

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	25 th September 2019
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Service Area	Neighbourhood Services - Highways
Committee Date	14 th October 2019

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

HIGHWAYS, WINTER MAINTENANCE & STREET LIGHTING – PERFORMANCE UPDATE

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on highways performance since the last Scrutiny on 21st January 2019.
- 1.2 MTCBC Highway Department aims to deliver a more efficient service through collaborative working with RCTCBC & CCBC Highways, in order to provide the best outcomes for all Highway users. It is fundamental for the Highways Department to continue to build on the success it has achieved to date and maintain the delivery of services whilst adapting to potential future challenges.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the content of the report is noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

National Context

- 3.1 All local authorities in Wales are required to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions by identifying their own priorities for improvement. This legal requirement is set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Council Vision

- 3.2 To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys, and be a place to be proud of where:
- a) People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions
 - b) People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life
 - c) People visit, enjoy and return

A Sustainable Environment

- a) People enjoy a vibrant, attractive, safe and sustainable environment in which to live, work, play and visit.
 - We will focus on two areas:
 - Climate Change, and
 - Sustainable Urban Development

Neighbourhood Services Vision

- 3.3 To provide innovative and cost effective frontline services that allows people in Merthyr Tydfil to enjoy a clean, safe, attractive and sustainable environment.

Service Outcomes

- Improved health and safety, quality of life and general wellbeing of the communities within the Borough.
- As far as practicable, minimise the risk of failure of the disused mineral tips and other critical infrastructure.
- Minimise the potential adverse impact that new developments could have on the highway infrastructure and flood risk within the Borough.
- Deliver a cost effective service and where possible maximise income from external third party sources.

Highways Vision

- 3.4 The Highways service will assist people who live, work and travel within Merthyr Tydfil to benefit from a first class highway, street lighting and highways drainage infrastructure.

Service Outcomes

- Improve condition survey data, as measured through the NSI/PAMS indicators that are required by WG.
- Continue to deliver operational maintenance works in line with statutory requirements, following the recent restructure of the service.
- Improve customer satisfaction levels leading to fewer complaints achieved through analysing the root cause of problems.

3.0 WHERE WE WERE

Highways

- 4.1 In 2018/19 THS/12a¹ declined to 3.30% from 3.60% in 2017.18, a slight decrease of 0.3%, but remains 11th in the all Wales ranking.
 In 2018/19 THS/12b² improved from 7.50% to 6.20%, a gain of 1.3%, but Merthyr still remains 21st in the all Wales ranking
 THS/012c³ – performance in 2018/19 remained the same as 2017/18 at 4.1% and still remains 2nd in the all Wales ranking.

	Key Indicators	2018/2019 Merthyr Tydfil %	2018/19 All Wales Ranking	2018/19 Wales Average
THS/012	% of principal A and non-principal/classified B and C roads in poor condition	4.30%	N/A	N/A
THS/12a	% of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition	3.60%	11th	11th
THS/12b	% of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition	6.20%	22nd	21st
THS/12c	% of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition	4.10%	1st	2nd

- 4.2 In 2018/19, 100% of emergency works orders were completed on time , even with work orders increasing by 35% from 329 in 2017/18 to 505 in 2018/19.
- 4.3 The percentage of Priority 1 works orders completed on time, within 20 working days, declined from 50.72% in 2017/18 to 42.22% in 2018/19. The work orders completed outside of the 20 working days in 2018/19 took an average of 197 working days to complete, compared to 64 working days in 2017/18.
- 4.4 The number of outstanding works orders increased to 850 in 2018/19, compared to 827 in 2017/18.
- 4.5 In 2018/19 the number of highway customer complaints completed on time declined to 69.21% compared to 87.33% in 2017/18. This was impacted by a loss of an administration officer.
- 4.6 In 2018 Highways received 21 third party insurance claims against the Council, of these 1 was registered, 10 repudiated/settled, 1 settled, 9 repudiated and 0 litigated. This resulted in £5,296 being paid out.
- 4.7 **Registered** – Claim has been received and is being investigated or claim has been received, investigated and we are going to settle it
Repudiated/Settled – Claim was repudiated and successfully defended and the claim has then been closed.
Settled – we have paid the claim, liability may have or may have not have been admitted.
Repudiated – Claim has been received, investigated and we have denied liability but claim remains open.

