

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee - 7
November 2018

Subject: Highways Reactive Maintenance Programme

Report of: Director of Operations (Highways)

Summary

This paper seeks to inform the Scrutiny Committee on the Highways Reactive Maintenance Programme. The report includes information on:

Pothole repairs; and
Drainage and gullies clearance and repairs.

Recommendations

The Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee is asked to note:

- The ongoing service improvement work around clearing a historic surplus of required defect repairs and drainage problems and embedding continual service improvement.
 - The work undertaken to comply with the new revised highway maintenance code of practice.
-

Wards Affected: All

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	A well maintained highway infrastructure will encourage business growth, creating jobs and opportunities
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Highways Investment Strategy will provide opportunities for the development of skills.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The improvements to the roads in the Community Network will contribute towards this strategy.

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Safe and improved highways will encourage people to visit, live and work within the City.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The maintenance of highways is a major contribution to this strategy.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The asset management principles outlined in the report will ensure that the most cost effective maintenance treatments are used at the right time to maximise the life of the asset. Over the longer term, this will help to reduce the pressure on our revenue budgets required for pothole and drainage repairs.

Adopting a risk-based approach will allow the Council to establish and implement more appropriate levels of service, which will allow better use of resources and may generate efficiency savings.

Financial Consequences – Capital

In 2016/17 the Department for Transport (DfT) changed the way that councils are awarded capital funding for highway maintenance. In previous years, all the available capital maintenance funding was allocated to local authorities based on a formula taking into account road length, traffic volumes etc. Available funding has now been split into three streams:

- Formula allocation element based on road length and other metrics;
- Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund – Awarded via a bidding process for specific maintenance schemes. In 2015 we were successful in receiving £6.3m of funding for maintenance of five of our key strategic routes;
- Local Highways Maintenance Capital Incentive Fund - Set up to reward councils who are using good asset management principles and who can clearly demonstrate efficiencies;

This means that a proportion of the available funding is now based on competitive/performance criteria. Manchester currently receives its full allocation of incentive funding as part of the GM devolution deal.

Improving our reactive maintenance processes demonstrates good practice and continuous improvement, which is one of the themes in the incentive funding criteria.

Contact Officers:

Name: Sara Todd
Position: Deputy Chief Executive
Telephone: 0161 234 3286
E-mail: s.todd@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Steve Robinson
Position: Director of Operations (Highways)
Telephone: 0161 234 4828
E-mail: steve.robinson@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Kevin Gillham
Position: Head of Citywide Highways
Telephone: 0161 234 5660
E-mail: k.gillham@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Tony King
Position: Highways Asset Manager
Telephone: 0161-219 3219
E-mail: a.king@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Report to Executive 2nd December 2015 - Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy;
- 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' published by UK Roads Liaison Group, October 2016;

1 Background

- 1.1 Manchester's highway network includes over 1,350 km of road length, 2,600 km of footway length and over 350 bridges and structures. Based on the latest valuations, the total highway asset has an indicative gross replacement value of over £2.7billion, making it the Council's most valuable asset.
- 1.2 Our current Highways Asset Management Strategy & Policy documents were approved at Executive in December 2015. These set out the Council's commitment to achieving benefits in the management of Manchester's highway network that can be delivered through asset management, and describes the principles adopted in applying asset management to help achieve the authority's strategic objectives.
- 1.3 Our funding for highways maintenance is split into 2 areas:
 1. Capital funding for planned network maintenance work – resurfacing, preventative treatments, patching;
£80m of the 5 year highways capital investment programme has been allocated between 2017/18 and 2021/22 to improve the condition of our network;
 2. Revenue funding for pothole, drainage and other defect repairs;
£5.3m of revenue funding has been allocated for Manchester Contracts to undertake highway repairs in 2018-19;
- 1.4 The asset management principles adopted and data collected were instrumental in providing the information which led to the successful challenge fund bid in 2015, where we received £6.3m of funding from the DfT for maintenance of five of our key strategic routes.
- 1.5 More recently, the approach was fundamental in securing the £100m 5 year Highways Investment programme currently underway, which will primarily be spent on improving the condition of Manchester's roads, footways and drainage, as well as supporting the maintenance of the bridge network.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to update members with the following processes that we follow to comply with our statutory duty to maintain our highway network under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980:

Potholes:

- Our inspection regime;
- How we respond to enquiries;
- Our defect repair processes;
- Small patching works programme;
- Monitoring utility works;

Cyclical Drainage programme:

- Background;
- Programme of cleansing work;

- Processes for dealing with blocked gullies;

Performance monitoring:

- How we are measuring performance;

Customer satisfaction:

- Summary of 2018 NHT survey results;

