

Public Perception working group:

Participants:

Ian Bamforth, Neil Anderson, Councillor Lucy Hodgson, Councillor Simon Geraghty, Councillor John Smith, Jon Fraser, Katharine Clough, Paul Whittaker, Andrew Rudd, Dave Rowley (Ringway Infrastructure Services) and Adele Clarkson

Objectives:

To identify and implement cost effective ways to improve public perception, addressing the findings from completed research. The Working Group meet regularly to review and agree ongoing actions and progress.

Key initiatives:

- a) Three Parish Makeovers have been successfully carried out in Cookley, Malvern and Martley. The fourth Parish makeover has taken place in early June for Belbroughton. It is proposed that a qualitative survey to residents in Cookley and Martley will be carried out to assess the impact of the Local Response Team. (A qualitative method is favoured to understand the experiences and attitudes of the local community through face to face interviews).
- b) To increase the offer of a Parish Makeover scheme to a maximum of 20 per year by providing the opportunity for Councillors to utilise their own Highways Divisional Funds. These will be branded as WCC/Worcestershire Highways. A proposal has been drafted for approval and implementation.
- c) Worcestershire County Council has joined the National Highways & Transport survey for 2015. This will enable comparison between similar authorities & provide for a clearer like for like clarity over the breadth of the survey. This also includes a sample size of over 3000 respondents.
- d) 'Thank you for your patience, another Highways job done' signage is being displayed after successful prominent works have been completed around the county. (see image below)



- e) For high value prominent works such as the Cathedral Square, an exhibition is being hosted in the Guild Hall, Worcester. For other Public Realm schemes, these include leaflets to local residents and businesses and information points such as the one shown below: (see shop front used for Tenbury Wells).



- f) Prominent signing to promote the £3.95m investment into the surface dressing programme is being displayed around the county for the duration of the works (see below), alongside significant positive media messages and press releases for public awareness via the Communications team, making reference to both the pre-patching and surfacing programmes. The aim is to help increase the public's understanding and awareness of the rationale of using these methods.



- g) Parish Conference 4th June titled 'Digital Parishes'. This included an agenda item about how we are improving communications about Highways with Parish Councils and to further promote the 'Report it online' system.
- h) In partnership with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, a proposal has been agreed to erect new county boundary plates. Following a pilot of two new plates on the county boundary of the A38 and A44, the WLEP have agreed to fund the erection of a further 9 prominent county boundary sites. This is in addition to 20 white county boundary locations where the County Council's white Worcestershire signs will be significantly improved. The design is shown below.



- i) To improve the communication from County to District, Town and Parish council level, a new model of communication is being proposed at the next Working Group meeting.
- j) Traffic flows in key hotspots of the county are being investigated to identify if any changes to sequencing of traffic lights may have a positive impact and to alleviate traffic disruption.
- k) Fortnightly meetings are in place to ensure programmes of work, including those by utility companies do not coincide with key events in and around Worcester City (as an initial pilot). There is also a separate piece of Lean work to ensure greater coordination between Severn Trent and National Grid to reduce disruption on major works.
- l) To improve public perception about lining and other road markings around the county, as part of the Highways term contract with Ringway, they are implementing a significant three year lining improvement programme across the county.
- m) To better coordinate and manage utility works, permitting for traffic management is being introduced in 2015/16. This will see a significant increase in the effective monitoring and management of all utility works across the county.
- n) To further improve highway verge clearance and sign clearance etc, we are working closely in partnership with the District and Parish councils to develop improved service delivery through a series of pilot schemes as part of Project Optimise.