

# Highways Transformation

## Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Version 2.0 Revised Date for Committee

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024



## **Strategic Plan 2022–26:**

Fix more roads and improve transport and digital connections

## **Vision:**

Deliver an excellent customer experience and improve the quality of our roads.

## **Three-part Highways Transformation Programme:**

1. Operational Delivery (Additional Investment & Functional Plans)
2. Customer Journey
3. Member's Offer

# Operational Delivery Update

**Structural maintenance** - 18 sites complete, 0 on-site at end of December (due to Christmas embargo period) and 10 in design due start during Q4 (2023/24) financial year.

Maintenance schemes & pre-scheme investigations due to start on site in January

- A511 Horninglow Road North, Burton upon Trent (£0.9M)
- A52 Ash Bank, Werrington (£0.78M)
- A34 Stafford (Weeping Cross to Queensville) – street lighting and drainage works ahead of main scheme in 2024/25

Investigation works

- A34 Beecroft Road, Cannock – drainage survey & core sampling in advance of main works starting in April

**Preventative maintenance** – Season of preventative treatment now ended. Pre-patching for next year's treatment ongoing, additional planer crew engaged to deliver further funding.

**Repairing Places Pilot** – trials and funding now completed. This pilot explored repairing places rather than defects, carrying out repairs to multiple features at the same time, and combining the repair of high and low risk potholes together. A report is now being prepared for consideration by the Highway Transformation Strategic Board. In the meantime, the Member £2M pothole fund remains an alternative method for Members to identify and prioritise adjacent high and low risk pothole defects for repair.



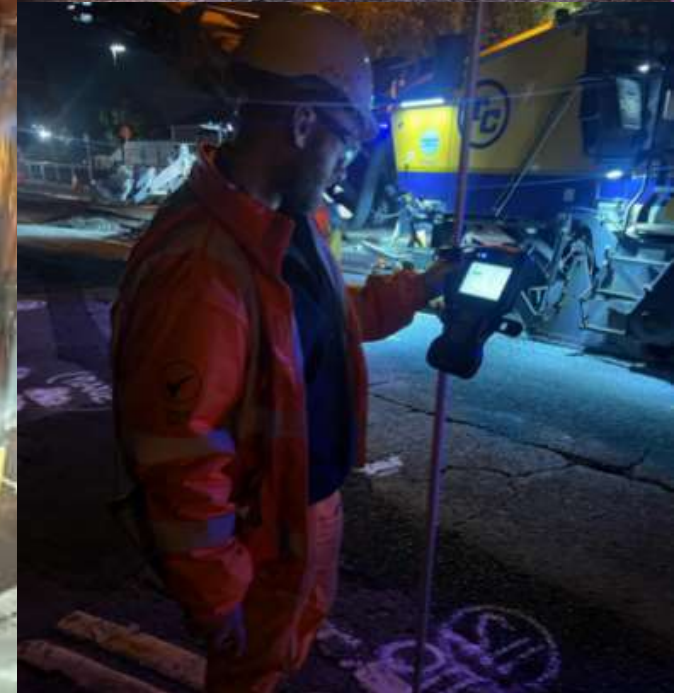


## Structural Maintenance Scheme in Burton-upon-Trent completed

A38 Claymills/A5121 Derby Road Junction – Completed 11<sup>th</sup> October Value £0.5M SCC Investment



Mill Street, Cannock  
Carriageways and Footways – completed November 2023  
Value £560k LUF2 Investment





Resurfacing and repairs completed to A518  
Bamford Bridge and Bridge Street, Uttoxeter  
Value £0.4M DfT Pothole Fund







# Refurbishment works to A53 Broad Street, Leek completed

Value £250k DfT Pothole Fund



# Other Completed Schemes

## Swan, Rimer and Joe Rakes, Hollinsclough

√ Completed November 2023

Improvements made to existing drainage systems and safety critical repairs of the unsurfaced elements of the Swan, Rimer and Joes Rakes after damage was caused as a result of vehicle usage, with the rakes being washed away and leaving exposed rock on the tracks.





## New Cycleway Station Street, Borough Road, Burton Upon Trent

✓ Completed September 2023

New cycleways on both sides of the road between Mosley Street and George Street, and a cycleway on the southern side of Borough Road to the railway station and the northern side of Station Street between George Street and Union Street.





