

PLACE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF POTHOLE MANAGEMENT – ACTION PLAN			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE	
R1.	<p>The Board recommends that officers develop a strategy for highway drainage, in order to target highways drainage investment requirements more accurately and to help prevent water damage to road surfaces.</p>	<p>We are reviewing and updating all Asset Management Policies and Plans to create a suite of documents that better reflect the Asset Management Objectives, to ensure that they are reflected in the execution of works. These will be presented to Lead Member in December 2024.</p> <p>The current 2015-2018 Highway Asset Management Drainage Strategy is being updated during this review and the 2025-28 Drainage Asset Management Plan will accurately reflect our drainage asset inventory, include detail of available resources, and the known areas at risk of flooding. This approach will allow targeted investment in line with the Asset Management Approach.</p>	<p>This action has been delayed due to the requirement to complete a full stakeholder consultation and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for each plan and policy. This work is currently underway, with responses expected to be fully collated by spring 2025. The plan is scheduled to be presented to the Lead Member in July 2025.</p>
R2.	<p>The Board recommends the Council lobbies Government to make changes to the way utility companies operate and are regulated under the New Roads and Street Works Act and in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower the time allowed for permanent reinstatements from 6 months to 3 months; 	<p>A letter was sent on 9 November from Councillor Keith Glazier on behalf of the South East Seven to the Secretary of State for Transport outlining the impact utility companies' street works have on the highways network and with some suggestions for giving local authorities greater oversight/management of their activities.</p> <p>We will share the response with the Committee when received.</p>	<p>Completed.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the reinstatement works guarantee period from 2 years to 5 years; • Raise the level of financial penalties for failing to comply with the requirements of the Act; • Introduce timescales for utility companies to repair defective apparatus once it has been reported to them, with penalties for non-compliance; and • Increase the number of utility company inspections that can be recharged from 30%. 		
R3.	<p>The Board recommends officers explore the feasibility of increasing the amount and type of inspections of utility company reinstatement work to drive up quality and lobby Government for funding to do so.</p>	<p>The DFT has recently introduced “Performance-Based Inspections”, which in essence allows authorities to undertake additional “chargeable” inspections based on a utility companies performance. If an undertaker has a failure rate lower than 15%, then a 30% sample rate will be applied for inspections carried out, if an undertaker has a failure rate of 15% or higher, then a 50% sample rate will be applied for inspections carried out. These percentages are reviewed quarterly, so any increase will be relevant to recent performance, and whilst may generate some additional inspections it will be applied where performance justifies it.</p> <p>Most of the utility companies in ESCC will be in the 30% sampling bracket, therefore any significant increase to inspections would require additional funding which may require further dialogue with Government.</p>	<p>Completed - Officers will where appropriate continue to lobby for additional funding, however the current inspection regime of utility companies is felt to be appropriate and therefore no further action.</p>

R4.	The Board recommends that Guide to Highways is amended to include a reference to the current practice of risk assessing reported road defects which ensures the risks posed to different types of road user are appropriately met through repairs.	Noted – the Guide to Highways is currently being reviewed and this reference will be included in the updates made by March 2024.	Completed
R5.	The Board supports the Cabinet report recommendation that a greater proportion of capital funding is allocated from the highways structural maintenance budget to patching and surface dressing in future years, and reviews are undertaken on a periodic basis.	This approach has been implemented and we have increased the number of patching and surface dressing schemes in the upcoming delivery programmes and reviews against our asset plan will be ongoing.	Completed
R6.	The Board recommends that it is made clear in reporting information that the road condition performance targets refer to the percentage of road length, and that all roads are likely to have a mixture of green, amber and red condition sections of road.	Noted this will be included where appropriate going forward	Noted.
R7.	The Review Board recommends that annual performance monitoring reports are presented to the Place Scrutiny Committee to maximise transparency and scrutiny of pothole repairs, contract key performance indicators (KPIs), and planned highway maintenance work, with the first report scheduled for July 2024.	Noted, the CET Department will consider how best to report this to Scrutiny Committee.	Completed
R8.	The Board recommends that officers continue to allocate specific, defined levels of investment within the existing highways infrastructure maintenance capital budget, to tackle clusters of potholes and address public concerns about this issue, for example	As above this approach has been fully adopted and a greater amount of funding has been/will be spent on patching and surface dressing programmes. Where issues are repeatedly reported this information is used to help shape future work programmes.	Completed – Hotspot planning for “repeat issues” is underway, and the next two annual capital

	by undertaking patching repairs and surface dressing.		budgets will focus on a patching/surfacing dressing approach.
R9.	The Board recommends that the Guide to Highways on the East Sussex Highways web site is amended to reflect that repairs gangs, BBLP and the Council exercise a degree of flexibility in their approach to repairing safety intervention level defects and will repair other safety intervention level defects they find whilst on site.	<p>Whilst we understand the sentiment of this suggestion, there is a high risk with this confusing/disappointing the public as it is not always appropriate to “flex” the policy.</p> <p>There is a risk that customers would see inconsistency of approach.</p> <p>However, our policy documents are clear and when the intervention level is ‘flexed’ it will be for good reason, based on our risk based approach, and we can explain this on a case by case basis.</p>	Noted - No further action required.
R10.	The Board recommends that the Council continues to lobby Government for better long-term funding arrangements for pothole repairs, and highways maintenance, so that it can plan effectively, does not have to expend resources bidding for funding and can address local road conditions.	The Council faces a number of long term funding challenges across the wide range of services it provides. As such the Council, through SE7 in particular, does make the case for additional support across these services. The Government has recently announced the outcomes of Network North which sets out increased government funding for highways.	Completed - This is now embedded as BAU.
R11.	The Board recommends that if funding pressures ease or additional funding becomes available, the Council considers making additional investment in highway drainage.	Noted and for consideration through the Reconciling Policy and Performance Policy (RPPR) process	Noted - No further action required
R12.	The Board recommends that the Department continues to maintain an active approach to modelling highway investment levels needed to achieve the Council’s road condition targets and feed the outcomes into the Reconciling Policy, Performance Resources (RPPR) budget setting process.	Noted – this will take place every two to three years moving forward.	Noted – no further action required

R13.	The Board recommends that officers review the visibility and usability of website information on planned maintenance work on potholes to make it easier to find and use online, including via the East Sussex County Council website and the upcoming app, and in particular information for patching, resurfacing and revenue funded advisories.	<p>The website is continually being reviewed, with the most recent and significant change being an update which will allow users to see previously reported potholes and street lighting issues on the mapping system. This will be rolled out for other asset types in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Updates will be communicated as improvements are applied to the website and the App is developed. With a full update provided in July 2024.</p>	Completed
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