

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT for meeting to be held on 20 May 2010

CONDITION OF ROADS IN NORWICH – POTHOLES

Summary:

At the March meeting of the scrutiny committee it was agreed by members to place this topic on to the committee's work programme. The scrutiny officer's report scopes an approach for member consideration.

This issue arose as a topic due to the poor condition of the roads in Norwich as a consequence of the recent exceptional weather of the 2009/10 winter.

The suggested questions should enable the committee to establish an overview of the way in which potholes are addressed and to assess if this is adequate. Also to assess if potholes are accurately located and quickly and appropriately dealt with.

Conclusions:

The aim and objective of this report is to establish an agreed methodology so that members can achieve an overview of how quickly and effectively the council responds to reports from the public of potholes and similar problems on the roads. The ensuing meeting will also be an opportunity for the scrutiny committee to either endorse the current methods used or to make recommendations for the improvement of the service.

Recommendation:

The scrutiny committee is invited to consider the report and;

1. agree the methodology as set out
2. decide on witnesses to invite for the item
3. take this topic as an item on the committee's agenda at the 24 June 2010 meeting of scrutiny

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Exec Member:

1. Methodology

- 1.1 The questions below will be sent to the witnesses prior to the meeting so that they have the opportunity to prepare and are able to give the committee accurate responses. In the meantime, members are encouraged to think of any follow up questions they anticipate may be appropriate at the meeting.
- 1.2 It is suggested that this topic be dealt with at a meeting of the scrutiny committee. If it is necessary to follow up any issues arising from the meeting Officers and other witnesses will be asked to respond in writing to a future meeting of the committee.

2. Questions to be asked & Information required:

- a) What is the definition of a pothole
- b) What are the established response times
- c) How are potholes located
- d) How many pothole problems in Norwich are reported per week/month/year
- e) How many repairs are carried out in Norwich per week/month/year
- f) Is there a road hierarchy
- g) How many claims for damage to vehicles as a result of encountering potholes does the council receive per year and how much does it cost to settle these claims
- h) Do problems reported on line and by phone have the same response time
- i) How quickly are potholes repaired
- j) How long is a pothole repair expected to last
- k) How is the decision made as to how permanent or temporary the repair will be
- l) If the repair is temporary when is it replaced with a permanent repair
- m) How many of the 'new' potholes are actually failed repairs
- n) Is there a special budget for funding pothole repairs
- o) Is the person who reported the pothole kept informed on progress
- p) Are repaired potholes inspected regularly to ensure the repair is still intact

3. Witnesses:

- 3.1 It is suggested that the following witnesses be invited to attend the meeting. At this point it would be useful if members could suggest any other attendees that would help them in their work.

(Continued)

- 3.2 Suggested witnesses are; The Council's Executive portfolio holder with responsibility for highways, the Norwich Highways Agency Committee Chair, the City Council's Head of Transportation and Landscape and any independent expert witness that may be able to inform the committee on best practice in road maintenance.

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