## Landywood Lane Junctions, Cheslyn Hay

✓ Completed September 2023

Install two new junctions for a housing development funded by the developer Cameron Homes on Landywood Lane in Cheslyn Hay. The scheme included full site clearance, earthworks, kerbing and footways, carriageway resurfacing and lining as well as the provision of new street lighting.





## i54 Plot D Access Road

√ Completed July 2023

Extension to 33-acre site including statutory diversion works, large diameter drainage installation and earthworks.



# Other Schemes





Chatterley Valley Enterprise Zone – S278 Development, Staffordshire County Council with Amey takeover site following the contractor going into administration





Essential drainage works commence in the village of Standon





Swainsley Bridge to reopen following repair





Phase one of Active Travel Scheme in Stafford completed on time ahead of Christmas





Gallowstree roundabout scheme,  
Newcastle-under-Lyme completed





Tamworth Public Footpath No 4  
Link to Town Centre, railway station and new  
property development





Trent and Mersey Canal Towpath Upgrade  
between Kings Bromley and Fradley Junction

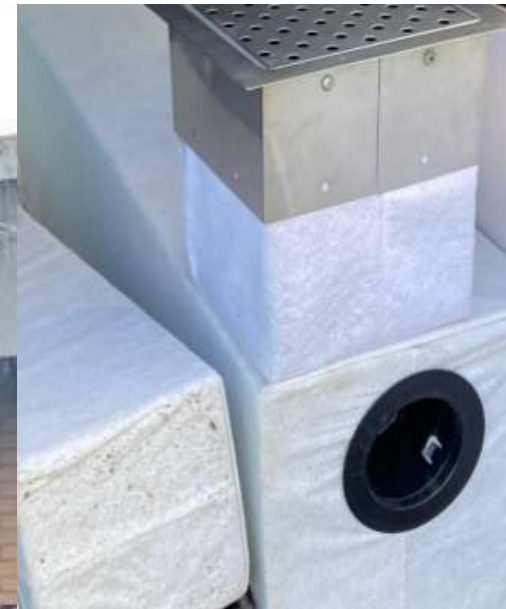
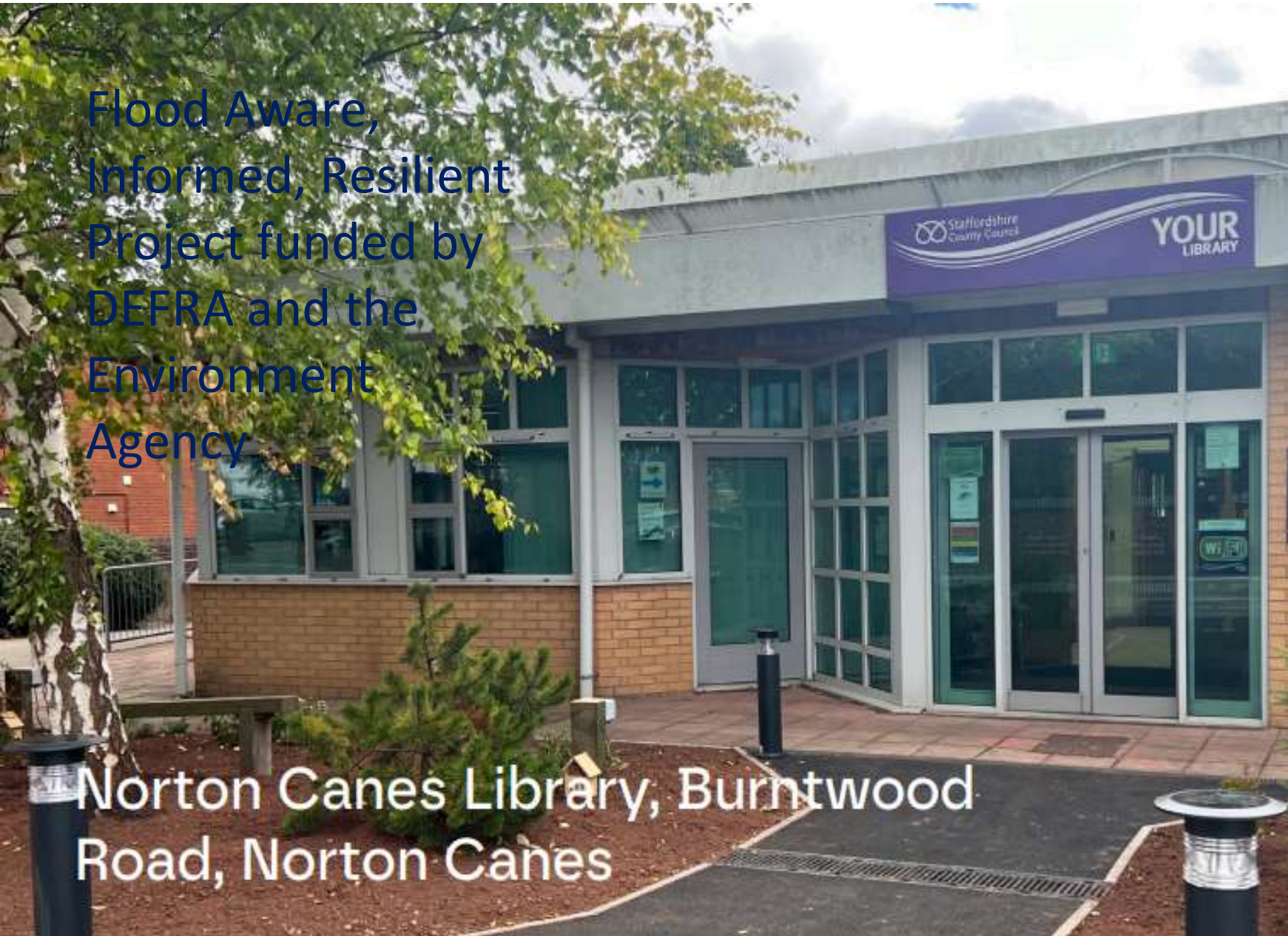


