

SECTION B – Potholes

B1: A - Has your authority aligned its maintenance programme to the Governments highways maintenance funding years?

- Coventry City Council (CCC) has an established forward programme of identified sites which are both treatment and year specific and covers a five year period. The actual delivery of schemes is aligned to and directly linked to the amount of funding settlement in any given year. (Please see table below for an extract of CCC forward programme showing recommended treatment year assessment.)

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B1: B – Has your authority adopted the principle that ‘prevention is better than cure’ in determining the balance between structural, preventative and reactive maintenance activities in order to improve the resilience of the highway network and to minimise the occurrence of potholes in the future?

In 2008 Coventry City Council produced its first version of its Highways Asset Management plan, and from this time, work has been on-going to ensure that treatment programmes are targeted correctly at the sections of the network, which are at the appropriate stage in their lifecycles for that treatment. It has been of paramount importance to Highways Officers at Coventry City Council, to stem the tide of wasteful reactive maintenance repairs, by introducing significant programmes of preventative maintenance treatments, even where this has not been politically popular.

A balanced programme has been delivered for four years, consisting of

- Carriageway Plane and Resurface – for roads in High Amber or Red condition
- Carriageway Retread / Recycling – for unclassified roads in High Amber or Red condition
- Carriageway Micro asphalt and Surface Dressing – for roads in high green, low amber to delay further deterioration
- Carriageway Plane and Patch – for roads with localised areas of deterioration where use of significant patches can bring the road back to a serviceable level with no further treatment. **NB** This process has the advantage of also preparing the road for future surface treatment.
- General Reactive Maintenance – for dealing with defects which meet Coventry City Council’s intervention level and works are required to keep the network safe in line with the Councils duty under Section 41 of the HA 1980.

Coventry City Council has invested 20 million of its own corporate capital into the road network, and has a strong commitment to ensure reactive revenue spend is reduced to the minimal levels achievable. It makes no sense to this Authority to return on a constant basis to a given road to constantly repair potholes. Roads which have reached this point in their lifecycle will either be subject to the appropriate end of life treatment if the whole section is failing, or structurally patched and a preventative treatment applied if the defects do not affect the whole of street.

In the years since the introduction of the HAMP and Coventry City Councils’ Capital Investment programme, we have seen an improvement in our indicators on both Classified and Unclassified networks and this is further evidenced, by a dramatic fall in complaints and enquiries through our contact centre.

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B1: C – Has your authority ensured that appropriate competencies have been made available to make the right choices when designing and specifying techniques and materials for the maintenance and repair of highways?

- Coventry City Council is working in collaboration with Warwickshire County Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to deliver high quality highway maintenance. As part of this collaboration all parties are constantly looking at new and innovative ways to deliver both capital work and reactive maintenance. We are currently working on a trial which will involve a number of different reactive treatments being trialled within one road closure.
- The West Midlands Alliance is another arena which gives Coventry an opportunity to share the experiences of other authorities in their delivery of highways maintenance techniques and innovations, one of the key areas this group is progressing is low temperature asphalts. The West Midlands Highway Alliance also has a framework for highways and engineering consultancy services across the region, this allows Coventry to utilise and share external experience and advice across a number of highway maintenance disciplines.
- Coventry City Council is also part of the Highways Infrastructure Managers Group (HIMG) and plays an active role in the Technology sub group. In addition to the collaboration with our neighbouring authorities we also make sure our engineers attend training courses and seminars to enable them to design and specify the right materials for our network.

B1: D – Does your authority co-ordinate with other parties working on the highway short and long term programmes of work activities for up to four years in advance?

