

Future Highways Research Club

Realising Transformational Business Benefits in Highways

2017/18 Research Programme Prospectus

Further Budget Cuts
Failing Infrastructure
Political Dissatisfaction

Local Economy Development
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
Revenue Generation
Cost Neutrality
Increased User Satisfaction

2017/18

Get in lane



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Future Highways Research Club

The Future Highways Research Club was formed in 2014 to provide a forum where thought-leaders could meet, discuss and reflect on the challenges facing the highways sector and collaborate on the development of future Options for service delivery.

This prospectus outlines the continuation and expansion of the Future Highways Research Programme for 2017/18.

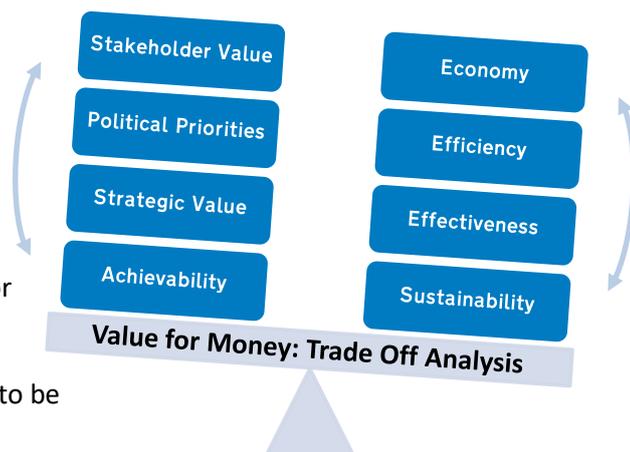
Background (The 2015/2016 Research Programme)

During 2015/2016, the Future Highways Research Club focused on answering three research questions:

- **Can we improve the *value for money* of our services?**
- **What are the Options for delivering future business benefits?**
 - Are there significant financial benefits?
 - Are there other tangible effectiveness and social benefits?
- **What business changes are required to deliver these options?**
 - What are the *process, people* and *technology* changes?
 - What barriers need to be overcome; what risks need to be managed?

A prerequisite of the research activity was to develop a robust instrument for the assessment of future Options; qualifying and quantifying the Value for Money (VfM) benefits and risks. To achieve this, a *Value for Money Toolkit* was developed combining a research-based, highways-specific factor set within Options Analyser™ (the *de facto* gold-standard application for Value for Money analysis).

During the course of 2015/2016, ten Options were evaluated to identify those with the greatest Value for Money (VfM) potential. In addition to desk research, many of the member organisations elected to host one (or more) of the Option assessments. This enabled the performance of the Options to be assessed in a real-world context. To ensure a robust baseline for the assessments, each participating organisation completed a baseline VfM study. This allowed the scale of change (including the benefits and costs) to be evaluated accurately.



The research Options have been deployed by a number of the members, including Lincolnshire County Council, Suffolk County Council and West Sussex County Council. Across these councils, the business benefits have included significant cashable cost savings, increased service performance and an improved service reputation (both internal and external).

2017/2018 Research Objectives

2017 has been a sea-change year for the sector, with announcements from government and the international automotive sector that herald the beginning-of-the-end of the use of fossil fuels in vehicles. With these changes come many challenges and opportunities for local authorities:

- A £255M grant to support local authorities planning Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) and Pollution Reduction Schemes.
- Additional powers and grants in support of the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme, the Workplace Charging Scheme and the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme.

The new Electric Vehicle Economy (EVE) presents opportunities to use highways assets as significant new sources of revenue; enabling highways services to expand and support dynamic local economies. With new market entrants keen to establish relationships with local authorities, which are best partnering methods and technology Options for the introduction of the new infrastructure. The research programme will include a comprehensive review of the EVE opportunities (structural and financial), together with the costs and risks.

2017 will also see a continuation and expansion of the work started in 2014. The top performing Options of 2015/16 will be developed from concept cases into deployable frameworks and operating models; each supported by outline businesses cases.

The Research Club will remain restricted to 12 active member organisations, with a maximum of two nominated representatives from each.

The 2017/2018 Research Programme

The 2017/2018 Research Programme will build upon the substantial foundation work started in 2014. Of the ten Options originally evaluated, six interrelated Options have been identified as supporting truly transformed services:

- **Electric Vehicle Economy**
 - The challenges facing the sector.
 - The opportunities for revenue generation and collaboration with new market entrants.
 - The implications of Central government policies and support schemes.
 - Transition modelling and new infrastructure implementation.



