

**Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 27 November 2019**

REPORT TITLE	Potholes and Street Lighting – Update
REPORT OF	Mark Smith, Interim Director – Highways and Streetscene

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an update on the measures being undertaken to reduce potholes in the carriageway and reduce the number streetlights not working across the borough.

The report also provides information regarding the methods being employed to bring about sustainable reduction improvements. Both areas of maintenance are important to the delivery of Wirral's 2020 pledges to ensure the network is safe and that we support healthy active travel. Having a well-maintained highway enables residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

This affects all wards in the Borough.

This report is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are requested to:

- (1) Note the report; and
- (2) Support the actions being taken to reduce pothole repairs and street lighting outages.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 To inform and seek endorsement from Members for the action being taken.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.2 None. The work is to meet the statutory requirement of providing a safe highway and the reduction in lighting outages which is a high priority for the Council.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Potholes Strategy

3.1.1 On the 1st February 2019, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority awarded £2,625,000 of Highways Maintenance funding to Wirral Council to support investment in our highway assets. This is in addition to a further £315,000 from the LCR Combined Authority especially for the Key Route Network and £1,465,000 extra funding from the Department for Transport awarded late last year. The Council also allocated £500,000 from its own Capital Programme for Unclassified Roads.

3.1.2. The strategy has been to spend the funds available to improve carriageways in poor condition but at the same time, be proactive by using preventative treatments to extend the surface life and prevent potholes from forming.

3.1.3 From 2016 the Government has provided additional funding for the reduction of potholes in the network. The Council has spent this money in number of different ways:

- (i) Pro-active surface treatments
- (ii) Pro-active patching repairs
- (iii) General patching repairs

Year	Total Potholes Repaired
2015-16	348
2016-17	242
2017-18	276

TABLE 1: TOTAL POTHOLES REPAIRED FROM 2015-2018

3.1.4 This mixed approach strategy has worked very well, even though we have experienced some harsh Winter weather there has been an ongoing reduction in the number of potholes requiring repair.

3.1.5 This year Government provided extra funding which wasn't just for dealing with potholes. The outcomes from this funding will be published in March 2020.

3.2 Street Lighting Strategy

- 3.2.1 As previously reported, the LED Phase 2 Contract commenced early October 2019 and will see some 9,000 column improvements and over 26,000 new more efficient energy saving LED lanterns being installed.
- 3.2.2 Until the LED programme takes effect the current strategy being employed to keep pace with repair demand is to issue further small contracts which will increase repair capacity.
- 3.2.3 This strategy will continue to run parallel with the LED programme to reduce lighting outages.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Potholes

4.1.1 The current strategy utilises a variety of surface treatments and patching programmes. Table 2 provides the number of potholes repaired month by month. This indicates an improvement over the period April 2018 to April 2019. This trend has continued through from April 2019 to present (Table 3). This demonstrates that the strategy is working, having maintained the number of potholes on the network. However, we should not be complacent as without major investment the network will continue to deteriorate.

17-18	Potholes Repaired	18-19	Potholes Repaired
Apr-17	18	Apr-18	26
May-17	24	May-18	26
Jun-17	25	Jun-18	53
Jul-17	16	Jul-18	32
Aug-17	16	Aug-18	8
Sep-17	20	Sep-18	11
Oct-17	11	Oct-18	15
Nov-17	10	Nov-18	13
Dec-17	23	Dec-18	17
Jan-18	27	Jan-19	29
Feb-18	31	Feb-19	18
Mar-18	55	Mar-19	24

TABLE 2: POTHoles REPAIRED APR-18 TO MAR-19

2018	Potholes Repaired	2019	Potholes Repaired
Apr-18	26	Apr-19	28
May-18	26	May-19	45
Jun-18	53	Jun-19	13
Jul-18	32	Jul-19	22
Aug-18	8	Aug-19	7
Sep-18	11	Sep-19	25

TABLE 3: POTHoles REPAIRED APR-19 TO SEP-19

4.2 Street Lighting

- 4.2.1 Changes were required in the Contract Information, detailing the number of lanterns required and column replacement priority, which delayed the LED Phase 2 Contract in being able to go out to tender. Therefore, we were aware that we needed to increase the lighting resource to tackle the number of outages. To improve the repair times we placed Mega Electrical as a sub contractor using the 2016 BAMN contract rates to benchmark good value. Table 4 shows the increase in repairs.

