



Improving Infrastructure Delivery: Project Initiation Routemap Case Study

SURREY CC HIGHWAYS INVESTMENT

Background

In July 2013, as part of a longer term improvement programme, Surrey County Council undertook a review of its highway and transport infrastructure, to identify a realistic and sustainable approach to improve long term asset management and to ensure the assets are enablers of the wider objectives of the Council, particularly economic growth. Surrey used the Routemap to guide this review, as it was felt this would provide a robust and effective framework that would maximise the chances of successfully achieving the desired objectives. The review focused on the potential for unlocking effectiveness, efficiency and innovation potential by transforming asset management through an outcome focused approach, and an extended planning horizon of up to 15 years.

Surrey's existing highways service provider, Kier, were involved in the review as well as other supply chain partners including; Aggregate Industries, Atkins, and Marshall Surfacing.

Routemap Recommendations

Surrey and its partners used the Routemap's thematic approach to improve their understanding of the complexity of their ambitions, the capability within the organisation and the wider supply chain, and to identify characteristics for success against a clear timeframe. The themes highlighted areas of weakness which were impeding its ability to move forward and in turn provided clarity on where Surrey should focus its attention to address these issues, which included;

- Moving towards a better understanding of the asset and the embedment of an asset management strategy
- Development of a programme management approach with clear outcomes and measures
- The establishment of a clear and empowered governance structure to support communication and timely decision making
- Increased understanding of the current and required workforce capability and the development of relationships

Implementing the Recommendations

To manage the implementation of the recommendations of the Routemap Surrey has developed a transformation programme, called Highways and Transport for the Future, which has a number of themes including;

Asset Management

One of the key issues to emerge from the Routemap was the need for a wider definition of the outcomes and benefits that highways and transport assets will provide. This includes the development of performance metrics such as condition, congestion, safety, aesthetics etc. and desired performance levels for each criterion. This will provide Surrey with a better understanding of what it is trying to achieve through its long term plan. It was also clear that there was a need to improve the alignment between strategic asset management and locally driven programmes.

To this end Surrey is undertaking a review of its asset management strategy, which will involve bringing together into one place targets and aspirations and is informed by;

- Customer priorities

- Budgetary constraints
- Statutory duties

The aim is to develop an asset management strategy which is an enabler of the council's objectives and having this defined will help Surrey to determine the most effective investment strategies to achieve those objectives.

Delivery

Surrey has learnt useful lessons for adopting a longer term approach from their 5-year capital highways programme, Operation Horizon. Working successfully with its supply chain under a Two Stage Open Book procurement process they were able to achieve substantial savings (15%), improved quality and an integrated team culture. Operation Horizon was one of the Government Construction Strategy's Trial Projects, and this has provided Surrey with some useful external scrutiny of their programme. Taking the lessons learned from Operation Horizon, along with the recommendations from the Routemap, Surrey is developing a delivery strategy that will ensure the effective implementation of its long-term asset plan, building on the fundamental principles of 5-year programmes and integrated team working. As part of this Surrey intend to develop a 5-year business plan, which will provide greater definition about the works and services they will undertake over this period. It will also enable them to provide clarity to their customers about levels of service and enable them to secure the best value from their supply chain.

Procurement

Surrey's highways term contract finishes in 2017, with an option to extend by up to 4 years. Surrey is using the findings of the Routemap to help inform what the critical enhancement activities are in order to maximise the benefits from an extension and assist in the decision making process on extension to the contract. Any future model will support Surrey's 5-year delivery strategy and will seek to be outcome focused supporting economic development, innovation, improving customer satisfaction and achieving value for money.

Organisation & Governance

The Routemap review focused attention on organisation design and was critical in identifying the work required to define the nature and shape of the whole organisation. Based on the findings and conclusions from the review Surrey has streamlined its management structure into 3 core areas; Local Highway Services, Network & Asset Management and Works Delivery. The new structure enables alignment between maintenance and improvement of highways. It also provides clear definition of the role of Client, Asset Manager and Sponsor, and supports a one client, one voice approach. This new structure is designed to improve decision making and supply chain management.

To address capacity and capability Surrey developed a People Strategy with six key themes: staff and opportunities; skills and competency; customer service; communication and engagement; leadership and management; and culture. The strategy is owned and implemented by staff who want to see positive change in the organisation, and also aims to create a culture that will support integrated team working.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Routemap has enabled Surrey and its partners to take a different approach to the management of its highway and transport infrastructure, through an improved understanding of the long-term objectives and the challenges faced in achieving them.

Notes:

This review was commissioned by Surrey County Council and carried out in July 2013 by Infrastructure UK and the Engineering Project Academy, University of Leeds.

For further information on the Routemap; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/infrastructure-cost-review>

For further information on this Case Study contact Jason Russell; Jason.russell@surreycc.gov.uk

