

Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 11 March 2020
10.00am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Barry Stone – Chairman
Cllr Graham Middleton (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Stuart Clancy	Cllr Claire Bowes
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	Cllr Tony White
Cllr Tim East	Cllr Brian Watkins
Cllr Beverley Spratt	

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Phillip Duigan for Cllr Vic Thompson
Cllr Danny Douglas for Cllr Colleen Walker

Also Present:

Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure
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Officers Present:

Grahame Bygrave	Director of Highways and Waste
Jason Glasspoole	Operations Director (Norse Highways)
Sophie Leney	Head of Trading Standards
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Ian Parkes	Senior Transport Planner
Karl Rands	Highway Services Manager
Sarah Rhoden	Assistant Director, Performance and Governance
Ceri Sumner	Director of Community, Information and Learning
Matt Tracey	Growth and Infrastructure Group Manager
David Cumming	Strategic Transport Team Manager

1. Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Vic Thomson (Cllr Phillip Duigan substituting), Colleen Walker (Cllr Danny Douglas substituting), Cllr Jess Barnard. Also absent was Cllr Brian Iles.

2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, with amendment at paragraph 1.2 to include Cllr Tony White as having given his apologies.
- 2.2.1 Cllr Bev Spratt asked for an update under the discussion at paragraph 10.2, bullet point 1 of the minutes, noting ongoing problems on the line. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services reported that Greater Anglia were now improving since the reliability problems experienced with their new stock.

- 2.2.2 Cllr Clancy requested an update on the feasibility study on Ely junction discussed at paragraph 10.2, bullet point 16 of the minutes.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 No interests were declared

4. Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

- 5.1 No public questions were received

6. Local Member Issues / Questions

- 6.1 The Chairman took a local Member question from Cllr Spratt, who asked for information on who took responsibility for clearing large animal carcasses from Norfolk roads. Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport, Cllr Martin Wilby, clarified that this was the responsibility of the local District Council.

7. Potholes

- 7.1 The Committee heard a presentation by the Director of Highways and Waste and the Operations Director (Norse Highways) on potholes and the pragmatic approach to their repair (see appendix a of these minutes):
- The number of potholes recorded in Norfolk had reduced since 2017-18
 - The peak seen in 2017-18 was due to snow and ice over the winter caused by the “beast from the east”
 - Highways teams had tablet technology to receive information from and input information into the Mayrise system in real time. Contractors had tablets to receive and update the works orders in real time
 - Norfolk was at the forefront of technology in the Country, with many counties still using paper-based systems
- 7.2 The following points were discussed and noted
- Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport, Cllr Martin Wilby, was confident in the Council’s bid for further funding
 - It was queried whether reported potholes were new or recurring potholes; The Director of Highways and Waste replied that if a section of road received repeated reports of potholes, it was highlighted by the system as requiring resurfacing
 - Concern was raised about fallen road signs; Officers confirmed that highways inspectors regularly inspected the road network, including signs in need of repair. A recent decluttering exercise had removed thousands of signs from the network
 - The high backlog of repairs across the network was raised as a concern; the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport noted that the proactive response was resulting in a decline in reported potholes and the maintenance repair backlog had reduced from around £50 million to around £36 million. He was

confident the Council would receive their share of funding to continue to address this and maintain the network

- Members of the Select Committee thanked the highways team for their work
- The discontinuation of liquid bitumen to seal pothole repairs was queried; the Director of Highways and Waste explained that this was due to changing national practices
- It was suggested that the standard email should explain why reported defects did not meet intervention criteria; the Director of Highways and Waste **agreed** to look into whether more detail could be put into the standard replies.
- There was a discussion around why multiple potholes on one road were not always repaired at the same time. Officers reported that changes being brought in at Norse Highways would empower staff to identify work for completion. It was also noted that some repairs required specialist machinery and would therefore need to be completed on a different day
- It was confirmed that pothole repair included footways where they were part of the highways' asset. Reporting footway defects followed the same reporting structure and they also received regular inspections.
- The risk-based approach to identifying repairs took public safety into account
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport confirmed that edging work and repair, or haunching, was still carried out
- The Director of Highways and Waste confirmed that the CRM and Mayrise systems discussed in the presentation were working well and feedback received so far had been positive
- The Operations Director (Norse Highways) confirmed that Norse Highways had an arrangement with national contractors for repairs by spray injection patching. They were looking to combine resource with contractors so it could be used by Norfolk when needed. The Vice-Chairman suggested that Norse Highways could invest in the equipment and loan it out when not in use. The Operations Director (Norse Highways) suggested this could be something for consideration in the future.
- A discussion was held about damage to vehicles caused by potholes; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that an insurance claim could be made to the Council, however, there was a robust defence in place due to the robust monthly driven inspection regime and reporting system, and national codes of practice for how long it takes to have a pothole repaired after notification to the Council.
- Officers would circulate information to Cllr Tim East on how much had been awarded in such claims over the past year

