

## **The Future Highways Research Group & Value for Money Benchmarking Club**

### **Our Research Journey and Membership Offer**

In 2014, Proving Services (Proving) established the Future Highways Research Club (FHRC) as a forum for sector thought leaders to share knowledge and experiences and identify, develop and assess innovations with the potential to transform the sector through the application of academic research frameworks and methods. In 2016, Proving separately launched the **Value for Money (VfM) Benchmarking Club** and the Value Analyser™ toolkit. In 2018, Proving and ADEPT formed an exclusive research partnership enabling all ADEPT members to access and participate in the research programmes and the VfM benchmarking club. In 2019, to reflect the expansion of its work and breadth of potential membership, the FHRC became the **Future Highways Research Group (FHRG)**.

**In 2020, ADEPT and Proving combined the Future Highways Research Group and the VfM Benchmarking Club to create a single research and benchmarking membership with an all-in annual fee of £4,950 + VAT. This represents a significant annual saving of 33% for combined membership.**

The annual membership fee provides unrestricted access to the research outputs of the FHRG and will also include an independent, annually conducted VfM Assessment, as well as access to the anonymised VfM benchmark data.

A full list of current FHRG and VfM Benchmarking Club members can be seen in Appendix A.

### **Research Pedigree & Membership Benefits**

Working within a robust academic framework, the FHRG's pioneering local authority members have successfully hosted and conducted numerous research initiatives, concepts trials and sector surveys. To date, the FHRG's research activities have:

- **Identified and developed 53 commercialisation, cost recovery and cost offsetting options.**
  - With an indicative total portfolio value of £16.3M p.a.
  - Including total cost offsetting for street lighting using value-exchange solar farms.
  - Developing robust frameworks to provide paid-for access to the network and highways assets to the benefit of the local economy and served communities (engaging with 5G and green energy providers).
- **Identified and currently assessing 45 climate emergency initiatives.**
  - Reducing greenhouse gases and improving air quality.
- **Designed and implemented advanced commissioning frameworks and highly optimised operating models.**
  - Achieving better performance and better outcomes at significantly lower operating costs.

- **Developed 9 methods for community engagement and 4 key enabling processes.**
  - From utilising volunteers to community payback resources to CSR funding.
- **Assessed 24 methods of communicating with the public.**
  - Including broadcast and targeted methods.
  - Ensuring that the public are better connected and informed.
- **Developed the Clarion pop-up street survey process.**
  - To provide a low-cost, robust method of testing the attitudes, perceptions and priorities of citizens and served communities.
  - Reducing the reliance on externally sourced surveys and data.
- **Completed a comprehensive assessment of the provider market and analysis of the relative benefits of 15 potential operating models.**
  - Interviews with 13 tier one and two providers to understand their perceptions of and ambitions for the future of the highways sector.
  - Worked with nine highways commissioning authorities to evaluate the highest performing potential future operating models.
- **Reimagined ways of collaborating, beyond ISO 44001, using “mutuality” concepts.**

In 2021, working with both local authority members and private sector provider partners, the FHRG commenced research into two highly contemporary challenges for the sector, aiming to:

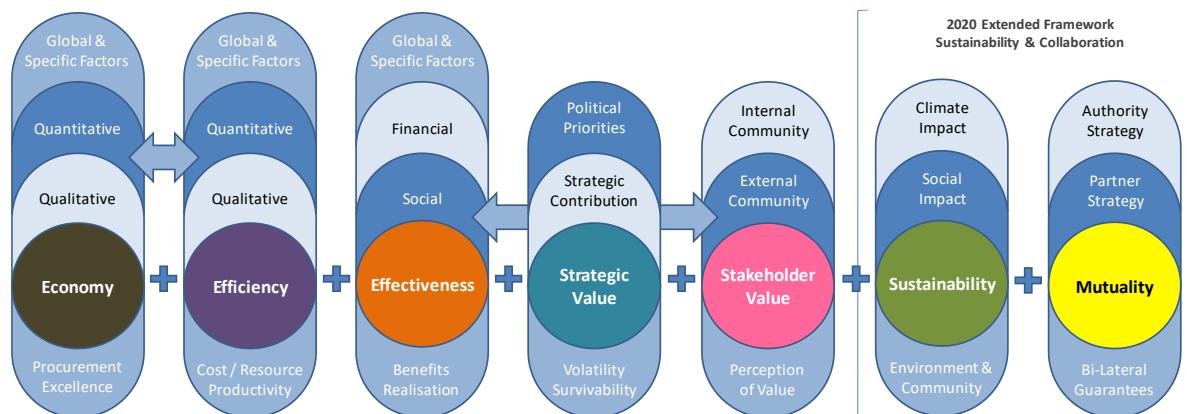
- **Develop guidance to support the consistent interpretation and measurement of SCOPE 1, 2 and 3.**
  - Critical to enabling highways authorities to achieve their goals around carbon reduction and air quality.
  - The SCOPE 1 and 2 guidance was published in February 2022 and the work to develop the SCOPE 3 guidance is now underway, engaging DfT and all the primary private and public sector stakeholders in the highways industry.
- **Develop shared solutions to the current challenges around human capital management.**
  - An aging workforce and skills shortage is endemic across both public and private sector highways partners and presents a threat to medium term service sustainability.
  - As of summer 2022, this study has completed a number of surveys, data gathering exercises and round tables and is starting to collate best practice and strategies to address the current challenge in both the immediate and longer term.

