

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Highway Management**

### **Introduction**

I have been asked to report to Council by Councillor Hannaford on the following:

1. The Civil Parking Enforcement Roads & Transport Consultation 2022, including number of responses overall and per district, and specifically the response to the proposals to raise charges and fees.

And by Councillor Letch as follows:

2. Since January 2019 DCC has paid out £181k in compensation to road users. Report requested on:
  - 1 The breakdown of amounts and types of claims.
  - 2 The current number of staff for road repairs.
  - 3 The number of road defects currently registered on our system.
  - 4 A timetable of when defects will be repaired.
  - 5 The impact of the 0.4% budget increase for highways in 2022 (a deficit in real terms).
  - 6 Plans to lobby central government for realistic help to fix our highways problems.

### **Reports**

In response to the requests my reports are as follows:

#### **1. The Civil Parking Enforcement Roads and Transport Consultation 2022**

Following a review of the Council's policy on Residents Parking, the Council's Cabinet Committee agreed a new policy in December 2020 which included a number of proposals to improve the system for residents, businesses and commuters whilst continuing to support DCC's work to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and reduce the county's impact on climate change.

A traffic regulation order has been advertised to allow the public to be consulted on those changes. The advert running from the 1st of June to the 1st July. Emails were sent to all current permit holders in Devon that had registered their email address with us. An advert was also placed in the Western Morning News.

In total 767 responses were received in response to that consultation. The team are currently reading and collating those responses so that we can decide on how the scheme is progressed. I am not able to report at this stage on the geographic split or specifics of the comments. However, I have asked for this to be placed on the agenda for the September Cabinet with a full report so we can democratically and transparently review what our residents have said.

## **2. Highway claims, staffing, defects, funding and lobbying**

In 2021 the County Council received 959 insurance claims for damage, with potholes making up 82% of all claims. Joint working between both Legal Services and the Highways and Traffic Management Teams resulted in 80% of all claims being repudiated.

To date we have received 229 claims in 2022.

With regard to resources employed, the Contractor adjusts their resources to meet the seasonal demands across the network. At the beginning of July there were 32 gangs assigned to repairing defects, this translates to approximately 70 to 80 operatives. In busier times this can go as high as 40 gangs (approximately 100 operatives).

As of the 12<sup>th</sup> July there are 711 recorded potholes that are awaiting repair. The timescales for these potholes to be repaired is based on the risk based approach laid out in the current Highway Safety Policy approved by Cabinet in December 2020. Our team of trained Highway Safety Inspectors determines whether the response should be immediate (within 2 hrs), next day, 7 day or 28 days based on the risk to the road user. They can also select a 90 day response for non-safety repairs.

The biggest immediate challenge facing the Highways and Traffic Management Service is inflation which has seen costs for works rise by approximately 15% in the first six months of the year. The Service has to prioritise safety related works over preventative maintenance so the reactive response to potholes is unlikely to be affected. The impacts will be felt in the non-safety related cyclical type activities which is likely to lead to a longer term deterioration in the network.

A briefing for MPs is currently being drafted. The Service has been in discussion with the Department for Transport, other Highway Authorities across the south west and south of the country and spoken with the chair of ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment Economy Planning and Transport to ensure consistency of message and to avoid a negative reaction to any lobbying.

**Councillor Stuart Hughes**  
**Cabinet Member for Highway Management**