7.3 The Committee **NOTED** the presentation

8. Future Highways Arrangements in Norwich

8.1 Following the decision of Environment, Development and Transport Committee in 2019 to bring the delivery of highways services in Norwich City back to Norfolk County Council, the Committee received the report providing detail on what was changing, some of the benefits and how the service would be delivered in future. The decision was made to help deliver efficiencies and savings by avoiding duplication, sharing resources and providing greater consistency across the service.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- Some Members of the Select Committee discussed concerns about the decision to bring delivery of services back to Norfolk County Council, queried the route of

reporting, and raised concerns that the voice of Norwich City Councillors and skills of staff working in Norwich Highways would be lost

- The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that there were technical advantages in having a single approach countywide including greater resilience on issues as there would be a larger team to call on. Members would be able to contact local highway engineers. The correct engineer would be identified by the system through the location of the issue when entered into the online form. Briefing material had been prepared with the City Council for City and County Councillors in the Norwich city area. The public should notice no detriment brought about by the changes.
- The Chairman noted the savings this would have for the Council, and assumed that it would also infer savings for Norwich City Council
- Officers confirmed that the modal share in Norwich had been shifted in a positive way, with 500,000 extra bus passengers seen in the past year; footfall in Norwich had increased yearly and bucked the national trend. Work using Transforming Cities funding would prioritise bus travel and bring in more people to the city.
- It was clarified that the staff from Norwich Highways would be offered the opportunity to TUPE over into their role under Norfolk County Council, however it could not be guaranteed that they would only work on schemes in Norwich
- The Chairman noted that further work was needed to increase availability of buses in rural areas
- Having the teams together would give a closer working relationship and ability to use the same contractor, bringing efficiencies and more seamless working
- Members of the public who did not have access to a computer could call Norfolk County Council's customer service who would direct them to the Highways team.
- The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services explained that the Joint Committee for Transforming Cities Funds projects was a joint committee between Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council.

8.3 The Committee **NOTED** the content of the report

9. Great Yarmouth Transport Strategy & Implementation Plan

9.1 The Committee received the report setting out the transport study carried out for Great Yarmouth by the Borough and County Councils which included data collection, evidence gathering including stakeholder engagement, the appraisal of a long list of possible schemes and a public consultation exercise, and setting out the draft Great Yarmouth Transport Strategy report had been prepared which included an implementation plan of transport schemes to address the priorities and objectives.

9.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- A Members asked whether the decision about the third runway at Heathrow would have an impact on sustainability appraisals; the Strategic Transport Team Manager replied that officers were aware of the Heathrow judgment and were in the process of assessing what, if any, impact this would have on the appraisals currently being undertaken
- A Member raised that there was no detail in the plan regarding how outputs and outcomes would be measured
- It was noted that housing density was important to the viability of commercial bus services; the Growth and Infrastructure Group Manager confirmed that Officers worked with Borough Councils to advise on housing development layouts through

discussions with Planning officers and transport providers as part of the consultation around Local Area Plans

- Dualling of the A47 Acle Straight was discussed; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that this was a priority of the Council under RIS 2, but this under the remit of Highways England
- Historical issues regarding on street parking and the loss of bus service at lodge farm were discussed. Officers confirmed that discussions were needed at early opportunities with bus providers and housing developers to avoid such situations.
- The Senior Transport Planner confirmed that schemes would be taken forward with the new environmental policy adopted
- Cllr Clancy was concerned that the plan did not pick up on aspirations positively and firmly enough. He felt that rail improvements proposed were not enough and that dualling of the A47 Acle Straight was needed. Cllr Clancy felt rail and road linkage in the report required strengthening. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services replied to Cllr Clancy that this report focussed on transport within the Great Yarmouth urban area; he agreed that strategic links were important to feed into Yarmouth however this report was not intended to look at this
- The Chairman felt that the work in the report would improve infrastructure and transport in Yarmouth and could act as a standalone report, not dependent on the work on the Acle Straight and railway line, but which were also important.

