

Attaining Best Practice and Value for the Council's Highways Resurfacing Activities



A review by the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee 2023/2024

Councillors on the Committee: Councillors Keith Burrows (Chairman), Steve Tuckwell (Vice Chairman), Peter Money (Opposition Lead), Alan Chapman, Darran Davies, Elizabeth Garelick and Kamal Preet Kaur



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Chairman's Foreword

On behalf of the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee, I am pleased to present this report to Cabinet summarising our major review into the Council's highways resurfacing activities. The Committee identified an opportunity to conduct an in-depth scrutiny review into how the Council could attain value for residents in terms of highways resurfacing whilst ensuring best practice and quality.

This report is the culmination of the Committee's evidence gathering sessions during which Committee Members had the opportunity to meet with a range of Senior Council Officers, external partners and the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, all of whom gave good evidence on which the Committee has based its findings and recommendations.



The recommendations are split into two overarching themes that became apparent over the course of the review; 'Engagement and Communication' and 'Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies'. Engagement and Communication was of paramount importance to the Committee, especially in the way that the Council's interacts with residents and Ward Councillors, but also with external stakeholders including contractors and other authorities tasked with maintaining some of the Borough's prominent highways. Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies encompasses the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions whilst acknowledging the need for managing cost within approved budgets.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those witnesses and officers who gave up their time to assist the Committee and commend officers for their continued hard work in striving to ensure Hillingdon's Highways and footways remain in good condition and fit for purpose.

Councillor Keith Burrows

Chairman of the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee

Ward Councillor for Uxbridge

Summary of recommendations to Cabinet

That Cabinet welcomes the Select Committee's report and recommendations which seek to support and enhance the delivery of Highways resurfacing and maintenance across the Borough. The aim of the review was to take a broad assessment of existing procedures, new technologies, methods, materials and scheduling possibilities to obtain best value and service for residents.

Engagement and Communication

1

That Cabinet develop a standardised Highways Resurfacing response template for Members Enquiries, to include the reasoning behind the response, the scheduling of works and estimated timescales, or reasons why a timescale cannot be given.

2

That Cabinet endorse the principle of feedback from residents and Ward Councillors contributing to the process by which the Council assesses the condition of footways and roadways and their priority for repair.

3

That Cabinet ensure that information regarding planned major resurfacing works is transparent and available to the Ward Councillors and the public where possible.

4

That Cabinet seek to enhance communication with relevant authorities that manage prominent highways in the Borough (National Highways and Transport for London) regarding any deterioration of their network impacting Hillingdon's residents.

5

That the Council's Highways, and Green Spaces Teams consult each other formally and frequently to ensure the issue of tree root protrusion on footways and roadways is mitigated effectively.

Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies

6

That where possible, Cabinet adopt and promote less energy intensive resurfacing techniques such as the recycling of materials and expanding trials using Warm Mixed Asphalt.

7

That Cabinet endorse the use of new resurfacing technologies and techniques including the new machine purchased for the delivery of reactive highways maintenance work.

8

That Cabinet support cost effective methods of repaving footways such as the move to tarmac where appropriate, rather than replacing all footways 'like for like'.

9

That Cabinet encourage the early ordering of works and volume of works discounts offered by the Council's Resurfacing Contractor.

Background to the review

The Select Committee formally agreed at its meeting on 20 September 2022, to commence with a major scrutiny review into attaining best practice and value for the Council's highways resurfacing activities.

The aim of the review was to take a broad assessment of new technologies, methods, materials and scheduling possibilities to obtain best value and service for residents. The Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport noted at the review's onset that they appreciated the Select Committee's undertaking of a major scrutiny 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.

By looking at the local context within Hillingdon, the London-wide setting, and the national picture, the Select Committee is now in a position to offer their findings and recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

Hillingdon's Highways Network

The Council is tasked with maintaining 905 kilometres of footways and 700 kilometres of carriageways (roadways) within Hillingdon. This makes up the vast majority of Hillingdon's Highways Network, with a small number of highways being maintained by other authorities such as National Highways (previously Highways England) and Transport for London.

