

Place Select Committee
Review of Highways Asset Management (inc. Potholes & Flooding)
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

Making the Borough a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means creating:

- Great places to live and visit.
- Clean and green spaces.

Making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm

- People are supported and protected from harm.
- People live healthy lives.

Making the Borough a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed

- A growing economy.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) Highways Infrastructure Asset is the Council's most valuable asset and currently totals in excess of £1.7 billion. The 2020/21 Highway Infrastructure Asset Inventory includes:

- 883km (548m) Adopted highways
- Excess Of 400 SBC Structures
- 29,500 Street Lights
- 2,100 Illuminated Signs/Bollards
- 196km (122m) Public Right of Way
- 169 Traffic Signal Junctions/Crossings

The required steady state funding for the Highways Infrastructure Asset in 2020/21 was £9,551,000 and the actual funding received for the same period was £5,480,936. Therefore, this review will provide an overview of the responsibilities and challenges in managing the Highways Infrastructure Asset. This will include a focus on potholes and surface water flooding as areas of concern.

Potholes are present on roads across the Borough, the presence of which are of increasing concern to road users, vehicles, and pedestrians. This review will include ascertaining the extent of the problems caused by potholes and how this can be considered and mitigated against.

Surface water issues can be problematic at locations across the Borough. This review will seek to address this problem so that a longer-term solution to surface water issues can be found in the areas where it is most needed.

Overall, the review will evaluate the opportunities for maintaining the Highways Infrastructure Asset as efficiently as possible, both now and in the future. This will be set within the context of increasing demands, financial pressures, and climate change issues.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What are the most common problems reported to Community Services and Transport? (Definitions of potholes and surface water flooding and the Council's statutory duty to maintain and repair highway infrastructure assets.) How have these problems changed over time? (for example, number of reports, number of potholes repaired, time of repairs?)
- How is funding allocated for highways infrastructure asset management? How has this funding changed over previous years? What is the projected condition of the highway if the budget remains the same over the next five years?
- What is SBC's Highways Infrastructure Routine Safety Inspection regime?
- How do SBC communicate and consult with residents about highways infrastructure asset issues? How is this information utilised? What is this telling us? How is this information used?
- How has and how will climate change impact the condition of the Borough's highways infrastructure assets?
- How does SBC's highway infrastructure asset management practices compare with other Local Authorities?
- Could advances in technology, or new materials, be utilised to improve the quality of highways in the long term?
- What could be done if SBC were provided with additional funding to repair/maintain highway infrastructure assets? What are the opportunities for 'invest to save'?
- What are the highway infrastructure asset priorities moving forward and how can the Committee help to deliver on them through their recommendations?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet. Council. Tees Valley Combined Authority. Government.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

8 months (reporting to Cabinet in December 2021)

Approve scope and project plan – May 2021

Receive evidence – June – September 2021

<p>Draft recommendations – October 2021 Final report – November 2021 Report to Cabinet – December 2021</p>	
<p>What information do we need?</p> <p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <p>Background information. Existing reports.</p>	
<p>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</p> <p>SBC Officers</p> <p>Representative from the Department for Transport</p>	<p>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information • Evidence relating to key lines of enquiries • How is funding to Local Authorities determined?
<p>How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p> <p>Committee meetings, reports, case studies, research.</p>	
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p> <p>Committee meetings, information submissions.</p>	
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics. Public bodies must have due regard to the need to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.</p>	
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p> <p><u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023</u>: All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.</p>	
<p>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</p> <p>Maintenance of the Highways Infrastructure Asset will result in positive social and environmental outcomes across the Borough’s public places. If opportunities or additional funding became available to tackle some of the highways infrastructure issues this could reduce Council spending in the long term.</p> <p>This review also has the potential to positively impact on the public’s perception of how Stockton</p>	

Borough Council takes its responsibility for the upkeep of its highway infrastructure systems.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	April/May 2021	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	10 May 2021	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	17 May 2021	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBD	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence		21 June 2021 19 July 2021 13 September 2021	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	11 October 2021	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	October 2021	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	15 November 2021	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive	Consideration of report	16 November 2021	Executive Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee			
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	9 December 2021	Cabinet / Approving Body