New code of practice for highway maintenance:

- Background;
- Work undertaken to date to comply with the new code;

The report does not include information on the current capital investment or the related programme of work.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 It is important to recognise that National Government funding decisions and resulting under-investment since 2010 has led to significant deterioration of the highway network across the country. Once the condition has fallen into serious disrepair, it becomes much more expensive to rectify.
- 2.2 Although we have now completed the first year of our highway capital investment programme, the Council is still currently tackling the effects of a sizeable number of outstanding defect repairs.
- 2.3 The initiatives that we are currently implementing will help us to deliver a more effective service moving forward and reduce the number of defect reports and complaints.
- 2.4 The maintenance procedures for all our highway assets are currently carried out in accordance with the national codes of practice, 'Well Maintained Highways', 'Management of Highway Structures' and 'Well Lit Highways'. Complying with national guidance helps local authorities to demonstrate their statutory defence under section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, when facing a damages claim for personal injury or property.
- 2.5 In October 2016, a new code, "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" (The Code) was published with an implementation period of 2 years, which combines the three parts of the old code into one. At the heart of the new document is the statement:
- 'The principle of this code is that highway authorities will adopt a risk-based approach in accordance with local needs (including safety), priorities and affordability.'
- 2.6 The Code does not outline any minimum or default standards, as were included in the old codes, but includes guidance and advice to support development of local levels of service.

2.7 Our work to comply with the requirements of the new Code is shown in section 7.

3 Highway Defects

3.1 Safety Inspections

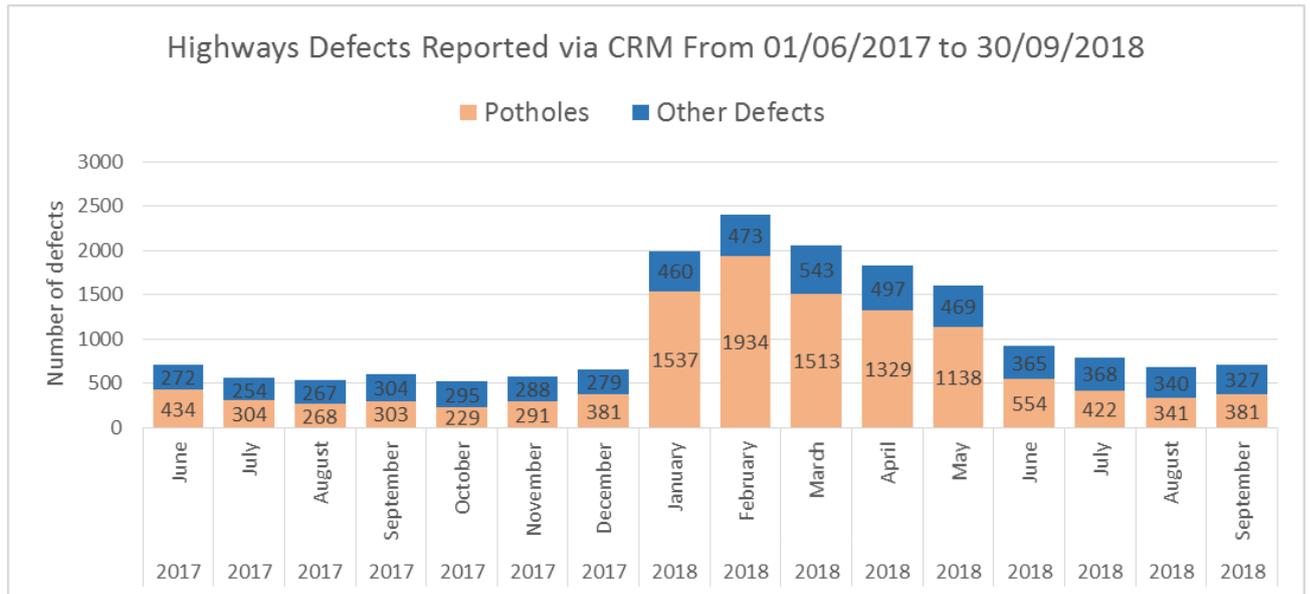
- 3.1.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on all Highway Authorities (HA) to maintain the highway network under their control. In order to comply with this legislation, we carry out regular highway safety inspections on our roads and footways in order to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. These inspections also help in providing the evidence to defend against claims brought against the Council under section 58 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 3.1.2 Our highway inspectors carry out walked and driven safety inspections across all of our adopted highway network at regular frequencies determined mainly by the defined road and footway hierarchy as set out in the code of practice. Every road is inspected at least once every 12 months and some roads are inspected monthly. In addition, we also commission annual highway condition surveys on our roads and footways to cover about 50% of all our network each year. This is more extensive than many other local authorities and means that we are better able to target our investment where it is most needed.
- 3.1.3 Following publication of the new Code we have been working with the other GM authorities to review our current inspection and repair regime as detailed in section 7 of the report.
- 3.1.4 Existing intervention levels for defect repairs are largely based on the size of the defect. eg. If the depth of a pothole is greater than 40mm on a road, it is scheduled for repair irrespective of its location. Under the new Code, a risk based approach will be adopted, which means we can take into account the likelihood of an injury/damage. As such we can be more flexible in targeting our resources where they are most needed.
- 3.1.5 Inspection data is recorded on site and uploaded onto Symology Insight software, which accurately records the location and details of any actionable defects found. We are currently working with our software provider as well as procuring new devices to improve efficiencies in recording data and improve our evidence when defending claims.
- 3.1.6 When a highway defect is found, an assessment is made by the inspector of the risk it presents to the public. This will depend on the type of defect, its size, location etc.
- 3.1.7 If the defect is classed as 'actionable', the details are recorded and a works order is automatically raised, which will have a defined timescale for suitable

repairs to be carried out. This will also indicate the level of traffic management that will be required to carry out the repair.

- 3.1.8 During September 2018, our inspectors completed 4,460 inspections on our road network and subsequently identified 2,269 defects for which works orders were raised.

3.2 CRM Reports

- 3.2.1 As well as planned inspections, we also carry out additional inspections following reports received from the public, usually via our CRM interface, although these may also be received by various other communication routes.
- 3.2.2 Members of the public can report defects by telephone, email and using 'MyAccount' web form. These requests are logged on our CRM system with a unique reference number.
- 3.2.3 These reports are picked up by the relevant highways inspector for the ward in which the defect is located, and they will make a site visit to assess the defect within 5 working days.
- 3.2.4 When the site assessment has been made, an automated e-mail is sent to the customer which reflects the inspector's assessment and the outcome decided.
- 3.2.5 Since July 2017, there has been an overall increase in the number of defect reports recorded on CRM. Comparing the most recent four months with the same months from last year, total reports of defects are up by an average of 29% per month.
- 3.2.6 The graph below shows total number of highway defects reported on our CRM system between June 2017 and September 2018, split to show potholes and other defects.
- 3.2.7 There is typically a seasonal spike in reports over winter, when adverse weather typically causes more defects.



3.2.8 Emergencies:

- 3.2.8.1 When a report is received which is regarded as a potential emergency, it will be logged in the CRM emergency inbox, which is continually monitored by our highways hub team. The contact centre will also telephone the hub directly to notify them of the emergency.
- 3.2.8.2 The hub team will first check to see if the issue has already been reported and is being dealt with. If not, a highways inspector will visit site within 2 hours of the report being received to assess the issue and determine the appropriate action.
- 3.2.8.3 Where a real emergency situation is present, the inspector will immediately contact the emergency mobile unit, who will attend site and make safe within 24 hours.
- 3.2.8.4 Where emergency reports are received out of normal office hours, our contact centre will immediately notify our out of hour's contractor, who will attend site to make safe or carry out a temporary repair, if appropriate.

3.3 Repairs

- 3.3.1 Works orders for repairs are assessed by our in-house team at Manchester Contracts and prioritised accordingly. Each order is then allocated to appropriate in-house or sub-contractor repair teams, dependant on the type of repair work required; this may be bituminous material repairs, such as pothole / larger patch repairs, or involve more complex repairs such as kerbs, paving or signs.
- 3.3.2 The teams are issued with a copy of the Symology works order which contains the location, description, dimensions and work type reference which allows them to plan a route and work out how much material is needed to

complete their days work. The team supervisors will ensure that all the required resources are available, including labour, equipment and materials to carry out the repair works on site in one visit where possible.

3.3.3 Materials

3.3.3.1 Different materials are used for repairs dependant on the nature of the defect. Where bituminous repairs are required this is usually 10mm surfacing for carriageways or 6mm surfacing for footways. Occasionally we will order Hot Rolled Asphalt where repairs are required on busier strategic routes, but we are minimising our use of this material for reactive repairs as it is very temperature sensitive and is not always a cost effective repair.

The bituminous material that the teams use is located at Hooper Street depot and stored in a temperature controlled Hot Box to ensure that there is always hot material available to the teams without the need to continually visit an asphalt plant.

3.3.3.2 The use of Spray Injection Patching (jet patching) has been used for bituminous defect repairs and we carried out a substantial programme of works in 2017-18 financial year. To support our pothole repair works, we currently have a £50,000 programme of jet patching works in progress which is being targeted on local road repairs which are more suitable for the process and where the most benefit will be achieved.