Of the roads that the Council is responsible for maintaining, these have been categorised into groups A – D within Hillingdon's road hierarchy. Categories are determined based on road classification with due regard to functionality, traffic use, character and trends. The vast majority of the Borough's road network (82%) falls within category D.

Feature	Hierarchy	Functionality factor	General description	Category	Length (m)
Road	Main Distributor	Borough principal roads; very high traffic flow routes.	Routes linking strategic network.	A	51,662
	Secondary Distributor	Traffic sensitive roads; classified non-principal roads; high traffic flow routes.	Routes linking main distributor network	B	20,343
	Link Road	Medium traffic flow routes. Mainly unclassified.	Routes linking secondary distributor network; industrial interconnecting roads.	C	52,700
	Residential / Local Access	Low traffic flow routes. No traffic generator. Unclassified.	Residential roads; access to individual properties and land.	D	574,151

Similarly, the footway hierarchy takes into account local factors such as the proximity to town centres, shopping parades, schools, hospitals, and public transport hubs. Footways are categorised in groups 1 – 4 detailed below. Again, the majority of footways (94.5%) fall within category 4.

Feature	Hierarchy	Functionality factor	General Description	Category	Length (m)
Footway	Primary Walking Route	Very high pedestrian volume. Major bus route.	Busy urban town centre; shopping and business centre; main train stations; main pedestrian routes.	1	14,197
	Secondary Walking Route	High pedestrian volume.	High usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes; shopping parades; large schools.	2	5,437
	Link Footway	Medium pedestrian volume.	Linking local access footways; local shops.	3	46,824
	Local Access Footway	Low pedestrian volume.	Low usage footways; residential housing estates; cul-de-sacs.	4	1,148,302

Highways Maintenance and Management

The Council's highways maintenance activities can be categorised under three primary functions:

- **Reactive Maintenance**
 - Patching
 - Potholes
 - Drainage
 - Road markings
 - Highway Inspections
 - Street Lighting Repairs
- **Regulatory Functions**
 - Network Management
 - Utility Inspections
- **Planned Maintenance**
 - Resurfacing
 - Surface Dressing

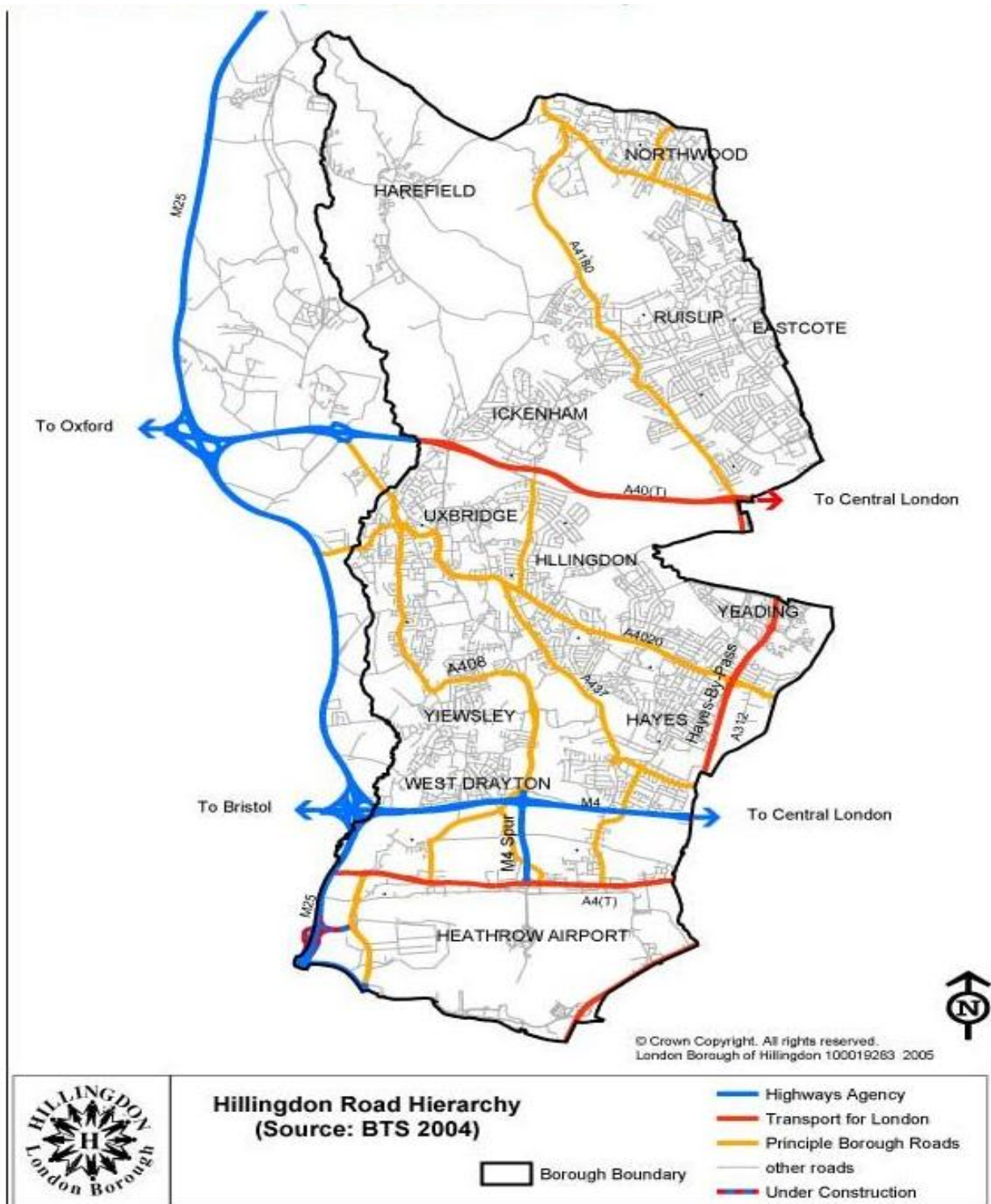
For the benefit of residents, the Council's website provides a list of the Borough's road closures authorised for roadworks by the Council. For road closures pertaining to communications and utility companies, Network Rail, Transport for London, and National Highways, the Transport for London website provides a register of roadworks taking place across London.

