

Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Road Surfaces

Review	How is the road repair work prioritised by the Highways Authority and what is being done to address the poor state of Ipswich's roads.
Review Brief	Residents are frustrated with the poor state of many of the town's roads. In light of extra funding being made available for road repairs in the county, public debate would be useful as would a review of how resources for roads were prioritised.
Aims/ Objectives of Review	To provide an opportunity to request revisions to the County Council's road maintenance plans to reflect resident's concerns and provide public scrutiny of what priority Ipswich's busiest roads have, compared to the overall maintenance programme.
Councillors	Colin Smart (Chair) Richard Pope Jan Parry Sandra Gage Liz Harsant Stephen Ion
Officers	Michael Newsham (Integrated Traffic Officer)
Timescales	Meeting – 15 August 2018 – scoping meeting Meeting – 5 September 2018 – Representatives of road user groups attended Meeting 11 October 2018 – Cycle Ipswich representative attended, SCC Cllr Mary Evans (Cabinet Member for Highways) and John Clements (SCC Head of Highways)
Meeting 15 August 2018	
Attendees: Cllr C Smart (Chair) Cllr Pope Cllr Parry Cllr Harsant Cllr Ion Cllr Gage Michael Newsham Trisha Sutton (Minutes)	

<p>1. With Suffolk County Council investing £21m over 3 years to repair roads in Suffolk and with Ipswich being the largest town in Suffolk, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were concerned whether Ipswich would receive a fair allocation of the funding for road repairs.</p> <p>2. Primarily the concerns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of the criteria and the rationale used to classify roads • the classification not taking usage into account (many low classified roads had high volumes of traffic) • the classifications being available for IBC Cllrs to view • when residential road classifications were being downgraded (even though many were bus routes) • bus route surfaces on residential roads wearing away due to continual stop/start abrasion and the use of grit • were the type, amount and weight of vehicles taken into account during classification e.g. HGV's delivering to shops or double decker buses to schools • road closures being better managed (increased liaison with utility firms) • the programme of planned maintenance being available to IBC Cllrs • concern whether strategic routes in Suffolk received more funding when local arterial routes required reactive maintenance • whether roads, especially cycle routes, were considered in terms of the severity of potholes for cycle users • how much of the funding would be spent in Ipswich compared to the whole of Suffolk • whether the planned maintenance amounts were available (by ward) • historically, whether the volume of traffic on roads was continually reassessed • were comparisons made with other similar sized authorities (benchmarking) • whether defect inspection took consideration of the needs of vulnerable people e.g. cyclists or wheelchair users • the resurfacing of concrete roads across Ipswich <p>3. It was suggested that the Cabinet Member for Highways at Suffolk County Council and appropriate Highways Officers be invited to a future Task & Finish Group. Prior to this the criteria and classifications of roads in Ipswich be requested and representatives of the following groups be invited to put forward their views on the state of the roads in Ipswich:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxi Services • Ipswich Buses & First Bus Group • The Chamber of Commerce • Disabled groups • Cycling groups 	<p>SC Cllr Evans / Cllr Harsant</p> <p>M Newsham /SCC</p> <p>Group Reps / TS</p>
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Meeting 5 September 2018

Attendees:

Cllr C Smart (Chair)

Cllr Pope

Cllr Parry

Cllr Harsant

Cllr Gage

Andy Cook, Ipswich Buses

Nick Burfield, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Paul Martin, First Eastern Buses

Pat Ramsey, Disabled Advice Bureau

Adam Barker, Taxi Drivers Association

Michael Newsham

Trisha Sutton (Minutes)

1. The external representatives were able to offer a view from a wider perspective and although agreeing that the state of the roads were perilous to cyclists, they requested that the roads and pavements were better maintained and had more minimal disruptions e.g. roadworks. Their overall impression was that rural roads had suffered more in respect of the failure to be repaired however, roads in Ipswich which required repair affected a greater volume of traffic and Ipswich as the county town of Suffolk required better management of this.
2. When potholes were at road junctions, visually impaired pedestrians experienced difficulty stepping off and crossing the roads, also uneven pavements caused concern for wheelchair users or for those with decreased mobility.
3. Repeated utility works along the same stretches of roads and pavements resulted in patchwork hatches forming and this repeated digging should be taken into consideration when planned maintenance occurred. Councillors stated that they received no notice of when any works were going to commence and the <https://www.roadworks.org> website was their only way of providing residents with updates.
4. Although recently there had been some resurfacing and maintenance work undertaken, issues with the design and policing of road junction layouts caused most concern especially for the bus companies. In particular, the 'cobbled stone' speed ramp sets were problematic when the concrete around the bricks wore away, the stone bricks became trapped between the double bus wheels at the back and were then projected out at speed which also destroyed the tyres and affected the quality of a ride for bus passengers. It was considered that speed bump design considered cars only and the movement of larger vehicles had not been taken into account. Speed tables