This process is increasing in popularity across the industry and with regard to longevity, previous trials within Manchester have shown that in the right circumstances and at appropriate locations, Jet Patching can offer a suitable repair that lasts as long as conventional methods with the offer of reduced whole-life costs.

The Jet Patching process has the additional benefit of repairing in a quantity controlled and quality checked way, a greater volume of defects than have been ordered, thereby providing a preventative solution and greater potential for future reduction in the numbers of identified defects.

3.3.4 When the works have been completed on site, the updated works order is returned to the supervisor with the repair details and associated comments. Symology is updated with this information and if no further works are required, the works order is closed down.

3.3.5 Significant work has been undertaken around enhancements in both the allocation of work and in the monitoring of performance of individual repair teams within Manchester Contracts and via sub-contractors since 2016. Manchester Contracts undertake sample testing on about 180 defect repairs per month. If any unsatisfactory repairs are found, the QA inspector will inform the team's supervisor who will arrange for appropriate remedial works to be carried out.

3.3.6 Performance data has improved markedly since this initiative, and quality checks carried out in the last year have shown that almost 90% of repairs are now completed to the agreed standard.

3.4 **Budgets for defect repairs**

3.4.1 Our budgets for highway maintenance works are split into 2 areas:

- Capital funding for planned network maintenance work – resurfacing, preventative treatments, patching; £80m of the 5 year highways capital investment programme has been allocated between 2017/18 and 2021/22 to improve the condition of our network;
- Revenue funding for pothole, drainage and other defect repairs; £5.3m of revenue funding has been allocated for Manchester Contracts to undertake highway repairs in 2018-19.

3.4.2 Substantial funding cuts from central government since 2010/11 have directly impacted the Council's revenue budgets.

3.4.3 Improvements in our highway network condition brought about by the capital investment should prevent increased pressure on our highway revenue budgets in subsequent years.

3.5 **Small patching repair programme**

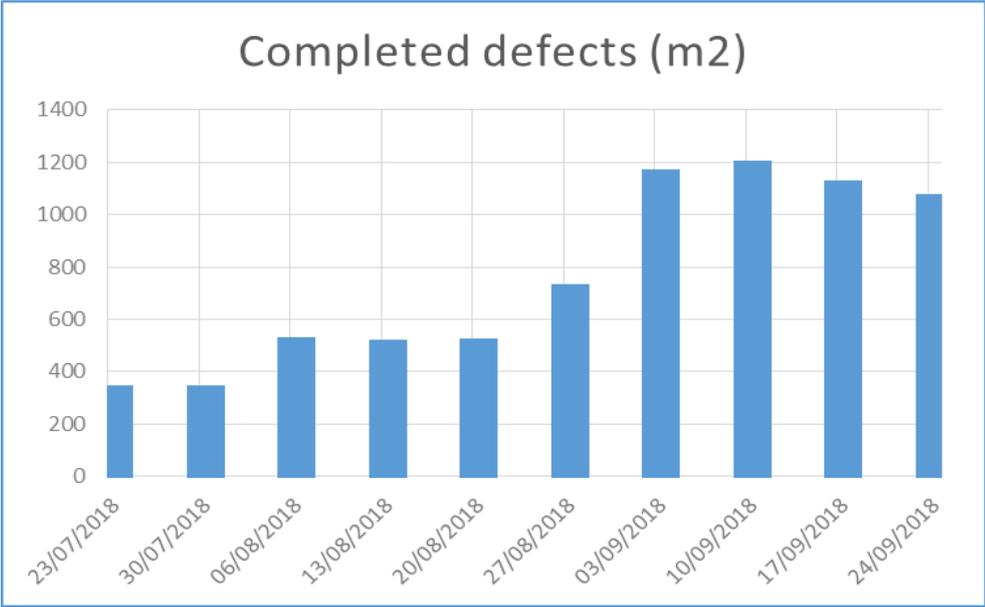
3.5.1 As previously stated, the number of potholes and associated defects on carriageways and footpaths has been increasing, especially following last year's severe winter weather. In order to mitigate the number of outstanding defect repairs, we have developed packages of works for each of the 32 Wards across the City. These comprise the outstanding workload as well as newly identified repair works.

3.5.2 The methodology for the ward selection is based on a split across North / Central and South wards to minimise disruption to residents and motorists, and targeting those first with the most number of defect repairs. This small patching programme started in August 2018 and forecasts about 14,000 potholes to be repaired in total. All works are scheduled for completion by summer 2019.