9.3 The Committee agreed, with one objection,

1. **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the draft Great Yarmouth transport strategy and implementation plan
2. **NOTED** that work on a Sustainability Appraisal is being carried out in conjunction with work on the Local Transport Plan

10. Trading Standards Service Plan 2020-21

10.1.1 The Committee received the report introducing the Trading Standards Service Plan 2020-21 including the Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Plan (Annex 1 of the service plan) and the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan (Annex 2 of the Service Plan).

10.1.2 The Director of Community, Information and Learning and the Head of Trading Standards introduced the report:

- The successes from the previous year included the focus on complaints; work carried out with the home improvement and second-hand car sectors to focus business advice and enforcement action had seen a reduction in complaints from the public
- There had been an increase in the number of no cold calling zones, which now cover more than 11,000 Norfolk homes. Applications for zones had increased following an article in Your Norfolk.
- Test purchasing of allergen-free meals at catering establishments had identified a lack of compliance with allergen labelling and provision of information to people with allergies and this is being addressed through advice to businesses.
- The calibration laboratory at Hethel was forecast to generate an income of over £0.5m

10.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Select Committee thanked the Trading Standards team for their work and noted the good information provided via social media
- The Head of Trading Standards confirmed that the team tackled online commerce

and worked with the national trading standards e-crime team to take-down offending websites. The team had also been proactive in highlighting online scams

- It was confirmed that the £0.5m income by the calibration laboratory was turnover and not revenue
- The effect of Brexit on the work of the team was queried; the impact was not known fully at that stage however, it may affect laws on how animals were kept, transported and slaughtered; along with other legislative changes. If this was the case, this would lead to uncertainty for business and the opportunity for fraudsters to exploit any confusion. There would need to be additional business advice, greater market surveillance and increased information provision to the public
- The information at paragraph 1.1 under Growing Economy “More businesses start, grow and invest in Norfolk” was queried; Officers confirmed that this related to business advice and guidance provided to new businesses, including via the library service and the New Anglia Compliance Partnership to aid them to operate in accordance with the law.
- The Growth and Infrastructure Group Manager highlighted the work of Economic Development in supporting business start-ups and agreed to provide information on the number of businesses which had been supported to start up by the business development team
- The 74% of samples taken at butcher’s shops rated as unsatisfactory was queried; Enforcement was focused on meat contamination following national intelligence. Low levels of meat cross-contamination could be caused by insufficient cleaning of meat processing machines; where high levels of meat substitution were picked up this was followed up robustly
- Non-compliant letting agents were highlighted in the report; new legislation had been brought in in 2019 restricting the fees that letting agents could charge to renters and the information which must be included on their websites. A piece of work had been carried out to look into compliance and a number of agents needed support to put this new legislation into place.
- Officers had a good working relationship with public health and worked with them on public promotion work, such as stop smoking and on issues of child and baby safety that they had identified
- The Head of Trading Standards **agreed** to email parish clerks information about the scam alerts

10.3 The Committee:

1. **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the Trading Standards Service Plan including Annexes I and II of the plan
2. **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the Consumer Services Policy.

11. Forward Work Plan

11.1 The Select Committee received the report setting out the forward plan for the Committee.

11.2 Members requested the following information on the forward plan:

- A report on waste; The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services reported that the waste disposal contract was currently out for procurement, therefore agreed that a report on waste would be brought to coincide with an update on this.
- A report to look at road safety performance, including consideration of the findings of the task and finish group: The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed that the task and finish group looking into this had

reported to the Environment Development and Transport Committee. He agreed to check with the road safety team to see when the last 12 months' data could be reported to Committee.

- The Vice-Chairman asked if Highways England could be invited to a future meeting to give an update on their plans for progress on schemes in Norfolk; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services agreed to send an invite to them to attend a future meeting.
- A report was requested on the performance indicators of the rural population able to access a market town and key employment locations by public transport; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services suggested that a report from the Local Transport Plan would be a suitable place to look into this topic as they were looking into rural public transport.
- Cllr Clancy requested feedback on the lobbying of the ministers as reported in paragraph 8.2.2 of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020.
- More reports looking into topics related to economic development, such as partnership with the LEP or apprenticeships was requested.
- Cllr Kiddle-Morris discussed the change in legislation which meant that 'crouching' buses now needed to be used for school transport, meaning coaches could no longer be used. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services asked Cllr Kiddle-Morris to send him the letter he had received on this so he could look into whether this was correct.

