

APPENDIX B - HIGHWAYS RESURFACING REVIEW: MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

20
September
2022

SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW: FOOTWAYS RESURFACING - SCOPING REPORT

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item noting that the Committee had shortlisted a number of potential review topics at July's Select Committee meeting. Following this, a feasibility exercise was undertaken on the shortlisted topics with one topic being chosen for a full scoping report. The topic chosen was a prospective review into how the Council can obtain best value and practice through its pavements and footways reconstruction and resurfacing programme. A scoping report had been prepared and was included in the agenda papers, the Committee were welcomed to make any amendments and comments they saw fit and to formally begin the review.

The Committee were encouraged by the scoping report and discussed a number of potential lines of enquiry that could assist with the review, these included:

- How the Council could focus on the prevention of damage to footways. It was noted that incidents occurred regularly whereby damage was caused to footways by individuals and businesses.
- How the Council was maximising the economies of scale through procurement of resurfacing services.
- How resident feedback fed into the process by which the Council assesses the condition of footways and their priority for repair.
- What were the minimum thresholds for footways defects to be investigated by the Council.
- How the Council were ensuring that information regarding planned resurfacing works were transparent and available to the public. It was also noted that this would likely only apply to planned works and not emergency works.
- Although the Council were not responsible for the maintenance of a number of prominent highways in the Borough, Members sought to understand what the Council could do to chase up the relevant authorities when these highways deteriorated. Additionally, if the Council was required to perform maintenance on these highways, what process was in place to ensure the funds were recovered from the relevant authority.

The Committee discussed the importance of communication with all stakeholders, including residents, in avoiding disturbances for residents as a result of resurfacing works. Whilst it was noted that communication of the Council's own planned resurfacing programme could be effectively communicated, issues would arise when statutory utility companies were required to undertake emergency works at short notice.

With regard to the scope of the review, Members discussed expanding this to include roadways in addition to footways as the two were so closely related. The Committee agreed that the remit of the review be expanded to include both footways and roadways resurfacing.

The Chairman emphasised that this would be a productive review not just in

terms of information being made available to the public but in providing positive changes to the way in which the Council approached its resurfacing programme.

RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee commented on and considered the scoping report to initiate a major review into obtaining best value and practice for the Council’s Highways Resurfacing Programme.

18
October
2022

HIGHWAYS NETWORK PRIORITISATION AND MAINTENANCE

Poonam Pathak, the Council's Head of Highways, was present for this item and introduced the report for the Committee giving an overview of how Hillingdon prioritises its selection of Highways that are designated for repair and resurfacing. It was highlighted that Hillingdon regularly commissioned condition surveys of the entire Highways network that the Council was responsible for in the Borough, Members were informed that these surveys adhered to the UKPMS (United Kingdom Pavement Management System). Recent changes in the Council’s procedures meant that prioritisation for works had not only been relying on the condition surveys but included a combination of factors such as engineering implications, bus routes, footfall, road users, proximity to schools, accident claim data and enquiries from the public and Members. Once the data had been combined, each section of Highway in the Borough received a prioritisation score which fed into the scheduling of works under the Highways forward planning programme.

Officers went on to inform Members of the innovative Highways repair and resurfacing techniques that the Council was currently trialling, this included Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA) which offered a low emissions approach by manufacturing and laying asphalt at lower temperatures, without compromising performance. It was noted that this technique had been trialled in both the north and south of the Borough and was soon to be trialled along Brickwall Lane in Ruislip. By way of clarification, officers highlighted the difference in the natural structure underneath the roads in the north and south of the Borough; where the south of the Borough had strong and solid sub soil, the north side of Hillingdon had a softer London clay base. This structural issue had recently manifested itself when works were being carried out on Northwood Way in Northwood, where the road had collapsed due to the soft sub soil level. This was highlighted as the reason why structural works more commonly took place north of the A40.

