

**Communities, Environment &
Highways Select Committee
22 November 2019**



Cabinet Member for Highways Update

Purpose of report:

To provide an update of the Cabinet Member's areas of work.

Introduction:

1. Verge Maintenance & Weed Control

Since the July Council motion for management of highway verges, the highways team has been working to imbed the changes into future maintenance works. We work in partnership with the District and Boroughs for verge maintenance, with nine areas being managed by the local District / Borough. Discussions have been held with relevant Officers and they are aware of the Councils desire to improve wildlife habitats, where appropriate. Examples of wild flower verges can be found in a number of areas already and this is something many Districts / Boroughs are equally keen to promote and expand. The current contract for maintaining grass verges and weed control is due for renewal in April 2020. As part of the new contract specification, clear reference has been made for the use of innovative solutions for both verge maintenance and weed spraying. This will include leaving areas uncut for pollination and alternatives to glyphosate. Discussions have been held with specialist suppliers and a trial is being arranged to use "sprayed hot water" as a weed treatment process. The results of this, and other planned trials will help shape how the County council manages highway weeds in the future.

2. Customer Reporting Changes

Following on from the successful changes introduced earlier this year to pothole reporting, a similar approach is being introduced for other popular highway assets. At the end of September our website went live with an improved way to report pavement defects, trees, weeds and grass. Pictures on our website show residents the type of defect, making it easier for them to explain their concern and better understand the priority we will give it. Issues can be marked on a map and should they wish, and customers can upload a photo. The team are now working on drainage and flooding with those planned changes set to go live later this month. Feedback so far is positive, with users particularly liking the photo examples.

3. Highway Maintenance Programme Update

We are now six months into the 2019/20 Highway Maintenance programme of works, Horizon 2, and construction schemes are progressing well.

4. Winter Service Update

The Cold Weather Plan has been updated and is now available on the website.

5. Materials Innovation Trials Update

A number of trials of innovative materials have taken place recently.

Recommendations:

1. The Select Committee reviews the information contained in this update and offers feedback to the Cabinet Member.
2. The Select Committee considers where it may add value to the Cabinet Member's work through scrutiny and scopes topics as required.

Next steps:

The Cabinet Member is to return with a further update at the next formal meeting of the Committee.

Report contact: Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways

Annex 1: Cabinet Member Update to Full Council – 8 October 2019