

## Torbay Council

### Pothole Fund Application Form – Supporting Data

#### SECTION B - POTHOLES

**B1: A** – *Has your authority aligned its maintenance programme to the Government's highways maintenance funding years (i.e. 2011-2015 and 2015-2021)?*

Torbay Council's key transport document is the Local Transport Plan which has an implementation plan for the period 2011-2016, a new implementation plan will cover 2016-2021.

All capital funding that reaches this service delivery arm are aligned for future maintenance programmes and used in accordance with Lifecycle Planning principles. The Lifecycle Planning toolkit provided with the Asset Management Guidance is based on ten year cycles, this period is therefore analysed with series of iterations based on the indicative funding.

The plan is then amended periodically to reflect any additional funding provisions or to reflect actual condition data as these become available.

This is incorporated in the Appendix to the Torbay Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) at the link:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/your-services/transport-and-streets/transport-asset-management-plan.pdf>

**B1: B** – *Has your authority adopted the principle that 'prevention is better than cure' in determining the balance between structural, preventative and reactive maintenance activities in order to improve the resilience of the highway network and to minimise the occurrence of potholes in the future?*

In accordance with the principles of asset management, preventative maintenance treatments have featured in all annual programmes for a number of years but the use of these has increased since 2007. Previous additional pothole prevention funding has been targeted specifically on local roads which were identified as being pothole cluster sites or vulnerable to water penetration. These sites are listed from historical data through the Pavement Management System (PMS) or as planned maintenance recorded during routine safety inspections.

The Council employs a Senior Engineer whose primary duty is to maintain the PMS records and to interrogate these to make maximum usage of the raw survey data. In doing so it has been possible to identify prospective treatment sites based on the type of defects thus allowing the system to generate lists of treatment bands. These lists are used to generate programmes of sites after being validated with visual checks. This means that presently some 25% of the streets in Torbay have been identified for different planned treatments waiting for suitable funding. This has allowed for additional funding to be targeted on vulnerable roads thus preventing the potential for pothole formation. Additionally surface dressing of major high speed roads has routinely been carried out and will continue to occur whilst the structural condition of carriageways remains suitable.

The authority has also used a selection of micro-asphalt treatments on suitable sites but these are generally only subject to low traffic usage on local roads that have ride quality issues but no

evidence of structural failure. This type of treatment is cost effective on roads that are not exhibiting any sign of reflective cracking and not where high skid resistance is a requirement.

This principle of concentrating on preventative treatments features clearly within the Transport Asset Management Plan on this Council's website.

**B1: C** – *Has your authority ensured that appropriate competencies have been made available to make the right choices when designing and specifying techniques and materials for the maintenance and repair of highways?*

Representatives of Torbay Council attend most regional meetings that cover best practice in highway activities. One example being the South West Highway Service Improvement Group (SWHSIG). This group also involves liaison with other service groups covering, Highway Asset Management, Highway Managers, Winter Maintenance, Traffic Managers and more latterly the South West Highways Alliance. In addition officers will attend highway related events and share experiences and even contractors with our neighbouring authorities.

In addition, as mentioned above, the Council employs the dedicated PMS Engineer to set parameters within UKPMS to identify the different treatment bands for candidate sites. This allows the rapid generation of lists of surfacing sites from the recorded backlog of sites to react to additional allocations of funding.

The close relationship between the UKPMS and the TAMP are evident in the living section of this latter document and particularly in the Lifecycle Planning Toolkit usage.

**B1: D** – *Does your authority co-ordinate with other parties working on the highway short and long term programmes of work activities for up to four years in advance?*

Our authority holds its own local HAUC meetings with public utility companies on a quarterly basis. These meetings enable the coordination of plant renewals and the authority's own surfacing schemes. An indicative list of prospective surfacing sites is provided to the utility companies and potential conflicts are then compared and have enabled some utility operations to start earlier. More commonly some planned maintenance schemes have to be postponed.