Management of the Council's highways asset is a strategic endeavour that enables the Council to make decisions over what service is provided and what can be achieved within budget limits. It enables officers to identify the best allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future residents. Good asset management therefore supports business decisions and provides longer term financial benefit.

The Council is not responsible for the maintenance of a number of prominent highways in the Borough, these include:

- A4 Bath Road
- A40 Western Avenue
- A30 Great South West Road
- A312 The Parkway
- A4180 West End Road south of the Polish War Memorial (including the roundabout)
- A3113 Airport Way (including the roundabout on Stanwell Moor Road)
- M4 Motorway including Heathrow spur
- M25 Motorway

These highways are maintained by a mix of National Highways (previously Highways England) and Transport for London as detailed below.



Safety Inspections in Hillingdon

The Council has an Inspection Regime in place that sees all roads and footways in the Borough inspected for defects on an agreed frequency in line with the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highways Infrastructure and the Borough's road and footway hierarchies.

Defects can also be reported by residents through the Council's Contact Centre or on the Council's website.

Footway and Roadway Defects

When a defect is reported, highway inspectors will objectively assess the severity, nature and location of defects to determine how urgent the required work is. Defects will only be repaired if they are regarded as hazardous or serious and, in order that consistent standards are adopted throughout the Borough, clearly defined categories known as 'investigatory levels' are set. If the defect assessed is not considered to be hazardous or serious and does not meet the required 'investigatory level', repair will not be undertaken. However, if it does, the priority allocated will depend on the severity, nature and location of the defect.

It is recognised that on any highway network, a multitude of minor defects will exist which do not pose any risk to either the safety or the integrity of the highway and for which it may be impractical and inefficient to expend limited financial resources to undertake repairs. Investigatory levels provide guidelines to highways inspectors, as to which defects should be considered for treatment or repair. All defects inspected that meet investigatory levels are evaluated and the likelihood of injury or damage to a highway user assessed. This approach helps to ensure that defect repairs are appropriately planned, resourced and completed to the correct standard. It should be noted that minimum investigatory levels are provided as a guide only. Should the Inspector, following a risk assessment, deem it necessary to record any specific defect at a higher level, then they should do so.