11.3 The Select Committee **AGREED** the forward plan with the addition of the agreed reports as discussed in paragraph 11.2 above

The meeting closed at 12.34 pm

Chairman



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Potholes

A Pragmatic Approach to Repair

Grahame Bygrave
Director of Highways & Waste
Norfolk County Council

Jason Glasspoole
Operations Director
Norse Highways



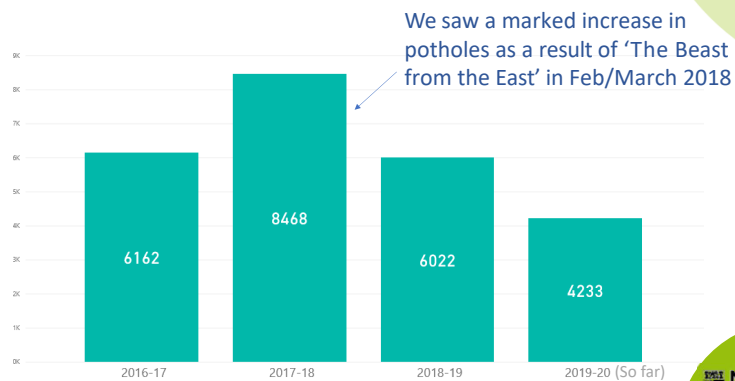
Introduction

The number of potholes appearing around the county each year varies depending on weather conditions. This is something that is mirrored across the country.

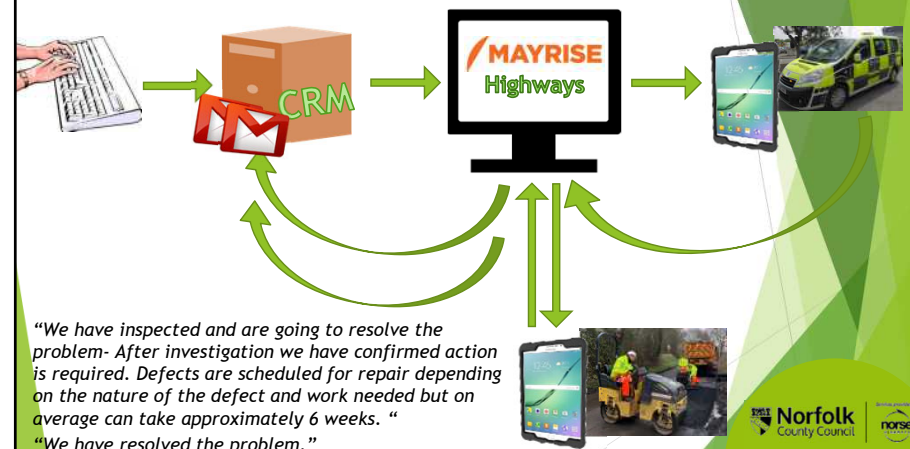
In Norfolk, we maintain approximately 6,125 miles of roads and 2,812 miles of footways.

The following information outlines how we manage, repair and prevent potholes in Norfolk.

Number of Potholes



Reporting Potholes – The Customer Journey



A Risk-Based Approach

Likelihood	Severity				
	Extensive 5	Major 4	Minor 3	Minor 2	Negligible 1
Very Likely 5	25	20	15	10	5
Likely 4	20	15	10	5	5
Possible 3	15	10	5	5	5
Unlikely 2	10	5	5	5	5
Rare 1	5	5	5	5	5

We operate a risk-based approach in accordance with the national Code of Practice, updated in October 2018.

We have scheduled inspections that take place every day, the frequency of which is dependent on hierarchy.

We use a risk-based approach when identifying potholes and prioritising their repair.

We consider the type and severity of the defect alongside it's location to assess risk and determine a response time.

The majority of works are permanent repairs on the first visit.

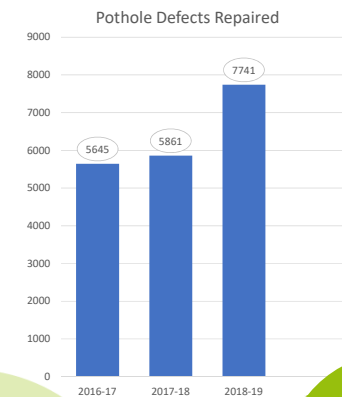
Additional Funding

To tackle the increase in potholes, central government provided additional funding in 2018.

Norfolk received:
£3.4m in March 2018 and
£12.7m in November 2018

In 2018-19 we repaired almost 2,000 more potholes than the previous year.

The extra funding also delivered 35 additional resurfacing schemes across the County.