**B1: E** – *Has your authority considered the guidance provided in the ADEPT report Potholes and Repair Techniques for Local Highways and adopted as appropriate to your local circumstances?*

Our pothole strategy has been to carry out first time repairs on any potholes in excess of our safety intervention depth. This is still the case but in addition to this, our Streetscene Inspectors now record lesser defects which often enables larger size patches to be used to take in the below intervention depth defects. This together with photographic records of defective areas also assists in identifying planned machine lay patching repairs, without jeopardising the Council's Section 58 defence of third party claims.

**B1: F** – *Has your authority developed a detailed highway inspection manual and have put appropriate training in place for your Highway Inspectors?*

Our Council has a clear and detailed inspection manual that is presently under review to reflect the treatment of some lesser non safety defects. All Streetscene Inspectors are trained by initially shadowing an experienced Inspector and carrying out in house induction courses. Additionally Inspectors will follow a remote learning to a diploma qualification in highway maintenance. They will also be given accredited Chapter 8 training and opportunities for driving courses to assist in their winter maintenance activities.

**B1: G** – *Does your authority use technology and systems for the effective identification and management of potholes?*

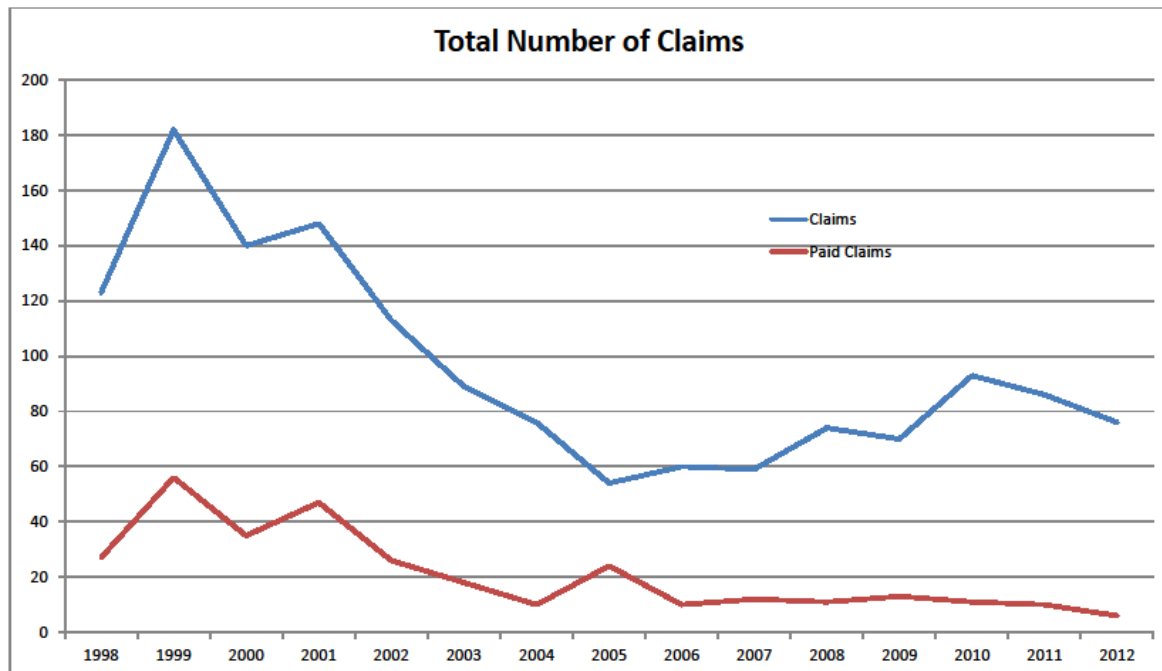
Torbay Council was one of the first highway authorities to adopt the 'Mayrise' highways system. This enables the production of maps of all defects recorded since 2008 to be plotted onto digital maps, such as the one shown below:-



These outputs readily identify the pothole cluster sites where the wasteful use of continued reactive maintenance is required. Whilst many of the sites will be too far gone to receive low cost preventative treatments, they will be stored on a resurfacing and reconstruction candidate list for future programming. So far this authority has managed to keep its entire network in a safe usable

condition but the decision to concentrate on preventative sites can lead to complaints from people living on the affected areas when roads in obviously better condition are treated first.