**CANAL  
TOWPATH  
SCHEME  
COMPLETED**



Flood Aware,  
Informed, Resilient  
Project funded by  
DEFRA and the  
Environment  
Agency

Norton Canes Library, Burntwood  
Road, Norton Canes





# JCB Pothole Pro

On track to repair approximately 14,000 sq.m of road by end of March 2024



## Express & Star

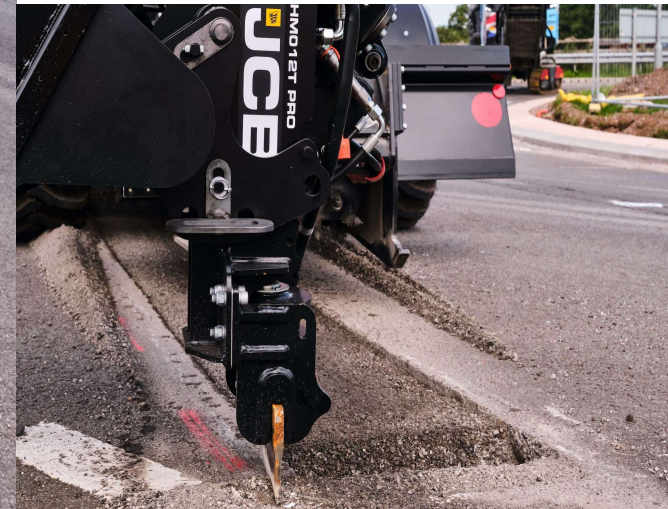
### Pothole repair machine receives high praise for patching up Staffordshire roads

A pioneering machine which repairs potholes in an average time of eight minutes has been praised for its role in patching up Staffordshire's roads.

By Isabelle Parkin Published Oct 31 [Comments](#)



Cabinet member for highways and transport at Staffordshire County Council, David Williams, with the JCB Pothole Pro





**Pothole defects** – 17.3% increase in high-risk statutory defects identified in financial year to end October in 23/24 (4,650) as Cat 3 defects age. However, early benefit of capital renewals of worn-out roads and timely preventative maintenance as number of carriageway, footway and cycleway defects from July onwards has been less than last year. Significant increase in high-risk defects also being seen in December. Options being explored to ensure target response for high-risk defects is being met.

**Pothole repairs** – 15, 938 pothole defects repaired over the summer months is a 15.3% (2,109) increase compared to last year as a result of additional investment including DfT Additional Pothole fund.

**Pothole jobs completed on time (December):**

- Emergency – 98.03% - *contract target 99.0%*.
- Category 1 – 96.66% within 24hrs – *contract target 96.7%*
- Category 2 – 75% within 7-days – *contract target 71.0%*.
  