Hillingdon's Investigatory Levels

Item	Defect	Investigatory Level
Carriageway	Pothole / depression (<i>depth/width</i>)	>40mm & >200mm
Cycleways	Pothole / depression (<i>depth only</i>)	25-40mm
Controlled crossing points (<i>zebra, pelican, puffin, toucan etc</i>)	Pothole / depression (<i>depth only</i>)	25-40mm
Carriageway	Standing water / water flowing onto public highway / blocked drain	> 1/3 width of carriageway and > 40mm deep
Signs/bollards/pedestrian guard rails	Damaged/misaligned item causing a hazard (including sign fixings)	Defect present
Footway	Trip / pothole / sunken cover	> 20mm
Footway	Rocking flagstones / block	> 20mm vertical movement
Footway	Loose kerbs (<i>All</i>)	50mm horizontal 20mm vertical
Footway	Missing kerb section	> 20mm
Footway	Depression / ponding	>1m sq & >40mm deep
Footway	Horizontal gap (<i>paving slabs</i>)	>20mm wide & >20mm deep
Footway	Fillets / open joints	>20mm wide & >20mm deep

Prioritisation criteria

Hillingdon previously adopted a “worst-first” approach to asset management whereby the worst condition roads were identified, and a one-year programme of road resurfacing and reconstruction works was developed. Officers are currently preparing a 5-year work programme which will include both major resurfacing and preventative maintenance which is the first step towards long-term programme development.

Condition surveys are commissioned and used to determine which roads will be suitable for major resurfacing and preventative maintenance. Recently, a number of factors have been taken into account other than road condition in determining surfaces for repair, such as accident claim, defect records, complaints, road usage levels, and footfall.

The prioritised future years works programmes of highways capital resurfacing schemes are reviewed and updated based on the results of the latest road condition survey data.

Evidence & Witness Testimony

Hillingdon's Highways Prioritisation Principles

Through witness sessions with Council Officers, Highways Resurfacing Contractors and the relevant Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, the Committee noted 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.

The condition surveys are carried out on the Council's entire Highways network every two years by an independent contractor; this survey project is time consuming and lasts for approximately one year, following this there's a further project to assess the survey data which lasts for a further year; the process then repeats. The prioritisation score and data given to each stretch of highway required specialist knowledge to interpret. It was also noted by the Committee that there was a separate in-house process for carrying out separate Highways inspections.

Throughout the review, the Committee regularly queried 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 a relatively 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.

Reactive Highways Maintenance and New Technologies

During the witness session in January 2023, the Select Committee heard 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. It was again highlighted that there was a 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.

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 WMA 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. 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.

Another product, which had been created in-house by the Council's resurfacing contractor and was in its infancy, was an aggrebind underlayer sub base for footways; which would reduce the import of quarried aggregate by primarily utilising excavated soil. 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 2023 and it was hoped that this would lead to a reduced environmental impact and carbon footprint in addition to increased cost savings. The new aggrebind material currently being trialled was believed to be a stronger, more robust product that would result in lower carbon emissions.

During the Committee's information gathering sessions, Members heard 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 the external contractor; the larger scales maintenance works were usually issued to the contractor.

There was a dedicated team at Harlington Road Depot of ten operatives who carried out immediate reactive repairs to footways that were considered dangerous within the parameters set by the Council's Highways Inspection Policy. Such repairs were



currently carried out using the Council's Rhino Patch resurfacing machine. As part of the review, the Select Committee conducted a site visit in March 2023 to see a reactive maintenance road surface repair using the Rhino Patch machine in Warren Road, Ickenham.