- **Services Sharing & Services Trading Framework(s)**
 - Including an evaluation of high-yield, no-sovereignty options.
 - Developing peer-to-peer and *Collaboration Agent* enabled framework(s) for services sharing.
 - Includes feedback from the *Nine-Authority Greater Manchester Highways Services Sharing Study*.
 - New types of commercial arrangements and creating Trading Council structures and commercially-orientated operating models
- **Provider Mutuality & Commissioning Framework(s)**
 - Developing an effective, deployable, commissioning framework template.
 - Overcoming the known issues and shortfalls; including scalability, flexibility and political agility.
 - Analysis of the opportunities and benefits of incorporating local SMEs, volunteers and the promotion of local apprenticeships; reinforcing local economies and developing home-grown talent.
 - Assessing the willingness and readiness of service providers to adopt modern commissioning methods.
- **Future Operating Model Optimisation**
 - Developing segregated *agile* and *efficient* structures.
 - Right-sourcing client / provider activities; answering ‘who should do what in a commissioned service’?
 - Exploring the case for long-term partner planning and services investment.
- **Future Community Communications & Engagement**
 - Finding effective communication methods; including an objective reappraisal of the efficacy of social networks as a medium for community engagement.
- **Future Value for Money (VfM) Assurance Framework(s)**
 - Expanding on the work completed during 2015/2016, an updated version of the Highways VfM Toolkit including the new Highways VfM Factors Set will be released to Research Club members.
 - Assessing the trade-off challenges of delivering value for money for highways services.

New Instruments & Applications

During 2017, two new instruments will be released based on the research programme. Tailored versions of these new software applications will be available to Research Club members.

Value for Money Analyser™ (Excel Edition): 2017/18 Update

The VfM assessment instrument was used to clearly identify current service challenges within member organisations and provide a

benchmarking tool incorporating a straightforward, repeatable process and transparent evaluation factors.

Refreshed for 2017/18, Value for Money Analyser™ (VfMA) has been updated with new functions and a refreshed factor set. The new instrument will be released to members during 2017.

Options Analyser™: New for the 2017 Programme

This instrument has been developed to enable members to assess the *attractiveness* and *achievability* of future service options using a best practice Options appraisal methodology.

Collaborative Thinking & Working

Many of the benefits of the Research Club will come from authorities working together on a wide range of new initiatives. These benefits are expected to extend beyond sharing research; with collaboration being carried forward as options are co-developed and implemented.

Shaping Policy

During 2015, the research findings will be shared with other highways-sector agencies, including Highways England and the Department for Transport. As original research within the sector is typically restricted to retrospective change analysis¹, this Research Programme will provide a fresh, forward-facing perspective.

The research programme will be used to inform policy makers (both locally and centrally) and assist in the formulation of pragmatic and realistic strategies that are deliverable in the real world.

Format

The Research Club and the roundtable meetings enable groups of executives, directors and managers to meet together regularly in order to review and discuss the research topics.

Through these meetings, members have the opportunity to share experiences and ideas and to explore and develop approaches to the real challenges they face within their organisations and workplaces.

The research club will meet once during 2017 and four times during 2018, with on-going research being conducted in support of these meetings. All members will be encouraged to share their specific challenges and experiences. Briefing papers will be provided at each meeting.

¹ Including the case analysis work completed by HMEP.

Research Methodology

The Highways Research Programme method is founded on *participatory action-based research*. This approach seeks to understand a problem by trying to change the underlying operating model, capabilities, structure and culture; collaboratively and reflectively. The research method is outcome-orientated and designed to answer the key questions set by the Research Club members.

Research Club Membership & Eligibility

Associate membership of the FHRC is free to all ADEPT members. Full membership of the research club is operated on a nomination and invitation basis. Only named individuals can be nominated.

There is no fee for nominated members.

Benefits of Membership

Research Club members will enjoy a range of benefits:

Learn

The research programme will explore a wide range of issues and challenges facing the highways sector. It will develop and evaluate options for meeting these challenges and study the experiences of organisations pioneering radical change.

Share

Research data and information will be formatted for effective dissemination. Empirical evidence is brought to life as leading practitioners from both the public and private sectors share their experiences and discuss research topics and findings. Associate members will enjoy free access to the research output, toolkits and methodologies through the ADEPT members site.

Network

Research club members will develop a network of contacts across a wide-range of organisations. As senior stakeholders within their respective organisations, members will be encouraged to collaborate; working together to generate, share and explore ideas and approaches.

Access

Members will be given exclusive access to the research findings prior to wider publication and dissemination. As sector pioneers, members will also be able to publish their own case studies in a structured format; independently assessed and verified.