-	HoP&C	
<p><b>B.4 Increase performance focus – annual summary</b></p> <p>Develop a quarterly Highways Performance Management Framework Summary for Highways and Transport Committee.</p>	31 Aug 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	It is proposed that this will be in place for the 2025-6 financial year, with the first quarterly update being provided for Q1 2025. The updates will be provided via online member briefings with slides produced for reference.

## C. Collaboration and Mutuality

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>C.1 Professional services review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the delivery of professional services by Jacobs and develop specific actions to improve productivity and timeliness.</li> <li>Develop appropriate indicators of performance and productivity.</li> </ul>	30 Apr 25	DT&I	MDRJ	Initial meeting took place on 12 Sep 24 with a senior Jacobs director to review professional services delivery.
<p><b>C.2 Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes</b></p> <p>As part of the production of the Transport and Infrastructure capital programmes from 2025-6 onwards (and including LTP4, when government guidance is published), develop measures to get closer alignment between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas where maintenance is required;</li> <li>Delivery of major transport infrastructure projects;</li> <li>Developer-led and s106 schemes; and</li> <li>Schemes promoting active travel.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	HoST	CM(A)	Workshop to be arranged with CEH to gain input.
<p><b>C.3 Social value outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify clear social value outcomes that are delivered through the contract.</li> <li>Report annually on progress to the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 May 25	-	HoP&C	

## D. Governance

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>D.1 Implement strategic board structure</b> Implement the new strategic board structure.	31 Jan 25	DT&I	MDRJ	Links to <b>B.1 - Strategic Board: Role of members.</b> Strategic board ("Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board") meetings for 2025 to be arranged.
<b>D.2 Agree strategic outcomes</b> Agree strategic outcomes that align with CEC's strategy.	31 Mar 25	DT&I	-	
<b>D.3 Confirm overall governance structure for Transport and Infrastructure</b> CEC senior team to review and confirm feeder board structure (into the Strategic Board).	31 Jan 24	DT&I	-	

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## E. Stakeholder Management


Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>E.1 Legal support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas where there are issues that cause delays between the Transport and Infrastructure and Legal Services teams.</li> <li>Identify proposed actions to address these issues, including potential for delegated responsibility or client team approvals.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	DT&I		CEH has started to collate all interactions with CEC Legal with a view to developing a list of issues where there can be delegation.
<p><b>E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a CEH Highways Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan.</li> <li>Incorporate a mechanism for surveying stakeholder views and feedback, on the 'You said, we did' principle.</li> <li>Approve through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Draft document in progress.
<p><b>E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy</b></p> <p>Develop a 2025/26 Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy.</p>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<p><b>E.4 Manage the introduction of TraCE (Netcall)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific risks relating to the implementation of the TraCE system.</li> <li>Identify required success criteria prior to sign off. Agree all success criteria have been met to sign off all Highways aspects in Netcall.</li> <li>Manage through CEC / CEH risk management processes.</li> </ul>	Prior to the implementation date for TraCE (currently TBA)	CP&CEM	HoP&C	Risks continue to be included within the Highways Risk Register and escalated to Executive Director, Place where appropriate. Key success criteria have been identified, which are to be met before the system can be approved by Highways.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>E.5 Develop web communications for Highways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review what other authorities do (sample of relevant comparators). Identifying existing good practice and further opportunities for improving customer experience.</li> <li>Recommend a plan for improving web communications based on the review.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<p><b>E.6 Develop contact centre capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Customer Contact Centre to identify areas where staff skills and knowledge can be improved to support more effective delivery.</li> <li>Agree a plan of specific actions to deliver these improvements.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	<p>These actions will be picked up through regular liaison with the Contact Centre that is used to develop issues such as Friendly Texts.</p> <p>We are also reviewing the potential for technology such as Artificial Intelligence to support this activity.</p>

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## F. Budgetary Control

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>F.1 Benchmarking and VFM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using MHA+ upload scheme / costing details to the MHA+ review database.</li> <li>Review comparison data through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> <li>Agree the frequency for periodic review thereafter through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	COM	CM	Frequency of review will be aligned to appropriate timescales with MHA+.
<b>F.2 Professional Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a value for money strategy for accessing professional services.</li> <li>Review the current engagement process.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 May 25	Hol	CM(A)	Links to <b>C.1 - Professional services review.</b> COM / CM to support as appropriate.
<b>F.3 In-contract Benchmarking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the existing price / quality comparison process for existing supply chain partners.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	COM	CM	
<b>F.4 Formal Tendering</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a three-year programme defining list of disciplines that are to be tendered (one per year, with a rolling three-year programme).</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	COM	CM	