However, in addition the increasing sophistication of hand held devices now allows photographs of defects at the time of inspection which can be extremely useful evidence in third party claim situations. Torbay Council has always had a very good record of successfully defending against claims as the Inspection records are robust and comprehensive. See graph below:-



The robust defence of claims does mean that more of the limited resources can be targeted on longer term treatments, as lower numbers of settled claims keeps maintenance money where it is most needed.

**B1: H** – *Does your authority have a public communications process in place that provides clarity and transparency in the policy and approach to repairing potholes?*

Torbay Council does have a clear description of pothole related processes on its website:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/your-services/transport-and-streets/dealing-with-potholes.pdf>

In addition the Highway Maintenance Plan on:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/your-services/transport-and-streets/highway-maintenance-plan.pdf>

This document has been available since its initial publication. The authority also has the locally developed on-line reporting tool (at <https://forms.torbay.gov.uk/highways>) which is being

constantly advertised in a bid for customers to make more use of. This system generates downloads to the Inspector's hand held devices enabling a speedy response to reported defects.

This has recently been reinforced on the authority's website by the Council's recently adopted Asset Management Plan and Policy which are also accessible. Additionally officers will attend local resident or Town Council forums on an informal basis if requested.

**B1: I** – *Does your authority monitor public satisfaction with road, footway and cycleway condition and report annually through the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey or its own surveys?*

As a participant in the activities of the SWHSIG which was responsible for the initiative that resulted in the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey, Torbay Council has been included in all but last year's NHT surveys. Unfortunately, cost can be prohibitive to smaller authorities and last year required substantial savings to be made by this department so the authority could not participate. However, recognising the value of our customers is important it has subscribed to this year's survey. The feedback from NHT surveys is trended and is contained within the Asset Management Plan. In addition to this Torbay subscribed to the associated Customer, Quality, Cost (CQC) study that was sponsored by HMEP and conducted by Leeds University. Indeed this first study showed that the efficiency of the Torbay's maintenance service was within the first quartile throughout the four year study period.

**B1: J** – *Does your authority adopt permanent repairs as the first choice when repairing potholes?*

The authority always adopts permanent repairs as its first choice in pothole repairs. The only exception being when the poor condition of the surrounding road surface means that it is not possible to form a joint against a sound material. In these situations temporary regulating in a 6mm hot dense material may be used pending the time that planned maintenance can be conducted. These roads feature prominently of the list of planned resurfacing and reconstruction sites and will feature on the maps such as the extract in section B1: G.

**B1: K** – *Has your authority adopted dimensional definitions based on best practice as part of its maintenance potholes?*

This authority has managed to adhere to the previously purported best practice definition intervention depth of 40mm. It will repair any defect at or above this figure if it is also of at least 100mm in diameter. However, to prevent pothole progression in a carriageway or delaminating of some thin lay preventative material, lesser depths are being considered if funding permits.

**B2:** - *Does your authority adopt any innovative methods to help repair potholes?*

This Council's Joint Venture Company partner do employ specialist gangs of operatives equipped with a hot box, for first time permanent pothole repairs.

There have also been trials by some of the public utility operators in the use of a permanent cold lay treatment on footways that could be trailed elsewhere.

However, the local issue here is that there are a large proportion of local estate roads that are essentially of an evolved construction. Typically this will be a deep layer of well consolidated unbound material with a thin layer of bituminous surfacing 30 to 50mm acting as the surface coat. This came about in the mislead assumption that the local micro climate (of the English Riviera) meant that roads did not have to be frost resistant. This was proven to be a folly with two severe cold winters and latterly extreme rainfall.

The combination of the climate events has made more of these local roads vulnerable to water penetration damage and trials of a thin overlay treatment combined with localised repairs to structurally damaged roads have shown promising results.

