

Highways Steward Scheme – Exmoor

Here's what they've achieved to date:

Highways Steward with van and equipment is in post

A proportion of the Highways maintenance budget will be passed to parishes

Funding for a new 'broker' role secured, and broker recruited

Exploring communications, asset mapping and influencing planned highway works

Highways Steward Scheme

A highly responsive Highways Steward, complete with van and equipment, became operational this spring, as part of the Exmoor pilot. They perform the kind of low-tech maintenance duties that are of high importance to communities, and yet consume County Highways 'post bags'. From sweeping the leaves off the gully-tops, and cutting back brambles from footways, to fixing problem patches of grass causing visibility issues. If successful, the scheme could be rolled-out across the county under the new unitary arrangements

Devolved Highways Maintenance Budget

Also confirmed at the Exmoor Area Panel meeting, was the devolving of a proportion of the Highways maintenance budget to parishes. Exmoor parishes can influence how, where and when that money is spent. They will need to exercise their own purchasing controls, and there are parameters to work within, but basically they can prioritise their own highway maintenance works and deliver it themselves.

Some of the Highways maintenance budget has been passed to Exmoor parishes to order works at their own discretion and authority. It's entirely in their gift to prioritise. This is about parishes having control.

Broker role secured

To better-connect the Exmoor LCN pilot to highways, traffic and the wider highways and transport group, funding for a broker role was secured and a broker has been recruited. This will improve communications and ensure the pilot scheme objectives are fulfilled, monitored and evaluated.

Lessons learned will be presented to the new unitary administration for consideration as the LCN programme is rolled-out across the county post Vesting Day, on April 1st, 2023.

Communications, asset mapping and influencing planned highway works

The Exmoor Pilot has re-engineered their back office processes, and reminded parishes to use the County Highways reporting function as the cleanest way into the service.

The location of assets, such as street lights, gullies, and highway boundaries are being mapped. Exploring the ability for parishes to influence works programmes, timings, diversion routes etc, is being established for the first time ever.

“How LCNs will work is being developed, and feedback from pilots such as this one will help make recommendations on how they could be constituted going forward.

We thank the Exmoor Area Panel for their hospitality and their positive approach. There’s been a real appetite and ambition to test and try out new ideas.”

Andrew Turner

SCC Highways Strategic Manager