

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 22 JULY 2021**

**Question to Cllr David Williams  
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**By Cllr Afsar**

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**Question**

As a new County Councillor, since becoming elected I have been inundated with requests to visit Potholes and general conditions of the Roads around Burton Town Division which are in a very poor state of repair.

Having visited many roads around my division I am constantly finding that there are large areas of the division that have had previous work done by third party contractors such as Gas works, Virgin Media etc and the finish is of a poor standard further leading to pot holes and road sinkage which in turn requires SCC to repair at their own cost.

Could the Cabinet Member confirm what are the arrangements for checking the quality of work by these contractors and by whom, do the works carry any guarantees, what are the percentages of work completed and are there and KPI's kept of such quality checks?

Finally, would the Cabinet Member for Highways at a mutually convenient date and time accompany me for a short drive through my division to see and experience my concerns?

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**Reply**

Utility companies have legal powers to install and maintain their apparatus in the highway. This legislation and a series of national codes of practice and specifications exist to ensure that their work is safe and fit for purpose. Utility companies, as professional private organisations are entirely responsible for the quality of their work and must ensure that their work meets the national specifications.

All utility reinstatements have a guarantee period of two years during which any faults must be remedied at their cost. The same legislation and national codes of practice permit us to inspect a utility company's work.

There are over 30,000 holes dug in Staffordshire roads each year by utilities. The national code of practice for inspections sets out a process whereby the County Council visually inspects a random 30% sample of utility works:

10% during the works

10% immediately after works have completed, and

10% at the end of the two-year guarantee period

The utility companies pay us to undertake these inspections. If more than 10% of inspected sites fail to comply then the utility company responsible is usually required to put in place an improvement plan to try to prevent further problems occurring. We can also undertake additional random inspections on poor performing utility companies to ensure compliance with their improvement plan. There is currently one utility company with an improvement plan in Staffordshire.

We undertake extra inspections as part of normal highway duties when we receive reports from members of the public. These additional inspections are undertaken at any stage of the reinstatement's life, even after the two-year guarantee period.

Inspections undertaken are mainly visual inspections and are done to check that the correct cones and signs are being used or that the surface of the reinstatement has not sunk, cracked or is not visually defective. We also operate a small program of both random and targeted coring to determine compliance of the layers not visible on the surface.

The Cabinet Member for Highways would be pleased to meet with yourself and the Network Inspection team at a mutually convenient date and time to look at local issues with utility reinstatements.