<p>were the preferred design for reducing traffic speeds as these created less wear and tear on buses.</p> <p>5. Mr Martin confirmed that he had been involved with the Norfolk Area Transportation Strategy Board (NATS) and had offered advice from an operator point of view. Mr Barker said that as a taxi driver you learnt where to avoid the pot holes, his issue was the length of time taken to repair them. When temporary traffic lights were installed for an extended period of time yet the actual repair only took a few hours. Taxi drivers felt obliged to stop the meter running when in traffic queues as it was not the fault of the customer, yet it reflected on the taxi driver's job times.</p> <p>6. Discussion took place about the exits and entrances at the station forecourt for both taxis and buses and in relation to the speed bumps at this location. It was confirmed that bus companies and taxi drivers had not been consulted prior to these works and concern about this was expressed by Councillors.</p> <p>7. It was reported that there had been an increase in vehicle maintenance for tyre and suspension repairs among all taxi drivers which was further affected by being queued in traffic, resulting in lost revenue. However, the vehicle maintenance of buses had not increased as bus drivers slowed down on problem routes to avoid injury to passengers or damage to vehicles.</p> <p>8. Discussion also took place about the heavy duty tyres required for buses, the cost of replacing windows broken by overhanging tree branches and leaves and detritus causing flooded roads.</p> <p>Actions:-</p> <p>1. Councillors requested updates from Suffolk County Council when roadworks were planned in their wards.</p> <p>2. As agreed at the last meeting, the Cabinet Member for Highways at Suffolk County Council and appropriate Highways Officers would be invited to a future Task & Finish Group. Prior to this the criteria and classifications of roads in Ipswich would be requested.</p>	<p>SC Cllr Evans / Cllr Harsant</p> <p>M Newsham /SCC</p>
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Meeting 11 October 2018

Attendees:

Cllr C Smart (Chair)

Cllr Pope

Cllr Parry

Cllr Harsant

Cllr Ion

Cllr Gage

Shaun McDonald (Cycle Ipswich)

Cllr Mary Evans (SCC Cabinet Member for Highways)

John Clements (SCC Head of Infrastructure Management, Highways)

Michael Newsham (IBC Integrated Transport Officer)

Trisha Sutton (Minutes)

1. Mr Shaun MacDonald of Cycle Ipswich reported that the main problems for cyclists were tree roots in paths and roads causing accidents when trying to avoid them, overhanging vegetation and drainage issues e.g. standing water at the edge of roads. Cyclists were not considered when roadworks occurred as often cyclists would be advised to dismount and use the footway. The difference between a cycle lane width on a carriageway of 1.8 metres (denoted by a solid white line) and an advisory cycle lane width on a footway of 2 metres (denoted by a dotted line) was discussed and Mr MacDonald agreed that no marking would be preferred to a marking that was too narrow to ride along, especially if the cycle was a trike and wider than a bicycle.
2. Councillor Gage suggested that the Highways Authority should consider wider users rather than the prioritisation of repairs be predominantly for vehicle users. Different road surfaces were discussed and it was agreed that loose stones, especially in kerbs or on corners were dangerous but cobbles or cobbled sets, if maintained well, were acceptable. Speed bumps with sharp raised edges often meant that bicycle or trike users avoided certain roads as these proved uncomfortable even if it meant taking an alternative route amongst heavier traffic.
3. Mr MacDonald reported that his cycling group (30 members) had not recently been consulted about any planned maintenance or scheme to join up cycle paths. He had offered input during the design stage of the Ipswich Station scheme but this had not been taken up. Dips in roads (as opposed to potholes) were discussed especially where water pooled or on kerb lines. These were often caused by buses stopping and starting and

were considered as dangerous.

4. As requested a list showing the categorisation of each road in Ipswich had been supplied. The following questions had been submitted to Suffolk County Council prior to the meeting and these answers were given:-