¹ % of principle A roads in poor condition

² % of principle B roads in poor condition

³ % of principle C roads in poor condition

Litigated – We have received Court Proceedings from the other side usually after we have repudiated the claim in the “pre-action” stage.

5 WHERE WE ARE NOW

Highways

- 5.1 The Highways section is currently managed by a FTE Highways Manager, a FTE Highways Supervisor and FTE Street-works Manager. Other technical office staff consists of two FTE Highways Inspectors, a PT Street-works Inspector, a FTE Street Naming & Numbering Custodian, and a PT Admin Officer. Civil and construction highway works are carried out by 10 FTE operational staff that undertake paving, kerbing, drainage and tarmac works. Labouring works are completed by a FTE agency worker. In addition, the section has recently recruited three apprentices to add to the 1 apprentice appointed in 2018.

Highways also oversee the day-to-day activities of two FTE Land Drainage Staff, from the Engineering Department.

- 5.2 The Highways Department operates from the Abercynon Depot, in order to share services with RCTCBC Highways Services to continue to maintain efficiency savings.
- 5.3 Precautionary and emergency Winter Maintenance functions for 2019/20 have moved to the Pengarnddu depot, as RCTCBC have relocated their own winter maintenance operations to a purpose built facility at Pontcynon. The current salt stock at Pengarnddu is around 1800 to 2000 tonnes, which will be maintained through the winter months.
- 5.4 Resurfacing Processes carried out within Merthyr Tydfil C.B.C.
- (i) Footway reconstruction is carried out by the Highways Department’s in-house team, this work includes the renewal of kerbs, tarmac and paving footways. The estimated spend for footway reconstruction for 2019/20 is £250,000.
- (ii) MTCBC commissions RMS Ltd to carry out its road surface treatments, who are contractors selected from the South East Wales framework through RCTCBC procurement department. RMS Ltd uses two types of cold lay treatments to help preserve Merthyr’s highway network
- Micro-asphalt is surface preservation method used as a cost effective alternative to a traditional inlay. Micro- asphalt can improve the profile of roads, ride quality and texture. The estimated spend on Micro-asphalt for 2019/20 is £110,000
 - Finagrip surface dressing treatment method is mainly used on busier A, B, C category carriageways. Finagrip improves the skid resistance and seals the existing carriageway from water ingress, which increases the longevity of carriageways. The estimated spend on Finagrip for 2019/20 is £100,000.
- (iii) Highways also sub-contract traditional resurfacing works to be carried out. Traditional resurfacing works involves scarifying the existing surface and replacing with a new layer of asphalt. Tarmac is procured through an all Wales tender with

labour and plant being procured through an annual quote. The estimated spend for traditional resurfacing works for 2019/20 is £450,000.

5.5 Sub contracted Gully Cleansing Service in MTCBC

Since April 2019 Highways have sub-contracted the gully cleansing service to Caerphilly CBC, as an efficiency saving. From April 2019 to the 31st August 2019, 5,000 gullies have been cleansed within the County Borough of Merthyr. The rest of the year will be spent on tackling blocked gullies and drainage system, which will be risk assessed and prioritised within the remaining Highways r gully cleansing budget for 2019/20.

5.6 Third party claims against the Council

Four third party insurance claims have been received from January to August 2019, of which 2 have been repudiated costing the Council £200. Claims are currently being kept at an all time low by being defended through Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, which require three consecutive highway inspections to be carried out in order to take reasonable measures to ensure problems such as potholes are identified and dealt with swiftly. Highways are complying with this legislation by carrying out the inspections and identifying safety defects, however, completing repair works is now taking on average 197 days (2018/19), compared to an average of 64 days in 2017/18. Any further reduction to the operational work force could increase future third party insurance claims.

