

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: **Repair of Defects and Superusers Report**

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Liz Leffman, Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair**

Date response requested:² **17 March 2026**

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should improve communications with residents, including clearer updates on ongoing works and challenges.	Accepted	We are committed to giving residents clear, accessible and up-to-date information about activity on the network. All roadworks and planned schemes are published openly through both the roadwork & event system (https://one.network/) and through our own Highways Schemes Map (schemes map),

¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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		<p>with the same information available via our local website to ensure consistent public visibility.</p> <p>As part of our preparation for larger schemes, we also provide advance warning signage around two weeks before works begin and carry out targeted letter drops to households directly affected.</p> <p>However, we recognise the importance of strengthening and improving our communication further, especially where works evolve or unavoidable delays occur.</p> <p>In respect of updates to enquires received through FixMyStreet, we are working closely with mySociety (system owners) to enhance the clarity of direct updates received by the public, particularly around explaining why a repair may be delayed, or why a temporary safety intervention is required before a permanent fix can be delivered. This will help ensure updates are more meaningful, transparent, and aligned with resident expectations.</p> <p>We also hope to shortly further enhance the online customer experience through the introduction of a 'Zoom Virtual Agent' (ZVA) on our local website – this is a major digital transformation initiative that will modernise how residents engage with Highway Maintenance enquiries. The ZVA will provide smarter self-service, quicker access to information, and more intuitive guidance - forming a key part of our wider ambition to deliver a more responsive, consistent and digitally integrated Highways service.</p>
<p>2. That the Council should launch the new public-facing statistics dashboard to</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Council recognises the importance of transparency in relation to highway defect volumes and the progress of repairs, which is the reason we are now publishing the latest defect information</p>

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<p>provide visibility of defect volumes and repair progress.</p>		<p>though the council's social media channels - this will continue for as long as it is deemed helpful. These communications are designed to provide residents with an overview of key metrics, including the scale of reported defects and the progress being made to address them.</p> <p>In addition, County Councillors have access to further relevant data via the Members' Resource Hub, which provides up-to-date information on defect levels, repair activity and performance trends to support local oversight and engagement.</p> <p>The council will continue to review how best to present and communicate performance data to both county councillors and members of the public, ensuring that information remains transparent, accessible and meaningful.</p>
<p>3. That the Council should strengthen communication and escalation routes for elected members, including reviewing the adequacy of the out of hours service.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>County Councillors already have communication and escalation routes through the dedicated Councillor Portal Form and Guidance/information webpages on the Hive, ensuring they can quickly find the information and support they need. However, we do recognise this could be improved and are continuing to develop this page and add more information based on common requests and feedback.</p> <p>Improvements have been also made to the council's website recently in respect of the promotion of temporary road closures due to flooding and severe weather, again we will continue to improve based on feedback received.</p> <p>The expectation that teams are proactive and communicate directly on matters within councillor's divisions remains an expectation, and this requirement will be reinforced.</p>

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		<p>In respect of the out of hours service, it is there to service genuine emergency highway issues that arise rather than an out of hours extension to the highway enquiry process. There is a single customer service centre number to call for both councillors and the public, and the customer service centre will escalate to the on-duty officer, Mgroup or in extreme cases our joint resilience team as appropriate. We will remind the company providing the out of hours call service to recognise the role of the county councillor within this though.</p>
<p>4. That the Council should increase visibility and clarity of programmed works, supported by earlier publication of multi-year plans.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Please also see responses under 1 as they are relevant here too.</p> <p>To confirm our larger planned works are multi-year programmes and typically we have a two-year rolling outlook. On the Highway schemes map we publish last year's, this year's, and next year's programme. However, we will also look to publish this in different formats to increase accessibility of this information.</p>
<p>5. That the Council should improve integration of local knowledge, especially of elected members, into prioritisation of repairs and programmed works.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>Input of local knowledge from Councillors is important, but there may be good asset-based reasons for programme decisions which don't along with local opinion on priority. It is appreciated that local knowledge needs to be known and taken into account when making programme decisions, and that the decision made and rationale for it needs to be explained.</p> <p>The process in developing and sharing our annual programmes of planned work will be updated to allow for this.</p>