- In 2011 Coventry City Council formed a new joint partnership working arrangement with its neighbouring authority Warwickshire County Council. Specific highway maintenance activities are delivered via Warwickshire's Highway Maintenance Contract with Balfour Beatty. As well as providing an efficient and value for money service it facilitates a co-ordinated delivery of activities on the highway network both annually and for the duration of the contract. (Currently 5 years until 2015/16)
- As part of our partnership with Warwickshire County Council they facilitate a quarterly street works co-ordination meeting. This meeting brings together the key stakeholders who are and will be carrying out work on the highway networks across both authorities. By the regular submission, collation and comparison of all the different planned programmes of work, opportunities can be identified and acted upon. Examples and benefits of this include co-ordinated and appropriately timed delivery of work to limit trench reinstatements, shared traffic management opportunities to keep both congestion time down and economy

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of set up costs. Early scheme identification to help jointly manage road user expectations and keep them informed.

- Internally, monthly coordination meetings are held, bringing together all the highway groups to share information regarding both upcoming and on-going scheme delivery to allow for a coordinated approach. The same benefits are obtained as previously mentioned above but can be even more localised to include authority specific services e.g. street cleansing and street lighting maintenance.

Please see the link below to both Coventry City Councils appropriate street work activities web page:

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/yourcity>

B1: E – Has your authority considered the guidance provided in the ADEPT report Potholes and Repair Techniques for Local Highways and adopted as appropriate to your local circumstances?

- We have worked towards adoption of the recommendations of the 2012 report in many ways to ensure that we provide a better cure:-
- We have a team of seven Street Inspectors who have a blend of training and experience. They ensure that reactive maintenance is ordered to the Councils intervention strategy and that roads that are approaching the latter stages of their lifecycles are put onto our forward programme.
- We have a team of well informed and trained engineers, who manage programmes of planned maintenance. They provide guidance and support to the Inspectors to ensure that roads that are approaching end of life receive minimum work until a whole of street treatment can be carried out.
- We have strong partnership links with neighbouring LA's, particularly Warwickshire CC and the other six West Midlands urban LA's. This joint working allows us to be confident that we are working to the most efficient standards for delivery and technical innovation across both operational and professional services.
- As a result of our work in Asset Management and subsequent guidance documents, such as the ADEPT report, we have reviewed and revised our reactive maintenance procedures.
- We undertook a LEAN review within our Street Inspectors and Operational areas, which has resulted in operational efficiencies for our reactive maintenance delivery.
- Over the last seven years we have employed asset management principles in Coventry, using our Pavement Management System to drive forward programmes, assist with lifecycle planning, financial spend projection and valuation.

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- We understand the benefits of effective communications and regularly meet with colleagues in Corporate Comms and Coventry's Customer Services Contact Centre to review how we interact and feedback to the public. We regularly update our website and keep our members informed of Highway related decisions.
- Strategic planning is another area where we co-ordinate closely with utilities and other key stakeholders, including colleagues in Major Projects to ensure minimum disruption to the network and vitally, that wherever possible treated roads are not soon after impaired by other works.

B1: F – Has your authority developed a detailed highway inspection manual and have put appropriate training in place for your Highway Inspectors?

- Coventry City Council's highway inspection team work to and follow the inspection regime and intervention criteria as laid down in Coventry City Council's Highways Maintenance Strategy. We have adopted and follow national best practice as advised in the Code of Practice for Well Maintained Highways.
- All members of the Inspection team hold a valid Street works qualification register supervisors card and have also attended recognised specialist "Highways Inspectors" training.

Please see link to Appendix K Highway Maintenance Strategy:

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/785/highway_plans

B1: G – Does your authority use technology and systems for the effective identification and management of potholes?

- Customer contacts, safety inspections, defect reporting and ordering are carried out by the highway inspection team via specific software on hand held portable devices in the field. This happens in 'real time' with regular data transfer from both our customer relation management system (CRM) for received customer pothole reports. Defect rectification ordering (including potholes) with electronic transfer directly to the delivery team for 'fixing'. To complete the 'circle' our delivery team report back electronically via hand held devices when a defect is fixed.

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B1: H – Does your authority have a public communications process in place that provides clarity and transparency in the policy and approach to repairing potholes?

- Coventry City Council has published on its website information which provides both dimensional definitions and service time aims in response to reported potholes. This provides clarity in our approach to pothole repairs. Please see the links below:

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/557/road_maintenance

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/537/pavements-maintenance>

B1: I – Does your authority monitor public satisfaction with road, footway and cycleway condition and report annually through the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey or their own surveys?

