

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure responses to questions asked at Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee , 14 September 2020

1) Notes that officers and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure are very positive about start of new contracts, which are allowing more control over what is being delivered and quality.

Across the contract model (Lots 1-6) the new model has been developing well, and significant progress and improvement has been achieved during these early days of the new model. The Directorate is well placed particularly since the substantial service review and restructure to move forward with all lots to meet the goals and ambitions set out.

2) Will review the contract in one year to consider what the actual experience has been.

The service constantly and consistently reviews progress and reports against published delivery plan, service and corporate performance measures. Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure is committed to reporting progress across the contract model to ECSC during summer 2021.

3) Has strong concerns regarding the state of the county's roads and that without investment the state of the County's highways will continue to deteriorate. The Committee recommends to Cabinet that that additional investment is allocated to the county's roads to ensure the deterioration does not continue. Furthermore, the Committee recommends the Council lobby the government for additional funding to resolve the issues of deterioration of the county's roads.

The service is developing its understanding of future investment need alongside the corporate strategy and update of the Asset Management Strategy (currently in the forward plan [here](#)).

4) Has concerns about the capacity of contractors with multiple contracts to fulfil their contractual obligations, particularly in light of the compressed programme. It notes that the Council must allocate contracts fairly and may not refuse a contract on the basis that a company already has other contracts with the County Council. However, the compressed programme requires carefully monitoring.

The service adheres to all procurement regulations and governance ensure contracts are awarded appropriately to framework contractors who meet all necessary standards. Risks and issues within the delivery programme are well managed and current the service has confidence that the programme is on course. It should be noted the current increase in restrictions due to the pandemic continue to be monitored and contingency understood.

5) Notes that the quality of potholes repairs is improving and this is due to contractual arrangements and improved internal quality insurance.

No additional comment

6) Welcomes the question and answer paper to be provided by Highways on potholes that will allow members to respond to their residents on this subject.

The service will circulate a FAQ briefing to all Members with the next 'Members Checklist'.

7) Welcomes the investment in white lines and cats eyes, but requests that this should not be a one off investment and it must continue.

The management of all highway assets (including lines and cats eyes) are aligned to the Asset Strategy and prioritised against all need and available budget.

8) Requests that action should be taken regarding the damage caused to vehicles by ironworks.

We apply our safety plus intervention levels when we find ironworks which are causing a safety concern. If this is our asset we will make it safe and will follow up with a programmed repair. If the apparatus belongs to a statutory undertaker, we will serve a notice under s81 of the Highway Act to request repair. Response time will depend on severity and risk. Any site identified will be allocated to our Streetworks team and they will chase the statutory undertaker to ensure the remedial works are carried out.

The following statistics for claims relate to ironworks. The claim numbers are relatively small and show a downward trend.

Data by incident date

Year	Vehicle Damage	Injury	Total of Ironworks/Drain Cover Claims
2015	17	24	41
2016	17	17	34
2017	25	29	54
2018	14	14	28
2019	9	12	21
2020	1	7	8

9) Notes the optimism of officers that a planned programme of maintenance can be carried out in 6 months and hopes it can be delivered, particularly over the winter months.

Works within the current [Delivery Plan](#) have been scheduled for delivery before April 2021. Risks are always monitored and where possible mitigated. It should be noted the current increase in restrictions due to the pandemic continue to be monitored and contingency understood. Optimism remains high for a successful delivery period that is already underway.