Recipient sites are carefully chosen to limit the potential use by large numbers of goods vehicles or buses and lists of candidate sites are derived using PMS data. This will be followed by visual inspections and eventually by walk through assessments immediately prior to preparing programmes. This process costs more than other forms of preventative treatments but is effectively restoring the local roads to their original as built configuration.

**B3:** - *Does your authority use reporting tools to identify potholes in your local area?*

In addition to accepting reports from web based sites such as CTC Fill that Hole and Fix My Street, the Council encourages reporting of defects to its own defect reporting site at the link below:-

<https://forms.torbay.gov.uk/highways>

This site uses the Council's digital mapping system and reports will be relayed directly to the bespoke 'Mayrise' system and downloaded to the appropriate Inspector's handheld PDA. This ensures a prompt reactive inspection to assess the defect concerned.

The Council also appreciates that many people still do not have access to computers and therefore has a dedicated Customer Contact centre and a fax reporting facility. Obviously written or emailed reports are also accepted and details will be input into the reporting system so that a continuous audit trail from receipt of report to date that defect was inspected and subsequently repaired are always available.

**B4:** - *Does your authority regularly consult and seek feedback on its highways maintenance regime, including potholes, with key stakeholders?*

Torbay Council has frequent written communication with its Local MPs concerning highway maintenance issues. However it does not do so on a regular organised basis.

There are no District or Borough Councils within Torbay Council's unitary area. However officers have been invited to speak to Brixham Town Council and Local Area Forums.

Torbay Council has Neighbourhood Forums that officers would attend on request. It has held consultation with representative groups but this was considered to be a duplication of the NHT survey, so its scarce resources are now concentrated on this national survey. Trending data does feature in the Asset Management Plan.

Officers will speak to the Business Community on individual schemes on request.

Emergency Services are consulted on various highway activities and are represented on Road Safety issues.

**B5:** - *Does your authority have an up-to-date vision and action plan to improve the walking environment and encourage walking?*

Although the guidance relating to the walking environment in the Local Transport Plan 2011 moved away from this requirement, there are still walking improvements listed in general in the implementation plan:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/transportandstreets/transportpolicy/implementation-plan.pdf>

However there is still a walking strategy on the Council's website that is regularly updated at:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/transportandstreets/walking.htm>

In addition to this the Council has a Public Right of Way improvement plan which is available at:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourbay/sports/walking/prow/rowimprovementplan.htm>

**B6:** - *Please explain how you deliver your duty under NRSWA to 'co-ordinate the execution of works of all kinds', including for example permit schemes, noticing, co-ordination meetings?*

The Council holds Quarterly Coordination Meetings under the HAUC umbrella. It employs both a dedicated Network Coordinator and a Streetworks Coordinator to monitor and supervise activities and has a designated Traffic Manager in accordance with the Traffic Management Act.

The authority produces a quarterly schedule of planned major works which are distributed to all works promoters; this is an integral part of the HAUC meetings. The co-ordination meetings require undertakers to produce indicative 5 year programmes of planned renewal or mains improvements within Torbay, thus assisting in avoiding conflicts of interest with our own planned maintenance sites.

The authority subscribes to roadworks.org allowing residents and visitors to obtain details of live roadworks on the internet. It also publishes weekly lists of planned activities on its network and ensures that affected residents will be notified of works in advance of site occupation.

The authority has updated the National Street Gazetteer and completed the production of its designated Traffic Sensitive Streets policy. This document has recently received two awards from GeoPlace for the quality of the information provided.

Prior to this publication the authority had an agreed seasonal embargo on all non emergency works in tourist sensitive areas. This is a good indication of the strong relationships with the local statutory undertakers and covered the periods of maximum traffic demand on Torbay's network.

The authority has installed remote cameras at its most traffic sensitive junctions and also has access to close circuit television cameras elsewhere on the network to assist in monitoring roadworks and congestion. These are supplemented by freetext signs allowing information to be relayed to motorists allowing them to avoid the most congested routes.

