

## ADDENDUM TO MEMBER QUESTION REPORT

COUNCIL 17 MAY 2018

### Question raised by Councillor Evans.

### Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport.

In answer to the question submitted by Councillor Evans. All Members will be aware that the recent winter has taken its toll on the highway network, which is replicated nationally, predominantly in the east of the country. To that end, the Department for Transport released additional funding to support local authorities dealing with the increased repair bill. Shropshire Highways has allocated the capital finance into its budgets across a number of work areas (surface dressing, patching, re-surfacing, pot hole repairs). This work is programmed and will be fully utilised by the autumn.

Further, the transition from one contract arrangement to a revised contract arrangement, and the subsequent de-mobilisation and mobilisation of a new contract, with the overall highways and transport contract procurement, has consumed a lot of management time.

**The responses to the questions raised below, are provided in the order that they were made.**

*I note the number of comments being received with reference to potholes in the county and the many problems these are incurring for both residents and visitors.*

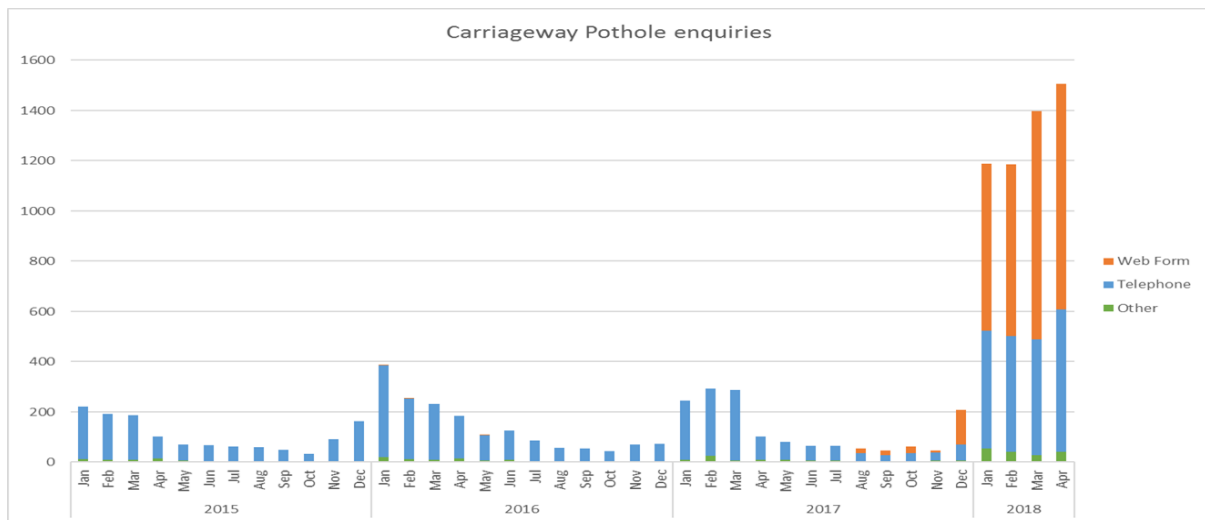
*Can we be told please?*

- 1. How many potholes were reported in each of the last four months? That is in January, February, March and April 2018.*
- 2. How many potholes were reported in each of these months during 2015, 2016 and 2017?*
- 3. How many potholes have been repaired in each of the months listed above, and how many have needed repeat visits?*
- 4. How many claims for compensation have the council received in each of the months listed above?*
- 5. How many of the claims in each of the months listed above have resulted in actual compensation being paid out?*
- 6. How many claims in total have resulted in compensation being paid out in each of the last three financial years and what has been the total cash paid out in each of these years?*

### Response 1

The table below identifies the number of enquiries that Shropshire Highways received during the four months in question. It is self-evident that the sharp increase in enquiries received coincided with the onset of the poor winter weather. It should be further noted that the question is asked as 'enquiries', and therefore one defect, i.e. one pot hole, could be subject to numerous enquiries identified in the table below. However, as an

evidential basis, the numbers of enquires increased and placed pressure onto the Highways service.



The data demonstrates that the combined enquiries for January, February, March and April when compared over the last four years where:

January, February, March & April	Year	Total enquiries
	2015	697
	2016	1,055
	2017	928
	2018	5,274

There was a **96% increase** in enquiries in the four months of 2018, when compared to the total of all enquiries received in the four months of the previous three years combined.

