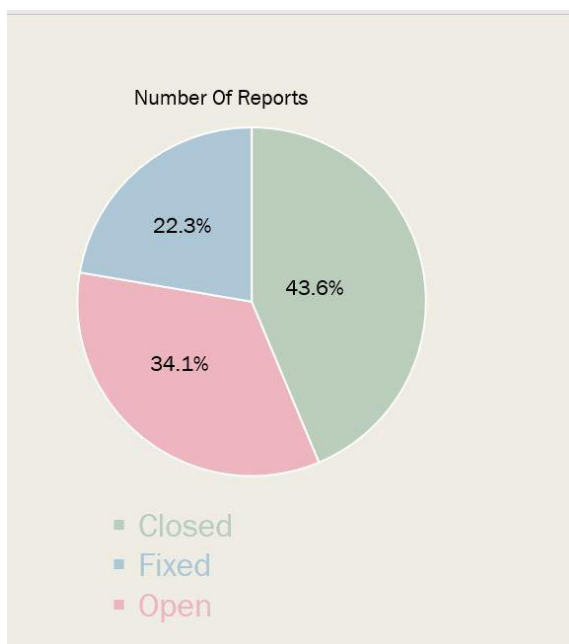


CABINET 20 JULY 2022
Member Questions

Question from:	Julia Buckley
Subject:	Fix My Street
Portfolio Holder:	Dean Carroll

Since November 2021 I have reported 103 cases for reactive repairs on the 'Fix My Street' system for Bridgnorth West and Tasley. Of these:-

- 22.3% have been fixed
- 43.6% are closed
- 34.1% are open



This means 77.7% of reports over the last eight months have still not been fixed, because those that have been classed as 'closed' do not mean that they have been fixed, but simply allocated for future repair – or not.

For example, a footway surface problem was logged on 31 March 2022, and although is now considered closed, the report has only had one update stating "We have received your report of the issue and will update you when appropriate." Nothing since.

Whilst the average waiting time for cases to be fixed in Shropshire is 42 days, this case has been ongoing for 105 days with no updates.

- Why are reports being classed as 'closed' when further action is still required – in some cases with no timescale?
- Why are repairs in Bridgnorth West taking so much longer than the Shropshire average?

- Should we as elected members (and members of the public) continue to spend our time logging issues for repair if only one in five ever get done?

FixMyStreet is still new to the service and we are working through a number of stages to improve the system and the integration with our internal system. The second phase to improve feedback will be undertaken over the next year as the funding made available by council allows the service to increase staffing capacity to service more nuanced feedback and upgrade its CONFIRM system, in order to develop FixMyStreet to the next step to provide more refined automated feedback.

Jobs shown as **Closed**, is FixMyStreet terminology for reports that are unlikely to be resolved as 'fixed' in the short term. For us, this generally relates to 'Works in Programme'. This is a location that has been identified as requiring follow up work, but the timescale is currently unknown. There are many issues which are being addressed considerably quicker than the average, but also some more complex issues that are taking longer to respond to but this is not unique to Bridgnorth West. For the list of 'fixed jobs' for Cllr Buckley, the average fix time is 30 days.

It is valuable for members and the public to **continuing to log issues**. The public travel far more of the network on a daily basis than the service can cover. Through our inspection regime we inspect the whole network over a year, so for many roads there can be a long time between inspections. By providing good quality information the public can greatly assist in identifying issues across the service. Over the last 18 months the highways team have made demonstrable improvements in their reaction time in addressing issues that meet the council's intervention criteria, and in the last 6 months have made significant progress in decreasing the backlog of issues that were in the system.

The FMS system is still work in progress and training needs and system updates continue, to ensure that status updates are as accurate and meaningful as possible.

Question from:	Julia Buckley
Subject:	NWRR Overspend
Portfolio Holder:	Dean Carroll

In the financial outturn report we discussed at full council last week, I was surprised to learn about the £2.5m overspend on the NWRR and would like some more information about it.

Is this overspend is a variance from the projected budget (of global cost) or is it a time/cashflow issue, i.e. unexpectedly in this financial year but an anticipated spend within the agreed envelope?

If it is a variance, then for what element of the NWRR project does this overspend relate to? And how was the overspend approved?

What percentage variance was this on the agreed budget?

How was this approved within procurement rules?

What impact does this have on our strategic risk register for the project?

In short, if we are able to overspend by such a large margin within the first year of the project, what financial implications will that have for the project as a whole and does it remain viable in the current fiscal climate?

A budget for 2021/22 was approved within the Capital Programme for NWRR of £5.021m. At this point in time, to manage risk and ensure maximum financial benefit to the Council, the budget was funded entirely from DfT Large Local Majors Grant and was based on assumed progress over the financial year. As at 31 March 2022, the programme had progressed at a faster rate than profiled and this was reported as an overspend against the profile, i.e. the budget in place for 2021/22. The overspend does not represent an overspend against the whole programme - there is still £40.773m grant, £8.265m S106 developer contributions and £19.846m capital receipts earmarked to the programme. The budget for 2022/23 for NWRR is £3.962m, funded entirely from DfT Large Local Majors Grant. Any spend over 2022/23 ahead of or behind the estimated profile will continue to be reported as an under or overspend for that year.