3.5.3 These repair works have been subdivided into those that require bituminous materials (largely road and footway potholes) and other modular defects (kerb repairs, paving defects etc.). To maximise resources, bituminous repairs have been subcontracted out, leaving Manchester Contracts teams to concentrate on the more specialised modular repairs.

3.5.4 A new framework is out to tender to appoint up to 4 sub-contractors to continue the programme. Our Project Manager for social value is currently working to ensure that this new contract will maximise social value benefits for Manchester.

3.5.5 A weekly progress chart showing the number of bituminous defect repairs completed up to the end of September 2018 is given below:



3.6 Utility Works

3.6.1 Utility companies must submit an advance notice on our GMRAPS permit system prior to undertaking any works on our highway. The details of the notice and the works, including the location and duration are logged with a unique works reference number; the GMRAPS database is shared across GM and this enables us to check for any clashes with other programmed infrastructure work and helps to reduce congestion on our highway network. The only exception to this is where the works are for emergency repairs.

3.6.2 A fixed penalty notice (FPN) is issued under S95A New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) to companies who do not provide us with accurate and timely notification of works on the highway. Between April and September of this year, a total of 361 FPN's have been issued so far.

3.6.3 We employ a team of street works inspectors who are responsible for assessing the required permits and licences, as well as carrying out routine and sample inspections of utility works.

3.6.4 These inspections will cover a visit while the initial works are in progress, another visit within six months to assess the quality of reinstatement at that time and a final visit within three months preceding the end of the guarantee period for the works, with a fee payable for each inspection.

3.6.5 Each year, the top five companies who register the highest amount of works in the highway over the preceding three years are sampled. The chart below shows the total number of inspections carried out this year (April-September 2018) and the failure percentage found:

Promoter Organisation Name	Number of works	
	inspected	% of Failures
BT	185	3.2
Cadent Gas Limited	448	5.8
ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST	249	2.8
UNITED UTILITIES WATER LTD	695	3.5
VIRGIN MEDIA	363	6.6
Grand Total	1940	

3.6.6 We issue a Section 81 notice (New Roads & Street Works Act 1991) where any highway defects relating to utilities or other third parties are identified, either by our inspectors or via reports from the public.

3.6.7 This notice may:

- State that the Statutory Undertaker must attend within a specific timeframe to remediate the issue. If it is regarded as dangerous a 2 hour timeframe is specified;
- Inform them that the Council's own contractors will attend to carry out the remedial works; All costs to be recharged to the Statutory Undertaker;
- Request that the Statutory Undertaker confirms with the Council what actions they are going to take;

3.6.8 Quarterly coordination meetings are held where representatives of Statutory Undertakers and the Council attend and declare all major works for the forthcoming year. This is a forum whereby clashes in works can be discussed and an opportunity to review performance issues and the records of defects.

3.6.9 The Council can also decide to exclude certain Sub-Contractors from carrying out utility works, due to historical poor performance.

4 Cyclical Drainage Programme

4.1 Following the well-publicised cuts to Local Government Funding a number of years ago, the cyclical gully cleansing maintenance programme was reduced such that only key routes were regularly cleaned along with a reactive service.

4.2 As a result, efficiency of the Council's drainage network has been decreasing, with the number of required repairs increasing steadily.

4.3 To redress this decline, we have now procured a Framework Contract to undertake cyclical gully cleansing which embodies a first-time-clean approach, for an initial period of 2 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

4.3.1 The estimated spend is £1.25m per annum, with a total value for the initial term (excluding extension) estimated at £2.5m.

- 4.3.2 As part of the Framework, the Service Providers (SPs) will visit, clean and capture data across the estimated 116,000 gullies across the City within 6 months but no longer than 10 months for the first pass. This will then be followed by a second pass, which will commence 9 months after the first pass, to enable silt levels to be recorded to form part of an Asset Condition Survey with data captured and reported back via a live Drainage Asset Management System.
- 4.4 A reactive service provided by Manchester Contracts teams will continue to respond to service requests and will initially run in parallel with this framework contract so as to not divert the contractors from the cyclical programme and assist in making the 10 month target more achievable.
- 4.5 Monitoring and recording silt levels will allow us to intelligently set up more effective drainage cleansing frequencies in the future by targeting those gullies that fill up with silt and detritus quicker, as well as those on more strategic routes.
- 4.6 To manage all of the data, we are using the Gully SMART System procured from KaarbonTech which is an asset management system allowing mobile users to add or download gully asset data and also to download geo-referenced mapping for offline use.
- 4.7 The SPs have provided a programme of works which includes a time table of when each Ward will be visited in the first pass, due to complete by the end of May 2019.
- 4.8 To date (22/10/2018) 13,693 gullies have been cleaned across the City, with an overall average of 7% of those found to be blocked and requiring further works. A breakdown by ward is shown in the table below.
- 4.9 As expected, as we have not fully operated a cyclical cleansing programme for several years, the majority of gullies visited so far have had high initial silt levels.
- 4.10 The drainage contractors will notify the Council within 24 hours where any gully is found to be blocked and left 'not running'. This will allow programmed repairs to take place, undertaken by Manchester Contracts or their service providers. Where a gully is found to require additional work, then it will be entered onto a programme of works and awarded to one of the SPs on the Framework as a separate call-off, dependent on the lowest rate submitted.
- 4.11 The Council has appointed a Contract Manager who is responsible for monitoring the performance and provision of the service. Performance Monitoring will focus on the key aspects of the service delivery, including overall performance, quality, delivery and customer service. All work carried out will be inspected based on a random 10% sample of cleaned gullies weekly.