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>F.5 Review and revise the Target Cost process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and agree a process for Target Cost schemes.</li> <li>Prepare a shortlist of Target Cost schemes prior to the start of the 2025-6 financial year.</li> <li>Review and re-design the Target Cost Register.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	COM	CM	List of target cost schemes to be presented and agreed as part of annual business planning process.
<p><b>F.6 Develop a Contract Manual</b></p> <p>Develop a manual for the contract that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes key contract management processes undertaken by both the CEC and CEH teams.</li> <li>Describes the key allocations of risk that have been accepted by CEC and CEH on entering into the contract.</li> <li>Provides guidance on how these processes are to be implemented within the framework of NEC.</li> </ul>	31 Aug 26	COM	CM	
<p><b>F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and identify proposals to streamline the number of Task Orders (TO).</li> <li>Review and identify proposals to simplify and automate Task Orders and Service Manager Instructions (SMI).</li> <li>Develop training, including a simple guide to HSC contract management with process maps to support the process.</li> <li>Propose and agree changes through the Contract and Commercial Board.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	COM	CM	Trial commenced in Nov 24 with review Jan 25.

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>F.8 Income generation</b> Develop an income strategy for Highways, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial review of fees and charges;</li> <li>• Charging commuted sums for maintenance more consistently;</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for advertising;</li> <li>• Opportunities for CEH to identify and generate income for CEC.</li> <li>• Examine the business case for CEH to generate income for CEC and link to similar review in Essex.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	HoH	CD	
<p><b>F.9 Red claims</b> Close out Schedule 13 of the contract regarding handling of claims against the council as Highway Authority.</p>	31 Mar 25	HoH	CD	A draft schedule has been produced and is currently under discussion.

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## G. Client Function

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>G.1 Highways service restructure</b> Implement a restructure of the Highways client team to provide greater capacity and recruit to the new structure.</p>	31 Aug 25	HoH	-	A restructure of the Highways was implemented on 1 Jan 25. Recruitment to vacancies is being progressed, subject to approvals remaining in place and identifying suitable applicants.
<p><b>G.2 Contract management training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review training needs within CEC and CEH job profiles and specifically and individually a potential need for NEC contract management training.</li> <li>Consider specific training on Option C (Target Cost).</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	HoH	CD	<p>NEC training has been identified within Person Specifications as part of <b>G.1</b>. Requirements for training will be assessed on an individual level following implementation of the Highways service restructure.</p> <p>We will also look to extend this to other client areas, including the Strategic Transport and Infrastructure teams. Provision of training will be considered jointly with CEH.</p>
<p><b>G.3 Team-building</b> Arrange a workshop to develop working between the CEC and CEH senior management teams, including use of psychometric profiles.</p>	30 Apr 25	DT&I	MDRJ	<p>We are planning the workshop for April 2025, to include new staff within the Highways team.</p> <p>We will look at the merits of repeating the workshop on a regular basis (every six to twelve months).</p>
<p><b>G.4 Shared services delivery review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the optimum delivery model for council services that may have synergy with those in the scope of the Highway Service Contract.</li> <li>Identify options for consideration and methods of implementation and advise to CLT.</li> <li>Support the transfer of highway verge grass cutting activity to ANSA.</li> </ul>	30 Jun 25	HoH	CD	
<p><b>G.5 Examine potential for efficiency in highways inspections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the feasibility of using AI devices to support highway inspections.</li> <li>Review the potential for installation on ANSA refuse vehicles.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CAM	CM(O)	<p>Initial work is being undertaken with Triple Value Impact to evaluate the capability of the Route Reports system to support safety and condition inspections and surveys. If there is a business case for this equipment then the method of deployment can be considered.</p>

## H. Performance Management

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>H.1 Performance Management Framework</b> Develop measures for the 2025-6 Performance Management Framework and beyond that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome-based; and</li> <li>• Align to CEC's Strategic Objectives.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<b>H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve visibility of contract performance for 2025-6 through performance focused dashboards, using Confirm and Power BI.</li> <li>• Include productivity indicators in the dashboards.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<b>H.3 Performance benchmarking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review comparative authorities' performance targets.</li> <li>• Report to Performance and Customer Board to provide confidence in CEH targets being set as realistic yet challenging targets.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	CP&CEM	HoP&C	
<b>H.4 Review capital scheme progress reporting</b> Review reporting on capital schemes progress to demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The volume of delivery on site relative to that planned, by activity; and</li> <li>• An accurate forecast to support accrued work estimates.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	COM	MA	
<b>H.5 Annual condition of asset reporting</b> Collate annual data on condition of assets to upload to Place Performance SharePoint Site.	30 Apr 25	CP&CEM	-	

