

Ward Event – Annandale South

Road Repairs

7 February 2019

Ward Events allow local residents to engage with Councillors in their Ward about issues that affect them.

Councillor Sean Marshall proposed this Ward Event to provide residents of Annandale South with an opportunity to learn about road repairs including the reporting, prioritisation and inspection process and Sustrans funding for cycle routes and footpaths.

16 local residents joined Annandale South Councillors and senior staff from Dumfries and Galloway Council for a meeting chaired by Councillor Richard Brodie. During the meeting, residents were able to raise local concerns and ask questions in relation to road repairs.

Dumfries and Galloway Council would like to thank local residents for their contribution to the meeting.

For more information, or to discuss this feedback, please contact:

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Open discussion regarding potholes

A presentation on road network management was provided by Graeme Alison, Roads Manager, and Stuart Caven, Team Leader Roads Network.

Key points regarding pothole inspection, repair prioritisation and the inspection process:

- There are different inspection frequencies for each classification of road (within Ward 10 there are no A Class roads, 78km of B Class roads, 56km of C class roads and 115km of unclassified roads).
- Road defects can be reported via the [Council's website](#).
- The risk associated with each road defect is assessed by inspectors. Each defect is categorised and prioritised as follows:
 - Category 1 Repair or make safe within 48 hours
 - Category 2a Repair or make safe within 5 working days
 - Category 2b Repair or make safe within 4 weeks
 - Category 2c Repair or make safe within 6 months / next available programme of work
- Inspectors send their reports, via mobile devices, to a central team who schedule the repairs and advise the repair squad.
- A photo is taken of the defect before and after repair.

	You Said	We are doing... or we can't because...
1	<p>There are frustrations with the pothole repair system. Do most potholes fall in to the category of 2c, as it appears it can take up to 6 months to resolve them?</p> <p>When you assess potholes, how many will be addressed within 4 weeks?</p>	<p>We consider factors such as how deep the pothole is and where it's located. Potholes in rural and urban areas are categorised differently, with potholes in urban areas given a higher priority.</p> <p>We use our resources wisely. For example, if work is already scheduled to take place where the pothole is then we won't spend funding from the pothole repair budget on it.</p> <p>Inspectors categorise potholes differently but the training we provide helps to standardise assessments.</p>

2	How many inspectors do you have?	We have 8 inspectors.
3	<p>The low road takes all the traffic from the A75 in this area when there is a (road traffic) accident. When it's being used by fast cyclists there's a danger they will hit a pothole. Drivers trying to give cyclists room can't because it's a narrow road. I assume that the low road isn't a high priority.</p> <p>The section of road near Cummertrees is a disgrace.</p>	We have 8 inspectors that travel the main route 12 times per year and carry out risk assessments.
4	If all Council staff attached their smartphones to the dashboard of their car and were given a suitable app they could identify potholes during their journey and send the information back to your office. This would reduce your inspectors' workload.	We can't spend money we don't have. We need to prioritise repairs within the budget to bring the network up to scratch.
5	<p>Complaints in Annan are not so much about the pothole but the length of time it takes to sort them.</p> <p>You only repair the deepest potholes and then all the others become just as bad. Why don't you repair all the potholes in a stretch of road? Would this not be more cost effective?</p> <p>If there are a group of potholes why don't they all get filled at the same time?</p>	<p>Budget limitations mean that we cannot repair all the potholes. However, inspectors will repair as many as they can in one area.</p> <p>Staff time within our budget is top-sliced so our revenue budget (£5.9M) is entirely spent on materials. If staff come across a pothole that is really bad then they are encouraged to repair it.</p> <p>The staff have the authority to complete minor repairs to a group of potholes even if they haven't all been reported.</p>

	<p>The yellow paint round the pothole at Annan Academy on the bridge has been there for 3 months.</p> <p>The pothole on the B6357 into Annan needs fixed.</p> <p>Bruce Street (Annan) continually has potholes that get fixed but quickly return.</p>	
6	<p>Wide farm vehicles are causing damage to our roads which is endangering other road users. There are restrictions on the width of farm vehicles which should be applied.</p> <p>Some potholes are made by tractors. Lorries also make a terrible mess at the side of the road.</p>	<p>Farming vehicles are increasing in size and many roads are not wide enough to accommodate them. As a result they churn up the verges. This is an ongoing challenge which we have to accept.</p>
7	<p>Companies which are contracted by the Council to carry out repairs on specific areas will set up a traffic management system, collect the materials required and carry out the work. However, they often have the capacity to carry additional material and conduct other repairs. Why are these not included in their contract?</p>	<p>We went through a process 2-3 years ago to determine the best way of managing pothole repairs. We programme our work to cover as many potholes as possible, optimising our use of material. On average, we use 7 tonnes of material a day. Our staff don't return to the depot with unused material.</p>
8	<p>Council contractors dumped excess tarmac in a field.</p>	<p>We don't know the reason for this.</p>

