

By: John Burr, Director of Kent Highways Services

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Repairs to Weather Damaged Roads

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

Members are asked to note progress on the delivery of repairs to roads in Kent. This work is being undertaken by 7 contractors who were appointed following a competitive tender process in March. Progress to date has seen the completion of over 75000m² of repairs to over 1200 roads.

1. Background

As part of the response to the unprecedented damage to the roads in Kent following the severe winter, KHS has been working to make all the roads in the county safe (in particular with repairs to potholes) and improve the condition of the carriageway surface.

On 29th March, The KCC Cabinet approved the letting of 12 contracts, one for each district, to contractors for the repair of weather related damage to roads. The initial cabinet decision to award these contracts was discussed at the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 9th April. The recommendations of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee related to future monitoring and reporting of progress and it was agreed to report to this committee.

2. Find and Fix Progress

After 12 weeks of the programme (up to 6th July) 13754 individual potholes and 61883m² of larger patches were repaired. This equates to some 75,600m² of repairs, equivalent to over 60 Olympic size swimming pools. This has been delivered at a cost of £3m.

The find and fix approach is clearly showing favour with many people, however with the rate of repair significantly higher than normal (due to the high level of winter damage, and increased intervention levels as explained), the cost is greater.

Beyond the completion of this task, any new safety critical potholes, or further deterioration of the road network not evident when the find and fix teams visited, will still be funded from within the KHS core budget and repaired using the permanent repair crews.

3. Communication and Project Management

The roads that are due to be completed, and those that have been repaired are being shown on the KCC website. *(5. Ask that Members, Parish Councils and Town Councils be informed when teams will be working in their areas).*

KHS has worked with the liaison officers to be responsive to members queries about progress, planning and priorities.

The administration of the contract is being undertaken with the KHS alliance; this includes contract preparation, project management, a high level of site supervision and permitting. The total estimated costs of are in the region of £320k (5% of the contract value). *(4 Ask for written confirmation that the total cost of administering the process and overheads is no more than 10% of the total cost of the contract).*

4. Next Steps

Since the initial Cabinet decision which allocated £1m to this work, progress has been good and feedback has been very positive. However, the quantum on the potholes was such that further funding was required to continue the work.

Subsequent Cabinet approval has been given to ensure funding is available for the repairs, and at the July 12th meeting, a final allocation of £6.5m was approved. It is predicted that this budget will allow the completion of some 3000 roads by the external contractors, with a completion date in early autumn.

5. Total highways maintenance backlog

It is currently estimated that the highways maintenance backlog is in the region of £430m. *(3 Ask for confirmation of the level of backlog to road repairs, the level of government support, and the level of expenditure which would be required to clear the backlog)*

6. Frequency of inspection for public utility works

The NRSWA code of practice allows for inspections at 5 stages of the works, with an inspection frequency of 6% at each (ie. a total of 30%). KHS has increased the frequency of the last two stages to raise the total to 40%. A separate report is being prepared on the findings of this initiative. *(6 Ask that the frequency of inspection of utilities work to road surfaces is increased to ensure benefits and high performance of utility companies)*

7. Recommendations

That members note the progress of the works.