

## **Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

### **Member Highway Fund**

#### **Background**

Members are invited to discuss;

- i) How their Member Highway Fund (MHF) experience could be improved building on the new staffing structure in KHS
- ii) How MHF could evolve under the localism agenda and how new Locality Boards could engage in the process.

#### **Highway Fund Improvements**

A paper was presented to the January 2011 POSC and recommended retention of the Member Highway Fund scheme beyond the pilot phase with some changes to make it more user friendly. These recommendations were introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and include;

- A more flexible Investigation Fee process
- Shortening the lead time for Cabinet Member approval
- Use of external contractors

The re-structuring of KHS offers many opportunities for greater efficiency across the service. One of the key issues slowing down Member Highway Fund schemes has been the handover across different delivery teams. The new KHS structure will facilitate a more efficient process by creating a “start to completion” team for schemes including those funded through Member Highway Fund. This will shorten lead times and leave the whole responsibility for delivery with one team. A copy of the new structure is attached.

In the short-term and in order to deal with Members frustrations concerning delivery times, a team of six dedicated officers have been assigned to deal with highway fund scheme development.

#### **Locality Boards**

The idea of linking the Member Highway Fund with Locality Boards is an interesting one and worthy of consideration. The Boards could add a great deal of value by being a conduit for schemes and it could act as watchdog and balance for both the type of schemes being chosen by Members and the delivery time taken to complete the work. A more radical solution would be for Member Highway Fund to be pooled into a Locality Board.

## **Conclusion**

Changes introduced to the Member Highway Fund in April are bedding in. There remains a concern amongst Members that schemes are being delivered too slowly and this is justified in some cases. The re-structuring of KHS offers a real opportunity to make a step change improvement in this regard.

Locality Boards could have a pro-active role in guiding Members on scheme content and acting as a “policeman” on scheme delivery.

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