

Peer to Peer Survey

The Peer to Peer Survey fulfils part of the *challenge* and *comparison* elements of the Best Value Review of Development and Transportation Processes.

The Survey was undertaken in order to establish the basis upon which similar authorities managed the link between Strategic Planning and Strategic Transportation. The results from this Survey will thus be used to stimulate and challenge improvements in the services in Essex.

The Survey questions were drawn up by Transportation and Planning Officers in Essex, and the form was sent to Nottingham, Cheshire, Lancashire, Surrey, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hampshire, Kent, Hertfordshire and Derbyshire County Councils. A response rate of 80% was finally achieved with all authorities except Cheshire and Derbyshire returning questionnaires.

The full results are contained in the attached spreadsheet, with an overview of the key findings from each question set out below.

Q1. What functions does the County Council include in its calculation of BVPI 107?

Essex	Included; Statutory Planning, Structure Plan, Regional Planning, Major Development Proposals, Minerals and Waste Local Plans, Development Control, and Monitoring. Not; Discretionary functions such as Archaeology, Conservation, and Listed Buildings. Not; Strategic Transportation
Norfolk	As Essex
Lancashire	As Essex (although a small element of specialist advice time works itself back into the equation.)
Surrey	As Essex, plus part discretionary function associated with conservation.
Hampshire	As Essex but also included are Discretionary functions such as Archaeology, Conservation, and Listed Buildings, capital cost of environmental improvement schemes, contribution/ subscriptions/ grant aid to other bodies, land acquisition for gypsy sites, repairs and maintenance of gypsy sites plus accommodation, legal, personnel, payroll and other corporate recharges/overheads. Not included: strategic transport and transport input to development control. NB: The current published BVPI 107 figures for Hants are therefore incorrect as they included services outside those identified on the POS guidance. The correct budget is £2.4 million for 2002/03 for the service areas identified by the POS as the 'planning service'.
Hertfordshire	What we are advised to include in the Best Value cost accounting guidance.
Kent	Strategic and Regional Planning, Structure and Local Planning, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Planning Projects and Implementation, Trees and Forestry, Development Control.

Note – Nottinghamshire and Suffolk did not answer this question.

Q2. How does the County manage Strategic Transportation and Strategic Planning? Are they part of a single service group or separate groups?

Same Service Group in Suffolk, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, and Norfolk

Different Service Group in Essex, Nottingham, Lancashire, Kent and Surrey

Note - Whilst Kent and Surrey deliver the services through different service groups they remain part of the same Directorate.

Q3. If separate groups, how does the County co-ordinate and integrate these two functions?

No formal system of integration in Essex, Nottingham and Lancashire

Kent "Constant interface on whole range of issues – daily working"

Surrey "Through Sustainable Development Heads of Services and Transportation Planning Liaison Group."

Q4. How does the County manage County level Development Control (Minerals and Waste) and Highways Development Control issues?

Dealt with by respective service groups Essex, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Lancashire,

Surrey Through Sustainable Development Heads of Services and Transportation Planning Liaison Group.

Hampshire To be devised as part of next stage of the reorganisation. (In the past it was done through informal close working between individuals)

Hertfordshire Plans Management Group (co-ordinates all plan/strategy making within the Department). Group management meetings every 3 weeks

Kent Constant interface on whole range of issues – daily working.

Q5. Does the County share internal systems for Highways and Minerals/Waste DC (E.g. progress tracking, record keeping)?

Separate systems Essex, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Lancashire, Surrey, Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk.

Similar system Kent

Q6. Does the County use consultants to assist with Strategic Planning? If so how?

All authorities have used consultants for the following reasons/areas.

Essex	Technical studies and spatial options
Suffolk	Capacity Study
Nottinghamshire	Retail Study
Lancashire	Sustainability appraisal
Norfolk	Terms Consultants for Mineral and Waste Planning appeals, other consultants for specialist areas
Surrey	Consultation
Hampshire	Specialist advice
Hertfordshire	Specialist advice and an additional resource
Kent	Specialist issues such as Cliffe Airport

Q7. What formal arrangements does the County have for working with District Councils?

No formal arrangements Essex, Nottingham, Norfolk and Hertfordshire

Lancashire	Regular formal working groups with Districts on LTP matters, such as Car Parking. There are also regular meetings of all development plan/development control officers in the county as well as informal consultation meetings on specific topics as required.
Surrey	Local Committees of joint County/District members consider local transportation and other matters, but not planning.
Hampshire	Standing officer liaison/working groups, and District participation in a Member Panel which steers the Structure Plan by jointly agreed Protocols for consultations on strategic planning applications and draft Local Plans. Consultants are also used for stakeholder involvement in the Mineral & Waste Local Plan Review and for specialist inputs e.g. GIS mineral resource study. The Local Plan Review is shared funding with the Unitaries – Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils
Suffolk	Regular Development Control, Development Plan, Conservation Officers and Landscape Officer Groups meet regularly. These involve all 8 authorities and include some outside representation e.g. Environment Agency, English Heritage etc. All groups operate under auspices of the Suffolk Planning Officers Group (this comprises all chief officers responsible for the planning functions).

Q8. Any other relevant comments

Lancashire There is considerable scope for improvement of the interface between strategic planning, LTP work and highways development control. Informal procedures have been greatly improved recently but formal re-organisation would be required to improve integration further. This is not being progressed for a number of reasons. Best Value is a very imprecise science – how you count numbers and how much effort you put into changing things!