NHT Survey

Norfolk ranked 1st out of 28 county councils that participated in the 2019 NHT survey.

We also ranked 1st in the following Key Business Indicators:

KBI 23 Condition of Highways (9% above average)

KBI 24 Highway Maintenance

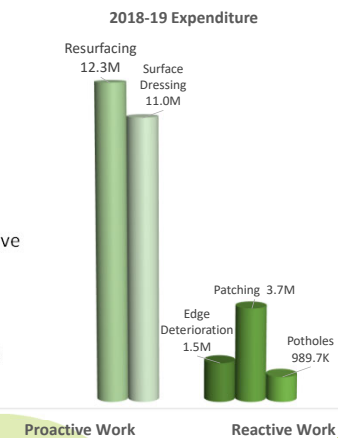


Proactive v Reactive Repairs

'Prevention is Better than Cure' -
Potholes Review 2012 by Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme

In Norfolk, we spend far more on proactive work than reactive pothole repairs.

Proactive work includes resurfacing, surface dressing, reclamation and joint sealing, which all extend the life of roads and prevent potholes forming.



Our Contractors

We rely on our contractors to carry out the necessary work identified to help in the battle against potholes.

Norse Highways

- Carries out routine maintenance work (including routine patching)
- Respond to emergencies (including Out of Hours response)
- Provides the specialist Spray Injection pothole repair service



Tarmac

- Routine patching in North & City areas
- Surface dressing & reclamation
- Resurfacing Schemes



Patching with hot asphalt

- This method is used across the county and is suitable for most surfaces.
- A permanent repair and a preferred solution.
- Dense Bound Material (DBM) or Hot Rolled Asphalt (HRA) - a mixture of sand, filler and bitumen - is transported to site in a 'hot box' and used to repair the pothole.
- This work is carried out by Norse Highways, Tarmac and sub-contractors such as NR Asphalt.



Cold Applied Instant Material

- Pre-mixed asphalt material is used as a reactive repair product to fill potholes, typically for emergencies out of hours, when hot material is unavailable
- It is a quick method of repair and can be less costly for small repairs.



Spray Injection Patching

- We use this method to help us repair potholes faster than conventional methods.
- It helped us deal with the significant demand as a result of the 'Beast from the East'.
- We typically use specialist contractors.



Spray Injection Patching

How it works...

1. A jet of air is directed at the pothole at high speed to remove all the dust and debris.
2. A cold bitumen emulsion is forced into every crack and crevice of the pothole, sealing the defect and protecting it by preventing water from getting in.
3. The aggregate mix is fired at high speed through the hose, evenly coating the granules with bitumen emulsion.



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Improving the Way We Work

The establishment of Norse Highways brings us the opportunity to deliver more efficient ways of working.

Close working relationships help make this happen.

Post transfer, 98% of pothole defects have been completed by Norse on time.

It is in Norse Highway's Business Plan to identify efficiencies with savings of up to £500,000 by year 5.

Teams on both sides are encouraged to be pragmatic.

Allocating pothole work to geographical resource/equipment best placed to deliver the work efficiently

The teams identifying and ordering work are empowered to take a pragmatic approach

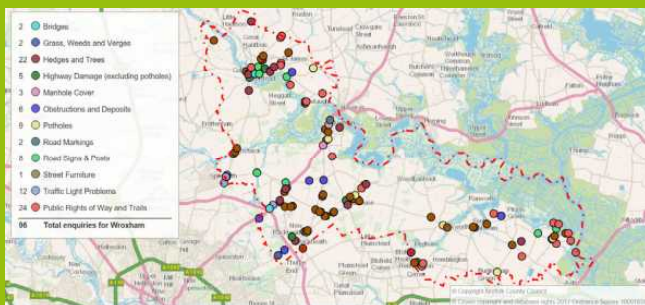
Empowered to spot and fix repairs when potholes found on route

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To see the reported defects in your area:

<http://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/enquiries/>



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In Summary

- 01 We take a risk based approach to decision making in order to efficiently and effectively maintain roads.
- 02 Highways teams are encouraged to take a common sense and pragmatic approach when prioritising and programming work.
- 03 We favour prevention rather than cure and will continue to spend more on proactive prevention than reactive repairs.
- 04 Additional funding has allowed us to carry out more resurfacing and improve road condition, resulting in improved public perception (NHT).
- 05 Our close relationship with Norse Highways & Tarmac allow us to work flexibly, identify efficiencies, and respond quickly to changing financial situations.

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For more information or to report a pothole visit:

<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes>