

● Torbay Council has adopted the Symphony Gazetteer Management solution from **Aligned Assets** to maintain its local street gazetteer (LSG).

The Highways department maintains the LSG to help manage the borough's 516km of adopted highways in the coastal towns of Torquay, Brixham and Paignton
☎: www.aligned-assets.co.uk

● City of York Council has appointed **Alpha Parking** to carry out a full review of service-delivery administration and financial controls within its parking services department. The company will identify and cost options for achieving improvements to match best practice within the industry as part of the council's initiative to improve efficiency and quality.
☎: 020 7203 8420

● A consortium of companies has secured a contract to supply national digital aerial photography to the British Geological Survey (BGS). **Infoterra** and **BlueSky International** – as joint venture UK Perspectives – will supply data for England, with **Getmapping** for Wales and Scotland, in order to deliver complete national coverage.

The nationwide aerial mapping will be combined with detailed height data to create a 3D model of the landscape to enable scientists to visualise, analyse, monitor and map geological features and natural hazards, such as landslides and coastal erosion, in the laboratory.

☎: 01530 518562

● Luton Borough Council has awarded **Birse Civils** a £15.7M contract to undertake a major road improvement scheme along the 'east Luton corridor', on the south eastern side of Luton.

The project involves construction of additional lanes on to the existing A1081 and A505 in order to upgrade a single carriageway road to dual carriageway.

As part of the scheme, a new dedicated access road will be created off the A505 to provide the main entry into London Luton Airport. Four new bridges are to be constructed, too.

☎: 01604 664200

● Consultant **JMP** has been appointed to assist Inspire East – the regional centre for excellence for sustainable communities in the East of England. Divisional director Dr Colin Black and Peter Hardy will sit on the design review and enabling panels respectively, with the ultimate aim of delivering high-quality sustainable developments in the region.

☎: www.jmp.co.uk

conference call

Keeping urban-creep from rural streets in Dorset

Highway engineers and planners from across the county came together in Dorchester recently to discuss more sensitive ways of creating highway design for Dorset.

Organised by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, the seminar aimed to raise awareness

about new approaches to highway design and treatment, and marked the start of implementing some of the objectives in the local transport plan.

Delegates were asked to look at more sensitive and appropriate treatments for rural roads than already happens nationally. This is part of Dorset County Council's contribution to the new approach.

As well as thought-provoking and challenging presentations from national and local speakers, a workshop session encouraged highway designers to look at local, distinctive features in a rural setting, and find ways to conserve and enhance them. This included considering whether features such as trees, road width and buildings already influence driver behaviour and promote a 'natural calming effect'. Designers also considered ways in which the use of traditional engineering techniques in rural settings, such as kerbs, lines and signs, often conflict with current policy.

Organiser of the event and speaker, Sue Mitchell, from the county's AONB team, said: 'Our roads are being urbanised and degraded by an increasing quantity of signs, kerbs, road markings and other street furniture.'

'We know we can do better, and in Dorset, we have learned much about incorporating highways into high-quality urban design. It is time we translated these skills into the rural setting.'

Dorset's LTP says it 'will seek to achieve improvements which provide streets that are meaningful, liveable places for people, and highway networks which link those places in forms that are appropriate to the landscape in which they are set'.



business

● A new all party parliamentary group was launched this week to provide a forum for MPs and peers from all political parties to raise awareness of matters concerning urban renewal and sustainable development.

The **All Party Parliamentary Urban Development Group** was launched at a parliamentary reception on 19 July. Chaired by Clive Betts MP, the group's officers set out the research programme and objectives for the first year. It promises to identify barriers and opportunities, providing a holistic package of policy proposals to drive forward physical and economic regeneration. A series of inquiry sessions will begin this autumn.

Nick Raynsford MP – former local and regional government minister – is standing for election as honorary chairman.

● **Rhino Asphalt Solutions'** ironwork reinstatement system, *Ironmaster*, has secured Highways Authority Product Approval Scheme

(HAPAS) approval from the British Board of Agrément (BBA).

The investigations undertaken by the BBA included a postal user survey conducted to assess the performance of the product in service and an on-site installation assessment. The manufacturing processes were also examined, as were details of the quality and composition of the materials used.

HAPAS approval removes the need for individual authorities to carry out their own assessments and tests.

● 'Passive safety' products supplier **TMP** has announced a 50% increase in production and storage capacity in response to growing demand. Its range, which includes *Flecta* and *Flexichev*, absorb impact and return to their original position following a collision.

The newly-enlarged premises is an extension of the company's existing facilities and, the company says, will enable development of new products.