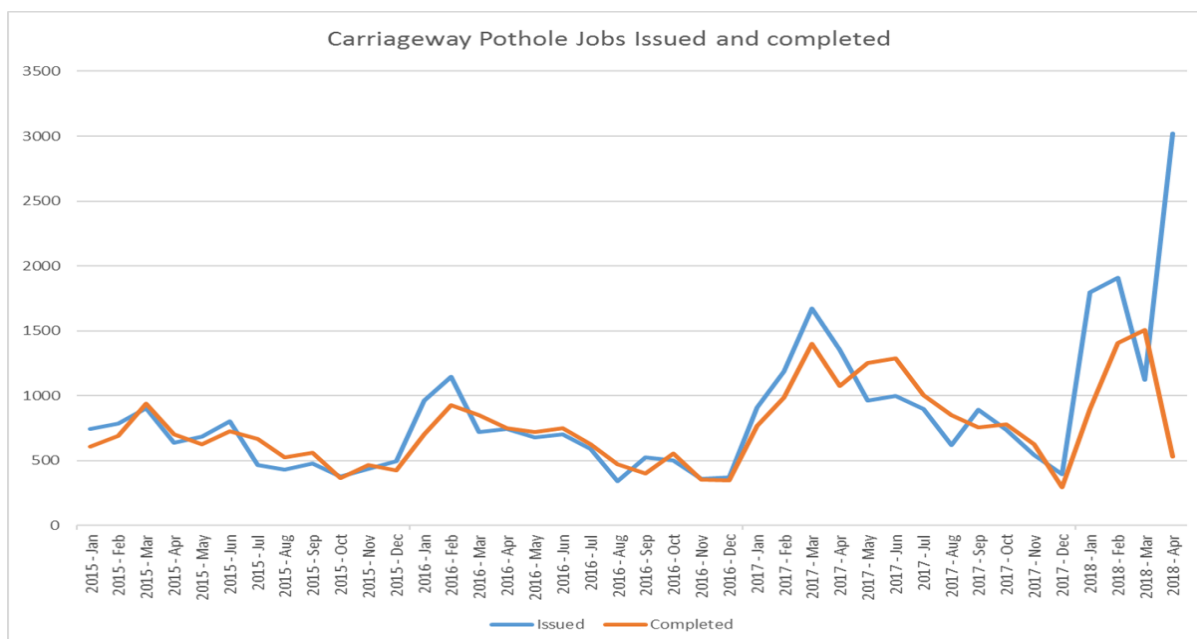
**Response 2.** This response is included within the table above.

**Response 3.**

The table below demonstrates the volume of jobs (a job could be numerous defects in a designated meter squared area) issued by Highways staff (blue line); the orange line demonstrates the number of jobs completed following inspections, using emergency (1 day), 5 day or 20 day response orders.

It should be noted that towards the end of the previous contract the number of orders issued to the contractor were reduced, due to the planned withdrawal and cessation of the contract and in preparation for the mobilisation of the new contract on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. On

1<sup>st</sup> April the new contractor was presented with the outstanding jobs for completion, which was agreed during the mobilisation process.



The nature of the work, and the need to ensure that the Council's liabilities are minimised, determines that repairs need to be undertaken within time constraints; or due to the identified hazard, a temporary repair is required, or where for example a patching programme is in place and will be undertaken on the same link of road. Any defective work by the contractor is replaced at contractor's cost, as are any insurance claims if the contractor is at fault.

With regard to repeat visits, the Confirm asset management system identifies that a defect has been identified and needs to be actioned; it does not identify if this is the same, or an adjacent pot hole or other minor repairs. However, we can identify on road links the number of defects reported; this is then a key factor used when identifying which roads are resurfaced / patched the following year.

**Response 4:**

The data below is accurate as of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and gives the number of claims for compensation the council received in each of the months listed above.

Month	Number of claims received
January 2018	94
February 2018	74
March 2018	58
April 2018	22
<b>Totals</b>	<b>248</b>

**Response 5:**

The number of claims in each of the months listed above that have resulted in actual compensation being paid out.

<b>Month</b>	<b>No. of claims where compensation has been paid out</b>
January 2018	1
February 2018	2
March 2018	0
April 2018	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3</b>

**Response 6:**

The total number of claims that have resulted in compensation being paid out in each of the last three financial years and the total cash paid out in each of these years.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>No. of claims where compensation paid</b>	<b>Total value</b>
2015	10	£44,990.00
2016	22	£7,889.00
2017	10	£11,052.00

Note:

- For 2016 /2017 full financial year, we had a repudiation rate of 91.37% - that is 91.37% of all claims are defended. For context, anything over 70% is considered to be high performing nationally.
- This prevented or saved claims to the value of £1,224,138
- The bad weather over the winter has taken its toll, and common sense would forecast a reduction on the repudiation rate – this will be a national trend, hence the Government releasing additional finances.
- Due to the bad weather, in consultation with our Insurers, we agreed a temporary plan for March, where we did not inspect rural roads (but did respond to customers comments / complaints) so that we could focus upon A and B roads, as said with the support of our Insurers, and we are defending claims on this basis. Due to the weather and its effect, a temporary plan was enacted, this reverted to normal operations in April.