

Report title: Response to PSEG Review of Member-led Pothole Scheme	
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
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Date: 10 May 2023	For: Discussion
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in response to the review carried out by the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PSEG) into the Member-led Pothole Scheme on 20 April 2023.
- 1.2 A number of recommendations, outlined below, were put forward following this review. Responses to these recommendations are laid out below each point.
- 1.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport is attending the PSEG Scrutiny Committee on the 18 May 2023 where he will welcome further discussion.

2. Recommendations and Responses

- 2.1 **Recommendation:** A majority of members would like to see the member-led pothole scheme continue and be extended (e.g., to include footways).

Response: adding footways or other such extensions would add complexity to the jobs that are being delivered, which would result in further delays to timescales; delays in the jobs being completed was a specific point raised at previous PSEG Scrutiny meetings, and one that we are keen to avoid. The 2023/24 Member led pothole scheme will be pothole specific again; however, there are schemes that are going through the Local Highway Panels that focus on footway repairs.

- 2.2 **Recommendation:** Members would like to see a tracking system and a streamlined reporting system. Ideas in this area included a 'live' tracking system allowing members to see the status of each submitted pothole and incorporating the member-led scheme into the existing reporting system on the 'Tell Us' website to avoid duplication.

Response: The existing tracking and reporting system set up was to ensure submissions relating to the member-led pothole scheme could be managed as a standalone work stream within the organisation. This is the most efficient method of operation for the service and ensures budget is not spent on additional staff resources or new/alterations to IT systems.

The current system generates emails to the Member who submitted the report

at the following stages:

- When received into system
- If Rejected
- Planning the works
- When completed

This is in line with the 'Tell Us' reporting/submission system.

To provide any more information than this would require additional staff resources to be employed and charged to the ring-fenced budget available, therefore reducing the amount available for works on the Network.

- 2.3 **Recommendation:** Reflecting the results of the survey, PSEG members would like greater clarity on whether the existing scheme provides value for money. This should include information on the cost per pothole of the member-led scheme compared to a pothole repaired through the 'normal' Highways route.

Response: There is no difference in cost for 'normal' or Member led potholes repairs. The Member led scheme was programmed to ensure delivery teams went into specific areas with the plan being to complete everything available from Member submissions on these visits.

Costs per pothole is not an available option as the operational delivery is at a Task Order level and includes all staff, direct resource and Supply Chain Partner resource. Each pothole varies in size and so comparison is not always beneficial or a true reflection. A single submission may cover more than one pothole and could also rectify a number of defects.

- 2.4 **Recommendation:** Members should be provided with an annual scheme of work showing the planned scheduling of local repairs (including through s106 contributions) in their division. This could then be used by councillors to inform their choices for the member-led scheme.

Response: This is something that is being looked at across the Service and being managed by the Communications Team. Further information on any progress will be shared in due course. We have already rolled out a monthly update to all County Members that will show the planned works in their district for the month ahead. We would welcome all Members to share this information with the residents they represent.

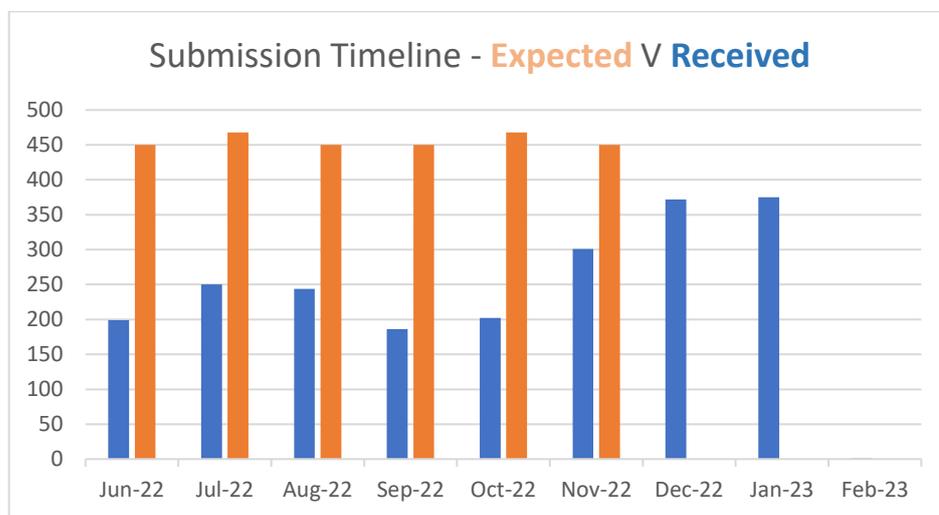
- 2.5 **Recommendation:** The timings for the scheme should be reviewed with some members suggesting that the deadline for submissions under the current scheme was too early, as many potholes only appeared after winter.

Response: The submission programme was shared in advance and was prepared to try and ensure there was a consistent and regular submission of potholes throughout the period of the scheme. This was to ensure that all resources, staff and operational delivery, were utilised efficiently over the course of the year. The graph below shows actual against programmed submissions.

It is important to stress that delays to submissions greatly impacts when the work can be completed, as the graph shows. The Cabinet Member extended submissions in 2022 to allow for some entries to be submitted as late as January, meaning that these are still being delivered now.

We are planning on starting the scheme as early as possible this year and so this will allow for potholes that have appeared during the winter season the be submitted when the first round opens for each Member.

There will not be an opportunity for extensions this year for submissions, and the Cabinet Member asks that Members support him in this and ensure that potholes are submitted on time to allow for the works to be completed according to the programme. This ensures the schemes operates in the most effective and efficient way possible.



2.6 Recommendation: Members would like to see greater clarity provided on the resource available and planned timetable for work to ensure that expectations match reality. This reflected members' disappointment that some repairs submitted under the existing scheme remain outstanding.

Response: Until specific locations of submissions are inspected it is difficult to give a timeline in advance. Each location is impacted by traffic volumes, road layout and position of pothole in the carriageway. If a road closure is required for example, this can take up to 13 weeks before approval is granted.

Individual reports would not be possible without additional staff resource being allocated. If there are any efficiencies or ideas on automation that can be identified during the above exercise on 'reports for future planned works', this could be considered.

We would again stress the importance of the submissions being made on time, as delays in submission mean delays in the work being programmed and carried out.

3. Update and Next Steps

- 3.1 There will be a Member-led pothole scheme for 2023/2024. The scheme will function in much the same way as 2022/2023 scheme. We will be communicating with all Members when final details become available.