

CASE STUDY 2013

Blackpool Borough Council has taken part in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey for the last five years.

The 2013 results showed a further substantial improvement in road condition allied with speed and quality of repair, making Blackpool the only authority in the survey that saw improvement in all of its road condition benchmarking indicators. The additional activity in road maintenance was accompanied by significant year on year improvements in ratings for traffic and roadworks management.

07. Highway Maintenance/ Enforcement KBI					
Question	2009 Sep	2010 Sep	2011 Sep	2012 Sep	2013 Sep
KBI 23 - Condition of highways	32.3	28.9	22.4	31.0	31.5
KBI 24 - Highway maintenance	45.6	44.7	42.8	43.4	48.6
KBI 25 - Street lighting	70.3	70.5	70.3	75.0	76.2
KBI 26 - Highway enforcement/obstructions	48.5	49.5	53.5	48.3	50.2

HAMP

In 2009 Blackpool Council released its first HAMP. The members' attention was drawn to how the roads underpinned the economic value of the town and that the highway network is the most valuable asset that the Council is responsible for. In particular the strategic road network is an extremely valuable asset as it provides routes for the goods and services and public transport routes. As Blackpool is the most popular seaside resort in the UK, the strategic road network is extremely important for the safe means of access and distribution around the town for the large visitor population. The 2009 HAMP's levels of service were to maintain the strategic roads, but without additional funding the residential roads would have to be a managed decline. The highway officers then developed a 'social network' which recognised the social value of the highway network to the residents of the town who use the roads and pavements everyday to access local services such as community centres, parks, GP surgeries, post offices etc. The Members now understood that the highway was the most important social service that the council provided. This social network was used by the Members whereby limited funding could be targeted to the right location at the right time. This approach was a key success factor that aligned the HAMP to the needs of their stakeholders including Members and the public.

Blackpool took part in the NHT public perception survey and the Members listened to the views of the public. These views were also drawn into the post 2009 HAMP reviews which led to a decision to make a major investment into the highway network which would enable the highway engineers to develop a preventive maintenance strategy.

Project 30

Blackpool are making an Investment of £30m to improve the local road network over four years, now in its final year (to be repaid over 25yrs). This investment has enabled the clearing of the backlog of works as well as arresting the accelerating decline of the network and reducing insurance claims.

As part of Project 30 a communications Management Plan was established. Project 30 is communicated in a number of ways to the Community. Initially the project 30 project management engaged in a high level public consultation programme and presented to every public forum meeting which took many months. The Council's Communications team regularly provide an update on progress and use various methods of communication regarding Project 30 items including the Community Newspaper and Facebook. The entire project 30 management team liaise extremely closely with the public to ensure that the planned programme is delivered on time. Essentially all the Members and the residents know what the plan is and when their road will be improved, which is critical information for local residents. The residents are in some instances, for the first time since the roads were originally built, seeing the benefits of the improved road condition. These benefits are the required output of the HAMP which is to provide a safe, sustainable and easy accessible highway network for all.

The town has been split into 66 geographical areas. This has greatly assisted with planning the works and although Project 30 had to follow behind the Streetlighting and traffic signals PFI, the members were canvassed to select roads in their wards which would be prioritised for treatments up front to the main programme. All utilities know exactly when and where Project 30 works are taking place and close relationships have been built to ensure that all utilities carry out planned excavation in advance of the project. Residents and local businesses have full visibility of all scheduled works via the website and the methods explained above.

Improvement in Road Condition

Programmes of planned preventative treatments have been put in place, scheduled to deliver a reduction in maintenance costs of £100m over 25 years. The reason that this proposal was successful was due to the Members realising that investment into the highway network would help underpin the social and economic aspirations of their town over the long term

