

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 19 March 2019

By: Chair of the Review Board

Title: Scrutiny Review of Road Repairs

Purpose: To present the outcomes of the scrutiny review and make recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee considers and endorses the report of the Review Board, and makes recommendations to Cabinet for comment, and County Council for approval.

1. Background

1.1 The condition of the County's roads is something that is of interest to all residents and businesses in East Sussex and is the most frequent topic raised with councillors. Of particular concern has been the Council's approach to repairing potholes and whether this represents value for money. Many residents question the Council's approach to pothole repairs, asking why some potholes are repaired and others nearby are not. Some people do not believe this represents value for money and that it would be more economic to repair all the potholes at the same time rather than coming back repeatedly to the same location

1.2 The Place Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Review in June 2018 to examine this issue and number of other road maintenance concerns reported to the Committee. Members of the Review Board undertook a number of site visits to help understand the issues and determine the scope of the review. The scope of the review includes:

- Road repairs, both reactive pothole repairs and planned resurfacing work;
- The quality of repairs;
- How the Council tackles highway drainage problems; and
- The repair of pavements (added following initial scoping work).

1.3 The lines of enquiry which have been explored in this review are:

- How the Council communicates its approach to highway maintenance;
- Whether the current approach to pothole repairs is the right one and represents value for money;
- The quality of the repair and resurfacing work;
- The time it takes to repair blocked drainage infrastructure once it is reported and initial work carried out; and
- The repair of pavements and the factors that affect their condition.

1.4 The Review Board has examined a considerable amount of evidence in the course of undertaking the review. It has heard evidence from key officers, the highways maintenance contractor, and submissions from other county councillors. The challenge for the Board has been to develop recommendations that will bring about improvements, whilst taking into account the Council's current financial position.

1.5 Overall the Review Board finds that the Council's arrangements for road repairs are robust and there is a commitment to continuously improve the approach to highways maintenance. The Board has made a number of recommendations which it believes will help improve highway maintenance and highlight issues that warrant further attention.

2. Summary

2.1 The members of the Review Board are Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Simon Elford, Nigel Enever, Pat Rodohan, Stephen Shing and Barry Taylor.

2.2 The attached report (appendix 1) contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. Copies of evidence papers listed in the report and other support documentation are available on request from the contact officer.

2.3 The Committee is recommended to receive the Review Board's report for submission to Cabinet and County Council on 23 April 2019 and 14 May 2019 respectively.

3. Recommendations and conclusion

3.1 The Committee is requested to consider and endorse the report of the Review Board for submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

COUNCILLOR RICHARD STOGDON Chair of the Review Board

Contact Officer: Martin Jenks

Tel No. 01273 481327

Email: martin.jenks@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS: All.