**B7:** - *What actions does your authority take to ensure road repairs undertaken by other parties (such as utilities companies) meet the standards in the specification?*

The authorities Streetworks Coordinator will conduct random inspection in accordance with the New Roads and Streetworks Act provisions. Whilst NRSWA requires a minimum of 10% of sites are



inspected during 3 phases of the works, this authority will inspect additional sites on a reactive basis. Accordingly the authorities sample coverage is probably nearer to 15% of sites.

The Council is considering the use of scorecards for utility works but presently relies on naming and shaming companies during the regular HAUC meetings.

The Council still collects the performance data associated with the former best value performance indicators. These figures are relayed to the SWHSIG and will be benchmarked with the other authorities as part of the production of annual reports.

As mentioned previously the authority holds quarterly scheduled HAUC meetings with all statutory undertakers working in Torbay or with existing apparatus.

The authority has its own trailer mounted coring rig that is used to test the quality of reinstatements. Utility companies are invited to witness the sampling of their reinstatements and issues such as incorrect depths of material or bonding issues may result in immediate agreement of failures. Other issues such as suspected air voids or material types will result in the core samples being sent for laboratory analysis. Currently the failure rate for core samples is running at 30% defective which is a concern.

## **SECTION C – ASSET MANAGEMENT**

**C1:** - *Has your authority adopted the recommendations arising from the Asset Management Strategy Guidance published in May 2013?*

Torbay Council's asset management strategy is contained in the plan at the first link below and the policy is at the second link:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/transportandstreets/transportassetmanagementplan.pdf>

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/transportandstreets/infrastructureassetpolicy.pdf>

The asset management plan was adopted by Torbay Council's Transport Working Party and the portfolio holder is given details of maintenance programmes and associated decisions.

The asset management register for highways is held with the Pavement Management System with a supplementary inventory section within the Highway Maintenance Plan at the link below:-

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/transportandstreets/highwaymaintenanceplan.pdf>

Lifecycle planning principles are used in the production of the Asset Management Plan and are updated as the living part of this document's 'Appendix A'.

**C2:** - *As part of your last L-Pack return for Whole Government Accounting requirements for the accounting period 2012/13, can you confirm you submitted the following return:*

All of the Council's L-Pack return for Whole Government Accounting was made with the exception of Street Furniture. This missing section is subject to an Audit Report where the issue is the cost of collecting data on non-illuminated signs, against its overall value in reporting terms. The Council has



an inventory figure for signs which is out of date but does not have resources to update in the immediate future.

## **SECTION D – EFFICIENCIES**

**D1:** - *Is your authority actively engaged with securing efficiencies for highway maintenance?*

Torbay has delivered a number of initiatives over the last 5 years that have delivered savings in excess of £1.0 million, these include the following:-

- Extending highway safety inspections to all other public areas such as car parks and park footpaths to reduce the number of inspectors, extend best practice and ensure consistency of standards.
- Use of slurry seal techniques on all residential tarmac footways as part of the life cycle planning.
- Use of recycled materials for footway sub-base and binder courses.
- Consortium procurement for services such as winter maintenance forecasting, carriageway condition surveys.
- Tri-partnership agreement for engineering support services with Devon County Council and Jacobs Engineering.
- Outsourcing of highway cyclical maintenance with the streetscene services to deliver economies of scale.
- Introduction of end specification within the term maintenance contract to reduce the need for inspections and some supervision.
- Use of hand held devices by Inspectors to keep accurate records of inspection dates and defect historic data. These have been invaluable in defending of third party claims and proving that the authority is acting responsibly and with due diligence.

**D2:** - *Is your authority exploring or has it already joined with neighbouring authorities or a Highway Maintenance Alliance to achieve economies of scale?*

Torbay Council worked with Devon County Council to produce a joint LTP and Torbay Council is a member of the SWHSIG and the South West Alliance. It also maintains close links with Devon County Council which allows economies of scale in the provision of specialist contractors, weather forecasting, laboratory testing, winter maintenance services and procurement. In addition Torbay had benefited from Cornwall Council's 'Condition Survey Contract' and has had a major reduction in the cost per kilometres surveyed as a result.

