

# Balfour Beatty Living Places Members & Parish Briefing - April 2018

## Questions & Answers

*Provided below is a summary of questions raised at the April round of Members and Parish briefings. Any questions relating to specific locations are responded to direct to the originator.*

### **Routine and Reactive Maintenance**

#### **Q. What is the average cost to repair a pothole?**

A. The cost of repair is dependent on pothole size, location and type of repair used. Where the road is suitable for such, we would look to use a cut and fill technique as a permanent repair however where the condition of the road is not suitable for such we look to plug these potholes as cutting will only worsen the condition. Each of these have different costs associated with them, however the UK average to repair a pothole is currently £56. For repairs undertaken with use of the Velocity Patcher, the best possible cost to repair a pothole with such can be £12 per pothole. However it should be noted that the jetpatcher is not suitable or cost effective to use in all situations or locations.

#### **Q. How does Balfour Beatty have access to extra reserves for snow events, when will the cut-off be to stop repairing potholes that are caused by weather and therefore repaired using funds from the reserves?**

A. The reserve money is allocated to react to severe weather events, specifically to cover the additional gritting, resources and salt purchase. The reserve also covers other bad weather events such as covering the cost of pumping during flooding and is not just for snow. Reserve money cannot be used to fix potholes.

#### **Q. How much money have pothole claims cost Hereford Council this year?**

A. This year there have been 244 vehicle damage claims (between 1<sup>st</sup> Nov and 31<sup>st</sup> March) with the current claimed amount being £59,854.90. Of this amount, £640.31 has been paid to date. It should be noted that in order for the claimant to receive a 'pay out' they must prove the defect is a danger, a breach of Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 and then 'pay out' will only happen if fail to demonstrate the operation of a reasonable system of inspection and repairs, as Section 58 of the act. Our reasonable system of inspection and repair is set out in the Highway Maintenance Plan.

#### **Q. There has been a lot of talk regarding defects and work to rural roads however what about urban roads? These also need attention and resurfacing as HGV's are causing damage.**

A. There are works planned for urban roads as well as strategic routes and urban roads, these can be found in the annual plan resurfacing/ surface dressing programme.

#### **Q. How long will it take for roads to get repaired or for the network to recover?**

A. We hope it will take a month to six weeks, weather dependant.

**Q. Potholes that are filled with water in bad weather cannot be seen at night. Why does Balfour Beatty not start using fluorescent paint when marking around them?**

A. Note made, this will be looked in to.

**Q. If water on the roads is causing potholes, why aren't Balfour Beatty clearing grips and improving drainage?**

A. This is resource dependant and so we are looking to increase resource within this area.

**Q. Why are potholes that are next to blocked drains being repaired yet the blocked drains not being cleared whilst the work team are on site?**

A. We will pass this on to the gangs as they should be looking to clear grips when filling potholes. We're hoping parish councils can liaise with landowner to discuss draining responsibilities where required. Maintenance of the grips are the responsibility of Hereford Council however water run off from the land to the network is the landowners responsibility. Subsequent drainage of the water from the network in to the drainage system is then also the responsibility of Hereford Council.

**Q. Can parish councils be told when BBLP will be working on the local roads and when to expect disruption, such as when BBLP are filling potholes?**

A. We wouldn't be able to do that due to the way that we operate and the way that the jobs are scheduled.

**Q. When defects are reported through the website, how are these prioritised?**

A. These are passed on to the steward to inspect, assess for repair and prioritise according to the Highways Maintenance Plan.

**Q. What autonomy do Locality Stewards have each day when inspecting?**

A. Each defect is reference against a map on the tablet and then if prioritised as an emergency the Locality Steward will call it in for emergency repair.

**Q. The website that is used to report pothole defects is not user friendly. We would like the map to show if potholes have been reported, when inspected and when fixed so that the same pothole is not duplicated.**

A. Hereford Council are working to improve the website, the update is currently being tested to allow it to be implemented soon.

**Q. There is currently no defect feedback received, a simple email to say whether completed would be beneficial.**

A. This is part of the update that is currently being tested.

**Q. Does Balfour Beatty have an obligation to clear gullies on side roads and lanes? Currently the Lengthsman is undertaking the works but the parish have only a finite budget for this.**

A. The gullies can be reported via the website and will then be inspected for jetting.

**Q. Having inspected rural side lanes annually, are any repairs then actually put forward for the defects found?**

A. Yes, each defect will be categorised and prioritised based on risk. If a defect is reported through the web system then the steward will conduct an ad-hoc inspection and the defect then repaired based on risk in timescales according to the Highways Maintenance Plan.

**Q. Are web reports constantly reviewed?**

A. Web reports automatically flow into the system from the web and are then passed on to the Locality Steward for looking in to.

