

## Highways, Capital Development & Waste Management

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Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Steve,

### **Challenge Fund: Devon Application.**

Thank you for the opportunity to bid for funding through the Challenge Fund process.

Following the Bid Guidance, Devon has developed a package of major maintenance schemes linked to highway junction improvement schemes. This offers an exciting opportunity to move from prevention to resilience in highway maintenance on priority sections of the network and, by including for improvement works, drive economic prosperity.

As you will recall from our conversation, Devon is very concerned about its ability to meet the needs of rural Devon where the condition of some rural roads is very poor. This is a major area of concern for local residents and Elected Members and we have been working hard to evolve our highway strategy to better balance available funding and local aspirations. You will recall that our strategy includes for driving efficiency; mobilising community support and managing demand.

The Challenge Fund Bid does not enable a scheme for the less busy parts of the network. However, there is massive pressure from residents to carry our repairs to the minor road network. Our Capital Allocation of Highway Maintenance Funding does not enable us to meet these local needs. That is why we are working so hard to engage with communities to explain the constraints we face on funding of capital work, to enable them to help themselves with local priority routine works that we cannot fund, and to agree with them different levels of maintenance, including the prospect of stopping up or downgrading roads to minimise the demands on the highway service.

I attach a recent press article that demonstrates some progress on this challenging agenda.

So, despite the fact that the Challenge Fund bid does not encourage a bid for our rural highway strategy, I hope you will be able to take a look at the document "Changing Lanes" and to consider the merits of our approach.

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**Strategic Director Place** Heather Barnes

I'm keen to seek DfT support for the Devon strategy. I think it could be a template for other Highway Authorities and I would like to explore with you the opportunity for funding a pilot of the Devon approach. The idea is to offer a challenge to our rural communities. In return for engagement with the Highway Authority and agreement on the stopping-up of some roads, and participation in our self-help scheme, I would like to be able to agree which roads we could invest in to provide a resilience network; which roads would receive preventative treatments (surface dressing) only and which roads would be accepted for managed decline with local maintenance input.

Please let me know if think that there is a possibility of DfT funding for the above and if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Whitton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Whitton  
Head of Highways, Capital Development & Waste Management