**D3:** - *Is your authority sharing its efficiency experience and/or case studies with other local highway authorities via the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme or other good practice networks?*

Torbay Council is a member of SWHSIG which is an organisation dedicated to benchmarking and sharing best practice.

Torbay Council has supplied data to the HMEP sponsored CQC analysis. This came about through its links with the NHT Survey and SWHSIG which advocated this process under the leadership of Peter

Radford of Somerset County Council. Torbay Council will continue to provide supporting data and is keen to identify how the efficiency scores have been derived and to share what can be learnt as a result. The pilot study showed that the authority scored within the top quartile for Highway Pavement Management for all 4 years of the pilot study period, see below:-

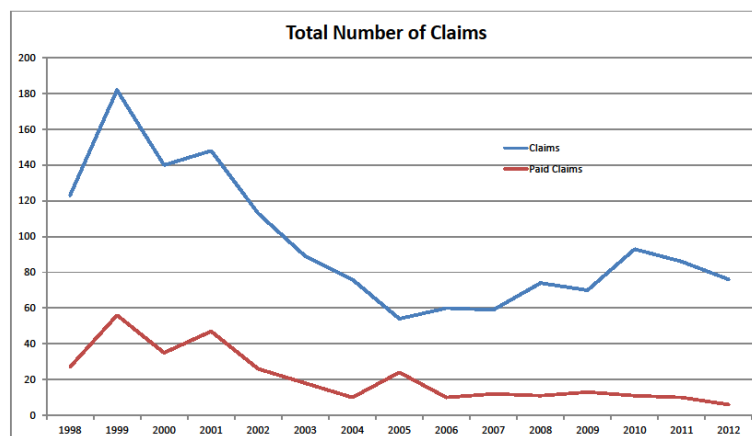
**COST MODEL**

Highway Pavement Maintenance	2009	2010	2011	2012
Cheshire East		■		
Derbyshire				■
Durham		■	■	
Hampshire	■	■		
Herefordshire				■
Kingston upon Hull	■			
Leicestershire			■	■
Lincolnshire	■		■	■
Medway				■
Northamptonshire		■	■	■
Sunderland				■
Swindon	■			
Torbay	■	■	■	■

**SECTION E – OTHER**

**E1:** - Please provide details on which of the following good practice activities your authority is undertaking for its highways management activities?

Torbay Council continues to have an excellent record for having small numbers of claims and subsequently being able to defend these in court. The rigid inspection regime and the quality of the records produced clearly indicate that the Council takes its 'duty to maintain' seriously and enables the retention of funding to invest in the highway network rather than for settling expensive claims. The graph previously used in section B1: G is reproduced below both to highlight this claim and for continuity:-



An additional significant benefit in being able to provide the Section 58 defence is that the insurance premium for public liability has seen a reduction of some 66% in the highway related contribution since its peak in 2002.

Torbay Council has used 'invest to save' for its Street Lighting provision on two previous occasions and is now considering a third. Initially all of the internally illuminated bollards were replaced by LED equivalents to save energy charges. The next example was to reduce the wattage of streetlights from 250 watts per unit to 150 watts using the 'salix' scheme. Currently there is a tender for converting all of the streetlights to LED ones in a further quest for energy efficiency.

Cross boundary collaboration is used for a number of activities and more are under discussion. Torbay Council grits some roads on behalf of Devon County Council and undertakes the cyclical maintenance activities on the A380 Ring Road on the DCC sections. The gritting activity is reciprocated by DCC on major routes into Torbay.

Roads on either side of the boundary have been treated by one or other of the authorities on behalf of the neighbour. Recent examples DCC surfaced the Teignmouth approach to Torbay whereas Torbay surface dressed sections of the A380 Ring Road and is now preparing to relay the French drains in both authorities areas.

Additionally the winter maintenance forecasting provision is undertaken by a consortium arrangement with Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and road condition surveys are based on a contract originally let by Cornwall Council.

The SWHSIG is used for comparing highway charges and identifying joint procurement opportunities. This did result in a salt provision opportunity for south west authorities, which Torbay can not subscribe to as its own supplies are via its joint venture partner. There are other activities being considered and discussions on the optimisation of revenue income have been conducted.