It was noted that the Council was soon to be trialling a new recycled sub-base material, known as ‘Aggrebind’ which would reduce the import of quarried aggregate by primarily utilising excavated soil. The Committee commented that the use of innovative and less carbon intensive resurfacing methods would be an incredibly important step with regard to the Council’s green agenda.

Members sought clarification on the frequency and procedure of the Highways conditions surveys. It was confirmed that the condition surveys were carried out on the Council’s entire Highways network every two years by an independent contractor; the survey project was time consuming and lasted for approximately one year, following this there was a further project to assess the survey data which lasted for a further year; the process then repeated. It was also noted that there was a separate in-house process for carrying out Highways inspections. Members also noted that the prioritisation score and data given to each stretch

	<p>of highway required specialist knowledge to interpret.</p> <p>The Committee asked as to how Members' Enquiries from elected councillors and petitions received from members of the public fed into the prioritisation of repair and resurfacing works. Members were informed that in recent years, information received from ward councillors and members of the public had been given more weight in putting together the work programme; it was also noted that only a small number of petitions had been received requesting resurfacing works in recent years. If a petition were to be received, then it would prompt further condition analysis of the stretch of highway it pertained to.</p> <p>Members highlighted the importance of facilitating communication between the Council and residents regarding any scheduled works in their area. Whilst it was understood that emergency works were often necessary, particularly from utility companies, and these short notice works would allow minimal ability to inform residents; the Committee suggested that it would be useful if a summary, in layman's terms, of the work that goes into prioritising, scheduling and carrying out resurfacing works, could be put into an article in the Hillingdon People magazine.</p> <p>The Committee sought clarification on what inspection work was done following any highways repair or resurfacing to ensure the work was carried out to an appropriate standard. It was noted that, with limited resources, the Council was unable to inspect 100% of the work carried out by contractors, however, randomised checks were carried out regularly.</p> <p>The Committee thanked officers for their report and praised the standard of the resurfacing works carried out in the Borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways & Transport Select Committee noted the content of the report and provided feedback to officers as appropriate.</p>
<p>18 October 2022</p>	<p>SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW: OBTAINING BEST VALUE AND PRACTICE FOR THE COUNCIL'S HIGHWAYS RESURFACING PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the item as the first witness session of the Committee's review into the Council's highways resurfacing procedures. It was noted that a research report had been prepared by officers as a starting point for the review and to assist the Committee's discourse. A brief overview of the report was delivered highlighting Hillingdon's Highway network, the Council's maintenance procedures and the highways safety inspection procedures. Poonam Pathak, the Council's Head of Highways and a key officer in the implementation and strategic development of the Council's Highways maintenance programme, was present as a witness for the review.</p> <p>Members initially sought to understand, with regard to footways resurfacing, the criteria which dictated why different materials and resurfacing types were used on different footways in the Borough. It was noted that, previously, the Council had operated on a 'like for like' basis by which if a slabbed footway required resurfacing, it would be repaved with slabs similar to that of the original condition, however, the Council had recently moved away from this approach, to a more cost effective method of repaving footways using tarmac regardless of</p>

the original type of surfacing on the footway. The Committee were informed that resurfacing with paving slabs was approximately 60% more expensive than tarmac resurfacing. Further to this it was noted that the life cycle of paving slabs was often inferior to tarmac as slabs tended to break where vehicles had mounted the pavement. Although it was noted that a 'like for like' method was preferred by residents, the priority for the Council had to be the safety of the footways and by adopting a more cost effective approach, the Council could maintain the safety of a higher quantity of footways to an appropriate safety standard. There were occasions where further analysis and discussion needed to take place before agreeing the appropriate resurfacing techniques, this was most commonly within conservation areas where conservation officers were consulted with.

The Committee were informed that roughly half of the highways maintenance works were carried out in-house, with the other half carried out by external contractors. It was noted that the in-house work mostly consisted of the highways repairs and patchwork, making regular use of the Council's two Rhino-Patch machines, where the external contractors would be used for more extensive resurfacing and more intensive repair works. The Committee were informed that the Council's resurfacing contract was reviewed every five years and would be up for review in 2023, the procurement process for which would be starting in the coming months.