Left and below: Images from the Select Committee's site visit to observe a reactive maintenance road surface repair

The Committee were disappointed to initially have been told that the Council had two operating Rhino Patch repair machines, only to later be informed that, due to both machines coming to the end of their serviceable life, one was not being used and only remained to supply replacement parts for the operating machine. Options for the replacement of the machines were considered whilst the review was ongoing. In May 2023, following



extensive market research undertaken by officers, the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Finance agreed to the purchase of a new machine package deal from Roadmender Asphalt for the delivery of highways reactive maintenance work undertaken by the Council's in-house Highways Team. This included two KM2-18X infrared heaters, a trailer mounted mastic boiler with a tool heater and ancillary tools. This technology allows for the quick and easy repair of defects and potholes without the need for excavations. This technology is expected to limit deterioration

Left: Image of the Roadmender Asphalt solution purchased by the Council for reactive maintenance road surface repairs

without the need for premature resurfacing and reduce the work assigned to our term service contractor. The Committee plan on conducting a further site visit to observe the use of the newly purchased technology.

Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies

Members initially sought to understand through the review, the criteria which dictated why different materials and resurfacing types were used on different footways in the Borough. It was noted that, with regard to footways, the Council had previously 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, 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. The Committee were informed that resurfacing with paving slabs was on average 20% more expensive than tarmac resurfacing though it was noted in one road, the pavement referenced was up to 60% more expensive. 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 and durability 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.

On the Council's reactive highways maintenance activities and the newly purchased Roadmender Asphalt solution, the Committee learned that the machine would assist in reducing the carbon footprint of patch repairs by 85%. Unlike conventional repairs that require potholes to be saw cut and excavated purely to accommodate the compaction requirements of using asphalt, the material used for the new technology is a flowable material that is simply poured into and over the top of defects in a fraction of the time. Once applied, the adhesive, flexible material welds itself to the existing road surface, locking out any potential for the ingress of water while extending the life of the road for years to come. The resurfacing material used for the machine is prepared using end-of-life waste tyres otherwise destined for incineration, with 9 end-of-life waste tyres recycled into each tonne of material. This material would cost roughly £16 per 20kg bag. Patching repairs can be finished in a short amount of time, with a minimal number of operatives and a minimal amount of material required, which

makes repairs more cost effective.

Resident and Ward Councillor Engagement

Through discussions with witnesses, the Select Committee wished to emphasise the importance of resident and Ward Councillor engagement 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.

Members highlighted their experiences to officers during the review, noting that they had encountered frustration when seeking responses regarding where stretches of highway sat on the Borough's prioritisation list for resurfacing and repair. Members felt that providing this information should not be a time consuming exercise and should not requiring repeated attempts to obtain. Given the regular condition surveys conducted on the Borough's entire highway network, it was felt that this information should be readily available, even if it did not ascertain exactly when a road surface was due for repair, Members sought more ease in communicating with officers.

Resurfacing Procedures and the Council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy

Over the course of the review, the Select Committee were informed that there was a dedicated team at the 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.

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.

The Committee sought clarification on what inspection work was done following any highways repair or resurfacing work, whether it be undertaken by the Council's in-house team or the resurfacing contractor, 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 reactive maintenance works carried out by contractors, however, the majority of works were inspected and randomised checks were carried out regularly by Hillingdon's officers. In regard to the planned resurfacing works, a project engineer was assigned to supervise the work to ensure that the standard meets the specifications and that any issues identified during the construction phase were resolved efficiently. Further to this the Contractor confirmed that appropriate internal checks were carried out following any works 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. 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.

Other Authorities Responsible for Managing Highways within the Borough

Throughout the review the Select 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 Transport for London (TfL). The

financial pressures seen by TfL in recent years in the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic 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, and that Hillingdon had contributed its condition survey data to the report.

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, whereby 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, 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.

Members noted that some of the prominent highways in the Borough, which were maintained by other authorities, were in a relatively poor condition, Members specifically highlighted the Bath Road, which came under the purview of TfL 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 due to the defective nature of the footway or roadway, TfL would be the responsible authority.

With regard to utility companies and their activity in the Borough which required works to the highway, the Committee heard how there was a dedicated Council team that 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 they 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. 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.

The Committee's Findings

General Conclusions

From the early stages of the review the Select Committee had expected that many of the findings and recommendations arising could be grouped into two broad categories, 'Engagement and Communication' and 'Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies'. Engagement and Communication holistically takes into account the way that the Council's interacts with residents and Ward Councillors, in addition to external stakeholders including contractors and other authorities tasked with maintaining some of the Borough's prominent highways. Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies encompasses the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions whilst acknowledging the need for managing cost within approved budgets.

