

Future Highways Research Club

On 5 October 2017, the Future Highways Research Club (FHRC) was relaunched at Cranfield University. After six months of literature searches, case reviews and interviews, the attending FHRC members reviewed, discussed and agreed the proposed research programme for 2017/18. This will include:

- The development of a prioritised portfolio of potential commercial activities for highways authorities, including concession selling for electric vehicle infrastructure and other highways assets. The ambition of the FHRC is to see the highways function become a cost neutral service over the next five years.
- An assessment of the methods and benefits of effective communications and community engagement – setting expectations and harnessing community resources to support the delivery of highways services, including through appropriate devolution to town and parish councils.
- An assessment of the benefits of implementing a function-by-function cyclical value for money (VfM) assurance and continuous improvement programme (including VfM benchmarking).
- An evaluation of the benefits to both commissioners and providers of adopting the principles of mutuality (and ISO44001) in commercial relationships with private sector providers to secure better outcomes.

The FHRC membership comprises thought leaders from across the highways sector. To ensure that the maximum benefit is achieved for the sector as a whole, the FHRC is coordinating its programme with ADEPT. This will ensure that research efforts are not duplicated and the outputs can benefit the widest number of authorities. More information and FHRC membership applications are available from Simon Wilson (s.wilson@provingservices.co.uk) and further information is available in the November edition of Highways Magazine:

<http://flickread.com/edition/html/59f04e8510ae4#21>