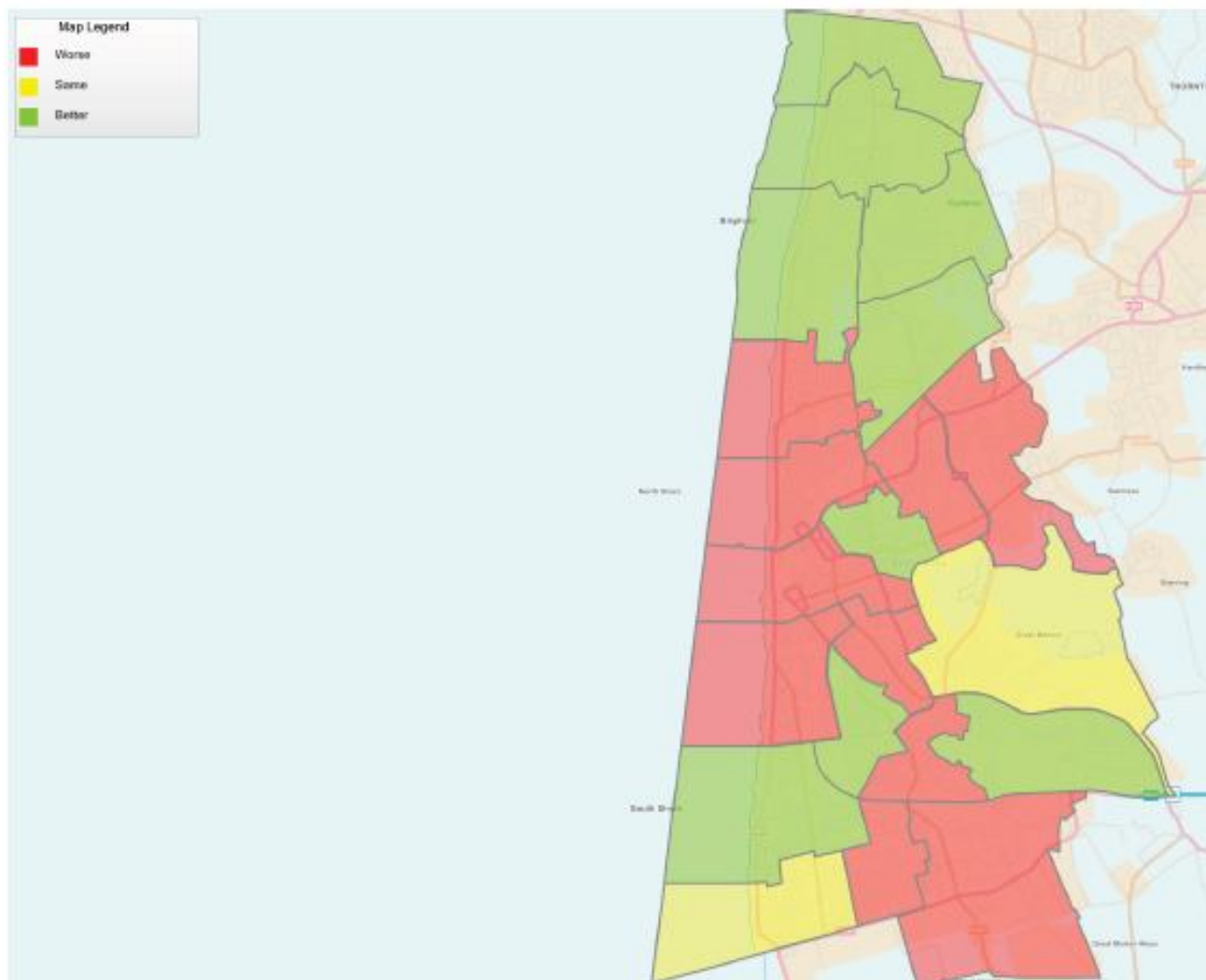
Local residents and businesses are kept informed of what the Project aims to achieve, how it is going to be done and how long it will take. Two-way communication is encouraged, providing people with a clear point of contact. The feedback and comments received help to check that the service is being delivered in the manner it was promised and gives early warning of any tweaks that may be required as the project continues.

- There are already less reactive maintenance works due to project 30.
- All contractors are working collaboratively
- Blackpool report that in their view, unlike a PFI, their approach is more flexible and can react to the needs of the community

Working with its contractors as one team under the brand of 'Project 30' and improving social outcomes are at the heart of the project. A vital element is clear and effective communications with local communities and stakeholders. The map below shows improvements in many areas of the Borough from 2012 to 2013 although there is still a lot of work to be done.

NHT SURVEY 2013 VS 2012 DATA MAP

BLACKPOOL BC - 2.11 HIGHWAY CONDITION (SATISFACTION) (UNWEIGHTED DATA)



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