9	Does the Council website tell us when a road is to be resurfaced? There's no sense in repairing potholes if they are going to resurface.	Details of our programme for the whole year will be uploaded to the Council's website in April. A short-term programme, which details resurfacing that was agreed in January, is currently available on our website. We will carry out 40 resurfacing schemes in Annandale and Eskdale within the next 6 weeks.
10	Is it feasible to use more plastic in road repair materials?	Plastic can be added to bitumen. We have used this type of mixture on seven sites and are monitoring its progress. It is more expensive and there are restrictions on the type of plastic that can be used.
11	Why do you cut roadside verges? This is not necessary. You should not cut verges in the spring or summer for conservation reasons.	Growing verges create road safety issues. We only cut verges twice a year. This is done at specific times of year and we only cut the first meter of the verge.
12	When BT or the Gas Board dig up and reinstate a road or pavement, how long is the warranty on that repair?	For a normal repair, the warranty is 2 years. For a deep excavation, the warranty is 3 years. This is under review by the Road Work Commissioner and we think it's likely that warranties will be extended to 6 years. Often defects don't appear for 3-4 years. We carry out inspections during the work to reinstate the road or pavement, within six months of its completion and again before the end of the 2 year warranty. We also have regular meetings to monitor the area. The company is expected to achieve a 90% pass rate (this has never happened). Quality Plans should be introduced in future. The Council doesn't financially benefit and the companies do get charged for the inspection work. They also have to pay for any repairs required.

	Does Dumfries and Galloway Council financially benefit? Do the companies get charged for your inspection work?	
13	<p>A contractor from Ireland carried out poor repair work on the B724 at Greenlea.</p> <p>This work involved tarmac not jet patching.</p> <p>Hotspots on the B724/725 were reported and patched. However, following a period of wet weather, the pothole reappeared within 3-5 weeks. Your team ought to have discretion to carry out further remedial work.</p>	<p>We aren't aware of contracting with an Irish company, except regarding work carried out on a jet patcher.</p> <p>Our team do have discretion to do carry out further remedial work.</p>
14	Are you responsible for the B95, which has two bad potholes?	Transport Scotland, not the Council, is responsible for this. We advise you to inform them of the repair required.
15	What is the cost of repairing a category 2c pothole?	On average, a pothole which is 4-5mm deep costs £37 per square meter to repair. This includes staff time and materials.
16	Do you have a statutory right to enforce speed limits?	The Police, not the Council, are responsible for enforcing speed limits.
17	Why is the work that is currently taking place outside Annan Town Hall not being done on a 24 hour basis?	Reasons include potential disturbance in a built-up area and safety issues arising from working in the dark.

18	<p>Issues can be reported on your website but your nearest office to me is in Lockerbie and it's shut to members of the public. Why is it becoming more difficult for the public to talk to you?</p>	<p>You can phone the Council's switchboard and report issues to a member of staff at our Contact Centre.</p>
19	<p>There is a parking issue at Newington Primary School in Annan which is affecting road safety and several requests have been made for double yellow lines. The issue was raised through the Community Council Enquiry Service. A member of your staff (name supplied) has offered to meet with us but doesn't think anything can be done – surely we should be pulling out all the stops to try to come to a solution. Emergency Service Vehicles have been unable to get up that road on two occasions because of the parked cars.</p> <p>The Belisha Beacons do not work and wires are hanging out of them (the wires were pulled out by children/young people).</p>	<p>Graeme Alison will work with the member of staff to help to find the best solution.</p>
20	<p>I understand that your department is responsible for footpaths. The footpaths in Clarencefield are not safe as a result of autumn leaves, weeds and a private hedge which encroaches the footpath by 1 foot 18 inches.</p>	<p>The Council's Roads Department is responsible for footpaths.</p> <p>Street cleaning is carried out by the Council's Community Assets Team.</p>

	<p>The road is a disgrace (due to mud, filth and farming materials). The road sweeper that visits every 2-3 weeks comes through very quickly.</p> <p>Drains are not being cleared. The water beside footpaths is terrible.</p>	<p>We regret that we're not able to provide timescales for remedial action.</p>
21	<p>Rural areas which are only accessible via a limited number of routes should be prioritised e.g. work required at Clarencefield.</p>	<p>We regret that the work at Clarencefield has been delayed due to staffing issues which are being resolved.</p>
22	<p>Reporting road defects through the Community Council Enquiry Service is a complete waste of time.</p>	<p>It is more effective to report road defects via the Council website and we would be most grateful if you would use this mechanism.</p>
23	<p>Annandale South does not have any A Class roads and this appears to be detrimental to spending on road repairs in the area.</p> <p>What improvements will we see over the next 6 months if you don't receive additional resources? Improvements should be evident where policy and methods are changed.</p>	<p>The absence of an A Class road is not detrimental to spending on road repairs in Annandale South. Spending is prioritised according to need.</p> <p>We are trying to be more effective. Budgets are not allocated geographically but spent where, to the best of our ability, we identify the greatest need.</p>
24	<p>There is a bad pothole Eastriggs which fills up with rainwater. A few days ago, an OAP fell and was badly hurt by it. The pothole has been reported by the Community Council and individuals.</p>	

