



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(WOKING)**

**RESPONSE TO LOCAL COMMITTEE QUERIES**

**20 OCTOBER 2010**

**KEY ISSUE**

The Chairman of the Local Committee (Woking) invited the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Head of Surrey Highways to attend to answer a series of specific questions.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree that:**

- (i) It will receive a 'Highways Update' at each meeting covering the latest information on Highways works and the budgetary impact.

**1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Chairman of the Local Committee asked for an answer to a series of questions:

- Quality control on utility works and highway works carried out by contractors?
- What measures can be put in place to ensure transparency to councillors of all budgetary and operational expenses affecting Woking?
- What communications improvements can be made, for councillors and the public, in relation to issues previously raised?
- What target service levels are planned for various categories of problems?
- What is the forward schedule for items that need to be considered by the Local Committee?

## 2 ANALYSIS

### **1. Quality control on utility works**

The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) sets out the standards to which utility companies must reinstate their works. All street works are subject to a 2-year guarantee period (3 years in the case of deep excavations), during which time the utility company must remedy any failures. Where works fail, the guarantee period restarts from the date the failure was identified.

There are 10 key utility companies operating within Surrey, with varying degrees of coverage across the county. 155,000 notices were received from utilities in Surrey during 2009/10, relating to over 33,000 'jobs' or schemes. This equates to over 600 notices received each working day.

Surrey County Council (SCC) carries out visual sample inspections of 30% of utility works to determine whether reinstatements conform to the required specification. Sites for inspection are randomly generated and the number carried out in Surrey can amount to between 8,000 and 10,000 a year.

There are 3 categories of inspection:

Category A	Inspection of ongoing works, to look at methods and materials, and site safety.
Category B	Inspection within 6 months of completion of works.
Category C	Before the end of the guarantee period.

The County Council is also entitled to carry out further "Investigatory Works" to confirm utility companies have reinstated the highway to the correct standard and using the correct materials. Within Surrey this takes the form of core samples (undertaken internally by our Materials Laboratory) that are tested for materials and construction methods. During 2009/10 a total of 1,200 cores were taken.

The above information provides a brief overview of how SCC monitors and inspects works undertaken by utility companies. For more detailed information please refer to the "Monitoring of Utility Works on Surrey's Highway Network" report presented to the Local Committee on 7 July 2010.

### **2. Quality control on highway works**

Whilst Surrey County Council's contractors are required to monitor the quality of their own works, Surrey County Council Officers also monitor the quality of workmanship. The frequency and form of this monitoring varies according to the type and scale of works. Listed below are examples of the monitoring undertaken for various categories of works:

- General revenue works (e.g. pot hole repairs/patching works) - Community Highway Officers carry out a 15% sample inspection to ensure quality of works. To date there is a 96% pass rate against expected standards.

- Works undertaken by the Community Gang - Maintenance Engineers and Community Highway Officers monitor completion of works and the quality of workmanship.
- Resurfacing schemes (Major Maintenance/Surface Dressing/Local Structural Repairs) - the Project Engineer will typically visit sites on a daily basis to ensure the quality of the workmanship. Surrey County Council's Materials Laboratory also undertakes testing to ensure the works conform to the required specification. The majority of major schemes will usually be subject to detailed testing along with a sample of smaller schemes.
- Improvement and drainage schemes – Project Engineers are responsible for monitoring the quality of the works and will typically visit sites on a daily basis whilst construction takes place.

**3. What measures can be put in place to ensure transparency to councillors of all budgetary and operational expenses affecting Woking?**

The majority of the budgets are allocated based on countywide priorities and these are spent to meet statutory needs such as potholes meeting our intervention criteria, a fixed number of grass cuts or gully cleans. In addition to this some specific funds are allocated to the Local Committee (Woking) for decision – these are £100,000 revenue local allocation, £73,000 capital for local schemes and Member allocations.

In addition to the regular Highways Bulletin that is sent directly to all councillors, many local committees receive a regular 'Highway Update' report that provides an update on all highway works and budget positions. Going forward this can be part of the regular agenda items. A copy of this for Woking will be tabled at the meeting.

**4. What communications improvements can be made, for councillors and the public, in relation to issues previously raised?**

Looking at the customer service reports, the Woking team has received 2,354 enquiries between 1 March to 31 August 2010 - roughly 400 enquiries a month. Overall 87% have been responded to – 43% within 5 days and 78% within 20 days. Unfortunately, 300 enquires are outstanding, something which we are trying to avoid – but sometimes staffing levels mean this is difficult. Going forward, Andrew Milne, the Area Team Manager will work hard to ensure we respond to as many enquires as we can, as quickly as we can, however, this will not always be possible, particularly during bad weather.

To ensure a timely response to county councillor enquiries, a new email address will be launched soon to ensure their enquiries are logged, tracked and promptly responded to.

