

Highways Performance Dashboard

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

1. Introduction

In response to the recommendations of the Planned & Reactive Maintenance: Potholes & Drainage Task Group presented to the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee in March 2019 an updated Performance Dashboard Report has been produced. The intention of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the performance of Devon Highways.

This report considers the following areas;

- Winter service;
- Reactive works including potholes and drainage cleaning;
- Delivery of planned works;
- Doing What Matters – Defects;
- Divestment of Skanska Infrastructure Services
- Staffing Issues
- Road Markings

2. Winter Service

Excellent progress has been made with the summer servicing programme for the winter fleet. Milestone are on target to provide a fully serviced and calibrated fleet by the end of September. We are in the process of purchasing 6 more pre-owned gritters from Econ to further bolster our fleet with newer and more reliable and enviro friendly gritters.

New roofs have been fitted to our salt barns in South Molton and Crediton which will greatly assist in managing the moisture content of our salt stocks, allowing for the lowest spread rates to be used. An order has been placed with our salt supplier following a successful 4 year framework tender process in late spring, however we do face challenges in restocking fully by the end of October due to nationwide transport distribution challenges that are well documented. We will ensure that all salt barns will have more than adequate stocks in them, ready for the start of winter service and we will meet our policy resilience levels.

3. Reactive Works

3.1 Gully Cleansing

The overall gully cleansing programme is 3% ahead of programme and remains on target for completion in March 2022. There are currently 10 gangs deployed on this

work type, 7 Milestone gangs with 3 additional gangs from the local supply chain. Principal road gullies will be targeted in September and October prior to the winter season. Further details are contained in Appendix 1.

3.2 Grips, Easements and Buddleholes

This work type remains on target for completion in March 2022 and is currently 5% ahead of programme. Resources have been increased from 4 to 5 gangs which will create some additional capacity for reactive works during the winter period. Further details are contained in Appendix 1.

3.3 Jetting

Since April 2021 we have employed two jetting gangs dedicated to working on non-functioning drainage assets. Between both gangs we have successfully restored 2321 sites.

3.4 Safety Defects

Pothole numbers have been slightly higher through the summer months when compared with previous, however the number of pothole defects originating from highway safety inspections has reduced.

The number of public reports of potholes have been consistently high, with each of May, June, July and August seeing the highest number of public reports being triaged by inspectors in that month since the process began. This is likely, in part, due to a combination of unseasonably wet weather during May and June and then very hot weather in July along with ease of restrictions on travel and movement around the network.

The outcomes of these public pothole reports received since 1st April 2021 are summarised in the following tables:

Assessment Action	Percentage
New Safety Defect	32
New Service Defect	10
No Further Action	58

No Further Action Reason	Percentage
Duplicate/ Works already Complete	44
Not a safety defect/ No defect found	47
Other	9

3.5 Other Defects

The number of defects instructed from 1st April 2021 to date are compared with the same period in 2020 in the table below:

Defect Type	2020	2021
Grey (trips, kerbs, ironwork etc)	6181	5702
Signs	2634	1864
Lining	1487	382
Vegetation	2464	2175

Of particular note, the large reduction in lining defects is due to a change in the safety policy in January 2021, bringing us in-line with the largest neighbouring Highway Authorities.

3.6 Dragon Patcher

Four Dragon Patchers are currently in use across Devon, with one in each operational area. The machines have been double-shifting since May to make the most of the longer days and better weather, this will continue into September subject to weather conditions. Outputs have, overall, been in-line with projections and this work equates to over 1,600t of aggregate and 220,000 litres of bitumen emulsion.

3.7 PIP (Public Information Portal) Patching

We continue to operate four PIP/serviceability patching gangs around the county. Since April we have completed over 10,000sqm of patching, paying particular attention to defect “hot spots” and where surface deterioration suggests potholes may occur in the future if left untreated, adopting a more proactive approach.

4. Delivery of Planned Works

This year we expect to deliver £46.8M through planned maintenance works. £6M is scheduled to be delivered through short notice planned works including minor hand patching gangs and dragon patching, along with broken gully replacements.

£12.3M is to be invested in our strategic A road network, typically including resurfacing and associated drainage. Improvements to the A380 have continued this financial year, following on from our successful Challenge Fund bid, with works due to be completed by the end of November. Over £3M of A road surfacing schemes have already been delivered with the remainder planned through to February 2022.

Our annual programme of works to SCRIM (skidding resistance) sites is largely complete, with final schemes programmed for delivery by the end of October. These schemes help reduce the risk of accidents by identifying low skid resistance and the associated risk of wet-road skidding.

£15.2M of works are scheduled to be delivered through resurfacing and patching to our non-principal network of B’s, C’s and Unclassified roads through a mix of central and locally identified schemes. Delivery is progressing well, with a large proportion of the works delivered through the better window offered by the summer months. The remainder of the schemes are in program, with a high confidence of delivery.

£2.2M is currently planned to be delivered through managed drainage, footways and cattle grid programmes. Approximately two thirds of the drainage budget has either

been delivered or is in programme, the remainder having pre-investigations and designs finalised. Footway and cattle grid maintenance programmes are substantially completed or in programme for delivery this financial year.

£9.4M of planned works are programmed to be delivered through a series of specialist contracts, including Surface Dressing (SD), Micro Asphalt (MA), Footway Slurry (FS), Joint Sealing (JS), High Friction Surfacing (HFS) and Road Restraint Systems (RRS). The vast majority of this value is allocated to preventative treatments (SD, MA & FS) recognising our asset management approach to lifecycle planning and long term value for money.

Both the SD and MA are summer activities and are now complete. These programmes of work have seen 1.8M m² of carriageways sealed with an associated increased in skid resistance.

Finally, £1.7M is programmed to be spent maintaining the Public Right of Way network and cycle network, with works allocated and planned for delivery this financial year.

In short, the delivery of the planned works programmes has gone well in the first part of the financial year and improvements in forward programming have enabled us to take advantage of delivering works in more favourable weather conditions. There of course remains a risk of disruption during the remainder of the year, however planning will continue to ensure we manage these potential risks as effectively as possible.

5. Doing What Matters – Defects

The project to improve the delivery of safety defects is due to move to live trials in October. The new process will require the Safety Inspectors to record additional information about each defect they encounter. This will ensure the repair gangs have the best opportunity to carry out a repair at the first visit. The team are working closely with both our software supplier and Milestone to ensure the new way of working improves the effectiveness of the inspectors and the gangs that carry out the repairs. While we would have hoped to have gone live earlier in the year there are a reduced number of inspections in October as the annual inspections are now carried out when the trees are in leaf.

We expect there to be a period of adjustment and refinement as we act on the feedback and experience of the teams responsible for inspections and repairs.

The project team have been in liaison with the team of inspectors throughout the development of the project. In addition to formal training, they have developed a series of support materials to help them transition through the adjustment to their role.

6. Divestment of Skanska Infrastructure Services

On 30 April 2021 Skanska UK divested its Infrastructure Services business to M Group Services (MGS), at the time this part of the Skanska business represented

around 20% of Skanska UK overall. The divested business now trades as a Limited Company as Milestone Infrastructure Limited (MIL) as part of MGS.

MGS now comprises 16 companies across various infrastructure sectors that include energy, transport, telecommunications, and water in both the UK & Ireland. They have built and maintained relationships with their clients over a number of years and have a strong culture that continuously focuses on health and safety, environmental sustainability, operational delivery, efficiency and customer service.

MGS is a trusted employer to circa 10,100 skilled specialists working from 240 locations. MIL joins MGS as part of the Transport Division, alongside another known contractor Dyer & Butler who focus on larger scale project works for a number of clients, including DCC in the past.

All the contracts associated with the divestment were novated across to MIL along with the TUPE transfer of all employees and associated assets. In Devon, this included the transfer of circa 320 employees, around 232 vehicles, all sub-contractors and supplier arrangements, depots and associated leases.

MIL operate across 3 key sectors, those being Highways Maintenance, Street Lighting Maintenance and Civils Projects. Focusing on Highways Maintenance, MIL have the following contracts with Local Authorities:

- Devon County Council
- Somerset County Council
- North Somerset Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council, and
- Peterborough City Council.

These contracts have been running for a number of years, ranging from 25 years in Somerset to 4 years in Devon and Hampshire. The longevity, knowledge and experience associated with all these contracts has transferred to MIL.

Service delivery performance on these contracts remains strong and in all cases MIL work in collaboration with the Authorities to deliver the varied outcomes across the contracts. To support this and understand the experiences elsewhere, a DCC Senior officer sits on the MIL Client Forum allowing MIL's other Local Authority clients to share their own experiences with each other and also provide direction to MIL senior leaders on the pressure areas for Local Highway Authorities.

7. Staffing Issues

The whole of the Highways and Traffic Management Service is experiencing real difficulties in recruiting staff. The overall compliment of staff is approximately 240 however we are currently operating with 33 vacancies.

We know that the structure of the service is already very lean when compared with other Highway Authorities and the impact of this reduction in staffing numbers is

putting added pressure on the remaining workforce. This comes at a time when the team have been dealing with the added challenges of the different way of working and reduced tolerance in society brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We continue to work with colleagues in HR and look for different ways to promote the opportunities that are available.

8. Road Markings

We manage a running programme of refreshing all road markings across individual Parishes and key routes. This element of work is progressing well and being delivered by Milestone our term maintenance contractor.

In addition to the planned works we also make ad-hoc changes such as disabled parking bays, minor waiting restriction amendments and implement HATOC schemes. A significant back log of smaller lining works has built up over the last 18 months. We are aware of the impact these changes have on communities and the frustration it can generate which is often communicated through our Elected Members and Neighbourhood Officers. The Traffic Team have formed new partnerships with several lining providers and are now working through the back log at pace.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		

Highways Performance Dashboard – Final

Appendix 1 to HIW/21/57

Gully Cleaning Programme

As of 22nd August (38% through the financial year)

	Total Programmed	Gullies Attended	Gullies Cleaned	Gullies Left to clean	% Complete
Honiton	25,516	11,488	10,369	15,147	41%
Exeter	33,656	17,575	16,389	17,267	49%
Rydon	24,007	9,304	8,289	15,718	35%
South Hams	18,523	8,335	7,329	11,194	40%
Okehampton	15,223	8,115	7,667	7,556	50%
Merton	12,198	6,281	5,559	6,639	46%
South Molton	24,474	8,619	7,515	16,959	31%
	153,597	69,717	63,117	90,480	41%

Grips, Easements and Buddleholes Programme

As of 22nd August (38% through the financial year)

	To be Cleaned	Cleaned	Left to Attend	Complete %	Programmed (m)	Cleaned (m)	Additional Cleaned (m)	Complete %
South	12,136	4,895	7,241	40%	43,405	23,692	6,156	55%
North	9,912	7,509	2,403	76%	27,087	22,203	1,454	82%
West	17,296	5,845	11,451	34%	62,242	33,723	11,638	54%
Torrige	23,264	9,308	13,956	40%	67,817	26,933	3,193	40%
East	44,770	18,086	26,684	40%	115,080	44,593	822	39%
	107,378	45,643	61,735	43%	315,632	151,143	23,262	48%