- Significant impact of several recent named storm events on operational activity including drainage, increased number of higher risk potholes, damaged trees and winter service operations. This has required redeployment of some crews from planned repairs (Category 3) to higher risk defects and has been enabled through the agility and flexibility of our delivery partner. For example, the number of Category 1 higher risk defects identified in January 2024 (to 25<sup>th</sup>) stands at 318 compared to 153 for the whole of January 2023. This is having an impact on the repair of lower risk defects including for example Member escalated repairs as crews are re-allocated to emergency and high-risk defects. Additional crews are being provided for the remainder of this financial year and, subject to investment decisions are likely to be retained into the next period.
  
- UK named storms in 2023/24 season to date (season starts in August) now stands at 10 with the latest being Storm Jocelyn. By comparison the 2022/23 saw only two UK named storms across the year.
  
- **Gullies** – >93% of gullies cleansed left running on first visit. Longer time being spent on right first time, increased escalations due to the wet autumn and early winter is impacting adversely on the planned programme. Additional resource (two crews) is being brought in for February and March to support the planned programme.



**Customer** – 50% increase in customer reports in calendar year in 2023 (45,912) compared to 2023 (30,602). Recruitment is underway to further increase the number Highway Inspectors to deal with this significantly increased demand and ensure our planned safety inspections are carried. Planned inspections remain a key part of the highway authority's duty to maintain under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 , and our risk-based approach to managing the network in line with national codes of practice to keep the highway safe. Numbers of enquiries in January 2024 (to 25<sup>th</sup>) stand at 5524 compared to 4662 in January 2023.

**Quality** – Both the County Council and Amey have a range of measures to minimise the risk of issues with quality of work starting with the Staffordshire Specification for Highway Works and the testing of materials and provision of advice by Staffordshire's own Highway Laboratory. Further assurance is provided through the Council's Compliance Officer, Clerk of the Works, Traffic & Network Inspectors and Amey's quality management system. Where issues do arise, for example repairs carried out in life expired roads, the seasonal timing of works, or wet/cold conditions these can comprise the effectiveness of repairs/materials. Overall, quality scorecards remain positive but where issues do occur, they are investigated, opportunities for improvement identified and remediated where required.

### **Value for Money**

Competition in the supply chain through Amey procurement processes, for example road surfacing contractors.

Buying power of a large company.

Reduced overheads compared to the individual procurement of schemes.

Target costs for structural maintenance schemes reviewed by County Council staff.

Ability to respond and mobilise quickly to changes in funding.

Larger schemes and programmes subject to additional best value scrutiny.

Future Highway Research Group/ADEPT Value for Money Review 2021 – Costs are well managed; Staffordshire County Council delivers good value for money and compares well to the FHRG Peer Group.

New contract arrangements from October 2024 provide a strengthened client capability, and increased transparency through functional specifications and annual plans to provide further assurance on value for money.



**Claims** – 2,900 new claims received in 2023, 103% higher than the 1,428 received in 2022. Numbers received in January 2024 (to 25<sup>th</sup>) stand at 583, compared to 390 in January 2023. Significant pressure on claims and inspection teams due to this significant increase and the service is working both with internal risk and insurance teams to understand the reasons and deal with more than twice the volume compared to the previous year.

National and local announcements about investment in fixing more roads, media attention such as National Pothole day, pressure on cost of living, increase of higher risk defects and the five-fold increase in named storms this season appear to be contributing factors to the significant increase in claims and enquiries. This is despite more defects being repaired and a reduction in the outstanding workstack because of the additional investment.



# 2024/25 Investment




Subject to MTFS approval by Full Council:

### **CAPITAL MAINTENANCE**

- SCC investing an extra £50m in highway capital maintenance over the next 3-years
- Details of the 24/25 extra investment (£20m) will be approved at Cabinet on 20 March 2024.
- Include a mix of capital renewal schemes, preventative maintenance programme, additional pothole repairs and drainage improvements.
- Includes £3.188m from Network North (Cancellation of HS2), with further £180m announced over the following 9 years (25/26 - 33/34) - profile to be confirmed.
- Includes £5.9m Levelling Up Fund 2 (LUF2) structural maintenance projects on Major Road Network in Stafford and Cannock.

