

## **Planned and Reactive Maintenance: Progress on Task Group Recommendations**

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

### **1. Introduction**

This report is intended to provide an update on progress on the recommendations made in the Planned & Reactive Maintenance: Potholes and Drainage Task Group report published at the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee in March 2019.

The report included the following recommendations that have been the focus of much of the improvement works undertaken during Spring and Summer.

- Closer monitoring of gully cleaning, other cyclical drainage works and planned maintenance programmes
- Continued focus on delivering highways maintenance from the point of view of communities
- A clear set of priorities for maintenance during winter
- Establish a more joined up approach between highways teams, contractors and communities
- Improve Skanska's management of pothole claims, in line with the agreed insurance protocol.

### **2. Closer monitoring of gully cleaning, other cyclical drainage works and planned maintenance programmes**

Since publication of the report in March the Highways and Traffic Management Service have produced a 'dashboard' style report to give members a better overview of the performance of the Service. In addition, the recommendation called for the Asset Management Team to provide Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) meetings with a mid-year progress report on the delivery of their various programmes. This was carried out during the summer round of HATOC meetings.

Towards the end of the financial year Skanska will provide the HATOC committees with an overview of their delivery and Asset Management will provide an overview of the future year programme.

### **3. Continued focus on delivering highways maintenance from the point of view of communities**

A report on the findings of the East and Mid-Devon trials into triaging publicly reported potholes was published at the 19 March committee as requested. Since March the trial has been steadily rolled out across the network to the extent that it was County wide in July. The team continue to react to new findings and refine the process where possible.

We have continued to develop an automated customer response that is dependent on the actions taken by the defect gangs. This was trialed for a short period but is currently turned off whilst development continues. Skanska have informed us that their works ordering software (Skanworks) is likely to be replaced with a new product from next April. At this stage it is difficult to anticipate the impact this is going to have on our systems but it is expected to be disruptive.

### **4. A clear set of priorities for maintenance during winter**

This year we have attempted to reprofile cyclical works and looked at the mix of skills across the work force to free up resources during the periods of typically higher demand in the second half of the financial year. This remains a work in progress due to the constraints around policy timescales and anticipating future demands. The increased uncertainty of future budgets is impacting this area of work due to the lack of visibility of forward budgets for Skanska.

In addition to the management of resources there is a season preference to be considered from an operation perspective. Towards the end of September, we would look to commence the cleaning on the primary network in preparation for the winter period. If this work commences too early in the season it is often rendered ineffective during the leaf fall in Autumn.

As the winter season approaches, we are working with Skanska to develop an agreed protocol laying priorities for periods of high demand.

### **5. Establish a more joined up approach between highways teams, contractors and communities**

In February this year we commenced a review of our approach to asset management. This review has grown into a pilot team working in our Okehampton depot. One of the areas the team has focused on is the over reliance on highway condition data to identify future programmes of work. As such we are trialing a revised approach that considers the local technical knowledge and experience within the Neighbourhood Teams and looks to consult and agree priorities with the local community through our network of Parish and Town Councils. This work remains very much at a 'proof of concept' stage but has been well received by the communities we are working with.

The Highways Service has been working for some time to develop an online facility to provide the public with details of works on the network whether they are historic, current or planned for the future.

Due to the various types of works carried out and the various internal and external contractors this has proved technically challenging however a beta version of the software has been published and is being tested internally. Once this has been proved to be working successfully a 'public' version will be made available.

**6. Improve Skanska's management of pothole claims, in line with the agreed insurance protocol**

Skanska's performance relating to the management of insurance claims is much improved with five outstanding claims at the beginning of September. This is down from an all-time high of approximately 90.

However, this improved performance is in some part due to the close monitoring and regular correspondence from our own Insurance Team. We continue to work with Skanska to improve their management of this process.

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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
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Nil

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