- Coventry City Council carries out both an annual household survey and a six monthly telephone survey to gauge customer satisfaction and response to its services. The Council monitors, reports and publishes statistics about its performance across all service areas in a given year. The following link shows information regarding highways maintenance performance for the year 2012/13 including customer survey results, information for the year 2013/14 has yet to be published.

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/200009/performance/1842/council_plan_end_of_year_performance_report_201213/11

B1: J – Does your authority adopt permanent repairs as the first choice when repairing potholes?

This is best demonstrated by an excerpt from our Reactive Maintenance Strategy:-

- Where the street is generally in good condition a permanent patch with saw cut sides is the right approach. Even if it is considered that the surface course is showing signs of wear and that a surface treatment is likely in the next year or two, the patch must be of a permanent nature. The better quality of the patch, the less preparation will be required for any future surface treatment.

We have been very careful to adopt permanent repairs as the way forward, since the first bad winter of 2009/10. We recognise the poor value to the travelling public of multiple visits to repair potholes, and this is supported at a very senior level within the Authority.

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B1: K – Has your authority adopted dimensional definitions for potholes based on best practice as part of its maintenance policy?

The following link shows the Coventry City Council's approach to dealing with potholes and the dimensional definitions adopted.

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/557/road_maintenance

B2 – Does your authority adopt any innovative methods to help repair potholes?

- Coventry City Council has 4 number dedicated maintenance gangs which cover specific geographical areas across the City. Following 'lean' principles they attend to potholes and defects by providing a first fix permanent reinstatement. The exceptions to this method would include: safety risk assessed emergency repairs particularly where traffic volumes preclude providing a permanent reinstatement on the first visit. Where identified and planned maintenance is due in the very near future and therefore permanent patches would not be required. In cases like this we would use a pre-mixed Permanent Road Repair material suitable for all classes of road and ideal for the temporary and permanent repair of potholes in locations where duration of Traffic Management is at a premium.
- Going forward Coventry City Council is arranging trials of several innovative methods of pothole repair, these include Nuphalt Pothole Buster, Rhinopatch, and High Velocity Patching to establish and consider their suitability.

B3 – Does your authority use reporting tools to identify potholes in your local area including:

CTC Fill that hole – Yes

Councils own web reporting –Yes

Other – Yes

Members of the public and customers can contact and report potholes to Coventry City Council via several different methods including by email, in person and by phone. There is a specific form that can be used for reporting potholes:

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/pothole_report

When reporting potholes online the following link on our web site explains to customers how they can do this.

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/557/roads-maintenance/374/potholes/4>

The Council also has its own dedicated pages on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube, which are monitored throughout the day for reports, which are then passed on to the appropriate section for action.

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B4 – Does your authority regularly consult and seek feedback on its highways maintenance regime, including potholes, with key stakeholders?

Local Members(s) of Parliament – Yes

District, Borough and Parish Councils – Yes

Local Residents (Including neighbourhood Forums) – Yes

Business Community – Yes

Emergency Services – Yes

- Coventry City Council has well-established local neighbourhood forum groups which are attended by all the fore mentioned key stakeholders. These forum groups allow for two way communication about the Councils services including its highway maintenance regimes. Local members of parliament are also kept informed of service standards and maintenance regimes via specific contact around constituent issues.

Please see the link below:

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/wardforums>

B6 – Please explain how you deliver your duty under NRSWA to ‘co-ordinate the execution of works of all kinds’, including for example permit schemes, noticing, and co-ordination meetings?

- Since 2011 Coventry City Council has operated a shared NRSWA service with its neighbouring authority Warwickshire County Council. As a shared back office function this not only gives economy of scale but provides a robust well supported regime to both noticing of work and co-ordination.
- As part of our partnership with Warwickshire County Council they facilitate a quarterly street works co-ordination meeting. This meeting brings together the key stakeholders who are and will be carrying out work on the highway networks across both authorities. By the regular submission, collation and comparison of all the different planned programmes of work, opportunities can be identified and acted upon. Examples and benefits of this include co-ordinated and appropriately timed delivery of work to limit trench reinstatements, shared traffic management opportunities to keep both congestion time down and economy of set up costs. Early scheme identification to help jointly manage road user expectations and keep them informed.