### **REVENUE MAINTENANCE**

- Increase from 6 to 8 cuts of urban grass verges
  - Increase from 1 to 3 routine weed control treatments
  - New Environmental Maintenance Team resource
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# Functional Management Approach

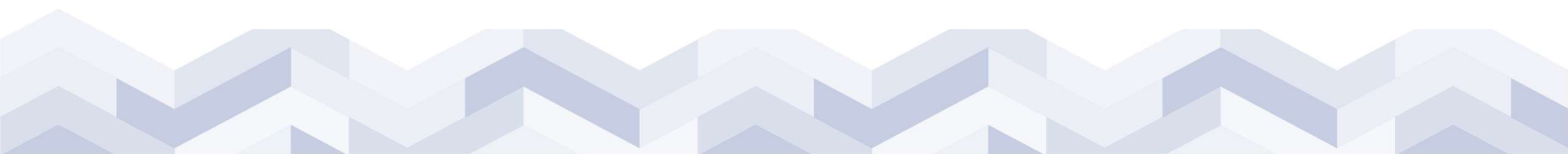
## **Phase 1 Functional Plans (Carriageway, footway, drainage, soft landscaping and winter service):**

- Slower than expected progress by Amey in the drafting of the Annual Plan. An action plan has been drawn up to ensure the Annual Plan is available for Phase 1 Functional Plans for sign off by the I+ Strategic Partnership Board in April 2024.

## **Q4 (2023/24) milestones:**

- Receive and review the Phase 1 Annual Plans
- Review Functional Specifications / Improvement Plan against the current 23/24 budget
- Review Functional Specifications / Improvement Plan against the future 24/25 budget

## **Future phases:**

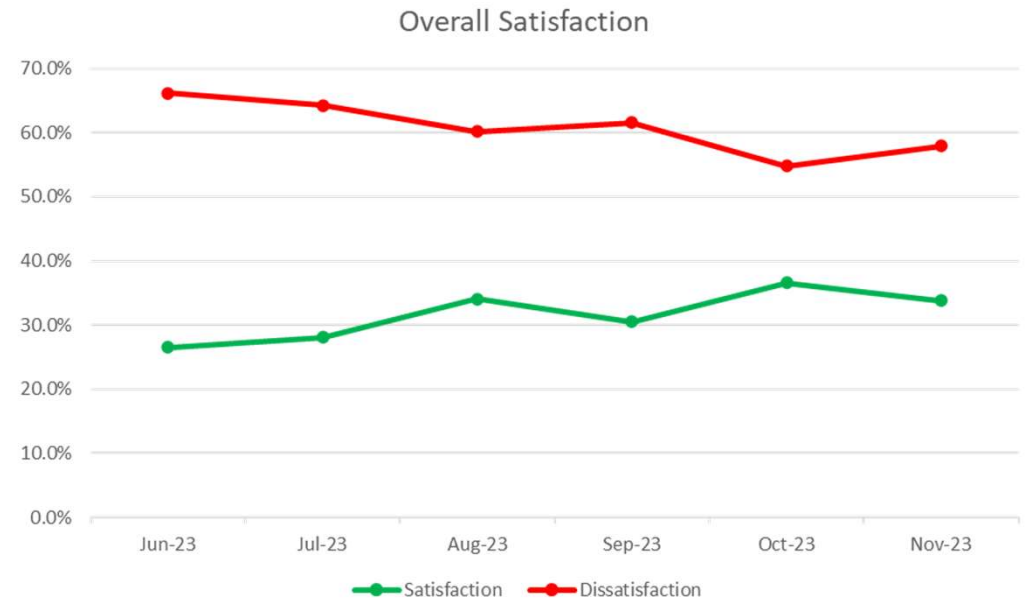
- Phase 2 (all other Amey provided services) – October-24 deadline
  - Phase 3 (all other highway services) – Review of future programme to commence October-24
- 



# Customer

# Customer Satisfaction Performance

- The CX tool has been live for customers reporting defect, for **6 months**
- The results are combined from both surveys (offered at the start and end of the defect reporting journey)
- Initial observations shows the total **dissatisfaction** (dissatisfied & very dissatisfied) is trending downwards over the time period
- Initial observations shows the total **satisfaction** (satisfied & very satisfied) is trending upwards over the time period
- CJWG currently viewing the comments to identify themes and future actions
- *Please note: The survey is defect specific – CJWG currently identifying new pathways to incorporate new surveys*



**Goal:** The **satisfaction** line rises above the **dissatisfaction** line



# Information, IT Systems & Digital Update

## Customer Portal update

- January 2024 – Highways Transformation Strategic Board approved award of customer portal contract.
- February 2024 – begin building new customer portal.
- July to September 2024 – launch Phase 1 of the customer portal. There is ongoing discussion with the supplier to ascertain the feasibility of an earlier implementation date.

