

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Funding for Innovation: Connected Vehicle Data**

Blackpool Council, who are leading this project, chairs the Local Councils Road Improvement Group (LCRIG), which brings together councils that are keen to develop new common methodologies to understand and communicate the true state of highway infrastructure.

This group now consists of the following local highway authorities:

1. Blackpool Council
2. Manchester City Council
3. Stockport City Council
4. Halton Council
5. Lancashire County Council
6. Cumbria County Council
7. Southend on Sea Council
8. Plymouth City Council
9. York Council

Bristol and Bradford are joining.

The key to the groups aims and aspirations is to break the disconnect between data and people. By providing information that everyone can understand in highway asset management to ensure it is working, as it should, on the ground, making a difference. This project fits completely into LCRIG's mission and purpose, which is:

**Mission / purpose**

To develop new common methodologies to understand /communicate the true state of Highways Infrastructure to facilitate long term robust business plans and determine the correct level of investment for today and the future.

**Purpose of the group**

To develop and promote a fresh approach to highway asset management that engenders wider stakeholder involvement and focuses on investment outcomes for present and future generations.

A project successfully concluded would further improve all local council's highway asset management plans/strategies in line with the new Well Managed Highway Code of Practise and update any council's road and footway condition data, bringing it to a state of the art data by adopting innovative connected vehicle technology. More efficient repair programmes would both save resources to be spent on more works and improve quality of life in all the local highway authorities' areas.

It is recognised that millions of pounds are spent nationally every year in collecting condition data to support the local council HAMPs. Successfully deployed, this scheme would overlay and improve the data available. There is an ongoing need to improve data quality as new technology becomes available.

Using money from the DfT's Connected Vehicles fund would have the following outcomes:

- Save resources to be invested in more road improvement works.
- Reduced claims against councils for trips and any damage to vehicles.
- Surfaces in better condition, having a better aesthetic appearance and reducing tripping claims.
- Assisting disabled persons moving around the urban environment. Walking surfaces will be better maintained, which will assist disabled persons' mobility. It is hoped that disabled persons will feel more confident in participating in society outside their homes.
- Helping the council maintain its single most valuable asset to the highest possible standard within the resources available.
- Assisting underpinning local council's economy and communities. Improved highway and footway surface quality improvements have recognised economic benefits. An example would be a better impression for potential inward investors. There is a long-term and ongoing benefit for employment generation and therefore poverty reduction. The benefit for the community would be persons affected by poor highway quality would be able to participate in community life more readily as the public realm will be easier to navigate. This will have a beneficial effect on community cohesion.
- The new technology would aim to carry out more 'right first time' solutions, thus using the recommendations in the HMEP toolkits and avoiding the pitfalls of worst first or reactive intervention. Revenue funding will also be prioritised for assets that have significant safety implications for highway users,
- To identify the 'Right Place', the LCRIG councils have already developed social networks working closely with their politicians using criteria that were significant to local communities. These criteria included bus routes, district centres, local health centres, employment sites, business areas, hospitals, schools, post offices, school routes and areas of high tripping or vehicle claims.
- In particular, the digital inspection system will reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of all local highway authorities' safety inspection regimes. By making use of connected vehicles, using cameras and processing all council's data could utilise all council vehicles to improve operational efficiency in terms of routing and scheduling. This includes as mentioned the better use of council and contractor resources, with fewer claims and links extremely well with customer facing aspects of the service thereby improving the reputation of the council's highway services and the Department for Transport. Whilst achieving a solution to the national problem of repairing potholes quicker and more effectively.

LCRIG tier 2 Partner councils offer a variety of road and footway environments within which to test the hardware and software package developed. It is anticipated that all Tier 2 authorities will become early adopters whilst the rest of the LCRIG members will adopt this highway condition monitoring method when it is tested and demonstrably reliable.



The scheme will enable this concept to be rolled out to other local authorities and road maintenance organisations.

Blackpool Council have released a RAMS framework contract whereby any local council can easily procure the new technology in a 'call-off' arrangement thus saving the DfT funding on further procurement enabling successful technology to be rolled out across the UK.

Yours faithfully,

Will Britain

LCRIG Chair