- How does SCC allocate its highway maintenance funding across the county? ***Annually condition surveys took place on a 4 year rolling programme, of the 24,000 sections of roadways across the County, either by a machine survey or minor roads with physical restriction by visual inspection.***
- How much was the total for 2018/19? ***£30,685,000.***
- How much of this was for Ipswich? ***£3,138,334 capital spend and £2,386,000 revenue spend. This included £98,000 paid to IBC for its Service Level Agreement to cut highways verges.***
- SCC classified all roads into different categories (category 1, category 2 etc.). How does it determine which roads are in which categories? ***The categories are part of the Code of Practice which had not changed. Roads in Ipswich were classed from Road Type U2 (Strategic 'A' roads) to Road Type U4b (Minor rural roads and cul-de-sacs). The Code of Practice determined the frequency of inspections, taking into account the speed and volume of traffic.***
- Are these ever reviewed? ***Although this may be required it would be a monumental task.***
- Are bus routes a considered factor? ***The Highways Officer said that the type of materials used on bus gates (speed ramps) was important and future investment going forward needed durable but affordable management. It was agreed that consultation and improved engagement with bus companies about changes to road junctions (especially at the roadworks at St Augustine's roundabout to ensure ease of movement) and where overhanging branches were evident, would be considered. The enforcement and maintenance of yellow lines was also important.***
- How are the particular needs of cyclists taken into consideration? ***The Highways Officer confirmed***

that mandatory cycle lanes would be reviewed after a recent trial.

- Does SCC allow for surfacing defects (e.g. potholes) in the part of the carriageway most likely to be used by cyclists given a higher priority for repair? If not why not? ***As above.***
- How does SCC liaise with statutory undertakers to co-ordinate their maintenance works with SCC's maintenance works? ***The Highways Officer said that engagement might be possible in the future but this was not a small scale exercise.***
- Does SCC have a specific plan to address maintenance issues on concrete roads in Ipswich? ***A number of options for concrete roads were detailed, from making them safe (at no additional cost) to repair existing joints at £1m cost, repair and overlay at £5m, to complete removal of the overlay, joint repair and the resurfacing of the asphalt surface (at a £10m cost). This area of road repair was not being considered at this time as the concrete roads were not in an unstable condition.***
- What is the current process where workers were repairing potholes and they noticed other similar defects in the vicinity, do they have the ability to repair those as well without referral back to SCC? ***It was confirmed that in relation to highway maintenance, a reactive service to the highest category of classification (from surveys or customers reports) would be carried out relative to the risk. Suffolk County Councillor Evans said that the Highways and Improvement Innovation Board had considered the way the road gangs worked from start to finish and the stages of intervention had been reduced from 5 to 3 meaning that smaller defects of 200mm across would be mended. A trial was due to start to increase the productivity of gangs by ensuring that more time was spent at sites, more first time fixes occurred resulting in more cost effective repairs and the reduction in the possibility of a pothole spreading.***

5. Discussion took place about the technology and data used to map road deterioration and the risk of the programme of repairs not being completed by the end of the financial year. It was confirmed that Ipswich had 6% of the roads in the County and a road marking project had started in

Ipswich this week.

6. Councillor Parry asked why the only criteria used to allocate a road a category was speed, when it was clear many roads in Ipswich, though classed as local, had high volume of traffic using them that did not appear to be considered.
7. Councillor Gage expressed concern that if the categories allocated to Ipswich roads had not been reviewed since 2014 as suggested, then the maintenance of roads throughout the town that had seen significant traffic growth due to recent economic growth and housing development had not been taken into account and whether this had resulted in an increase in the amount of deterioration. From the list of categorised Ipswich roads provided, only the main roads into town were classed as U2, a few were U3b but the majority were U4a and U4b.
8. In the list of planned maintenance works for Ipswich available on the County Council website, 65 schemes were listed with 27 of them yet to be programmed. Councillor Gage queried the likelihood that this year's planned maintenance projects would be completed by the end of March 2019. It was agreed that this would be checked and verified.
9. Councillor Colin Smart questioned the County Council's stance on concrete roads as they were well used by Ipswich residents who regularly travelled these areas, by the bus companies and taxi firms who used them and he requested that a plan of action be funded to renew these roads, as they were currently beyond their intended life span.
10. In relation to community involvement, discussion took place about the Suffolk County Council website based reporting tool and Suffolk County Councillor Evans invited representatives of the Area Committees to visit the depot areas with more specific questions. Councillors C Smart and Gage asked that the County Council also consider having SCC representatives attend the Area Committees, to inform residents of the planned road maintenance for each new year and for the opportunity to hear residents' feedback.

Actions for the Committee to consider:

- That the road classifications be reviewed independently as vehicle movements in the growing economic area of Ipswich had increased significantly.
- That the local knowledge of the members of each Area Committee be considered, in line with that of the Town and Parish Councils.
- A presentation be given at each Area Committee about the planned year's maintenance for 2019/20 in line with the planned programme of works.
- That a plan be considered to review and prioritise the repair of concrete roads in relation to resident's concerns about noise and deterioration.
- That increased consultation with cyclists, the disabled and bus and taxi groups take place with regard to changes at road junctions.
- That there be reassurance that the publicised programme of maintenance for the roads listed in Ipswich would be completed by the end of the financial year.