# Customer Portal – Phased Improvement Plan

## Phase 1 – July to September 2024 (to be confirmed)

Launch new Customer Portal (beta testing phase). The following improvements are planned for launch:

- Multiple defect reporting.
- Customer accounts.
- Ability for customers to view enquiry status.
- Dashboard for Member divisions (to be agreed with Members).
- Enhanced reporting ability for gullies, i.e. ability to: log an enquiry against a specific gully; view gully history (e.g. last time the gully was cleansed, outstanding repairs etc.); and highlight gullies not recorded on the system.
- Provide information to customers on planned carriageway preventative and structural maintenance schemes that are relevant to the defect being reported.
- Improved response speeds – enquiries will go directly to the correct team/person



# Customer Portal – Phased Improvement Plan

## Phase 2 – October to December 2024 (to be confirmed)

- Ability for customers to report against individual highway assets – signs, grit bins, vehicle restraint systems, known structures (bridges, tunnels, subways, retaining walls, culverts) street lighting, traffic signals and trees (tree data is being continually captured).
- Ability for customers to see inspection routes, inspector raised defects and inspection frequency when reporting defects.
- Ability for customers to see winter gritting routes when raising an enquiry.
- Ability for customers to see other planned highway works when raising an enquiry: integrated transport schemes, grass cutting schedules, weed spraying schedules, planned grit bin refills etc.

# Customer Portal – Phased Improvement Plan

## Phase 3 – January 2025 onwards (to be confirmed with supplier)

The following improvements planned for Phase 3 are:

- Ability for customers to see grass cutting areas and frequency of cutting.
- Add further highways assets that can be reported against on a risk/cost/benefit basis – road signs, road markings, bollards, unknown structures, drainage infrastructure, guardrails, vehicles restraint systems.
- Ability to offer increasing bespoke responses due to increased staff capacity as a result of Customer Portal efficiencies and better access to data.



# Members Offer

Aim: to provide an effective and efficient member response capability within the Highway service

Themes...	Updates...	Status
Provide quality IAG about Highway services facilitating meaningful local engagement	Functional specifications being prepared to provide clarity about service provision	On track
	<b>Pitching the Message - Embedding Customer Experience Tool across wider service areas</b>	Ongoing
	<b>Member training events - next session on Winter Maintenance in Jan</b>	On track
	<b>Customer Journey improvements - CRM software incorporating Member requirements</b>	On track
Provide prompt responses to member queries re. service delivery	Community Highways team will continue to provide point of contact	In place
	'Further & Faster' option - capacity for service leads to provide prompt responses	Option
Provide timely delivery of member priorities	<b>Two tick approach operational - raising awareness with wider delivery teams</b>	On
	Member priority factor added to Cat 3 defect matrix	Implemented
	<b>Member Priority Potholes - 2,700 prioritised defects (+500) - 67% complete</b>	On track
	Planned improvements to commissioning of DHP delivery	Req. Design
	'Further & Faster' option - Community Highways to design small scale DHP schemes	Option
	'Further & Faster' option - 3-tier working/self-help (procurement/licences/liabilities/H&S)	Option



# Communications

## Progress Update

- Refreshed key transformation priorities have been communicated to all staff and workforce.
- Internal highways transformation microsite updated with details of priorities, progress and next steps.
- Media coverage:

Period	Total No.	Positive	Neutral	Negative
November	103	69.9%	30.1%	0%
December	127	45.7%	44.9%	9.4%

- Positives include 4 radio hits (gritting) and 1 TV hit (pothole funding).
- Negative relates to national media pothole coverage

## Q4 (2023/24) milestones

Monthly three key things – to concentrate on updates on operational delivery, customer journey and member offer.

- Develop member's update and share with members regularly.
- Focus on winter for external communications, both media and social media.
- Additional effort to support need for pothole holding repairs



# Summary

## 1. Operational Delivery – Green

- Extra investment programme is on-track
- Development of new delivery model (Functional Plans) has been slow but following mitigation remains on-track to meet April milestone
- Operational performance remains strong albeit facing exceptional winter weather and network condition related challenges, including rising numbers of defects and claims.
- Positive outlook for future capital maintenance investment

## 2. Customer Journey - Green

- Overall positive media coverage
- Positive trend in defect report customer satisfaction
- Improvements programme is on-track

## 3. Member's Offer – Green

- Agreed improvements programme is on track
- Positive feedback from new Member's training events
- Further and faster options identified but remain subject to future funding opportunities.