Members sought clarification with regard to any potential works that may be undertaken by the Council on some of the major highways in the Borough where maintenance of which did not fall under the Council's responsibilities. It was noted that Borough Principal Roads, including the Uxbridge Road and Hillingdon Hill, traditionally were funded for resurfacing by Transport for London (TfL); however, due to the financial issues experienced by TfL in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the funding for this resurfacing work had stopped leading to rapid deterioration of these high traffic flow routes, used constantly as primary bus routes by TfL. Members noted that, as TfL emerges from the financial issues brought on by the pandemic, it was hoped that TfL funding would recommence, the Council continued to bid for TfL funding for these roads.

The Committee heard how Highways Authorities outside of London would traditionally apply for funding from central government, the equivalent funding for London Boroughs would come through TfL. The financial pressures seen by TfL in recent years had led to more budget pressures which was having a real impact on the quantity of work that could be carried out by the Council's Highways team. Members heard how all London Boroughs were lobbying central government for alternative funding streams through the 'State of the City' report, Hillingdon contributed its condition survey data to the report.

Members noted the relatively poor condition of some major arterial routes in the Borough, notably the Bath Road, and queried what could be done to communicate to the authorities responsible for the maintenance of those roads that they are in need of repair. It was highlighted that requests had been made for TfL to address the deterioration of the Bath Road although it was noted that TfL would have their own prioritisation criteria and the Council did not have any powers to force repair works from TfL, any defect reports were communicated with TfL however, unfortunately the Council was unable to spend its own Highways budget on the TfL road network. Should an accident claim be made

	<p>due to the defective nature of the footway or roadway, TfL would be the responsible authority.</p> <p>Members noted that the Highways Safety Inspection Policy & Procedure document, provided with the agenda papers, showed that the last revision had taken place in February 2020; Members queried whether the document should be reviewed on a more regular basis. Officers confirmed that the policy was reviewed annually, however, reviews were only noted on the policy document when revisions were made as a result of the review. The Committee felt that the policy should state when the last review took place, regardless of whether any changes were made as a result; this would show anyone inspecting the policy that the document was regularly reviewed. Officers confirmed that this could be achieved fairly easily as there was an internal log of each annual review of the policy.</p> <p>Following on from a point made on the previous item regarding innovative resurfacing technologies such as Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA), it was stated that, despite the environmental positives brought by the use of WMA, it was currently more expensive than traditional asphalt as it was only made in small batches due to a smaller demand; it was expected that in the future, as more Boroughs and clients request the use of WMA, the cost would come down through the economies of scale. The Committee were supportive of the use of WMA and placed an importance on exploring less energy intensive methods of resurfacing.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Head of Highways for attending the meeting as a witness for the review and helping the Committee set the groundwork for their highways resurfacing review.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways & Transport Select Committee noted the contents of the report and used the first witness session of the review to enquire as to the Council’s existing approach to footways and carriageways resurfacing.</p>
<p>11 January 2023</p>	<p>SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW – ATTAINING BEST PRACTICE AND VALUE FOR THE COUNCIL’S HIGHWAYS RESURFACING PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed the witnesses present to the meeting and asked each of them to introduce themselves to the Committee. There were three witnesses present, the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport, Councillor Jonathan Bianco, who was the relevant Cabinet Member responsible for the oversight of the Council’s highways maintenance responsibilities; Wayne Greenshield, the Council’s Network Operations Manager for Highways; and Christopher O’Hara, the Director of O’Hara Bros. Surfacing Ltd, the Council’s contractor for specialist highway maintenance solutions.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member noted that they appreciated the Select Committee undertaking their major review into highways resurfacing and highlighted how highways maintenance was a constantly generating area of work due to the expected degradation of the Council’s highways network as a result of regular heavy usage, usual and extreme weather impacts, and regular maintenance and utility works. The Council’s current approach to this work area was a ‘worst first’ approach, with a degree of prioritisation based on factors such as volume of use. It was noted that, with regard to footways, the Council had previously operated</p>

on a 'like for like' basis by which if a slabbed footway required resurfacing, it would be repaved with slabs similar to that of the original condition, however, the Council had recently moved away from this approach, to a more cost effective, blanket method of repaving footways using tarmac regardless of the original type of surfacing on the footway. Where there were exceptional considerations, such as the works being undertaken in an area of special local character, officers would investigate whether 'like for like' was the best approach.