5.7 In 2018/19, 2,452 Priority E, 1, 2 & 3 works orders were completed. The completion of these work orders ranged between 24 hours to 197 days. 22% (545) of the 2,452 work orders were for pothole repairs. The average cost of a tarmac repair is £50 per square metre, with the average pothole in 2018/19 costing £50.

5.8 Highways are currently awaiting 2019/20 THS/012 indicators for the % of principal A and non-principal/classified B and C roads in poor condition.

5.9 100% (163) of Priority Emergency works orders were completed on time, within 24 hours, as from the 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019.

5.10 The percentage of Priority 1 works orders completed on time, within 20 working days, declined to 40.09% as at 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019, compared to 43.68%, 2018/19.

5.11 The number of outstanding works orders has increased from 850 in 2018/19 to 910 as from 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019 for 2019.20, an 8% increase with another 7 months of the year remaining.

5.12 In 2019/20 the number of highways customer complaints completed on time have improved with 80.85% on them being dealt within 5 working days compared to 69.21% in 2018/19. This has been achieved through increased monthly monitoring.

Street Lighting

5.13 The Street lighting function is currently managed by a part-time Street Lighting Engineer in conjunction with a part-time sub-contractor S.S.E. (Scottish and Southern Energy plc) who undertakes maintenance works. Maintenance is carried

out on a reactive basis with a complaint/s via web, telephone or email being raised on our Highways Customer Care (H.C.C.) database. From this our administration team integrate and test the street lights on our Street Lighting central management system (C.M.S.) to identify if any of the street lights are out. If the system identifies that a light is not working a job ticket is raised for a repair to be carried out. These jobs are presently completed by S.S.E. within the target times of 5 working days, which is a Welsh Government Performance Indicator (THS/009).

Standard Priorities for Street Lighting

Priority 1/ attend within 2 hours (Emergency calls, danger to public)

Priority 2 / attend within 24 hours (section faults affecting 3 light or more)

Priority 3 / attend within 5 days standard reactive maintenance

- 5.14 Where Street Lighting repairs require other works e.g. cable faults, or column/sign post changes these will be investigated and a works order will be raised and programmed in, within Street Lightings remaining budget for 2019.20,. Also, where there are faults on Western Power Distribution apparatus (W.P.D.) do not provide timescales of when the works will be completed.

Planned works for 2019/20

- 5.15 Street lighting has a number of mandatory assessments that have to be carried out on a six year cyclical basis in order to comply with British Standards and code of practice for Electrical Safety in Highway Electrical Operations.
- 5.16 *Electrical testing of individual lighting columns*
In 2018/19, 1500 individual lighting columns will be electrically tested as part of the planned programme of work. This can be done over a six year cyclical program to comply with BS 7671:2008 +A3:2015 IEE wiring regulations and BS 5489-1:2013 code of practice for road lighting. Information on periodic electrical testing can be found in section 18.5.1 code of practice for Electrical Safety in Highway Electrical Operations 2013.
- 5.17 *Electrical testing of the network (cables and feeder pillars)*
In 2018/19 we will carry out 200 electrical testing of the network and feeder pillars that must be done every six years. This can be done over a six year cyclical program to comply with BS 7671:2008 +A3:2015 IEE wiring regulations and BS 5489-1:2013 code of practice for road lighting, Information on periodic electrical testing can be found in section 18.5.1 code of practice for Electrical Safety in Highway Electrical Operations 2013.
- 5.18 *Structural testing non- destructive*
In 2019/20 we will carry out 1500 lighting units, non-destructive structural testing. This must be done every six years but can be done over a six year cyclic program. This is covered in BS5649 and BS EN 40 (RECOMMENDATIONS IN TR 22 ILP'S TECHNICAL REPORT).
- 5.19 In 2019/20 the number of street lights are working at any one time within the County Borough was 99.8% compared to 99.01% in 2018/19.
- 5.20 From 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019 the average number of days street lights are restored to working is 2 working days which is the same as 2018/19