The County Council is committed to increasing the quantity and quality of the information that it provides to both Members and the public. Work is constantly being undertaken to identify new and better ways in which

information can be delivered. For example, the service has recently sought to improve communication by introducing electronic bulletins providing details of works taking place in each Borough and District together with other useful information. Hopefully Members will agree that the introduction of these new bulletins has been helpful.

**4. What target service levels are planned for various categories of problems?**

Different types of work have different service levels that we aim for, although some of these are dependent upon funding and some on the time of year. Sometimes schemes are delayed so they can be coordinated to take place in conjunction with other activities to minimise costs and disruption.

Public enquiries

We aim to respond to public enquiries within 20 working days.

General Highway Defects

Annex 1 provides a copy of the Highway Safety Inspection Matrix setting out the target levels of service for general highway defects. This is a complex area, but the target timescales are set out below:

	Response time
Accidents & emergencies	1 hour to make safe
Category 1 defects	24 hours
Category 2a defects	7 calendar days
Category 2b defects	28 calendar days
Category 2c	As and when funding is available.

During times of severe weather the speed of response may be lower due to a lack of resources.

Street Lighting

Under the recently introduced streetlighting contract the target level of service is to ensure that a minimum of 98% of streetlights are lit during the first 5 years of the contract (period over which the programme of street lighting replacement will be implemented). After the first 5 years of the contract this target then increases to 99%.

The following response times apply for street lighting faults identified:

- Emergency attendance - 2hrs
- Repair defective lighting apparatus - 6 days
- Replace column - 10 days
- Repair underground electrical faults - 30 days
- Repair illuminated sign or bollard - 2 days
- Replace illuminated sign or bollard - 10 days
- Repair SCC cables – 5 days to attend / 10 days to repair

Refreshing road markings

Our budget for refreshing lines is very limited with £523,000 to cover the whole county. This funds essential lining that is required for safety purposes, sometimes leaving a small amount for a proactive programme. When money is available work is 'batched' into a programme to maximize cost effectiveness. There are no service levels for this type of work.

Capital resurfacing schemes (including major maintenance, surface dressing, local structural repairs)

Each year the county council prepares a capital resurfacing programme. Local offices and Members submit roads that they think should be considered for planned maintenance, these then get assessed and added to the programme for prioritisation. The prioritisation takes into account a number of factors such as existing defects, condition data analysis, skid accidents and public or councillor interest and each scheme on the programme gets a score. The highest scoring schemes then get funded in the following financial year.

Integrated Transport Schemes

These schemes are funded entirely through Local Committee funds or Developer contributions. There is a long list of suggested schemes from councillors, residents and officers. Subject to the availability of funding, schemes are assessed against a number of factors and the Local Committee then takes the proposed programme of works for approval. Typically integrated transport schemes require a number of different stages to be undertaken (e.g. feasibility, consultation, detailed design, statutory processes (including advertising) and construction). As such, delivery of schemes will often be phased over more than one year. Sometimes schemes are approved by a local committee and not funded by the committee, which can make it seem as if schemes are taking a long time.

Parking Restriction Amendments

Parking schemes are also funded by Local Committees. Subject to the availability of resources, the County Council's parking team aims to carry out an annual review of parking restrictions in each Borough and District. Any proposed changes to parking restrictions resulting from the review then have to be funded and approved by the relevant Local Committee.

Before any amendments to parking restrictions can be implemented there are statutory legal processes that need to be completed (including advertising the intended changes and then considering any objections). This can delay delivery of the changes on the ground.

If details of levels of service for a specific activity not mentioned above are required then these can be provided on request

## **6. What is the forward schedule for items that need to be considered by the Local Committee?**

A "Forward Programme" report is currently taken to each Local Committee (Woking) meeting. This sets out the items that it is anticipated will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee. Reports are also taken at various times during the year to either get agreement for works programmes or to present details, for example LTP, Local Allocation, Cycle Woking or specific schemes. In addition to this, the Local Partnerships Team will explore whether an annual programme could be developed for all services.

### **3 OPTIONS**

3.1 Not applicable.

### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 Not applicable.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

### **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable.

### **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable.

### **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 This report should answer the key questions for councillors and that going forward Andrew Milne is able to keep the committee involved and informed.

8.2 The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree that:  
It will receive a 'Highways Update' at each meeting covering the latest information on Highways works and the budgetary impact.

### **9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 To keep the councillors informed.

<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Andrew Milne, Area Team Manager Runnymede, Woking and Surrey Heath
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	03456 009009
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:wah@surreycc.gov.uk">wah@surreycc.gov.uk</a>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Andrew Milne, Area Team Manager Runnymede, Woking and Surrey Heath
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	03456 009009
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:wah@surreycc.gov.uk">wah@surreycc.gov.uk</a>
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	<b>Highway Safety Inspection Standards and Procedures</b>

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