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<p>6. That the Council should review the FixMyStreet process, ensuring cases are not closed prematurely and status updates are clearer.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>FixMyStreet is already subject to continuous review and ongoing development to improve both functionality and user experience.</p> <p>This includes regular assessment of reporting categories, workflow logic, response templates, and how information is presented back to the public. Feedback from residents, councillors, frontline teams, inspectors, and our contractor is routinely analysed to identify where enhancements are needed.</p> <p>The approach of continuous improvement will continue to be carried out, but we will commit to looking with a particular focus on not prematurely closing cases or managing some of the longer-term issues or service requests in a different way.</p> <p>We are also looking at opportunities to automate more of the responses using inspection schedule and work schedule information to provide a more timely response.</p>
<p>7. That the Council should enhance training and support in relation to the Superuser scheme.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>We will look to run further campaigns to attract additional volunteers to this successful initiative and promote the scheme.</p> <p>There is already a strong training programme, refresher sessions and support activity in place, however, we will carry out further engagement with the superuser volunteer network to understand where improvements might be required.</p> <p>To confirm we carried out an FMS SU survey during Nov 2024, and early 2026 collecting structured feedback on what's working well, where improvements are needed, and ideas for further support the volunteers may find valuable. We will continue to provide an annual feedback survey form. This helps us to shape</p>

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		<p>our future working with our volunteers in relation to our processes and scope of our volunteers across all activities and potential new ones.</p> <p>For awareness since Jan 2026 there have been 30 min on-line drop-in sessions taking place and these will continue with 3 sessions per month planned, plus, ad-hoc ones as required.</p> <p>Using activity data, both individual and general training support is provided as needed. Formal reviews following the initial training are had at 6 weeks, 6 months and annually. An annual in-person refresher training is also held.</p> <p>All OxToG volunteers are also sent a monthly newsletter that includes training updates and defects raised. We welcome and encourage volunteer good news stories, recognising their contributions across all the OxToG activities. These articles help in providing a strong sense of community and appreciation of the work our volunteers do, as well as encourage best practice and potential for crossover OxToG activities.</p>
<p>8. That the Council should review approaches to temporary repairs, including failure patterns on bus routes.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>To strengthen quality assurance, the Council has increased resourcing in this area, with two Highway Officers now dedicated solely to monitoring the quality of completed repairs. Where recurring quality issues arise, they are addressed through formal contractual performance management, which may include financial adjustments and impacts on contractor Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>In addition, the service carried out an end-to-end defect management process review. This programme looked at and has implemented enhancing inspection accuracy, the quality of works instructions, and overall data integrity.</p>

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		<p>In respect to impact of buses, we will explore how we could potentially assess and compare road condition degradation and bus routes to see if there is a correlation or not.</p>
<p>9. That the Council should explore further measures to limit the impact of HGVs on vulnerable roads.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The council accepts the proposal to keep under review additional tools and interventions, including routing measures, improved signage, engagement with freight operators, and strengthened use of planning and development levers where relevant to manage and route HGVs appropriately.</p> <p>With regards to Highways Maintenance specifically, the Council takes into account the need for HGV use on its roads when maintaining them, and looks to use advanced materials and design specifications when developing planned works.</p> <p>Although the use of graphene-enhanced asphalt is still within its infancy, the potential benefits on high-traffic routes to increase resistance to cracking and deformation, extending surface life where Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) loading is greatest.</p>
<p>10. That the Council should undertake a review of the impact of cars being significantly heavier on average than previously and the resultant pressure on roads.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The impact of changes in vehicle weight on road deterioration is primarily being considered at a national level, where research and policy development continue to evolve. Current available evidence does not demonstrate a clear or significant link between heavier cars, including electric vehicles, and increased road damage.</p> <p>Locally, the Council will continue to monitor emerging evidence and remain engaged with national research and guidance. Where appropriate, we will contribute our experience of managing the network to help inform this wider work.</p>

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		<p>In practice, the main drivers of road deterioration in Oxfordshire remain ageing materials, weather-related factors, past levels of maintenance investment, and Heavy Goods Vehicle use.</p>
<p>11. That the Council should consider whether additional inspection capacity is needed and strengthen inspection processes.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Work is already underway to review current inspection routes and frequencies to ensure they remain appropriate, targeted, and risk-based. As part of this review, the level of resource required to deliver an effective and resilient inspection regime is being considered, alongside technology and A.I opportunities.</p> <p>In parallel, changes to the structure and associated responsibilities will be considered if deemed to help improve oversight, and enhance the efficiency and consistency of inspections.</p>
<p>12. That the Council should continue to embed learning from repair failures, including materials choices and method improvements.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Council will ensure that reviews and lessons learned are part of continuous service improvement.</p> <p>A key part of this will be planned Pothole Innovation Day, which will bring together a wide range of suppliers and delivery partners to showcase and compare different repair methods and materials. This will give the Council a practical opportunity to see what works best in real conditions, rather than relying on theory alone. The day will also help encourage collaboration and open discussion about what has and hasn't worked in the past. Feedback from operational teams will be gathered and used to improve future approaches, with the outcomes helping to update our standards and ensure we are using the most effective, durable and value-for-money solutions. Overall, this approach will support a more consistent and proactive way of improving repairs over time.</p>