Ward	Gullies attended	Working	Blocked	% Blocked
Ancoats & Beswick	244	228	16	7%
Ardwick	44	42	2	5%
Baguley	1182	1016	166	14%
Brooklands	171	162	9	5%
Burnage	199	199	0	0%
Charlestown	2417	2143	274	11%
Clayton & Openshaw	130	125	5	4%
Crumpsall	526	488	38	7%
Gorton & Abbey Hey	43	41	2	5%
Harpurhey	525	494	31	6%
Higher Blackley	2701	1998	703	26%
Levenshulme	25	25	0	0%
Miles Platting & Newton Heath	88	84	4	5%
Moston	108	102	6	6%
Northenden	62	61	1	2%
Sharston	2770	2665	105	4%
Woodhouse Park	2458	1976	482	20%
TOTALS:	13693	11849	1844	7%

4.12 Regular review meetings are being held, in line with any work awarded under this Framework. The SPs are required to submit management and monitoring information in a mutually agreed format, at mutually agreed intervals and from time to time, the SPs may be requested to attend specially arranged monitoring meetings.

4.13 The SPs deal with all service related complaints received, from whatever source, in a prompt, courteous and efficient manner, within 10 days of receipt.

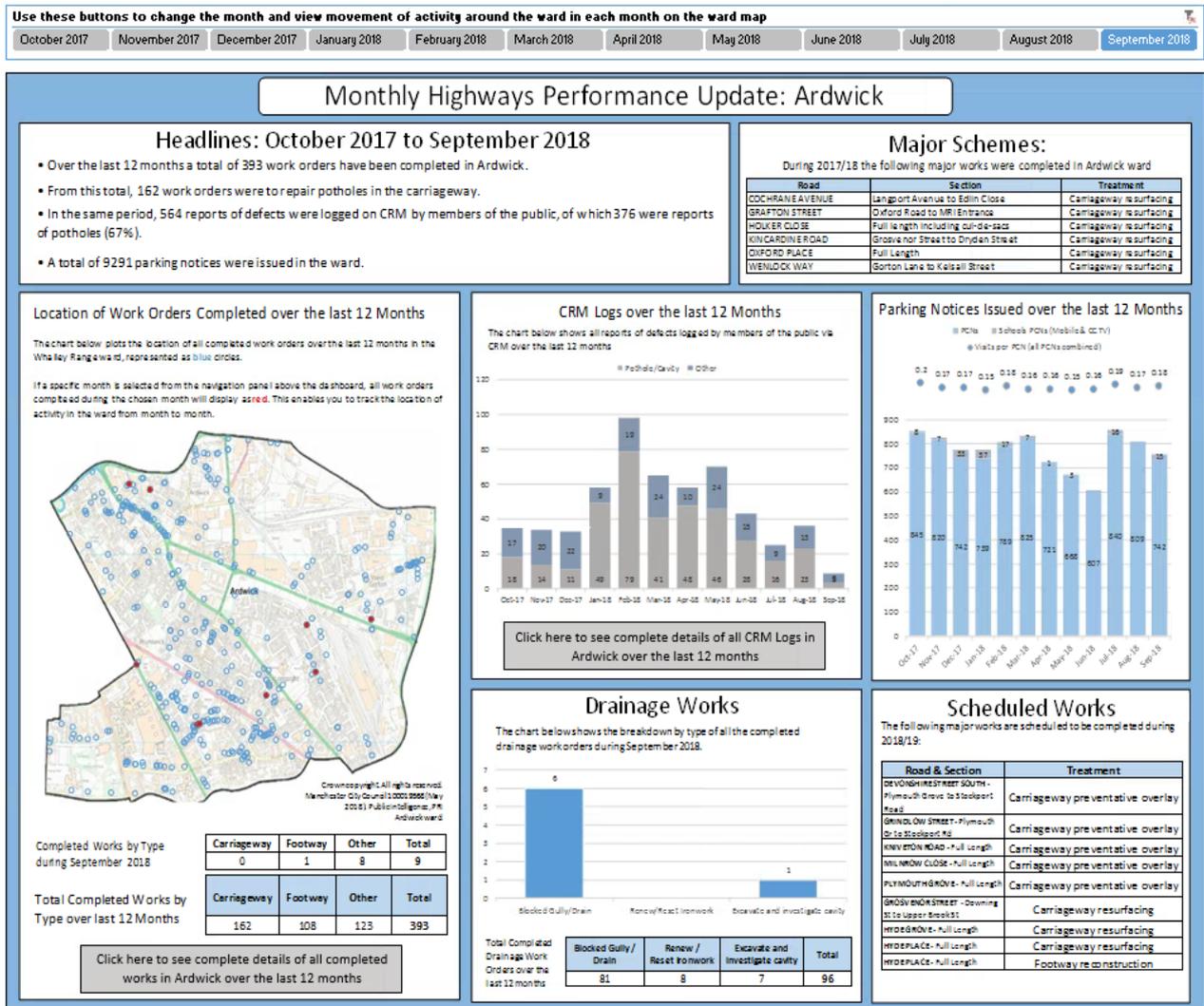
4.14 Once the full programme of works has been completed across the 32 wards, analysis of the data will enable a 'smart' programme of cyclical gully cleansing to be implemented in future years, targeting those gullies that are strategically important as well as those that fill up the quickest. This will allow us to maximise resources and efficiencies in our operations.

