



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 28 June 2022

Highways Update

Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street
Lead Director:	Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
Service Area:	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
Report Author:	Adam Brookes – Service Delivery Manager – Highways, Engineering & Project Delivery, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services.
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 384645 Email: adam.brookes@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Key Decision:	N
Forward Plan:	
Report considered by:	Communities Scrutiny Committee – 28 June 2022

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

- 1.1** That Communities Scrutiny Committee note the progress that has been made in the delivery and maintenance of our highway network.
- 1.2** The Communities Scrutiny Committee note the budget pressures for highway maintenance resulting from a reduction in Government grants.
- 1.3** The Communities Scrutiny Committee endorse the improvements being brought forward in engaging with residents and businesses while offering areas for further consideration.

- 1.4 The Communities Scrutiny Committee endorse the steps being taken to improve sustainability within the highways service and offer areas for further review.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report provides Community Scrutiny Committee with an update on Highways Maintenance & Delivery in the borough and continued improvements being delivered to maintain and improve the borough's infrastructure.

3.0 Summary of main proposals

- 3.1 The 2021/22 National Highways & Transportation survey results ranked overall satisfaction with the boroughs highways highest in the West Midlands region and second nationally.
- 3.2 The Council has invested over £27 million in to improving and maintaining highways since April 2019; this is compared to £21 million of Government grants over the same period. Since 2020/21, the level of Government funding has reduced by over 20% requiring further Council investment to ensure the highway network continues to be well maintained.
- 3.3 Over 800 improvement schemes have been delivered across the Borough alongside the repair of approximately 12,000 potholes since April 2019. Over the same period, the Council has seen nearly a 40% reduction in the number of potholes being reported by the public.
- 3.4 Social Value is a key part of highway delivery where there is a commitment from our partnering contractor Balfour Beatty Living Places to support the community through the use of local suppliers, developing a number of apprenticeships as well as supporting various community projects across the Borough.
- 3.5 Investing in new technology and new ways of working is a key part of the Council's Highway Asset Management Policy & Strategy and also forms a fundamental part of highway service delivery. A number of innovations have been trialled and subsequently introduced with a number of these innovations providing sustainability improvements as well as carbon savings, supporting the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.
- 3.6 In delivering highway maintenance and improvements, significant levels of community and stakeholder engagement takes place to ensure local needs are considered and planned where possible. This was reflected in the 2021/22 National Highways & Transportation survey results outlined above.

4.0 Additional Information

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The Council's adopted Highway Asset Management Policy & Strategy sets out the vision for highways in Telford & Wrekin. Our vision is that we will Keep Telford Moving by delivering a safe, efficient and sustainable highway to meet the needs of residents and businesses. This will provide access to jobs and services, support health and wellbeing and cater for future growth while maximising and managing investment into the highway network to support the local economy, investing in new technologies and our workforce to promote innovation and creativity. Consultation, collaboration and community engagement underpin our approach.
- 4.1.2 The highways partnership with Balfour Beatty Living Places continues to provide significant benefits through better performance management with a primary a focus on 'right first time'. In addition to this, the partnership brings significant social value benefits including provision of three apprenticeships and one graduate placement, 60% of spend locally and volunteering to support local initiatives as detailed in section 4.4.
- 4.1.3 The partnership continues to deliver the highways vision in Keeping Telford Moving by supporting our communities and improving the condition of the highway network.
- 4.1.4 The highways team deliver both core capital and revenue works including, highways maintenance, footway maintenance, drainage improvements, structures and bridges maintenance, traffic and road safety schemes as well as reactive maintenance services including gritting of the roads during winter.

4.2 Funding

- 4.2.1 Funding to deliver the highway maintenance and improvements is funded through the Council capital investment and allocations from the Department for Transport (DfT). Since 2019, the Council has invested over £27 million into our highways compared to £21 million of Government grants. By the end of 2023/24 the council will have invested over £50m into improving and maintaining our highways across the borough since 2019.
- 4.2.2 Since 2020/21, the level of Government funding has reduced by over 20% which has placed increased pressure on effectively maintaining our roads and footpaths. This level of reduced funding is set to continue and in April 2021 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Commercial Services and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that the budgets for highway maintenance remained at their

previous level. Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Minister for Roads, Buses and Places responded to both Cabinet Members in April 2021 and confirmed that following a one year Spending Review, reduced funding had been allocated to Local Authorities and distributed based on a funding formula which takes in to account road lengths and other assets the Council are responsible for.

4.3 Performance

- 4.3.1 Since April 2019, over 800 improvement schemes have been delivered across the Borough in addition to routine and reactive maintenance undertaken.
- 4.3.2 During this time, approximately 12,000 potholes have been repaired and over 96% of these repairs have been completed on time and has seen a 40% reduction in the number of potholes being reported by residents. This is complemented by our promotion during the winter months to encourage residents to report potholes to the Council for action. Such performance is underpinned through the Council's own investment and 'right first time' approach; these actions are complemented by the 2021 National Highways & Transportation Survey results referred to in 4.7, illustrating considerable progress in terms of the quality of our roads and footpaths across the Borough.
- 4.3.3 During the 2021/22 winter season, the gritters were called upon 50 times, where they covered over 20,000km during the season. As part of this, over 2,300 tonnes of salt was used during the season and covered over 40% of the borough's road network each time a gritting action was completed.
- 4.3.4 Other outputs during 2021/22 include:
- Over 6,000 reactive jobs completed
 - Over 3,600 potholes repaired
 - 49km of roads resurfaced
 - 85,000m² of footways surfaced
 - 115 emergencies attended, both in hour and out of hours
 - 97km of road markings replaced
 - Over 1,700 tonnes of materials recycled