Month	Street Lights Repaired
Apr-19	284
May-19	220
Jun-19	290
Jul-19	793
Aug-19	781
Sep-19	653

TABLE 4: STREET LIGHTS REPAIRED APR-19 TO SEP-19

- 4.2.2 Further contracts have been put together to provide resource to install new columns and presently we have just engaged Jenkins Electrical to undertake cable fault repairs. We have also appointed a new Street Lighting & Operations Manager to supervise and provide additional resource to facilitate and award additional contracts.
- 4.2.3 This strategy of using small contracts to provide additional resource is having an impact but, with the ageing asset, we will continue to have lighting issues through the Winter months. However, the huge capital investment of the LED Phase 2 will mitigate many of these issues in the coming weeks.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The additional Government Funding along with the Council Capital investment has had an impact in carriageway repairs but without such funding continuing repairs at the current level are not sustainable and would not only lead to increase potholes but also increase third party claims.

5.2 The increased lighting resource is not sustainable within the existing revenue budget and additional funding will be required to continue the current level of repairs.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain the highway.

6.2 The Council does not have a duty to provide light but must ensure the safety of the lighting assets.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

7.1 Existing staff resources will be used to identify and arrange the necessary pothole repairs.

7.2 Additional contracted support, to maintain the level of Street Lighting services, will continue as funds allow.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 Repairing potholes is an essential element of maintaining the network, any reduction in funds would impact the safety of the highway and expose the Council to increased third party insurance claims.

8.2 Maintaining lighting repairs is an essential part of providing a safe environment and without additional funding this would impact on the Council's 2020 pledges.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

9.1 Whilst has been no consultation, the council will report, the outcomes from the additional Government funding to be published in March 2020.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The repairing of the highway and the provision of streetlights are major contributors to our carbon emissions.

11.2 The increased use of surface treatments means we are using considerably less fossil material, also, with no excavation we have no contaminated waste issues.

11.3 One of the advantages of having our own inhouse contract provision, is that we have been able to trial new products when undertaking conventional patching repair. Charts 1 and 2 show the cost and carbon efficiencies that can be made.

