

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

27 January 2026

Fix My Street

Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
 - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's use of the Fix My Street platform at its meeting on 05 December 2025.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety, Paul Wilson, Operations Manager (Operations), and Matthew Timms, Team Leader (Engagement) – Highway Maintenance for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety introduced the Fix My Street item, explaining that the platform enabled the public to report highway defects and issues, and had seen around 41,000 reports since January 2025 – a growth of 4000 on the report provided to the Committee, presumably incorporating an additional month of figures. While acknowledging the system's imperfections, he emphasised its role within a wider transformation programme aimed at improving customer experience, with several workstreams underway to address known issues. Ongoing collaboration with colleagues was highlighted, alongside recognition that not all users were satisfied with the service.
6. In its consideration of the item, the Committee explored items such as recent cleansing of older reports and safeguards associated with such action, the purpose of 'superusers' and the process to become one, ways to make reporting more accurate and efficient, the cost benefits of different approaches to filling potholes, the prevalence of 'find and fix', quality inspections of work undertaken, and communication with members.
7. The Committee makes eight recommendations, which broadly align behind the issues of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of repairs, and improving communication with residents, particularly around updating them on reported defects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

'Find and Fix'

8. Many of the Committee's recommendations follow the most regular comments made by residents to members about the Fix My Street platform.
9. The first is the frustration experienced when a pothole is reported and fixed, but others nearby are not filled at the same time. The report to Committee and discussions held afterwards determined that 'Through a "find and fix" approach, crews are empowered to repair additional issues not originally specified in the initial instruction.' However, this was counterbalanced by the need to prioritise works on a risk-based approach.
10. According to a Freedom of Information request to all Highways Authorities, Devon County Council undertook the highest number of pothole repairs in the country between January 2022 and September 2025.¹ It also receives the highest number of reports, suggesting that, as a highway authority, Devon faces a more challenging position even than Oxfordshire (which, incidentally, had the seventh highest number reported). Devon has begun a trial whereby all potholes are filled, rather than those which are a safety hazard.² The Committee is of the view that, whilst 'find and fix' does operate in Oxfordshire, it could be extended

¹ [The British pothole crisis exposed: over 5 million repairs and 3.3 million reports since 2022 - cinch](#)

² [Devon's pothole repair trial to get underway soon - News](#)

significantly. Though it is appreciated that Devon is only undertaking a trial, there are strong reasons to think that preventative action will save money in the long run, and undertaking multiple repairs in the same location will prove more efficient as well as reducing overall risk than a less efficient but more prioritised approach. As such, the Committee seeks that the Council contact Devon County Council to learn from their experience of this trial, and consider implementing something similar.

Recommendation 1: That the Council extends "find and fix" powers, including considering a trial similar to Devon County Council's recent trial's approach.

11. Following on from this, one simple way of communicating to residents that additional potholes in the area have been noted – even if they are not immediately fixed – is simply to mark them with spray paint. Doing so would be reassuring for members of the public for very little extra effort, and the Committee recommends that this start happening.

Recommendation 2: That the Council considers marking additional defects with spray paint to show residents that issues have been noted, even if not immediately fixed.

Interim Repairs

12. The second area of frustration raised by residents to members concerns the quality and durability of repairs which have been undertaken. The Committee is content to accept the point made that these are two different issues: it is not uncommon for interim fixes to be put in place to avert danger whilst awaiting a longer-term solution. These are, of course, not as durable as permanent solutions. In order to be assured of quality, the Council's policy is to review 20% of repairs. In view of the frustrations expressed by residents to members, the Committee is of the view that this should be increased; poorly fixed roads are easily damaged in cold weather, meaning that there is the potential that the costs avoided by increasing the percentage of works which are quality assured may mitigate if not fully the cover the cost.

Recommendation 3: That the Council increases the percentage of road defect repairs that are quality assured from the current 20% level.

13. In relation to the issue of interim repairs, improved communication around the status of interim repairs and expected timescales for permanent fixes would allay much of the confusion and frustration arising from this issue.
14. A secondary issue on this is the reports of defects being marked as 'fixed' following an interim intervention. The Committee appreciates that in making safe a defect through an interim measure, the problem is fixed from a Council risk perspective – it is no longer an immediate danger - but there remains work to do to make it safe in the long term. This longer-term perspective is generally the one taken by members of the public, and it would be helpful if the Council's processes were to align with it.