5 Performance Monitoring

5.1 We are trialling a monthly dashboard reporting system in several wards which shows performance information provided by our City-Wide Support team, Parking team, Reactive and Planned Maintenance teams. An example report is shown below.

5.2 The trial started in June 2018 and we have sought feedback from members on this approach, which we are currently reviewing in terms of the overall methods of communicating highway works taking place in the wards across the city.

5.3 A project has recently been commissioned to create a Google site where all of the performance reports can be brought together in one place, which can be accessed by anyone within the service, including local members. We believe this will have the advantage of allowing managers to monitor the performance in their own teams, but also be able to cross-reference performance data in other services.



5.4 Good performance data is essential to drive objective, evidence-based decisions as to what future work we should be doing and where we should be doing it. The Google site can also provide a secure platform for us to circulate performance data to a wider audience so that the good work being achieved by Highways will have visibility outside the department.

6 Customer Satisfaction

- 6.1 We have recently received the authority annual summary report of the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey for 2018. The survey is carried out by IPSOS/MORI and allows comparison on performance at a local, regional and national level. This is the second year of the survey, which enables us to compare our performance against last year, as well as benchmarking against other authorities in GM and nationally.
- 6.2 Overall satisfaction with our highway services was measured at 53%, which is the same as the national average (NA) and consistent with last year's score. Manchester got the best score among all 10 authorities within GM, which reflects well on our highway service within the region.
- 6.3 The table below summarises the results found for the 7 themes within the survey:

Key Themes	Manchester CC score 2018	Manchester CC score 2017	% Difference	National average score 2018
Overall public satisfaction	53%	54%	-1%	53%
Accessibility	73%	71%	+2%	70%
Public transport	66%	65%	+1%	61%
Walking / cycling	53%	55%	-2%	54%
Tackling congestion	47%	48%	-1%	47%
Road safety	53%	55%	-2%	55%
Highway maintenance	49%	49%	0%	49%

- 6.4 In terms of highway maintenance our satisfaction score was measured at 49%, which again is consistent with last year's score as well as the national average.
- 6.5 As the 5 year highway investment programme progresses, this will deliver an improvement in the overall condition of our roads and footways, which should be reflected in improved satisfaction scores in the coming years.

7 Well Managed Highways Code of Practice

- 7.1 The first national Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance was published in 1983, and has subsequently been revised at intervals to take account of new and emerging developments in technology, policy and good practice. It comprised three documents:
- Well Maintained highways;
 - Management of Highway Structures; and
 - Well Lit Highways.
- 7.2 The last edition of this code was published in 2005 and has been the basis of the way all council's approach and support their maintenance practice and strategies.

