
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	12 th September 2019
Subject:	Response to Scrutiny Review of Highway Maintenance
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Walker, Corporate Director - Community
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Report from Scrutiny Review Group on Highways Maintenance

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides responses to the recommendations made in the Report from the Scrutiny Review Group on Highways Maintenance. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review of highways

maintenance and the Group was set up to action this review.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

- Note the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group as set out in their Report
- Agree the proposed actions in response to the recommendations as set out in this report.

Reason: (For recommendations)

The recommendations and responses are based on the outcome of the Scrutiny Review.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1 A range of issues concerning highways maintenance were originally identified for the scrutiny work programme as a result of the Residents Survey 2017 which highlighted to members the level of residents' concerns around highways. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the review's scope on 13 November 2018.
- 2.2 The purpose of this review was to better understand and influence how Harrow's schedule of highways work is prioritised so as to better inform, engage and consult with residents.
- 2.3 The objectives of the review as set out in the scope are as follows:
1. To establish the nature of residents' concern about the condition of roads in Harrow and other highways issues, as raised in the Residents' Survey 2017.
 2. To understand how Harrow's schedule of planned highways maintenance works is formulated and understand the criteria, including financial, for determining in what way works are carried out.
 3. To ascertain if and how the Council coordinates different types of planned works to roads and pavements.
 4. To ascertain if and how utilities companies coordinate planned works with the council.

5. To investigate how council policies around dropped kerbs and enforcement impact upon the conditions of Harrow's roads and pavements.
6. To examine the quality assurance around contractors' performance on highways maintenance, including enforcement by the council of its contractual rights.
7. To understand how planned works and their progress are communicated to residents.
8. To understand the sources of funding and associated pressures, including TfL involvement, that affect Harrow's highways maintenance programme.

Options considered

- 2.4 The options under consideration by the Scrutiny Review Group were:
1. Do nothing and continue providing highway services as now.
 2. Highlight a range of improvements to highway services based on the scope of the review.

Background

- 2.5 The final report of the Scrutiny Review Group of Highways Maintenance presents their findings and recommendations and can be seen in **Appendix A**. The final report was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 4th June 2019 for consideration. The Committee resolved that:
- a) the report of the Scrutiny Review Group on Highways Maintenance be endorsed;
 - b) the report and the recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response;
 - c) the implementation of the recommendations be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after 12 months.
- 2.6 The intelligence to inform this review was pulled together between December 2018 and May 2019 and comes from desktop research, question and answer sessions with officers and the Environment Portfolio Holder, review of briefings from the services, data analysis and site visits.
- 2.7 The recommendations made in the review are shown in the table below and includes the response from the Highways Service.

Recommendation	Response
<p>1) That on an ongoing basis, the council better informs councillors and residents about the highways inspections that it conducts and commissions, the different types of defects, and the different investigative levels. The Highways Team are to work with the Communications Team in order to produce an information leaflet of bitesize information that could be used by councillors and also given to residents to provide the key facts and figures around highways issues.</p>	<p>There is already existing information on the Council's website and this was considered as a part of the scrutiny review. The web page information will therefore be assessed to consider if further information can be added or amended to improve the quality of information provided.</p> <p>A leaflet will be developed with the communications team to provide key facts and figures around highways maintenance. The aims of the leaflet will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details about the council's responsibilities for the road network • The size, value, condition and deterioration of the asset and the limited funds available to maintain it • How we plan and organise works to maximise the use of funding with examples • How and when residents can report defects and issues and how we will deal with requests • The problem of highway damage caused by inappropriate behaviour from residents / businesses vehicles and the impact on the Council's limited resources and discouraging such activity <p>This leaflet could be widely used at events, members briefings, Council website, distributed with scheme leaflets as. it would be a general summary / FAQ of the Council's approach to road maintenance.</p> <p>Action by September 2019</p>
<p>2) That the council considers charging all residents applying for planning permission an additional charge for any damage to driving over verges, which would be refunded if, after building works are</p>	<p>This concerns contractor's vehicles causing highway damage that are undertaking construction works on development with planning consent. Discussions with the Planning and Legal departments will be undertaken</p>

<p>completed, it can be shown that no damage was caused.</p>	<p>to consider if developers can be required to agree a planning condition and to pay a bond that can be used by the Council to enforce against any occurrence of highway damage in connection with developer construction works or undertake repairs.</p> <p>Review by December 2019</p>
<p>3) That the council more widely informs residents of planned works, through regular articles in Harrow People and the MyHarrow emails sent to residents. The content of these articles should include messages around behaviour change and highlight the cost impact on the council of selfish behaviour by the public (e.g. driving over verges) which may not be malicious but nonetheless costs the council – money that could be used elsewhere in service delivery. Messages around enforcement should also be reinforced.</p>	<p>There is already existing information about the main annual highways maintenance programmes on the Council’s website and this was considered as a part of the scrutiny review. A way of linking this information to the MyHarrow Account will be investigated with the web team to improve circulation of the information.</p> <p>The issue of behaviour change is important to ensure unnecessary highway damage does not occur and wastes valuable council resource unnecessarily. Suitable messaging will be developed to highlight the impact of poor behaviour setting out the consequences and any recourse to highways enforcement action.</p> <p>Review by December 2019</p>
<p>4) That the council explores alternative and additional sources of funding for greening, for example in bids to the GLA.</p>	<p>All opportunities to bid for additional finance for greening and other public realm improvements are actively pursued.</p>
<p>5) That there is greater transparency to members on the Planning Committee on the long term cost to the council of adopting and maintaining a built asset. It is suggested that a standing item on Planning Committee reports provides clarification on officer recommendations in respect of responsibility for assets built by developers and adoption by the council of assets, and allows for check or review of previous decisions on implementation in accordance</p>	<p>Cabinet approved a highways adoption policy in Dec 2015 and this guides highways officers in determining where roads in a development need to be adopted. This is normally included in the highway comments provided for reports on planning applications to the Planning committee.</p> <p>The format of reports to the Planning Committee and how issues of adoption can be highlighted will be discussed with the Planning</p>

