

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Considered: 7 February 2013

Item under consideration: NEW STRATEGY FOR HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

- The Select Committee was supportive of all recommendations proposed in the report, and expressed the view that they would bring about significant improvements to the Council's highway maintenance strategy, in particular a move from reactive maintenance to a more structured, planned policy.
- The Committee welcomed proposals to introduce a fourth SPN category and an increase to the rate of inspections.
- Officers stated that a move from a 24 hour to a five day response time for defect repair would allow greater flexibility within the programme and also encourage the use of permanent as opposed to temporary repairs. This would reduce costs, as it would eliminate the need for crews to revisit repair sites to carry-out follow-up work. Members were supportive of this proposal, though stressed the importance of ensuring that adequate criteria were in place to monitor progress.
- The view was expressed that training for staff would be crucial in order to achieve the goals set out in the programme. Officers responded that they would equip staff with the skills required.
- A further benefit of the new strategy was that moving to a five year programme would bring about more investment in new technology, as with previous one year plans there was not enough certainty for partners to justify investment in this area.
- Plans to focus on roads classified as 'red' were welcomed, however the need to ensure that other roads did not slip into this category over the course of the five year programme was emphasised by Members. Officers responded that an effective asset management programme would prevent this from happening.
- The Committee stressed that the new strategy would only be successful if effective communication processes were put in place, both within Surrey Highways and May Gurney. Officers responded that appropriate steps were being taken to ensure this.
- The Committee felt that implementation of the new strategy would be an evolutionary process, and that effective communication would be essential in order to manage public and Member expectations.

Recommendations:

That the recommendations set out in the New Strategy for Highways Maintenance report, be endorsed.

Steve Renshaw
Chairman Environment and Transport Select Committee

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