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- Internally monthly co-ordination meetings are held bringing together all the highway groups to share information regarding both upcoming and on-going scheme delivery to allow for a coordinated approach. The same benefits are obtained as previously mentioned above but can be even more localised to include authority specific services e.g. street cleansing and street lighting maintenance.
- Going forward a permit scheme is currently out for consultation with a planned implementation date of April 2015. See below for link.

Please see the link below to both Coventry City Councils appropriate street work activities web page:

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/yourcity>

Please see below for link to current consultation regarding the introduction of a permit scheme:

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=85>

B7. What actions does your authority take to ensure road repairs undertaken by other parties (such as utilities companies) meet the standards in the specification?

Inspection regime – yes

Coring programme – No

Performance bench marking – No

Meetings – Yes

Other - Yes

- Coventry City Council monitors and inspects work carried out by third parties on its highway network as follows:
- Sample Inspections - This involves inspecting a specific % of works at various stages of completion to ensure the reinstatement complies with the guarantee periods. This enables us to monitor the level of compliance with the standards in the Codes of Practice.
- Defect Inspections - This is the procedure for dealing with individual reinstatements that do not comply with the specification. This allows for a joint site meeting and inspections by the authority and the utility before, during and after any remedial works are undertaken.
- Investigatory Inspections - An inspection of a site by the authority to verify a defect or inadequacy reported by a member of the public or the police.

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- Project specific – In cases of large projects being carried out over a significant amount of time then individual meetings are held both prior to and during project delivery which assist and compliment the standard inspections.

SECTION C – Asset Management

Has your authority got an up to date asset management policy and strategy?

The asset management policy and strategy can be found at

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/785/highway_plans

N.B. The strategy is currently under review in line with Asset Management Strategy Guidance published in May 2013.

Does your authority communicate relevant information associated with asset management through engagement with your relevant stakeholders when you set requirements, make decisions and report performance?

- Engagement, consultation, communication and feedback are carried out and sought at all levels with regard to the asset management process. This takes place via regular meetings with elected members including the highways portfolio holder, Directorate level officers, local ward Councillor's, service users and staff. Performance is monitored, reported and published both to members and officers as well as on the Councils web site. See link below:

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/200009/performance/1184/council_plan_performance_report

Does your authority have an asset management register?

- Coventry City Councils recorded highway assets are held in Confirm which is a modular software package which is used for the maintenance and management of our highway infrastructure assets.

Does your authority follow lifecycle planning principles which are used to review the level of funding and which will help support investment decisions including long term investment in your assets?.

- Coventry City Council has, as part of the wider West Midlands group of authorities, developed comprehensive life cycle plans for its classified road networks. This project has been jointly undertaken by the West Midlands local authorities and findings have been presented to the DfT. The modelling is carried out at section level and following research, data mining & extraction and assessment, a robust plan of interim and end of life treatments is produced to show when, what and where treatment is required to maintain a steady state. A monetary cost is also applied to give a true cost of restoring the network to good condition and there after the subsequent cost to maintain at a steady state.

SECTION D – Efficiencies

D1 - Is your authority actively engaged with securing efficiencies for highways maintenance?

- A 'Lean Working' review has been undertaken and implemented in order to ensure pothole repairs are 'right first time'. This in turn is leading to savings negating the need to carry out multiple costly repairs. Part of the review has implemented improved communication between inspectors and crews, introducing cleaner information in descriptions, with crews working in fixed geographic areas. The result has been the average number of jobs crews can complete per day has increased from 4.41 to 5.43. To have achieved this increase, working in the old way, an additional 0.93 of a gang would have to be hired. Based on 254 working days per year this increase creates a benefit to the organisation.

D2: Is your authority exploring or has it already joined with neighbouring local highway authorities or a Highways Maintenance Alliance to achieve economies of scale?