Christopher O'Hara introduced himself as a representative of O'Hara Bros. Surfacing Ltd, who carry out highways maintenance work on behalf of the Council ranging from reactive maintenance of potholes up to town centre regeneration such as the works undertaken in Hayes town centre over recent years. Other works undertaken for the Council included gully cleansing, vehicle crossovers and machine surfacing. Further detail was given to the Committee with regard to the warm mix asphalt material produced by a number of asphalt suppliers, including Hanson Asphalt, based in West Drayton; the product was called Era 140 which was a warm mix asphalt produced at 40 degrees Celsius lower than traditional mix asphalt, this equated to a 15% saving in greenhouse gas emissions associated with production; it was noted that the material performed in the same way and still met BBA (British Board of Agrément) standards and was fully recyclable. Another product, which had been created in-house by O'Hara Bros and was in its infancy, was an aggregate binder underlayer sub base for footways; the substance had been trialled recently in a number of London Boroughs, including a small section of Hayes, however the Covid-19 pandemic had halted the testing of the substance which was conducted by an external consultant, testing was expected to resume in February 2023 and it was hoped that this would lead to a reduced environmental impact and carbon footprint in addition to increased cost savings. The Committee commented that there were exciting developments within the field and the industry had a lot coming forward, particularly in terms of a reduction in carbon emissions; Members were informed that the new aggregate binder material currently being trialled was believed to be a stronger, more robust product that would result in lower carbon emissions. The potential cost savings that the Council could see would be led by uptake of the new product, it was noted that small batches were more expensive therefore as more highways authorities bought into the new materials, the more promising that the product would be in terms of delivering cost savings.

Wayne Greenshield was present as the Council's Network Operations Manager for Highways, he informed the Committee about his role managing highways maintenance, the winter service maintenance, and liaising with utility companies and statutory undertakers regarding their work. There was a dedicated team at Harlington Road Depot of ten operatives who carried out immediate repairs to footways that were considered dangerous within the parameters set by the Council's Highways Inspection Policy; there was also a dedicated team that carried out daily inspections and coordinated all streetworks, this team was highlighted as being extremely busy currently receiving in excess of 300 permit and permit amendment requests per day from statutory undertakers to carry out works on the Council's highways network, they also ensured the safety aspect of works undertaken within the Borough, the difficulty of this work was highlighted specifically with regard to emergency works carried out by utility companies and statutory undertakers where they do not require the Council's permission, as the local highway authority, to undertake those works. Officers met with the statutory undertakers every three months whereby officers would coordinate with them

regarding planned works from the Council and planned works from the statutory undertakers, this was in an effort to align works to cause the least disruption possible. It was also noted that if works were carried out by statutory undertakers on a newly resurfaced roadway or footway, it would be agreed with the statutory undertaker that they must resurface and make good the area of works. The Committee commended officers on their work highlighting the fact that utility companies could commence emergency works involving the dismantling of the Council's roadways and footways without express permission from the Council. It was highlighted that there were a significant number of emergency works taking place at any given time in the Borough and that this varied depending on the time of year, for example where a cold bout of weather had impacted the aging drainage mains infrastructure which was often from the Victorian era and made from cast iron which would expand and retract.

Members sought to understand the length of contract that the Council held with O'Hara Bros. Surfacing Ltd as the primary highways maintenance contractor; it was stated that the contract was reviewed every five years with a facility to extend the contract by a further two years, officers stated that the current contract with O'Hara Bros Surfacing Ltd was due to expire on 31 March 2024. Officers noted that roughly 85% of regular highway maintenance works were carried out in-house by the Council's operatives and around 15% of the work was issued to O'Hara Bros Surfacing Ltd as the contractor; the larger scales maintenance works were issued to the contractor.