**Q. Can the customer services number be circulated?**

A. Yes, please feel free to put the 01432 261800 number on parish websites and share with the parishes

**Q. What bus routes qualify for gritting?**

A. Bus routes are taken in to account however it depends on whether the roads are classed as primary or secondary gritting routes. During snow events we must prioritise the treatment of primary route.

**Q. Is there a grass cutting programme?**

A. Yes, this is being finalised and will be shared on Herefordshire Council website

**Q. It appears that fly tipping has worsened, what can be done to deter this?**

A. We firstly need to understand why it is done, although it could be laziness. In order to take domestic waste to the tip in a trailer or small van a ticket must first be obtained from the council, each household is allocated 12 of these tickets annually and without these non-domestic vehicles will be rejected from the council waste centre. A further contribution to fly tipping is the attitude of those who do it.

**Q. Litter on the dual carriageways and central reservations is a problem. In the upcoming road closure on the A40 are Balfour Beatty planning to undertake litter picking during the closure?**

A. Our Operations Director is currently on leave however we believe he had planned for the litter picking to take place during the closure.

**Surfacing works****Q. Why spend money on positing so many letters to households regarding road closures?**

A. Multiple locations are covered by the letters that are sent out. The denser the housing in the areas surrounding road works, the greater the number of letters that are then sent out but this is open to review if felt that not so many letters are required. We have a number of options when choosing to send out letters to householders and we always look at best value.

**Q. Why has only £5m of the money arising from legal ongoings with the previous contractor been released, not the full £8m?**

A. There is ongoing litigation and so the £3m is required as a reserve should the ongoing continue.

**Q. Why has Balfour Beatty not replaced cats eyes or repainted white lines?**

A. Where we are resurfacing, cats eyes will be reinstated. There is also a programme for the repainting of white lines however due to seasonal weather forecasts the programme tends to be undertaken through the summer months.

**Q. There have been a number of difficult and awkward diversions during the resurfacing works however it is disgusting how rude vehicle users can be to the staff manning the road closures. Is there anything that can be done?**

A. This is where parish councils can pass on information to locals to inform when and where the diversions will be in place to allow for the public to plan their journeys.

**Q. A44 resurfacing is very welcome but what about the A456 or A417? Are any further works planned under the challenge fund?**

A. There has been an indication given for a further round of challenge funding from the Government however we can't be sure that that is still the case with recent weather events as that money may now have been used elsewhere, such as the money allocated to local governments for road repairs following the snow events. Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty have an idea what we would bid for and how but we cannot be guaranteed to win any bid that is put forward.

**Q. People feel they are not being listened to and not being informed of works.**

A. We are working to make communities more aware of works going forward, it is also very important for parishes to liaise with their stewards regarding any concerns.

**Q. It is rumoured that further works to the A4103 have been delayed, and so we are concerned about the extent of these works.**

A. Nothing has been decided yet for any works, this is to be discussed in May and until such discussion nothing is finalised. The parishes will be notified of any works well in advance.

## **Supporting communities**

**Q. Are Balfour Beatty still encouraging community litter picks as collected litter is not being picked up soon enough by Balfour Beatty?**

A. We aim to pick up community litter pick waste within 5 days of the community group reporting to us where the litter has been left after the event has taken place.

**Q. How do we dispose of a litter generated from litter picking?**

A. BBLP run a service to support Herefordshire Council's Stop the Drop anti-litter campaign. Residents or groups planning to carry out a litter pick are requested to contact BBLP first on 01432 261800 for further details. Information is also available on the Council's website

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report\\_a\\_problem/107/litter/4](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/107/litter/4) . Herefordshire Council, Town and Parish Councils all have a duty of care to store and transfer the waste they produce to a properly licensed contractor. This is because the waste they produce is classified as Commercial waste and the use of the Council Tip would be illegal. Consequently if a Town or Parish Council has spare capacity within their waste storage bins residents could put their collected litter in them following approval to do so. This would give an additional disposal route for litter picked waste at no additional cost as the waste bin charges are by volume not weight.

**Q. We understand that community groups shouldn't litter pick trunk roads or A/B roads?**

A. We confirm that we would not be safe for community groups to litter pick adjacent to main roads without appropriate traffic management and risk assessments in place.

**Q. Can the TRO programme for 2018/19 be issued so that members can have an idea where their schemes are on the list? Also, will the community commissioning model have any effect on this list?**

A. The TRO programme can be accessed if requested and has been circulated to all members. Additional works through the community commissioning model will not take away resources from existing programme identified in the annual plan.

**Q. What happened with grounds maintenance equipment from the previous contractor when Balfour Beatty took over the contract? Would this equipment be given to the parishes or community groups?**

A. The equipment that was here when Balfour Beatty took over the contract is still being used. This equipment still has value and so may be auctioned off rather than given away. We may consider options of a loan out to groups but would need to consider best value.