- Coventry City Council is constantly exploring opportunities of economies of scale in its approach to procurement with other authorities. This has resulted in joint working with, for example, Warwickshire County Council, who we are in partnership with (along with Solihull MB) on the Highways Maintenance Contract and the Professional Services Contract. This joint working has also resulted in joint shared services within Planning and Inspections & NRSWA back office functions.
- We also attend the West Midlands Collaborative Working Group (CWG) set up specifically to explore the savings that can be made by joint working. This has been closely linked (and shares members with) the HMEP (Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme) – which again Coventry has been involved with and benefitted from (in particular a 'Lean Review' of how we monitor and manage pothole data).
- Coventry also attends the Highways Infrastructure Managers Group (HIMG) Winter Maintenance sub-group which has assisted us in responding to the new Appendix H (Well-Maintained Highways).

D3. Is your authority sharing its efficiency experience and/or case studies with other local highway authorities via the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme or other good practice networks?

- Coventry City Council works collaboratively with its 7 neighbouring West Midlands local authorities through Integrated Transport Authority governance arrangements. The Highway Infrastructure Managers Group (HIMG) meets on a regular basis to share information, knowledge and makes performance comparisons to help drive service improvements.
- Coventry City Council has membership of CIPFA Highway Asset Management Planning Network group. Attendance at the regular workshops allows for information sharing including latest central government news and the ability to share views and knowledge with a group of asset management practitioners.

SECTION E – Other

E1 – Please provide details on which of the following good practice activities your authority is undertaking for its highways management activities.

- Coventry City Council has invested at least £5m in highway capital maintenance, in each of the last four financial years, carrying out a large number of schemes to improve the highway network across the City. This investment has resulted in a marked improvement in the resilience of the highway network. (Invest to save ethos)
- In addition a 5 year Street Lighting PFI is currently in progress having started in 2010, which will involve:
 - The installation of 28,700 new lighting columns, the replacement of 5,400 illuminated traffic signs and bollards throughout the city.
 - Reduced energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, light targeted downwards to reduce light pollution.
 - Upgrading and adapting existing lighting columns that have been installed in the last five years which are compliant and will not be replaced as part of the PFI project.
 - The provision of state of the art technology, which will enable the council to have a flexible approach to street lighting and to be proactive with the early detection of defective lighting.
- Cross boundary collaboration is well established with neighbouring authorities. This provides delivery, direct financial savings and economies of scale across a wide range of services. These include:
 - Programmed structural and preventative Highway maintenance delivery activities.
 - Provision and delivery of all highway network condition surveys (Scanner, DVI/CVI, griptester etc.)
 - Back office support and delivery of our statutory NRSWA function.
 - The West Midlands Highways Alliance – Professional Services Framework provides a broad range of municipal highways and engineering consultancy services through secondments or outsourced packages of work.

SECTION E – Other - Continued

E2 – Do you consider your authority to be an exemplar authority in tackling potholes and undertaking highway maintenance?

In April 2010, Coventry reorganised its technical function under a new division Planning, Transportation and Highways. Since that time, and with a new management team, we have pressed hard to employ Asset Management techniques in order to ensure better delivery and value for money for our customers. Vital improvements made in this time as a result of our right first time and planned preventative maintenance programmes include:-

- A reduction in the number of enquires through our contact centre from 500 per week to an average of 100 per week.
- A 'Lean Working' review has been undertaken and implemented in order to ensure pothole repairs are 'right first time'.
- A reduction in our backlog of reactive maintenance work from 2000 jobs to 500 jobs.
- Delivery of planned maintenance treatments to over 500km of the 860km network.
- Delivery of improvements to over 44km of footways and over 11 km of cycle ways in order to encourage cycling and walking, which will over time reduce impact on the road network.
- Introduction of mobile working for Inspection service and Operational crews to streamline ordering and reactive delivery.
- Introduction of a weekly 'dashboard ' of data for management, in order to constantly monitor the condition and trends on the network, leading to improvements and efficient delivery of reactive maintenance.