On matters of the contractor's level of work and communication with the Council, it was stated that it varied based on the work being issued by the Council, there were regularly two to three reactive maintenance gangs present in the Borough throughout the year, additionally there was typically a machine gang of up to 11 operatives carrying out main carriageway works in Hillingdon for seven or eight months of the year, there were around four civil element/footways teams of up to six operatives working within the Borough at any one time, and there were also two gully cleanser machines operating in the Borough year round. It was noted that when the budgets were released, Council officers and the contractor could plan and programme works; works would tail off slightly towards the end of the financial year as the annual budget gets spent; it was noted that this was the way in which the contractor worked with all local highways authorities. The Cabinet Member highlighted the important partnership that was maintained between the Council and the contractor for the benefit of the service provided to Hillingdon's residents. It was also noted that within the contract with O'Hara Bros Surfacing Ltd, there was a mechanism for early ordering and volume of works discounts where works were procured ahead of time as it helped the contractor forward plan their scheduling and resources. The Committee were encouraged by this and sought to ensure that the Council pursued these discounts where possible to deliver value for residents.

The Contractor confirmed that appropriate checks were carried out following any works that were carried out including a walk and snagging of the works, ensuring any ironworks were raised and gullies were cleaned; the Council were then asked to come out and inspect the works to then be signed off following review. Contractually, all works were guaranteed for 12 months. The Committee queried the length of the guarantee and expressed that they would hope to see works last well beyond 12 months; it was highlighted that it would be incredibly rare to see surfaces failing shortly after the guarantee period, the contractor noted that

works tended to last a lot longer than the guarantee period and it would only be under very exceptional circumstances, for example when the underlying earth had slipped, where surfaces would fail within even three years of the works. It was noted that the earth underneath a roadway was a significant factor in the lifespan of the roadworks above it, London clay was endemic to the north of the Borough which had an impact on the lifespan of roads in that area where some roadworks had not lasted as long as initially hoped due to water build up in the clay beneath degrading the road at a faster rate. It was also noted that, although the contractor worked with a number of local highways authorities, where materials had been reclaimed from Hillingdon roads to be recycled, the material would primarily be kept within the Borough, this was to ensure that any material was not necessarily transported causing further costs and carbon emissions. The Committee were informed that some schemes, where works were carried out at a shallower depth due to factors such as design, the road surface, limitations, and finances, may not last as long as deeper treatments.

The Committee raised a point regarding the way in which Members' Enquiries and service requests for highways resurfacing were dealt with, particularly where the roads in question were of a lower priority on the highways network, for example quieter residential roads with less footfall and traffic. Members sought to have a system in place whereby a steer could be given from officers as to roughly when the surfaces would be due for resurfacing or due for a condition survey to help inform residents and give them a loose timescale. It was noted that all of the Council's highways network was inspected at least once per year and there was a team of inspectors out 'walking' the Borough each day. The Cabinet Member noted that there was an issue with promising that works would be carried out within a certain timescale in that, it was not known which emerging highways maintenance issues would occur around the Borough in that time period, making it incredibly difficult to plan far ahead in terms of which specific roads would receive works. In response, the Committee were minded to increase the transparency of the way in which Members' Enquiries and service requests were responded to, potentially through a standardised response template, which would improve the way in which Members and residents were communicated with regarding the reasoning behind the scheduling of works.

The Chairman thanked the witnesses present for attending and giving their input into the Committee's review. The Committee commended the condition of roads within Hillingdon and highlighted that it was often evidenced when driving outside of the Borough boundary by a poorer road surface. There was also an understanding that local authority budgets were currently squeezed in all parts of the country and the Cabinet Member noted that there was the intention of increasing the amount of resurfacing and repair work conducted on Hillingdon's highway network in future.

RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways & Transport Select Committee used the second witness session of the review to broaden understanding of the Council's practical and strategic approach to highways resurfacing.