The Committee generally commended the condition of roads within Hillingdon and understood that local highway authority budgets were currently squeezed in all parts of the country. The Select Committee was also encouraged at the Council's intention to increase the amount of resurfacing and repair work conducted on Hillingdon's highway network in future.

Engagement and Communication

The Select Committee's primary findings related to the frustration experienced by some Members in how hard it was to receive information and answers from Highways Officers to where certain roads sit on the prioritisation list for resurfacing. The Committee felt that it was too difficult and took too long to receive this fairly straight forward information. Although it was understood that there was difficulty in giving out even rough timescales for certain projects due to the reactive nature of much of the Council's resurfacing works impacting the scheduling of works; it was felt that this type of information should be available to be readily shared with Members. This would facilitate honest and open communication between Members and officers, and allow

Members to correctly frame their conversations with residents.

The Committee also agreed on the importance of communication with all stakeholders, including residents, in avoiding disturbances for businesses and 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. Throughout the review it was repeatedly 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 any given time period, making it incredibly difficult to plan far ahead in terms of which specific roads would receive works. The Committee are minded to increase the transparency of the way in which Members' Enquiries and service requests are 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. This could lead to a system whereby a steer could be given from officers as to roughly when particular surfaces may be due for either a condition survey or repair works.

As a suggestion which could put a spotlight on the commendable and challenging work undertaken by the Council's Highways Team, 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 Hillingdon People magazine.

A specific matter that arose during the review pertained to the Council's Highways Safety Inspection Policy & Procedure document, which showed that its last revision had taken place in February 2020; it was confirmed with officers and Members 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.

Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies

The Select Committee wish to make of paramount importance the need for promoting green initiatives and cost efficiencies through the Council's highways resurfacing activities. The Committee were supportive of the trials using Warm Mixed Asphalt, and sought to encourage the expansion of said trials, an importance was placed on exploring less energy intensive methods of resurfacing. The Committee heard of the

exciting developments within the field and that many stakeholders within the industry had a lot of new developments coming forward, particularly in terms of a reduction in carbon emissions. Where greener products were currently more costly due to only being produced in small batches, the potential cost efficiencies that the Council could see would be led by uptake of the new product among other highways authorities. Production of small batches is more expensive, therefore as more highways authorities buy into the new materials, the more promising that the product would be in terms of delivering cost savings. The Committee highlighted 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.

The Select Committee also found that, where cost could be addressed, there was a mechanism within the current contract with the external resurfacing contractor for the 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 Committee's Recommendations to Cabinet

Through the witnesses and evidence received during the detailed review by the Committee, Members request that Cabinet welcomes the Committee's report and recommendations which seek to both support and provide further strategic direction on the Council's Highways resurfacing activities.

Engagement and Communication

The Select Committee felt that there was a need for increased transparency, particularly between Ward Councillors and the Council's Highways officers where Members' Enquiries had been raised. On the basis of facilitating transparency and engagement between Members and the Highways Teams, it is recommended:

1

That Cabinet develop a standardised Highways Resurfacing response template for Members Enquiries, to include the reasoning behind the response, the scheduling of works and estimated timescales, or reasons why a timescale cannot be given.

Members sought to ensure that Ward Councillor and resident feedback was factored into the prioritisation criteria whereby highways were assessed for resurfacing. As a result of the Committee conducting their review, officers now give a weighting to this feedback within the prioritisation process. It is therefore recommended:

2

That Cabinet endorse the principle of feedback from residents and Ward Councillors contributing to the process by which the Council assesses the condition of footways and roadways and their priority for repair.

Whilst understanding the difficulty in anticipating the need for emergency works from statutory undertakers, Members felt that there was scope to improve the amount of information available to help forewarn and assist the public in avoiding roadworks disruption. On that basis, it is recommended:

3

That Cabinet ensure that information regarding planned major resurfacing works is transparent and available to the Ward Councillors and the public where possible.