with guidance.	Department. Review by December 2019
<p>6) That the Environment Portfolio Holder call a public event for stakeholders on highways maintenance, which disseminates the findings of this review, shares the learning and briefs stakeholders of the key issues around highways maintenance. The event could also demonstrate the websites that use planned works information and that would be useful for residents in identifying nearby roadworks, as well as provide the opportunity to give out the leaflets designed as per Recommendation 1.</p>	<p>The organising of a public event will be discussed with the Portfolio Holder, Environment.</p> <p>This would provide an opportunity to circulate leaflets as set out in recommendation 1.</p> <p>Review with PH by September 2019</p>
<p>7) That members and highways services help make residents better aware of the online tools available to them around reporting defects and tracking the progress of remedial work.</p>	<p>This will be highlighted in the new leaflet to be produced as set out in recommendation 1.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to any messaging that could be sent via MyHarrow accounts to highlight awareness.</p> <p>Review by December 2019</p>
<p>8) That members are strongly encouraged to use the EE members' portal to log concerns. If for any reason members approach individual officers instead, the EE members' portal should be copied into correspondence so that all queries are captured.</p>	<p>It is current practice for officers to copy in the EE members inbox if they receive queries directly from members.</p> <p>Members are encouraged by the highways team to use the EE members inbox to improve reporting and tracking of queries.</p>
<p>9) That the service be asked to design a diagram/map which depicts the route that all residents' queries follow and are handled, so that members can then share this with residents. This will also allow residents to know how to navigate their concerns to the services.</p>	<p>A flow chart will be developed to map out the correct process for receiving queries through to the responsible teams. This will be shared with councillors.</p> <p>This could be incorporated in the new leaflet to be produced as set out in recommendation 1.</p> <p>Action by September 2019</p>

<p>10) That the highways services undertake scenario modelling to explore different models of investment for the highways asset, and that this be used to inform decisions around future spend.</p>	<p>The scrutiny review demonstrated how capital funding for highways maintenance is generally insufficient to reduce the backlog of repairs on the council's largest asset. It also demonstrated that no method of determining the necessary annual funding based on the condition and deterioration of the asset was used currently.</p> <p>The efficient and effective use of maintenance funds is essential in order to keep the asset in a serviceable condition. Deterioration modelling and maintenance treatment scenarios are therefore being developed in 2019/20 and will inform a new Highways Asset Management Plan. The scenarios modelled will provide a range of investment strategies for the highway asset in the future that can be considered in the annual capital bid submissions.</p> <p>Action by December 2019</p>
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Ward Councillors' comments

2.8 Not applicable as the report is not ward-specific.

Risk Management Implications

2.9 No specific risks are highlighted.

Procurement Implications

There are no specific procurement implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. Any procurement that may result from the recommendations will be conducted in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and through the engagement of the procurement team.

Legal Implications

2.10 This report involves a Key Decision. Article 13.03(b) of the Constitution stipulates that decision makers may only make key decisions in accordance with the requirements of Rule 23 of Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Financial Implications

- 2.11 The cost of any changes to the highway service resulting from recommendations in the Scrutiny Report will be accommodated within the revenue budget of the traffic, Highways & Asset Management Team.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.12 LIP3 underwent an Equalities Impact Assessment which includes highways maintenance. The Council has had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it as required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Council Priorities

- 2.13 The findings and recommendations from this scrutiny review relate most to the delivery of the following priorities:
- Building a Better Harrow - Create a thriving modern, inclusive and vibrant Harrow that people can be proud to call home
 - Protecting Vital Public Services - Harrow has a transport infrastructure that supports economic growth, improves accessibility and supports healthy lifestyles

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Chief Financial Officer
Date: 19/07/19		

Name: Baljit Bhandal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Monitoring Officer
Date: 26/07/19		

Name: Nimesh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Procurement
Date: 23/07/19		

Name: Paul Walker



Corporate Director

Date: 23/07/19

Ward Councillors notified: NO

EqIA carried out: YES, as a part of LIP3

EqIA cleared by: Dave Corby,
Community - Equality
Task Group (DETG)
Chair

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: David Eaglesham, Head of Traffic, Highways & Asset Management, 020 8424 1500, david.eaglesham@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- Scope for the review, as agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 November 2018:

<http://modern.gov:8080/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=276&MId=64420&Ver=4>

- Final report of the Scrutiny Review of Highways Maintenance, 4th June 2019

Call-In Waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(for completion by Democratic Services staff only)

NOT APPLICABLE*

** Delete as appropriate
If No, set out why the decision is urgent with reference to 4b - Rule*

47 of the Constitution.