- 7.3 Complying with national guidance helps local authorities to demonstrate their statutory defence under section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, when facing claims.
- 7.4 The new code, “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” combines the three parts of the old code into one. It was published in October 2016 and has an implementation period of 24 months. At the heart of the new document is the statement:
- ‘The principle of this code is that highway authorities will adopt a risk-based approach in accordance with local needs (including safety), priorities and affordability.’
- 7.5 The Code does not therefore outline any minimum or default standards, as were included in the old code, but includes guidance and advice to support development of local levels of service.
- 7.6 Its specific intention is that authorities will develop their own levels of service, centred on a risk-based approach to highway infrastructure maintenance. From October 2018, there will no longer be the provision to fall back on the prescriptive recommendations of the old code.
- 7.7 In addition to the guidance in the Code, our officers have attended various seminars / events run by CIPFA and other industry professionals on implementing the requirements, as well as attending a specific workshop/seminar on the subject, hosted by Zurich Insurance.
- 7.8 The Code includes a number of recommendations (shown in Appendix 1), many of which align with the current DfT self-assessment questionnaire that local authorities currently submit annually for their allocation of maintenance incentive funding.
- 7.9 Following advice from the Insurance industry, we have concentrated on key recommendations that we have been advised should be prioritised to ensure highway safety compliance. These prioritised recommendations are:
- Consistency with other Local Authorities – All 10 Highway Authorities (HA’s) within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) region have collaborated to produce a ‘Greater Manchester Highway Safety Inspection Framework’ document (shown in Appendix 2), which is to be followed when carrying out highway safety inspections. This was endorsed by the GM Highways Group in May 2018. Using this framework document will help the GM HA’s to comply with the risk based code and to provide a consistent defence against claims.
 - Risked based approach – Authorities are encouraged to incorporate their corporate view of risk alongside being more evidence led in defining highway network priorities. Our Risk & Resilience team provides leadership, support and challenge in the development and application of a consistent approach to risk management and business continuity across

the Council.

- Network Hierarchy – We have reviewed our road and footway hierarchies for each section of our network, using the functional parameters defined in the new code, the GM Highway Safety Inspection Framework document and also referencing Manchester’s Community Network (CN). This in turn has been used to refine our highway safety inspection frequencies. We will adopt these new frequencies from 1 January 2019.
- Competencies and training – The Code recognises that competence is especially important in the case of inspections and surveys, where the quality and treatment of data could have significant legal and financial implications.

Our Highway Inspectors, along with some of our highways customer service team and defect repair teams, completed a certified 4-day training programme between February and May 2018, which was specifically targeted around the new GM Framework Inspection document and proposed local standards. This training will enable us to provide a more robust defence against highway claims, and this has been recognised across all 10 GM authorities. They are also qualified to be registered on the IHE qualified inspectors national register.

We are developing a skills matrix to document that appropriate skills and competence are in place across all the Highways service, which will include a regular review process and an action plan for staff training & development.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 We are using the highway investment funding to implement several new initiatives aimed at improving the condition of the City’s highway network, including a new highway repair contract and a cyclical draining cleansing programme.
- 8.2 These initiatives will help us better manage the reactive maintenance workload and reduce the current number of outstanding defect repairs as well as improving our drainage network.
- 8.3 The new Code provides an opportunity to improve our highway maintenance practices and to align service levels to Manchester’s corporate objectives rather than having to comply with prescribed service levels set by the old codes, which did not necessarily reflect local needs.
- 8.4 Taking a risk based approach also provides an opportunity to generate efficiencies based on robust evidence where possible.

9 Contributing to the Manchester Strategy

(a) A thriving and sustainable city

9.1 A well maintained highway infrastructure will encourage business growth, creating jobs and opportunities.

(b) A highly skilled city

9.2 The Highways Investment Strategy will provide opportunities for the development of a variety skills within the highways industry.

(c) A progressive and equitable city

9.3 The improvements to the roads in the Community Network will contribute towards unlocking the potential of our communities.

(d) A liveable and low carbon city

9.4 Safe and improved highways will encourage people to visit, live and work within the City.

(e) A connected city

9.5 A connected city needs a well maintained highway infrastructure and the Highways Asset Management Strategy is targeted to achieving this.

10 Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

10.1 A well maintained highway network will improve access for vehicles and enhance pedestrian and cycling facilities, contributing to the corporate objectives of making the environment accessible to all and creating neighbourhoods of choice. Where appropriate Equality Impact Statements will be undertaken

(b) Risk Management

10.2 Although the “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure” guidance is not statutory, it provides Highway Authorities with national guidance on highways management. The previous national guidance has been regularly referred to during highways claims against Local Authorities. A failure to follow the new national guidance could expose the Council to an increased risk of highway claims.

(c) Legal Considerations

10.3 The Council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance. Adopting a robust highways safety inspection regime that is compliant with the new Code, while also adopting recognised training and qualifications, minimises potential error in the identification and classification of

highways defects and therefore reduces risk to highway users and to the Council in its statutory role as the Highway Authority.