Recommendation 4: That the Council uses Fix My Street to update residents, especially regarding the status of interim repairs and expected timescales for permanent fixes, and keeps notifications active until permanent repairs are completed.

Other

15. Alongside written reports, photos can be submitted on Fix My Street and are a very useful tool when staff seek to risk assess and prioritise new reports. The Committee discussed whether, in order to make the process more efficient and decisions of priority more informed, pictures could always be required as part of the making a report. It was responded, however, that this would not be a practical solution, given not every highway defect is in a place where it is safe to take a picture.
16. The Committee takes this on board, but it does not consider that simply because there are instances where the idea is impractical, that it does not work at all. There are categories of repair, pavement issues for example, which do remain safe to photograph. Being alert to the equalities considerations - for instance wheelchair or mobility scooter users are more likely to find disrepair of pavements problematic than those who do not use them but may be less likely to use smartphones – the Committee suggests there remains value in reviewing whether to require photographs in suitable categories in order to improve the efficiency of initial risk assessment and triage.

Recommendation 5: That the Council considers requiring photos for appropriate categories of reports – those where it is safe and practical – to improve the quality of initial submissions.

17. With regards to pavements and other footways, it is the view of the Committee that public understanding of the Council's responsibilities regarding potholes is fairly well understood as are the thresholds for non-intervention. This is not the case for pavement repairs. This is not helped by the way thresholds are communicated. For instance, if a resident clicks through to the 'footways and pavement damage' section of the Fix My Street website, they are met with the following:

Report your problem

→ Click the map or drag the pin to adjust the location

🔍 Or search for a different location

We take different action depending on the issue.
This category is for issues relating to the surface of the pavement. If you are reporting issues such as **littering** or **fly tipping**, please do so under the **Rubbish and Environment Category**.



In comparison, when they navigate through to report a pothole they are presented with the intervention criteria and system of prioritisation:

Report your problem

→ Click the map or drag the pin to adjust the location

🔍 Or search for a different location

Not everything meets our criteria for fixing.
On roads the size of the pothole must be **40mm depth and/or 150mm diameter**.
On paths the size of the pothole must be **20mm depth and/or 100mm diameter**.
If the location is on a cycle path, at a junction, bend or in the wheel track this may increase the priority.



18. The Committee considers that it would be helpful in setting expectations amongst residents and defuse some of their frustrations if the criteria for intervention in pavement repairs were to be explained more fully here, and publicised more broadly also.

Recommendation 6: That the Council improves communication with the public about the criteria for pavement repairs, as residents often do not understand why some pavements are not fixed.

19. Since launching the concept as a trial in 2019, the Council has been training 'super users' to inspect potholes, footpaths, blocked drains and damaged kerbing, and allowing direct work orders to be made to the Council's contractors.

20. Though the concept of super-users was valued by members of the Committee, it was suggested that the Council was not maximising the effectiveness of the current volunteers. Some criticism was put forward that members on the committee had been trained as super users but had received little guidance as to what was expected of them, and that there had not been any follow-up despite the fact that they had not made any reports. The Council's listing on Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action's website – one of the main portals for volunteering in the county – suggests that 'ongoing support' is provided, but does not outline any expectations of those who register.³ It is not possible with current evidence to know whether the lack of follow-up for committee members was representative or not, but the Committee's comment remains the same: volunteers willingly take work off paid Council staff, and if through a small investment in outlining expectations and improved support, the Council can leverage the willingness of community-minded residents and receive significant returns on this investment. The Committee seeks that the Council does so.

Recommendation 7: That the Council provides expectations of super-users, and implements more post-training support.

21. The final recommendation is something of a summary recommendation. In the report presented to the Committee, it was reported that, of 41,000 highway defects identified and actioned, approximately 25% originated from Fix My Street. It is the view of the Committee that this number is actually a good indicator of public confidence in Fix My Street as a reporting system. If steps are taken to improve the outcomes of reports, and communication with residents is improved – such as those being recommended by the Committee – then this number will naturally increase. As a means of measuring this improvement, the Council should therefore set and monitor a target which increases this percentage.

Recommendation 8: That the Council develops a target for the percentage of defects originating from Fix My Street to increase the current 25% figure, which is considered too low.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

22. The Committee is conscious that the primary interest in Fix My Street, potholes, is scheduled to be considered by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2026. Any further scrutiny, therefore, will take place in conversation with that committee in order to prevent duplication.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

23. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed

³ [FixMyStreet Super User - raise work orders for potholes, damaged kerbs and blocked drains](#)

by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.

24. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

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Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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