

Island Roads - Improving our roads to drive our future



Since April last year Island Roads embarked on the biggest programme of highway improvements ever seen on the Island.

In the first nine months of the seven-year core investment programme 127,760m² of roads were surfaced (the equivalent of Cowes to Ventnor in total distance) and, this year, these figures look set to be tripled as work to upgrade, improve and maintain the Island's highways continues.



It's a long-term solution

Years of reactive maintenance and limited resurfacing have left the roads in an extremely poor condition. The Island has PFI funding to upgrade, manage and maintain the Island's highways network for the next 25 years providing long-term improvements to the Island's roads.

All of the roads on the Island have been inspected and assessed and a programme of work has been developed to ensure the best value for money can be achieved within the life of the contract.

The programme takes into account a wide range of factors including, for example, the likely deterioration of the road over time, whether the road can be economically repaired, the road usage, location and other works (eg drainage, utility works) needed in that section of road. The timing of works is also scheduled taking into account factors such as traffic volume and movement and availability of diversion routes to enable the road improvements to take place at an equal pace across the Island and with the minimum inconvenience to local residents and visitors.

Our assessments are scientifically based and look not just at the surface of the road but deep within its structural layers to determine which roads need to be tackled first. This can sometimes mean that roads which appear to be superficially worse are dealt with later in the programme than those which, on the surface, appear to be less of a priority.

It is a complex programme that is under continual review as work can also be affected by the weather, emergency works and availability of materials. But by the end of seven years, work will have been completed to upgrade virtually all Island roads.

We've brought in extra resources to tackle potholes and repairs

Alongside this programme, we are also undertaking ongoing maintenance work to repair defects such as potholes so that we can maintain the use of roads until they are scheduled for surfacing work.

These defects have however been made much worse in the recent prolonged periods of heavy rain, wind and flooding and there are hundreds across the Island making it a colossal task to tackle. We've brought in additional resources and specialist equipment to enable us to prioritise and target the worst of these defects. These include additional operational crews, a state-of-the-art patching machine and a mobile road mending vehicle which will allow hot material to be used to repair the roads so that repairs only need to be done once.



Since the start of January 2014 we've had over 4,000 calls to report defects. On average we tackle in the region of 1,500 different defects each month but in the last two weeks alone, with our additional resources, we've repaired over 3,000 defects across the Island.

With the prospect of colder weather ahead which will cause saturated ground to freeze and expand any defects, we are committed to doing our utmost to treat as many of these as possible, as quickly as possible. But it will take time and we appeal to residents to be patient with us as we undertake this extensive programme of work.

We're also improving drainage



We also have a specialist drainage team working on a scheduled programme to cleanse and repair all gullies and drains across the Island ahead of our surfacing works. This work will repair systems that have suffered from years of poor maintenance due to the lack of funding.

Since 1st April 2013, we've completed 15 minor drainage schemes and work on a major drainage scheme in Newport Road, Niton also started this month. Other known problem areas such as Pallance Road (Northwood), Palmers Lane (Newchurch), Carisbrooke Road (Newport), and Cemetery Road (Lake) have been programmed for similar improvement works during the course of 2014/15.

To report a defective highway drain or gully, or a pothole or other problem relating to the highway network please visit our website.