

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 23 January 2024

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management – Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 In March 2023 the Place Scrutiny Committee established a Review Board to examine the Council's approach to the management of pothole repairs. This was in response to the level of concern that was being expressed by residents about the number of potholes and other defects in the County's roads.

1.2 The scope of the review included:

- Pothole repair techniques and costs;
- The quality of pothole repair works;
- Alternative pothole intervention levels and costs;
- Defect reporting and consideration of current policies to take into account vulnerable road users (e.g. those who walk, wheel, cycle, and motorcycle etc.)
- Consideration of budgets for pothole repairs and safety defects; and
- Consideration of the effectiveness of the Council's patching programme.

1.3 The Place Scrutiny Review addressed the following lines of enquiry:

- How can the Council improve the repair of potholes and tackle pothole clusters;
- What can we do to have a visibly better highway network; and
- How can we ensure the needs of vulnerable road users are taken into account in the defect reporting system and when carrying out repairs.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of Pothole Management. The review makes thirteen recommendations which address the areas covered by the review. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1. The Review Board were mindful of the Council's financial position when making recommendations and has therefore focussed on developing

recommendations that are affordable, cost effective, and represent value for money.

2.2 Overall the Review Board found that good progress and plans are being made to reduce the number of potholes in the County's roads within the available resources. During the course of the review, it became evident that things were changing as a result a proactive 'right first time' approach to pothole repairs being taken by the highways maintenance contractor, changes that had been made to the contract specification and additional investment being made in highways maintenance. However, it will take time for the impact of the recent changes and additional investment to become apparent, as the planned repair programmes start to be delivered.

2.3 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 6 February 2024. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda (item 7b) there is a separate report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None