**Q. The drainage leaflet is good; would there be an opportunity for a mud on the road leaflet?**

A. We already have some guidance on signage for farmers but agree that a more formalised leaflet would be beneficial. We will consider this for the future.

**Q. Who do parishes report such a situation to?**

A. information will be provided in an updated guidance leaflet. It is important to encourage landowners to recognise their responsibilities.

**Q. There are always some landowners that ignore riparian responsibilities. What support does Balfour Beatty offer for such a situation?**

A. Balfour Beatty has the responsibility to enforce and send strongly worded letters explaining what work is required and give a timescale for the works to be completed in but the decision to prosecute in such a situation is the responsibility of Hereford Council.

**Q. Where there is overhanging vegetation on the pavements and the soil is encroaching on to the footpaths, who is responsible for this if it coming from a garden?**

A. If this is reported via the website then the Locality Steward will inspect and action taken as necessary.

**Q. As a PFO, a footpath has tried to be kept open but has been closed. Where is this reported to?**

A. This can be reported through the Locality Steward or the Report It tool and will be passed on to the enforcement team.

**Q. Is there a possibility that Hereford Council could run campaign regarding mud on the road with NFU at harvest time?**

A. We already work with them and have taken a note of the earlier point made regarding the creation of a mud on the road leaflet.

**Q. Does Balfour Beatty use community payback to have those that are legally ordered to undertake community service to clean or litter pick the highways?**

A. The number of litter picking volunteers who borrow the kits that Balfour Beatty offer is growing, a community payback programme wouldn't be able to litter pick roads due to safety but could litter pick open spaces.

**Q. What is Balfour Beatty's involvement and input with the Community Commissioning Model?**

A. The commissioning model provides a mechanism for parishes to have work undertaken that is above what would usually be offered. Balfour Beatty supervise and provide guidance for this, managing permissions and competencies and ensuring infrastructure is safeguarded.

## **Lengthsman scheme**

**Q. What tasks will Balfour Beatty do going forwards and what jobs should be picked up by the lengthsman?**

A. Other than the removal of the grant funded element, there has been no other change to the lengthsman scheme. Where Balfour Beatty would prioritise works on A, B roads and in urban areas it is recognised that parishes may prioritise low risk jobs on C, U roads and rural communities that could be undertaken by a Lengthsman at a sooner convenience than Balfour Beatty could offer.

**Q. Will cash be requested to reinstate the subsidy for the lengthsman scheme?**

A. We need to assess where money is spent for the best output for the whole county before we can review.

**Q. Can a lengthsman or a contractor be used to fill potholes on residential roads?**

A. Yes, but only for works in locations that have both been approved by a Locality Steward for lengthsman that have the required competencies and training.

**Q. Are Balfour Beatty not providing training for Lengthsman to fill potholes?**

A. Balfour Beatty has never provided training for lengthsman to fill potholes but we have previously provided a briefing session for guidance, however the responsibility for training is on the lengthsman and the parish council.

**Q. The PFO's have been asked to sign a Guidance document, however the document contains a section regarding liaison with landowners which some PFO's are not comfortable with and therefore puts them off.**

A. This will be looked in to.

## **Major projects**

**Q. Are we doing traffic checks to assess the use of the City Link Road? Traffic queues up Aylestone Hill as only one lane goes in to Hereford and yet two flow in to the City Link Road.**

A. The traffic lights at the City Link road junction with Commercial Road and Aylestone Hill are being reviewed to favour traffic in the most popular direction.

**Q. Why has Leominster Bypass not been included in the briefing?**

A. Leominster Bypass is not in the forward plan, it is currently at the negotiation stage.

**Q. If it will cost £10 million per year to maintain road conditions, what is being spent per year now?**

A. Our given budget for the highway is £5 million to £6 million each financial year.

**Q. Does the South Wye Transport Package include improvements to the road from Belmont in to the city?**

A. This is being reviewed at present.

**Q. We are told that Hereford Council are on a tight budget so what was the rationale in building the new City Link Road?**

A. The City Link Road was built to open land for the development of the city. The land that the road has opened up will now be used for the new university and the new Police and Fire stations. These opportunities give Hereford the ability to go forward with developing as a city.

## **Performance**

**Q. Is Balfour Beatty's performance measured against KPI's and OPI's, if so can this be shared?**

A. This can be shared. We hit 100% on all indicators other than street cleansing and category 2 defects. The reason for this being that we changed to a new system for street cleansing which shows as a reduction on performance on the KPI's during implementation and due to the increased volume of category 2 defects due to the recent weather this is also reflected in performance.

**Q. Are you subject to penalties for not achieving KPI's?**

A. Yes, there are financial implications if KPI's are not met.