

# **CAMBRIDGESHIRE HIGHWAYS**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is Cambridgeshire Highways?**

Cambridgeshire Highways is a partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council and Atkins supported by supply chain partners to form a single provider for the highway network management service in the county.

### **What is its key objective?**

The key objective for Cambridgeshire Highways is to work as a single and seamless organisation delivering a continuously improving highways service to the people of Cambridgeshire.

### **What is the scope of the service being provided by Cambridgeshire Highways?**

Cambridgeshire Highways delivers work in a number of areas: highway maintenance, transport asset management, traffic management, street lighting and bridge maintenance as well as [the design of major transport infrastructure and transport planning advice](#).

The transport asset management service is responsible for assessing the condition of the highway network to enable decisions to be taken on prioritising investment.

The highway maintenance service covers both routine cyclic maintenance and planned maintenance works.

Cyclic maintenance includes:

- Pothole repairs
- Cleaning signs
- Replacing road markings and studs (catseyes)
- Verge cutting
- Drainage grip cutting
- Drainage jetting
- Gully emptying
- Weed kill
- Surface dressing
- Slurry seal on footways

The planned maintenance programme covers the patching and resurfacing of roads and the upgrading of highway drainage systems.

For the traffic management service, Cambridgeshire Highways is responsible for the development, design and construction of all traffic management projects up to a value of £500,000. This covers the following programme areas:

- Jointly funded minor highway improvements
- Safer Routes to School
- Speed management
- Accident remedial schemes
- Medium sized traffic management and safety schemes
- Cambridge Access strategy schemes
- Market Towns strategy schemes
- Street lighting projects

- Bridge maintenance projects to £500,000

The street lighting service is delivered through a performance contract and has its own Freephone number [0800 253529] to allow faults to be reported for fixing. Most parish councils have maintenance agreements with the County Council for their own parish lighting. The relevant parish clerk should be contacted in the first instant for parish lighting.

Reactive maintenance and accident damage is dealt with through the contract via specialist bridge gangs.

Major bridge and highway schemes costing over £500,000 are constructed through a separate framework contract, with Cambridgeshire Highways undertaking design and supervision.

Traffic signal maintenance and fault repairs are delivered through a separate contract; please call the Council's contact centre to report any faults for fixing [0845 045 5212]. Footpath maintenance on Rights of Way ~~is~~ handled under separate contracts through the Countryside Service Team who can also be contacted via the contact centre.

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### **What is the planned lifespan of Cambridgeshire Highways?**

The contract that established Cambridgeshire Highways, which started in September 2006, can last for up to 10 years with a review after 5 and 7 years to assess how well the partnership performs.

### **How is the partnership being developed?**

Wherever possible we are co-locating County Council, Atkins and supply chain partner staff to:

- promote a single organisational culture
- streamline and standardise our working practices
- use our respective skills and experience in the most effective way.

We are developing a joint training programme to:

- provide staff with clear career progression paths
- ensure all staff have access to training opportunities
- achieve a high level of staff retention
- to improve recruitment opportunities in a nationally limited workforce market
- improve the skills base across the organisation
- empower staff so that decisions can be taken at the most effective level in the organisation

### **What is the role of supply chain partners?**

Whilst Atkins provides some of the resource for construction and maintenance work, this is being supplemented by various partners. The supply chain partners have been selected to provide specialist skills in various areas ranging from such things as gully emptying through to the construction of traffic management schemes and major road resurfacing.

### **How will Cambridgeshire Highways deliver a more cost effective service?**

We intend to improve the way in which we deliver the service by utilising the skills and experience that the partners provide in the most effective way. We also intend to improve the way in which we communicate with our customers.

We are also jointly agreeing target costs prior to commencing work. Once a target cost is set for a job this will be the amount that the County Council expects to pay. Obviously, unforeseen aspects may arise from time to time which will require the target cost to be adjusted through negotiation. A pain/gain mechanism has been developed which means that if Atkins and the supply chain partners deliver a job for less than the target cost, they then share in the savings made. This is balanced with a 'pain' element whereby if the job costs more, Atkins or the supply chain partners meet the majority of the additional cost.

We also expect, through joint working, to develop new ways of delivering the service that will demonstrate savings which can be reinvested in the service. For example, we are now providing hot boxes in our highway depots for the storage of hot surfacing materials to reduce the time and mileage in collecting these materials from suppliers who are often some distance away.

### **How will the performance of Cambridgeshire Highways be monitored?**

The partnership has developed a series of performance indicators that will be used to monitor how well we are delivering the service. Councillors will review these indicators annually when scrutinising the performance of the partnership.

The performance indicators are wide ranging and fall into the following themes:

- Customer Service
- Environmental Activity
- Business Efficiency
- Operational Safety
- People

### **What are the key challenges for Cambridgeshire Highways?**

The County Council, like all Local Authorities, is being asked to achieve efficiency savings each year and Cambridgeshire Highways needs to contribute to these savings which means not everything that the County Council and the public wants doing can be done. One way we will be able to make savings is to combine small elements of work into a larger package to allow the work to be done more cost effectively. For example bringing together a list of white lining work in an area will avoid the need for multiple visits by the white lining contractor. This may mean that it takes a bit longer for some work to be done in order to reduce our costs.

Nationally, there is a shortage of engineers and technicians with experience in the highways field and both the County Council and Atkins continue to find the recruitment and retention of staff a challenge. This challenge is not expected to become easier over the next few years and pressure on staff resources may increase in light of the scale of development expected in the region and the demands of the Olympic Games construction programme.

Establishing a joint training scheme, bringing in new recruits at all levels and utilising our staff skills in the most effective way will all be important elements in managing staff resource pressures.

Meeting the challenges presented by climate change and sustainable development will also need to be a focus for the partnership. Work has started on increasing the use of recycled materials and reducing our carbon footprint.

### **How can you communicate with Cambridgeshire Highways?**

We are encouraging all our customers to contact us via email as much as possible as this means that your service request or feedback will be electronically logged and then distributed to the most appropriate member of the partnership who will then be expected to

respond within 10 working days in line with the response standards set by the County Council.

We encourage contact by email as staff are often out of the office for long periods of the day and therefore are often not available to take calls. However, if you need to call Cambridgeshire Highways, we can be contacted via the County Council's contact centre on 0845 045 5212.

Our email address is [street.scene@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:street.scene@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

When we respond you should expect the response to set out:

- what action is being taken (if any)
- if we decide that no action is required, the reason why
- the timescale for any work actioned to be completed

### **Where is Cambridgeshire Highways located?**

Our main office is at 2 Wellbrook Court, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0NA and we have area offices at the following sites:

For South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City: Station Road, Whittlesford, Cambs. CB22 4NL.

For Huntingdonshire: Stanton House, Stanton Way, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 6XL.

For East Cambridgeshire: Stirling Way, Witchford, Ely, Cambs. CB6 3NR.

For Fenland: Cambridgeshire County Council staff are based at Hereward Hall, County Road, March, Cambs. PE15 8NE. Atkins staff are currently based at Bawsey Yard, Gadds Lane, Wisbech, PE13 4TJ