In an effort to facilitate better engagement between the Council and other authorities responsible for maintaining some of the Borough's prominent highways. It is recommended:

4

That Cabinet seek to enhance communication with relevant authorities that manage prominent highways in the Borough (National Highways and Transport for London) regarding any deterioration of their network impacting Hillingdon's residents.

The Select Committee, in relation to how the protrusion of tree roots on footways was accounted for, felt that the relationship between the highways resurfacing team and the green spaces team should be bolstered to ensure this issue was mitigated effectively. On that basis, it is recommended:

5

That the Council's Highways, and Green Spaces Teams consult each other formally and frequently to ensure the issue of tree root protrusion on footways and roadways is mitigated effectively.

Promoting Green Initiatives and Cost Efficiencies

Upon learning of the trials of Warm Mixed Asphalt and the recycling of materials, the Committee sought to encourage the expansion of products and technologies with lower associated carbon emissions. On that basis, it is recommended:

6

That where possible, Cabinet adopt and promote less energy intensive resurfacing techniques such as the recycling of materials and expanding trials using Warm Mixed Asphalt.

The Select Committee were encouraged to hear of the new, carbon efficient and cost effective reactive highway maintenance technologies being pursued by the Council. On that basis, it is recommended:

7

That Cabinet endorse the use of new resurfacing technologies and techniques including the new machine purchased for the delivery of reactive highways maintenance work.

One of the primary focusses for the review pertained to promoting cost effective resurfacing techniques where possible. The Committee support the recent move to repaving most footways in the Borough with tarmac rather than replacing footways 'like for like'. This improves the longevity of the footway, improves safety (when compared to paving slabs), and is roughly 20% cheaper than paving slabs. Therefore, it is recommended:

8

That Cabinet support cost effective methods of repaving footways such as the move to tarmac where appropriate, rather than replacing all footways 'like for like'.

The review also highlighted that there was, and should always be, a mechanism built into any contract with external highways resurfacing providers for early ordering and volume of works discounts where works were procured ahead of time. This helped the contractor forward plan their scheduling and resources, and offered greater value for the Council and residents. Therefore, it is also recommended:

9

That Cabinet encourage the early ordering of works and volume of works discounts offered by the Council's Resurfacing Contractor.

About the review - witnesses and activity

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee from the outset of the review:

1. To understand the Council's current position and procedures with regard to highways reconstruction and resurfacing;
2. To explore the national legislative setting and initiatives undertaken by other London Boroughs and local authorities in relation to highways resurfacing;
3. To explore recent developments in resurfacing technologies, methods and materials;
4. To assess options for adopting new scheduling possibilities in an effort to improve the efficiency of the Council's resurfacing programme;
5. To influence any emerging Council plans with respect to footways and roadways management in terms of meeting carbon reduction targets;
6. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

The Committee received evidence from the following sources and witnesses:

<p>Witness Session 1 and report on Highways Network Prioritisation and Maintenance</p> <p>18 October 2022</p>	<p>Council officers in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poonam Pathak Head of Highways
<p>Witness Session 2</p> <p>11 January 2023</p>	<p>External Witnesses present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher O'Hara Director O'Hara Bros. Surfacing Ltd <p>Council officers in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Greenshields Network Operations Manager Highways

	<p>Cabinet Members present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Jonathan Bianco Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport
<p>Reactive Maintenance Machine Site Visit</p> <p>21 March 2023</p>	<p>Highways officers in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne Greenshields Network Operations Manager Highways • Martin Kenealy Reactive Maintenance Supervisor Highways
<p>Select Committee Meeting</p> <p>06 April 2023</p>	<p>Council officers in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poonam Pathak Head of Highways

References

[Cabinet Member Decision - Highways Purchase of New Machine \(Purchase of Vehicles Release No 1\)](#) – London Borough of Hillingdon, May 2023

[London Borough of Hillingdon - Highway Safety Inspection Policy & Procedure](#) – London Borough of Hillingdon, November 2018

[Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice](#) – UK Roads Liaison Group

[Roadmender Asphalt](#) – Reactive Highways Maintenance Patching Machine

[Guideline document for the assessment and certification of high-friction surfacing for highways](#) – British Board of Agreement Highway Authorities Product Approval Scheme for Highway Products and Systems, March 2017