Estimated Annual Costs

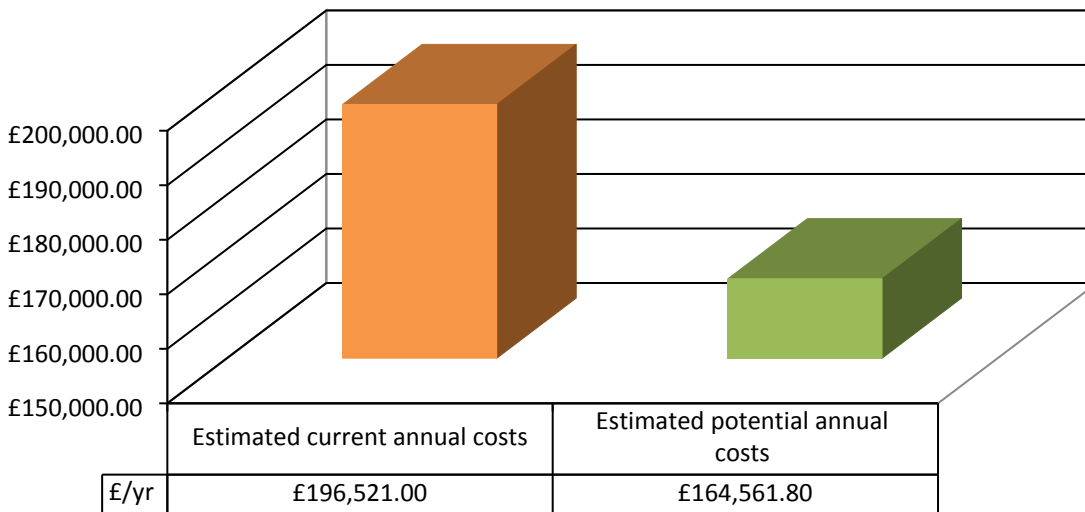


CHART 1: ESTIMATED CURRENT/POTENTIAL ANNUAL COSTS - CURRENT MATERIALS VS ULTIPATCH VIAFIX

Estimated Annual Emissions

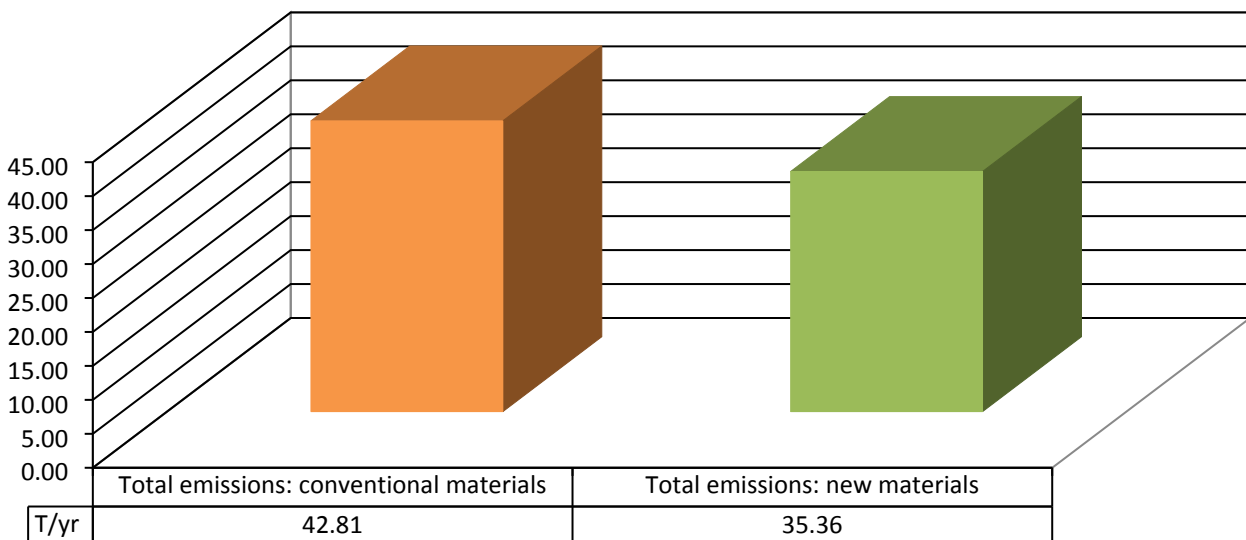


CHART 2: ESTIMATED CURRENT/POTENTIAL ANNUAL CARBON EMISSIONS - CURRENT MATERIALS VS ULTIPATCH VIAFIX

11.4 Trials are also in progress using hot and cold applied micro-asphalt patching. Such materials and working methods remove the need to excavate, reduce waste by using only the materials required and reduce the risk of vibration injury to operatives. The results of these trials will be published at the end of this financial year.

11.5 To reduce our lighting energy consumption, any new lanterns being installed from April have been LED.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Brian Smith*
Senior Highway Maintenance & Street Lighting Manager
 telephone: (0151) 606 2426
 email: briansmith@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Highway Structural Maintenance Programme	25 March 2019
Cabinet Member report Structural Maintenance Programme unclassified roads	26 April 2019
Cabinet Member report, Highway Structural Maintenance Programme, local roads	4 September 2019
Cabinet Street lighting Investment Programme Leader Report.	16 July 2018
LED Phase 2 contract award	12 August 2019