

## National e-Service Delivery Standards – and their application to Highways

*A new set of standards will allow local authorities to continue to improve services in a consistent manner*

In the run up to the priority service outcome deadlines, Questions are being asked about how a local authority can guarantee that the information and transactions it offers are of a similar minimum standard to a neighbouring authority yet at the same time can develop and improve on the services already provided. The answer, it seems, is standards such as those provided by PARSOL (Planning and Regulatory Services OnLine), one of the ODPM's national projects. This has set out a detailed list of standards that local authorities should be aiming to achieve in terms of e-services offered around planning. The new National e-Service Delivery Standards (NeSDS) aims to do this for other service areas.

Such a solution is particularly relevant for local authority departments that look after highways. With the massive increase in information that could potentially be available, from GIS displays of roadworks to information on safe routes to school or accident black spots, there is a need to ensure that a consistent minimum level of service is offered across the country. At the same time, the standards will highlight the best practice of CPA rated 'excellent' authorities and provide a mechanism for local authorities to see what their peers are doing. They are designed to provide a benchmark against which the current level of e-enablement in an authority can be assessed.

The NeSDS programme is being led by the London Borough of Havering. Northamptonshire County Council and Derbyshire County Council are heading up the Highways stream. iMPower Consulting Ltd. have been commissioned to work with the local authorities.

In order to ensure that the output of this project is relevant to a wide range of local authorities, each e-service delivery standard will have up to three levels:

- **Minimum**  
The Minimum Standard will reflect a basic degree of compliance with the standard which should be applicable to all local authorities. This will be the minimum required to meet the Government's targets as defined by BVPI 157, IEG, PO and Government Connects.
- **Progressing**  
The Progressing Standard is between minimum and excellent and will indicate a natural step between the two.
- **Excellent**  
The Excellent Standard will be 'National Best Practice'.

For each standard there will also be an explanation as to why the standard has been included, what the benefits of implementing the standard will be and any links to other standards, priority outcomes and best value indicators.

The standards are being designed with other ODPM initiatives in mind. They will allow local authorities to prioritise services allowing them to focus their effort and resources on achieving the improvements needed for the priority outcomes, the Gershon agenda, the IEG returns and the CPA ratings. They will be fully integrated with Government Connect.

The highways standards will consider the following areas:

- **Information for Highway Users**  
Standards may include the integrated transport options, rights of way, safe routes to school, and which organisations are responsible for what (such as what the Highways Agency is responsible for in comparison to, say, a county council).
- **Information on Highways**  
As well as information for Highway Users, the standards may suggest what sort of information should be presented about the highways that a local authority is responsible for. This could include preferred routes for abnormal loads vehicles or accident black spots for example.
- **Public Transport**

There is a large amount of information on local public transport. Standards could recommend the sorts of links that users of a local authority website could expect to find.

- **Consultation**  
This section will build on the e-consultation requirements that already exist and may suggest standards that affect how the organisation processes consultations. The standards will be specific to Highways but will reference existing consultation standards.
- **Parking Fines and Mitigation**  
Information around parking can be very useful for residents and visitors. Standards could allow for payment of parking fines online, where appropriate, and the ability to check parking maps to ensure that people receiving a fine can understand the traffic regulation orders.
- **Forms for Requesting a Service**  
e-Forms allow users to interact with the authority. Standards may include form tracking, reporting a highways fault online or other interactions such as requesting a blue badge. Forms may even be integrated with GIS.
- **Roadworks**  
The standards will require local authorities to provide information on roadworks. It is intended that these will be fully compatible with the Traffic Management Act and will be integrated with GIS.
- **Request for Traffic Order**  
Requests for traffic orders to close roads should be possible over a local authority's website.
- **Winter Service Information**  
There will be a set of standards around the provision of winter service information. This may include salting routes and other relevant issues. GIS integration may be specified where appropriate.
- **GIS**  
A category will specifically highlight the increasing importance of GIS information on roadworks and wider

applications such as bus routes, safe routes to school and parking maps.

The National e-Service Delivery Standards have the potential to transform the way individuals view their local authorities. By showing other authorities what the best ones are doing, every local authority should be able to improve the e-services they offer. For departments who maintain highways, this could mean a significant improvement in the way their customers interact with their locality.

For further information visit [www.nesds.gov.uk](http://www.nesds.gov.uk) or email [nesds.gov.uk](mailto:nesds.gov.uk)