## I. IT Systems

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<p><b>I.1 Project Mapper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the coordination of highway maintenance, strategic infrastructure improvements and developer schemes by developing a programme for the full development and roll-out across CEH of the Project Mapper system.</li> <li>Implement the programme.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	HoI	CM(A)	<p>The implementation of the Project Mapper is currently being prepared and an introductory session for staff was held in November 2024.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to how Project Mapper fits with the council's approach and strategy for Geographical Information Systems (GIS).</p>
<p><b>I.2 Network Resilience Mapping</b></p> <p>Complete CEH highway network resilience maps, aligned to LTP4 and include on Project Mapper.</p>	31 Mar 25	CAM	CM(O)	
<p><b>I.3 Data analytics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review data analytics capacity / capability and (if appropriate) the business case for its future role.</li> <li>Report to Transport and Infrastructure Partnership Board and agree future actions.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 25	DT&I	MDRJ	
<p><b>I.4 Finance and Commercial systems and process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene working group to review and optimise information management between finance systems (Dynamics – Unit4).</li> <li>Implement changes to clarify and simplify processes.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 25	COM	MA / CM	
<p><b>I.5 Payment Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put in place assurance measures to trial the payment for accruals based on forecast cost.</li> <li>Assurance measures should demonstrate that CEH is forecasting with reasonable accuracy and challenging subcontractor cost.</li> </ul>	28 Feb 25	HoH / COM	CD / MA / CM	<p>A three- month trial was implemented from October 2024 and will be reviewed following the January 2025 valuation payment.</p>

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>I.6 Contract Management System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess requirements and options for using contract management software.</li> <li>• Review options and recommendations.</li> <li>• Decide on the way forward and set out a plan to implement the new system.</li> </ul>	31 Mar 26	COM	CM	

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## J. Forward Programming

Improvement Action	Target Date	CEC Lead	CEH Lead	Progress
<b>J.1 Longer term programming approach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visualisation and development of three-year, medium-term programmes for assets (carriageways and drainage) to enable co-ordination and buy-in from various teams.</li> <li>Link this to the approach to <b>C.2</b> (Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes).</li> </ul>	31 May 25	-	CM(A)	
<b>J.2 Lessons Learned / Best Practice</b> Review requirements for lessons learned capture and dissemination. If required, formalise a process that enables continuous improvement across the Service.	30 Jun 25	COM / CAM	CM(O) / CM(A) / CM	

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## Appendix 1: Link to FHRG recommendations

Table 1: FHRG Recommendations

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
1. Determine and recruit the additional skills and capacity required by the client team to deliver clear direction and comprehensive contract management. An experienced service manager with a clear understanding of the contract provisions is essential. A good cost engineer is also vital.	G - Client Function	G.1 Highways service restructure
2. Review the governance structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose and develop a robust approach to contract management with a clear contract management structure and procedures.	D - Governance	D.1 Implement strategic board structure D.2 Agree strategic outcomes D.3 Confirm overall governance structure
a. Supplement this with training for both parties on the contract ethos and provisions.	G - Client Function	G.2 Contract management training
b. Consider member involvement in the Strategic Board to build buy in to the contract and service.	B - Elected members	B.1 Strategic Board: Role of members
c. The governance structure should be supported by a clear and concise contract manual, regularly updated with Service Manager decisions.	F - Budgetary Control	F.6 Develop a Contract Manual F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process
d. Resolve the current conflict of interests for Legal Services, whereby timeliness is impacted by the need for CEC client approvals.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.1 Legal support
3. Refresh the performance management framework to ensure it cascades from outcome-based metrics that support delivery of the strategic objectives, encompasses all functions within the service, and contains milestones and targets that are benchmarked externally.	H - Performance Management	H.1 Performance Management Framework H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility H.3 Performance benchmarking H.4 Review capital scheme progress reporting H.5 Annual condition of asset reporting

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
4. Refresh the asset management policy, strategy, and plans to reflect the service's strategic priorities and rebalance the current urban / rural approach which perhaps drives a reactive spiral at the expense of preventative work. Demonstrate explicitly how the asset management strategy and full lifecycle asset plans cascade through budgets and into operational delivery plans. A more preventative approach to maintenance would make better use of scarce resource.	A - Investment	A.2 Asset Management Policy and Strategy A.3 Specification and design guide A.4 Asset management team A.5 Asset data intelligence
5. Use the contract break point as an opportunity to reinvigorate the service:		
a. Use the refreshed policies and strategies to define priorities for CEH over the short- and medium-term planning periods.	D - Governance	D.2 Agree strategic outcomes
b. Engage with RJ to understand its vision and plans for the integrated model going forward. Determine whether there are concepts that could usefully be explored and trialled during the remainder of the contract.	D - Governance G - Client Function	D.2 Agree strategic outcomes G.4 Shared services delivery review
c. Consider whether there are certain elements of the service that could be delivered more economically in house. Stakeholder suggestions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).</li> <li>ii. Verge cutting.</li> <li>iii. Utilising CEC's refuse fleet to undertake highways inspections.</li> </ul>	F - Budgetary Control G - Client Function	F.9 Red claims G.4 Shared services delivery review G.5 Examine potential for efficiency in highways inspections
d. Consider whether there may be a de minimis value beneath which the formal task order process could be simplified.	F - Budgetary Control	F.7 Review and revise the Task Order process

FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
6. Develop a more rigorous and open approach to benchmarking to help apply commercial challenge to RJ, identify any issues and give confidence to the wider public and members.		
a. The use of MHA+ and APSE should help but absolute clarity on the data used will be critical as evidenced by the eclectic approach in the current data. A single source of the truth approach may be required to ensure clarity and consistency.	F - Budgetary Control	F.1 Benchmarking and VFM F.3 In-contract Benchmarking
b. Infrequent open tendering of packages of work for professional services will also help CEC gain assurance around cost competitiveness.	F - Budgetary Control	F.2 Professional Services F.4 Formal Tendering
7. Use the opportunity presented by the corporate commitment to earlier budget setting to develop longer term work, preventative work programmes that are made visible to the supply chain and general public. A zero-based budget exercise incorporating cross asset prioritisation should also be a regular feature of budget setting.	A - Investment J - Forward Programming	A.6 Zero-Base Budget J.1 Longer term programming approach
8. Develop and deliver a comprehensive plan to improve stakeholder management and drive efficiency, including:	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy
a. Delivering current initiatives to upskill staff in customer communications and replace Fix My Street.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.4 Manage the introduction of TraCE (Netcall)
b. Engaging with the Contact Centre to ensure staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to properly triage enquiries.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.6 Develop contact centre capacity
c. Continue to develop the website as the primary information portal for all enquiries from elected members and customers.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.5 Develop web communications for Highways
d. In alignment with longer term planning and programming, better communicate strategy and planned activity to local communities.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan E.3 Develop a Highways Stakeholder Communications Strategy



FHRG report recommendations	Feature / Theme	Proposed action
e. Equip elected members with the skills and knowledge to be effective advocates for the service.	B - Elected members	B.2 Improve information and data sharing to better inform Members B.3 Increase performance focus – look ahead B.4 Increase performance focus – annual summary
9. Execute the depot strategy to enable greater self-delivery and realise cost savings.	A - Investment	A.7 Depot strategy
10. Ensure the learning gained from risk events that materialise is used to improve the relevant systems and processes.	J - Forward Programming	J.2 Lessons Learned / Best Practice
11. Develop a business case for additional resource to extend the breadth of income generation activities being undertaken.	A - Investment F - Budgetary Control I - IT Systems	A.1 Explore cross-service opportunities F.8 Income generation I.3 Data analytics
12. Increased Target Costing would help to build skills during the second half of the contract period, as Option C is likely to be the main pricing approach for any replacement contract.	F - Budgetary Control	F.5 Review and revise the Target Cost process F.6 Develop a Contract Manual
13. Undertake an end-to-end review of the delivery of professional services and determine what each party needs to do better or differently to facilitate a more productive and timely service.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.1 Professional services review
14. Ensure productivity indicators are in place for all functions and easily visible to all parties, through Confirm dashboards or otherwise.	H - Performance Management	H.2 Increase performance focus – visibility
15. Consider how information management systems can be further integrated between CEC and RJ to eliminate the need for separate spreadsheets and manual reconciliations.	I - IT Systems	I.4 Finance and Commercial systems and process I.5 Payment Process I.6 Contract Management System
16. Ensure management information explicitly demonstrates the volume and mix of activity delivered relative to that planned.	H - Performance Management	H.4 Review capital scheme progress reporting
17. Ensure there is adequate resilience to cover core client functions that cannot be delegated to RJ.	G - Client Function	G.1 Highways service restructure G.3 Team-building

<b>FHRG report recommendations</b>	<b>Feature / Theme</b>	<b>Proposed action</b>
18. Reinvigorate the Innovations Group and ensure it properly defines, determines, monitors and measures strategic and operational innovation.	J - Forward Programming	J.2 Lessons Learned / Best Practice
19. Consider how CEC can strengthen its approach to social value and contribute more fully to the good work being delivered through the CEH partnership.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.3 Social value outcomes
20. Survey each of the stakeholder groups considered in the Stakeholder Value dimension of the vfm assessment to ascertain directly their views of the service and any suggestions for improvement.	E - Stakeholder Management	E.2 Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Management Plan

**Table 2: Further actions**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Feature / Theme</b>	<b>Proposed action</b>
21. Develop our capacity as an 'intelligence-led' service area.	A - Investment I - IT Systems	A.5 Asset data intelligence I.1 Project Mapper I.2 Network Resilience Mapping I.3 Data analytics
22. Work in collaboration to develop CEC's Local Transport Plan 4.	C - Collaboration and Mutuality	C.2 Transport and Infrastructure Capital Schemes