

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE CABINET PANEL
FRIDAY 5 JULY 2019 at 10:00AM



VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW UPDATE - CARRIAGEWAY MAINTENANCE

Report of the Director of Environment and Infrastructure

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Executive Members: Phil Bibby, Highways and Environment

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To provide Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel with an update on progress following the value for money review on carriageway maintenance the Cabinet Panel carried out at its meeting on 16 November 2018.

2. Summary

- 2.1. At the November Resource and Performance Cabinet Panel, Highways Officers gave a presentation on 'Value for Money in Carriageway Maintenance'. Members identified four areas for highways to consider and report back to Cabinet Panel on.
- 2.2. This report provides an update on the actions identified and sets out an indicative timeframe for providing evidence on how the investment in highways is delivering longer term benefits.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. Resources & Performance Cabinet Panel is invited to note and comment on the report.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Highways service maintains 5,100 km (3,169 miles) of carriageways. The gross replacement cost of this network would be approximately £6 billion.
- 4.2. To maintain this network, the service undertakes reactive and planned carriageway maintenance using a variety of treatments as set out in the previous panel report.

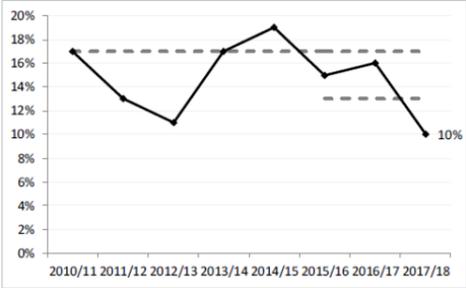
- 4.3. Following the presentation to panel, members identified four areas for further consideration as set out below.

4.4. The Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel:

1. Would be interested in receiving a further report focussing on the improvement of the Highways Network as a consequence of the additional funding for Unclassified Roads made available to the Highways Service in the current IP, with the report to be made available after a sufficient period of time has elapsed for the programme to have had a material impact on the network.
2. Recognised the continuing concern of the public in relation to the condition of Hertfordshire roads, with regards to potholes and value for money. Panel resolved to continue to monitor the value for money for highways in relation to Cat 1 works.
3. Noted that in view of the consistently high performance of the County Councils contractor in meeting response time targets for pothole repairs, would the Executive Member for Highways consider reviewing target levels acknowledging that the additional resources associated with shorter reaction times need to balance against the benefits those resources could deliver elsewhere?
4. Noted that with the significant increase in Highways Funding directed at improving the condition of Unclassified Roads and the general improvement in the Highway Network, would the Executive Members for Highways consider using the potential future savings from the reduction in the occurrence of potholes to review the current pothole intervention levels?

5. Update on the matters identified

- 5.1. The table overleaf sets out a summary of the actions being taken with an indicative timeframe for responding back to Cabinet Panel.

Recommendation(s)	When and How can this be addressed?	Other Comments/Considerations
<p>1. R&P Panel would be interested in receiving a further report focussing on the improvement of the Highways Network as a consequence of the additional funding for Unclassified Roads made available to the Highways Service in the current IP, with the report to be made available after a sufficient period of time has elapsed for the programme to have had a material impact on the network.</p>	<p>Report to Resources & Performance Panel in Spring 2022 on the outcomes from the i2i investment – The Invest 2 Improve programme is 5 years long. It is estimated that the net effect of this programme on the overall network will start to show after the first 3 years (i.e. 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21).</p> <p>At this point, the condition surveys to be conducted in Autumn 2021 will provide an indication of the programme’s outcomes. With these becoming available in early 2022, a report to panel will be produced for Spring 2022.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of asset condition – Monitoring of the highway asset condition performance is undertaken on an annual basis via a series of indicators for A, B, C and U roads. These are reported to Highways & Environment Cabinet Panel, with the most recent figures available here (Item 9a), and the showing ‘Percentage of U-Roads in need of structural maintenance’ included below:</p>  <p>The above shows that the U-Road asset condition has been broadly consistent, reflecting the service’s continued application of asset management principles, building resilience into the network.</p>
<p>2. R&P Panel recognised the continuing concern of the public in relation to the condition of Hertfordshire roads, with regards to potholes and value for money. Panel resolved to continue to monitor the value for money for highways in relation to Cat 1 works.</p>	<p>A quarterly Performance Report is presented to the Highways & Environment Cabinet Panel together with an Annual Asset Performance Report – as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways & Environment Quarterly Performance Report (Item 9a) – This includes Response to Cat 1 (%), measuring our adherence to Cat 1 timescales, and the Quality Audit (Cat 1) measure, measuring the quality of Cat 1 jobs. • Annual Asset Performance Report – This includes more detailed information on the condition of the network as a whole, and outlines the service’s Lifecycle Planning approach. The 2018/19 report is currently in production. 	<p>The Highway Service is working on two initiatives below, both of which are focused on driving Value for Money in the service, including (but not limited to) Cat 1 works:</p> <p>Building a predictive model for reactive repairs – The service is working with the Business Intelligence Team to explore the possibility of predicting reactive interventions on the network before they occur.</p> <p>This involves taking datasets on all the possible variables that could determine the occurrence of a pothole, i.e. surface type, drainage conditions, traffic levels etc., and determining the causality between each variable and the occurrence of a pothole in a particular road section.</p> <p>It is an experimental piece of work that may not return significant results, but if successful, would be the next step in enhancing the planning of workloads at a service level, and at a granular level intervene on the network before the need for a reactive repair arises.</p> <p>Comprehensive Value for Money assessment of the service – The service has recently engaged Proving Services Ltd to undertake a comprehensive value for money assessment of the service.</p> <p>The all-day workshop, attended by Councillor Bibby and senior Highways officers from HCC, WSP and Ringway identified potential areas for further evolution to work more efficiently and to increase its strategic value. One of the assessment conclusions was that overall the service “<i>compares reasonably well to its peer group</i>”.</p> <p>The recommendations from the assessment will be discussed by Highways Senior Management Team and Executive Members, with a view to drawing up an action plan for implementation.</p>

Please note: Due to the following recommendations both relating to our Defect Management Approach, they are taken together

3. R&P Panel noted that in view of the consistently high performance of the County Council's contractor in meeting response time targets for pothole repairs, would the Executive Member for Highways consider reviewing target levels acknowledging that the additional resources associated with shorter reaction times need to balance against the benefits those resources could deliver elsewhere?

4. R&P Panel noted that with the significant increase in Highways Funding directed at improving the condition of Unclassified Roads and the general improvement in the Highway Network, would the Executive Members for Highways consider using the potential future savings from the reduction in the occurrence of potholes to review the current pothole intervention levels?

Monitoring the impacts of the additional investment will need to be carried out over a suitable period of time (2 to 3 years) before it would be possible to determine with a degree of certainty what the potential future savings could be and then how these potential future savings could be used.

The service will continue to monitor reports of potholes and other defects, analysing data on a quarterly basis to help identify underlying trends, to ensure that investments are delivering the desired outcomes.

An analysis will be undertaken at the end of 2019/20 and the results with any initial recommendations produced.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.4 No equality implications have been identified in relation to this report.

BACKGROUND REPORTS

Resources & Performance Cabinet Panel – 16 November 2018:

<https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=283&MIId=1109&Ver=4>