

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 12 June 2018
Report Subject	Repairing Potholes and Preparing the Annual Carriageway Resurfacing Programme
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer – Streetscene & Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update on the methods of repairing and maintaining the highway network following the winter period.

This report outlines the approach to defect identification and provides details on capital expenditure and investment levels relating to the highway network, the cost benefit of temporary pot holes repairs and the reasoning behind the need for repeated repairs on some road surfaces, due to the same pot holes reappearing.

The report also provides Scrutiny with details of the proposed carriageway resurfacing programmes for 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny notes the information contained within this report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND OF WINTER IMPACT ON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND EMERGENCY REPAIRS
1.01	A report was presented to Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in October 2017 setting out the operational rationale relating to pot-hole repairs and outlining the processes used to identify resurfacing programmes and the preferred methods of repairing and maintaining the highway network.

1.02	The report outlined the approach to defect identification, including the inspection regime and the intervention levels operated by the Council. The report also provided details on capital expenditure and investment levels on the various highway assets, the preferred treatment option for carriageways such as patching, surface dressing or resurfacing and the cost benefit of temporary pot holes repairs.
1.03	During the winter of 2017/18, the County was affected by four significant periods of severe wintery weather; one in early December, one over the Christmas and New Year period, one towards the end of February and finally an extended period of snowfall at the end of March which lasted through to the beginning of April.
1.04	The winter weather will always have a detrimental effect on the highway network, with periods of frost and freezing conditions causing the road structure to heave and create defects in the surface which in turn allow more water ingress which will again freeze during the next period of cold temperatures. This results in potholes, and untreated potholes are exacerbated by traffic movements which cause further damage.
1.05	Road and weather conditions determined whether it is cost-effective for pothole repairs to be sealed and carried out in a prolonged and more permanent manner. The weather forecast, availability of resources and condition of the network are all considered when planning the appropriate response to defect repairs each week during the winter period.
1.06	Regular safety inspections are therefore carried out on all elements of the network which involve Streetscene Coordinators visiting each section of the highway infrastructure at an approved frequency. During the visit any defects present are noted and the required maintenance repair work arranged. Safety inspections are carried out on all carriageways (roads), footways and cycle-ways and on all publically accessible car parks operated by the Council.
1.07	It is necessary to remove safety related defects from the network in the most expedient manner possible, however this needs to be balanced against resources and the most effective method of removing the defect. Continued bad weather makes both the repairs itself difficult to carry out and the durability of the repair work uncertain.
1.08	Temporary filling of potholes is the cheapest option to quickly remove defects and provide a defence against any claims and the work is funded through maintenance (revenue) budgets. The costs comprise mainly of labour (FCC employees) and a small amount of materials used to fill the potholes.
1.09	Pothole repairs are an effective option to immediately deal with defects on the network and they are undertaken to remove the hazard in the most expedient manner. This reduces the risk of damage and injury to third parties and protects the Authority against litigation and damages. Whilst the repair often fails, this is due to the weather conditions and more expensive permanent repairs would also fail in these circumstances. Whilst repeated temporary repairs are frustrating for motorists it remains the only option to immediately remove the risk from the network in most circumstances.

1.10	The Council is also required to continue to respond to defects reported on the network either following the Area Coordinator safety inspections or reports from members of the public. This requirement demands that maintenance (revenue) budgets remain available for reactive works of this nature.
1.11	Asset management is a strategic approach to highway maintenance that identifies the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of the highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future customers.
1.12	<p>Ideally the Authority would like to achieve a continuance of the current condition level – this is known as “Steady State”.</p> <p>The level of Capital investment required to achieve this position, which was calculated in 2016, was £2,745,680 per year. This level of investment would simply maintain the condition of the carriageways at the current level.</p>
1.13	FCC’s allocation of Welsh Government funding for road maintenance schemes together with the Council’s capital allocation need to be carefully allocated to provide maximum benefits. All roads are surveyed to develop programmes for resurfacing which are shown on Appendix 1 .
1.14	In response to the initial periods of poor weather during December, Streetscene increased the resources allocation to defect repair throughout January to supplement the existing internal resources allocated. This was funded by reallocating capital funding that is usually held back until the Spring, in response to winter defects.
1.15	With the weather not relenting throughout January to April, these additional resources were extended to four dedicated crews treating defects on the network, and this work continue throughout the remaining winter period, where the weather allowed, and well into the new financial year.
1.16	Since the winter all roads across the network have been re-inspected and a condition score recorded following the winter of 2017/18, and these scores were collated and prioritised to prepare the resurfacing programmes. Those highest ranking roads, as measured by the formal adopted ranking matrix, were then inspected by Technical Officers to ensure consistency prior to the programme being planned for the summer of 2018.
1.17	<p>The Scheme prepared for annual maintenance programmes are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority Resurfacing Schemes • Resurfacing Programme • Surface Dressing Programme <p>Detail of these roads are included on the FCC website - http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Roads-and-Travel/Programme-of-highway-works.pdf</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Capital Budgets for Planned Maintenance - £600k</p> <p>Additional Welsh Government Funding support - £1.427m</p> <p>Reallocated revenue spend in response to winter defects - £89,285.00</p> <p>WG Grant received for additional Winter Maintenance costs was £118,974.00</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Not applicable.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The highway maintenance service has undertaken risk assessments on the provision of road surface treatments.
4.02	Good highway asset management aligns with the principles of the Future Generation and Well Being Act.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 - Resurfacing programmes</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Surface Dressing schemes</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Priority Resurfacing schemes.</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones – Chief Officer – Streetscene & Transportation</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704700</p> <p>E-mail: Stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Financial Year (FY): the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April
	Budget: a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.
	HAMP: Highway Asset Management Plan.