4.4 Social Value

- 4.4.1 As part of the partnership with Balfour Beatty Living Places, the Council secures social value opportunities whereby commitments are made to the community and the borough.
- 4.4.2 Recent examples have included volunteering and providing resources to a number of community projects such as:
- Improvements to the War Memorial in the Town Park
 - Donation of 15 laptops to families across the Borough
 - Installation of a community designed poppy art in St Georges
 - Resurfacing of the access to Donnington Boxing Club
 - Installation of a summer house at Redhill Primary School
 - Supporting Telford Interfaith Council with a Santa Sleigh

- Supporting Telford College with the supply of materials for apprenticeship training

4.4.3 The social value commitment will continue for the duration of the partnership.

4.5 Innovation

4.5.1 Investing in new technology and new ways of working is a key part of the Highway Asset Management Policy & Strategy and also forms a key part of the managing and maintaining our highway network.

4.5.2 Where practical and efficient to do so, items of plant and equipment have been replaced with electric alternatives along with the roll out of low/zero emission vehicles. Earlier this year, the highways maintenance teams trialled the UK's first fully electric 3.5 tonne flatbed vehicle alongside a hydrogen powered multipurpose vehicle used for pothole repairs. This is complemented by six fully electric vehicles already being used by the Council's highways and enforcement officers. Such innovation contributes towards the Council's aim to be Carbon Neutral by 2030.

4.5.3 The Council has also introduced a new and innovative system to support a new approach to cleansing over 36,000 gullies across the borough. This has supported a risk based approach to gully cleansing to be adopted that ensures resources are prioritised to the areas that need it most while reducing and managing the impacts of more frequent severe weather events. Once fully operational, this system will enable further information to be provided to residents so they know when the drainage systems in their area were last cleaned and when they are next due to be inspected.

4.5.4 Opportunity is continually sought to support the development of new materials and techniques for project delivery that maximises efficiency and reduces carbon footprint; this is with the aim of delivering the first carbon neutral road resurfacing scheme in the near future.

4.5.5 Work will continue on identifying new and innovative ways of working to ensure we can achieve sustainable highway services to support the wider Council priorities.

4.6 Communication

4.6.1 Prior to any capital improvement works taking place (that are over three days in duration), advance notification must be placed on site two weeks prior to the work commencing. This is complemented with a letter to properties directly impacted by the works.

4.6.2 Furthermore, advanced notification emails are sent to Members, Parish and Town Councils, Schools and key officers six weeks prior to the scheme commencing; this is followed up with a further email two weeks prior to commencement that may include any additional information on the planned works.

4.6.3 Where a streetworks permit is required, the above engagement is complemented by publication online via the Councils website

(www.telford.gov.uk/roadworks). Residents, businesses, Town/Parish Councils and Members are able to sign up to receive notification of works in their area of interest for both Council works as well as third party works such as utilities.

- 4.6.4 A new @Telfordhighways Twitter account has been created to allow updates to be provided on works being delivered by the highways service. This account is supported by the corporate social media channel to ensure the content is shared with a wider audience.
- 4.6.5 A new approach to providing updates has been adopted as part of the improvement works along the A442. Detailed updates have been provided through video where frequently asked questions have been answered and requests for feedback sought. These videos have reached approximately 43,000 people and have been received positively and reduced the number of general queries being received in relation to the project.
- 4.6.6 The team continually find new and innovative ways to engage with the community and those impacted by highway maintenance and improvement projects.

4.7 National Highways and Transport Survey

- 4.7.1 The National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey (NHTS) is conducted annually. The survey is formed of a random selection of postal surveys sent to residents across the authority area. The survey assesses the performance of Telford & Wrekin Council against a number of Benchmark Indicators grouped into the following themes:
 - Accessibility
 - Cycling and Walking
 - Highway congestion
 - Highway maintenance
 - Public Transport
 - Road safety
 - Communication
- 4.7.2 The results of this survey show that for overall satisfaction with the Highways and Transport Service, Telford & Wrekin is ranked first within the West Midlands region and 2nd nationally out of 111 local authorities that took part in the 2021 survey.
- 4.7.3 These results show that the highway and transport service is performing at a high level both regionally and nationally. The Council will be taking part in this national survey again during 2022 with the results expected from October 2022.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The highway service focuses on delivering in accordance with the Council's priorities by ensuring all neighbourhoods are a great place to live, supporting a thriving economy as well as contributing towards the Council's role in addressing the climate emergency.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Details relating to the financial implications of this report are detailed in section 4.2 above.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 As this is a report for noting only there are no specific legal implications arising, however, the Council has a general statutory duty to maintain highways within its area and this is considered in relation to any planned or reactive maintenance or works.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 Not Applicable.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 This report details in section 4.4 work that is being done to deliver additional social value benefits through the highways service.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 Not Applicable.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 This report details in section 4.5 work that is being done to deliver sustainability improvements the highways service.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Not applicable.

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Dean Sargeant	17/06/2022	22/06/2022	DS
Dainy Runton	22/06/2022	23/06/2022	DR
Emma Harvey	22/06/2022	24/06/2022	EH