The outcomes from both studies will be published in autumn 2022.

## VfM Benchmarking Club Membership Benefits

The combined Future Highways Research Group and VfM Benchmarking Club includes the option of a biennial, independently conducted and certified value for

money assessment of highways services. To date, the research-based VfM assessment has been designed to provide detailed performance analysis in five key dimensions. From 2022, two new dimensions will be added to recognise the emergence of the sustainability agenda and best practice collaboration as critical drivers of good value for money.



Research Programme (CVRC, 2011) ©Proving, Farquharson, Perrin & Wilson 2020

Each VfM Assessment includes:

- **A fully independent and quality-assured review undertaken by Proving.**
  - These reviews now include opportunities for FHRG members to act as peer reviewers, working alongside a Proving VfM specialist.
- **A tailored report to include key findings and a prioritised schedule of improvement opportunities together with waypoint targets.**
- **A detailed illustration of each member's benchmarked VfM position relative to the other club members.**
  - All benchmark participants have the assurance that comparisons are based on like-for-like reviews, conducted with a consistent level of rigour.

Members are also free to use the Value Analyser™ toolkit, factor sets, scoring guides and methodology to undertake self-assessments; either of their whole service and / or individual functions, such as street lighting or winter maintenance.

## Additional Combined Membership Benefits

Membership also includes additional significant benefits to ADEPT, exclusive to local authority members:

- **Software Toolkits & Research Findings:** Access to a range of software toolkits, evidence-based best practice proposals and collated sector benchmarks and indicators.
- **Influence:** The chance to support strategic transformation, the implementation of sector-based innovation and deploy continuous value for money improvements.

- **Confer, Collaborate & Share:** The opportunity to take part in, shape the research and benefit from attendance at the quarterly meetings of the FHRG at Cranfield University, a forum for discussion of the sector challenges and innovations.
- **Annual Conference:** A complimentary ticket to the annual Innovation Conference; showcasing the latest research and innovations being deployed by the FHRG, with members presenting on the tangible benefits achieved.
- **Financial savings for local authorities:** membership of the FHRG and VfM Benchmarking Club is via an annual subscription of £4,950, representing a significant saving.

## Supporting & Promoting ADEPT

The FHRG membership fee includes a contribution of £750 to ADEPT. As a not-for-profit organisation, any surplus is invested into the Association and used to further improve services to members.

## Further Information & Membership Application

Please contact Hannah Bartram, Chief Operating Officer at ADEPT, [hannah.bartram@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.bartram@eastsussex.gov.uk) or call 07872 013707 or Andy Perrin, Director at Proving, [a.perrin@provingservices.co.uk](mailto:a.perrin@provingservices.co.uk) or call 07400 161111.

## Appendix A – FHRG Membership July 2022

Dominic Brown – Highways Magazine  
Hannah Bartram – COO, ADEPT  
Barnet London Borough  
Buckinghamshire Council  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
Cheshire East Council  
Cumbria County Council  
Derby City Council  
Derbyshire County Council  
Devon County Council  
Dorset Council  
East Sussex County Council  
Essex County Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Haringey London Borough  
Herefordshire Council  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Kent County Council  
Kirklees Council  
Lancashire County Council  
Leicestershire County Council  
Lincolnshire County Council  
Luton Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Newham London Borough  
North Somerset Council  
Northumberland County Council  
North Yorkshire County Council  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Shropshire Council  
Somerset County Council  
South Gloucestershire Council  
Southend Borough Council  
Staffordshire County Council  
Suffolk County Council  
Surrey County Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
West Sussex County Council