**E2: - *Do you consider your authority to be an exemplar authority in tackling potholes and undertaking highway maintenance?***

The continuing prioritisation of applying timely preventative treatments to fragile local roads is proving to be the most practical way of halting the formation of pothole clusters. By proactively interrogating the 'pavement management system' and identifying streets that could benefit from surface dressing, micro-asphalts or non structural overlays has resulted in a lower rate of condition indicators than other authorities. The nature of weather damage over recent years has meant that more potholes are being found and repaired, but by using third party reports in addition to safety inspections and recording these has enable a robust defence against third party liability claims. This Council has an exemplary record in recording potholes and fixing them within the stated timescales that it has set itself.

More recently in order to further address the onset of carriageway deterioration, Torbay Council is recording all surface defects found at the time of an inspection and photographing these to show where preventative planned maintenance should be considered. The opportunity to return estate roads to an as built construction rather than to resort to full depth reconstruction is proving to be cost effective. Sites that were treated in this manner in 2009 are showing no tendency towards

surface defects and will be more than capable of being put into future programmes of preventative treatments.

With regard to potholes themselves, it is intended that when a defect that it already observed to be at the safety intervention level that surrounding non- safety defects can be repaired at the same time but recorded as being 'planned'. This with the photographic evidence will not prejudice any future Section 58 defence but will make the carriageways more resilient and less susceptible to water penetration. Torbay Council has a good history with regard to being able to defend liability claims but accepts that in some situations such claims are unavoidable. However, as a result of this historic defence the savings in the cost of public liability cover is substantial.

The combination of condition surveys, inspections, recording and intervention makes Torbay an efficient and effective service provider; however, there is an identified backlog of some £11.5M of surfacing schemes that will need to be addressed when finance permits.

The press article reproduced below is evidence of the continuing importance that the Council affords potholes and is one of 4 such articles used recently to appeal for the public's assistance in addressing this issue:-

## **Potholes? Tell us where says Torbay Council after extra £336K from Government**

By [ColleenSmith](#) | Posted: March 29, 2014



KNOW any terrible potholes? Then Torbay Council says it wants to know where.

The council received £336,225 additional cash from the Department of Transport on Friday, March 28 to help repair damage to the local road network caused by the recent storms.

Torbay Council has admitted it will also use the new pot of government money to improve 'estate roads' for the future.

The council says its inspectors will react by the following day to reports of potholes from members of the public.

The new money is in addition to funding already allocated to the council for highway maintenance.

A council statement says the additional £336,225 will be used 'to deal with the immediate backlog of pothole repairs and to identify and resurface a number of estate roads to make them more resilient to future weather damage.'

The council will publish full details of how the money will be spent – listing the exact locations of repairs - on its website in the next few weeks when the council has drawn up the programme of works according to the most urgent needs.

"In the meantime, the Council is always pleased to receive any reports of potholes that you may observe whilst using our roads," the spokesman said.

"There is an online reporting tool that ensures that details are downloaded to the relevant Inspector, which enables them to react to these by the following working day.

"All of these reported defects will be assessed during additional ad-hoc inspections and issued for repair if they meet the current safety intervention levels. Presently, the intervention defect depth will be 40mm or more for a pothole and half of this for a potential trip hazard. However, concerns about any type of defect can be reported by using the reporting tool at: <https://forms.torbay.gov.uk/highways> or by emailing [Highways@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Highways@torbay.gov.uk) or telephoning 01803 207900."

In addition, the Chancellor's [Budget](#) Statement on March 19 announced that a further £200 million is to be made available for 2014/15 to help tackle potholes and surface deterioration on the local road network, and the Department of Transport will run a bidding exercise to allocate this funding to councils across the UK in the next few weeks.

Cllr Ray Hill, Torbay Council's Highways, Transport and Environment spokesman said: "After the wettest winter on record we are very pleased to have received this additional funding to repair damage to our highways. I can assure residents and road users of Torbay that we will use the extra money to secure the best value and most effective programme of works."