- 5.21 From 1st April 2019 to 31st August 2019 the number of street lighting failures is 225 compared with the same 6 monthly period 224 in 2018/19 and 369 in 2017/18.
- 5.22 Cable faults are increasing within the County Borough due to the ageing cables in the ground most of them being over 50 years old and this can lead to sections of lights not working until the issue has been investigated and a solution found and rectified. These problems increase pressure on the part time Street Lighting Engineer to quickly resolve the problem. The increase of these works are currently paid for through the Street Lighting revenue budget.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Highways

- 6.1 Through working in collaboration with RCTCBC & Caerphilly CBC Highways aim to deliver more efficient highways services, by providing the best provisions and outcomes for all users. We must build on the success achieved to date and ensure that performance is maintained in the delivery of services, whilst adapting to future challenges.

	Key Indicators	2020/2021 Merthyr Tydfil		2021/2022 Merthyr Tydfil	2021/2022 All Wales Ranking	2021/2022 Wales Average
THS/012	% of principal A and non-principal/classified B and C roads in poor condition	4.3% ¹	Data not Available	4.3% ¹	Data not Available	Data not Available
THS/12a	% of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition	3.3% ⁴	Data not Available	3.3% ⁵	Data not Available	Data not Available
THS/12b	% of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition	7.5% ¹	Data not Available	7.5% ¹	Data not Available	Data not Available
THS/12c	% of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition	4.1% ¹	Data not Available	4.1% ¹	Data not Available	Data not Available

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 Ensure all new adopted Highways are entered into the electronic Mayrise system as part of the annual inspection regime, in accordance with The Highways Act 1980 - Ongoing.

⁴ Target set with the intention of at least maintaining performance; however, adverse weather conditions could have a negative impact on this.

- 7.2 Identify funding in order for Highways Inspectors and operational staff to utilise mobile tablets to reduce time spent on completing paperwork which in turn should increase productivity t.
- 7.3 Review Street-Lighting technology to continue to reduce energy and CO² emissions and explore other options such as dimming features to improve service efficiency.
- 7.4 Continue collaboration with a neighbouring Council to deliver gully cleansing service.
- 7.5 Review and update the MTCBC Highways Network Plan in line with the new Highways Code of Good Practice, as and when it is published – ongoing.
- 7.6 Review Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and update if deemed necessary - ongoing.
- 7.7 Review Winter Maintenance Plan in relation to all winter maintenance activities that are undertaken within the Highway Maintenance Section -- ongoing.
- 7.8 Continue to work collaboratively with RCT to seek opportunities for service efficiencies and improved delivery - ongoing.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 The Highways Division does not directly support the Council's wellbeing objectives. However, the division contributes to them by being committed to providing people who live, work and travel within Merthyr Tydfil to benefit from a well-maintained highway network and infrastructure, which we do by carrying out minor and major highway repairs, drainage resolution and street-lighting preservation. The department contributes to the needs of businesses within the borough by developing safe infrastructure and therefore, plays a role in making Merthyr an attractive destination. The department also recognises that its activities and operations have an impact on the environment and is committed to conserving natural resources, operating in a manner sensitive to the environment and complying with all relevant legislation. For example, Highways Division is currently in collaboration with Caerphilly CBC to cleanse the gullies, whereby all gully waste is recycled; this is not only cost effective but contributes towards the Council's and Neighbourhood Services recycling targets. Other eco-friendly practices include the use of low carbon tarmac and recycled sub-base when carrying out highway maintenance work. Hence, the Highways Division contributes to the following corporate well-being objectives:

Working Life: People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination;

Environmental Wellbeing: Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside; and

Living Well: People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

JUDITH JONES
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CABINET MEMBER PLANNING &
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees		
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		