	<p>Will the new road repair system inform members of the public which category a pothole has been allocated?</p> <p>You could write the pothole's expected date of repair on the road. We need more certainty on timescales.</p> <p>Can you provide Elected Members with advance notice of the pothole repair team's schedule?</p>	<p>Our new system will automatically send the reporter an email to tell them when the pothole was assessed and the expected course of action.</p> <p>It's impossible to put timescales on road defects. We'll not always meet the targets set.</p>
25	<p>How much has the Council paid out for claims made against pothole related issues?</p>	<p>We regret that we do not know however if this information is wanted we can ask our Councils insurance colleagues.</p>

Open discussion regarding Sustrans funding for cycle routes and footpaths

Jaime Nicholson provided an overview of Sustrans funding that is available for cycle routes and footpaths.

Key points:

- The Sustrans Community Links programme provides funding of £1K - £2M for cycle routes and footpaths.
- Any public or Third Sector organisation can apply for up to 100% of costs within the design phase and 50% of costs within the construction phase of their project.

	You Said	We are doing... or we can't because...
1	Why is there not a proper footpath from Annan town centre to the harbour and Back of the Hill?	<p>Previous plans for a path project in the Annan area were hampered by the extent of the work that was required once it was further investigated. The project identified that there was a much bigger problem with paths that lead to the Annan Harbour with regards to footpath width and drop curbs.</p> <p>Previous plans of a cycleway that linked shore from Gretna, Eastriggs and Annan where discussed, the MOD restrictions on land within the route proposed resulted in this being postponed. These have been lifted and Community Councils are engaged in talks about a similar project which would benefit the area. The Council could assist with this.</p>
2	I don't think we'll be given money from this fund. All the money goes to the central belt.	Annandale South is eligible for funding from this programme.

Feedback from Ward Event evaluation forms

16 local residents attended the Ward Event and 14 returned evaluation forms (87.5%)

We asked if the purpose of the Ward Event (to inform participants of road repair processes and Sustrans funding for cycle routes and footpaths) had been achieved.	50% said YES
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Comments:

- Very well conducted
- Staff who were running the event need public speaking training and need to have an open mind rather than gub answers.

We asked how strongly you agreed with the following statements:

The purpose of the meeting was meaningful to me	64% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
The day and time was convenient	50% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
The venue was suitable and in a good location	86% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
Staff were helpful	86% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
The information provided was easy to understand	64% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I felt that I was fully involved in the discussion	79% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
My views were listened to	71% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
I know how to find out what happens next	43% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
This was a good way to connect with my local Councillors	36% Agreed or Strongly Agreed
My attendance was worthwhile	71% Agreed or Strongly Agreed

Other comments:

- Poor acoustics in the Town Hall cause difficulty
- The format needs to be reviewed. Not sufficient opportunity to make points. It is an emotive subject and deserves more time to be dedicated to it.
- Chair protected the Council member.
- The event was held owing to the severity of the issue. It may be helpful to concentrate on the issues next time rather than Council bureaucracy.
- Is it possible to prepare a questionnaire for completion? CCs could complete and obtain views of their community.
- There was no opportunity to ask about the Council responsibility towards people. While I understand the risk v probability potholes and collapsed drains are increasing therefore negligence claims must be also. To my mind this is irresponsible.
- Was the utility work carried out in Butt St last week (Road Closed) co-ordinated by Council? If so, why was it scheduled at same time (as a) major road closure on High Street?
- Start on time
- Using slides that cannot be read – useless. Too much information per slide. Need to set the room up properly so slides can be seen.

Attendees were asked to note further concerns on the reverse of their Evaluation Form and listed the following issues:

- Speed limits
- Footpaths
- Verge cutting
- Timber haulage – farm traffic
- Restrictions on size of farm vehicles
- Beacons at Newington School
- Brow of Hill at Railway Bridge
- Road Safety Newington Primary School
- Do you have a webpage that shows resurfacing in the next 6 months?
- Back of the Hill road to shore blocked
- Pathways to Harbour and Back of the Hill

- Potholes were marked out in Eastriggs on the first working day in January, they have not been repaired. This includes a bad pothole in Durban Road. It fills up with water therefore cannot be seen! causing a potential for pedestrian/vehicle injury. A drain on the Ridge is collapsed the second time in 12 months. When will it be repaired?