

ANNEX 1 – CABINET MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNTY COUNCIL

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PORTFOLIO: Highways

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 2019 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 also be marked on a map, and customers can upload a photo. Feedback so far is positive, with users particularly liking the photo examples.

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. So far we have completed over 85 miles of treatments on roads and over 10 miles of treatments on pavements as well as a number of schemes on structures, drainage, traffic signals and safety barriers. We still have around another 10 miles of road schemes to deliver before the end of March 2020 and around 12 miles of work on pavements as well as a number of schemes on the other highway assets. We have also completed 39 schemes under the Severe Weather Recovery programme and have protected the investments made from last year's Severe Weather Recovery Programme through surface dressing 50 of last year's schemes. As part of our "capital safety defect" programme, we have repaired or prevented nearly 17,000 potholes and we have also continued working on LEP funded "resilience" schemes which have included reconstructing significant areas of the A23 and extensive drainage works and carriageway reconstruction on the A31. The website is currently being updated to show progress on the individual schemes within the Horizon 2 and Severe Weather programmes.

Materials innovation trials update: A number of trials of innovative materials have taken place recently. At the end of August we trialled a process called "Reclamite" which involves applying an emulsion to the road surface which penetrates into the material and can extend the road life for 5-7 years by replacing some the elements lost over time. The emulsion takes around three months to fully penetrate into the asphalt, therefore we should have some meaningful test data by the end of the year. We also carried out a trial using "hydroblasting" which uses high pressure water to remove excess bitumen from the road surface restoring the skid resistance of the road. We tested the site for skid resistance before and after treatment and are awaiting the results. Later this month we will be trialling a "warm mix asphalt", as opposed to hot mix asphalt which is usually used. Instead this material is mixed at a reduced temperature, which not only provides environmental advantages but also means the bitumen within the asphalt should oxidise less during the mixing process at the plant, meaning we should get a greater life out of the material. During September 2017 we carried out a trial using an "asphalt preservation system". This process seals the road surface and helps slow down the rate of oxidisation of the bitumen which in turn should increase the road's life. We already have 12 months of data for this trial and are just about to conduct the 24 month testing. So far the results for this trial look promising, compared to the control sections the treated sections are oxidising at a slower rate. Finally, a trial was undertaken in conjunction with a utility company using plastics to replace part of the bitumen content of the asphalt. Phase 1 of the trial involved two footway reinstatements and we are currently looking at dates for the next phase of the trial which will be on a road reinstatement.

Verge maintenance and weed control: Since the July 2019 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 Council's desire to improve wildlife habitats, where appropriate. 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.