

Pothole Campaign August 2016 - Report Back

As you may know CycloX undertook a campaign called '[Tour de Potholes](#)' to raise awareness of the poor state of roads and cyclepaths in Oxfordshire, and the consequent danger to bike riders.

We thought you might like to hear the outcomes of the event, and helpful feedback from Kevin Haines, Highways Asset Manager, Oxfordshire County Council, and Shaun Hatton, Area Steward and Highways & Engineering Manager for Oxford City Council, at our post event meeting.

The Campaign

Flyers went out to cycle media (Sustrans etc), and 18 clubs and 26 bike shops in the county. We achieved substantial coverage in the local press, radio and BBC South.

During the campaign (13 and 16 August 2016), 146 potholes and 35 carriageway defects were reported on [FixMyStreet.com](#). Whilst it is unlikely that all these reports were in response to our campaign, there was a definite 'spike' in reporting during this period. Highways apparently needed to roster additional Inspectors around this period to meet the Department's quality assurance deadline for reports to be examined.

Participants said that it was good to have focussed campaign, which has encouraged bike riders to continue to report road defects. The general view was that reporting on FixMyStreet was fairly easy – and it was great that a considerable number of the potholes that were reported were agreed as needing fixing by Highways. CycloX members have been pleased to see that many of the reported defects have already been fixed.

Council representatives gave the following feedback:

- **Budget.** Oxon CC hopes to gain an additional £1million for pothole-type repairs for the next financial period, over and above current allocations. The Council recognises that there is insufficient money available for highway maintenance but makes funds go further by utilising cost effective treatments that reduce the need for more expensive reconstruction in the future. To put this into context, the budget for resurfacing and surface dressing can only pay for approximately 1.5% of the county network to be maintained each year. This means that the remainder of our roads must be treated with patching and pothole- type repairs. All concerned understand that this is not where we want to be.
- **Quality of repairs.** Highways regularly trial new methods, materials and products for maintenance and repairs. There is also a regular process for auditing repairs, and where these occasionally fail, contractors are required to repeat the repair. Where red edges are painted on the pothole this means that the repair must be made within 24 hours. White edges mean that the repair must be made within 28 days.
- **Taking into account the bike rider's perspective.** The Council understands that some surface defects can concern cyclists more than they do motorists. However, the guidelines for assessing pot holes is unlikely to change , because all defects are individually risk-assessed and will be repaired if considered hazardous. KH and SH made a commitment to raise the prominence of cycling in the assessment of maintenance work and through training, so that Highway Inspectors can keep in mind the safety of the bike rider, and especially the road surface within 1 metre of the kerb.
- **Injury reporting.** The number of official injury reports involving cyclists is quite low and may not represent the number of minor incidents that occur. A way forward may be for more regular dialogue with groups such as CycloX to communicate the locations of greatest concern and, consequently, to better understand the groups' priorities, which is particularly pertinent when budgets are so limited.
- **Consultation with cyclist lobby groups.** Communication Plans are produced for major works and improvement schemes to ensure the Council consults with interest groups and other relevant parties as proposals are being developed. KH and SH said that early dialogue should enable opportunities for funds to be best utilised and for the provision of improved cycle facilities to be explored, and that this could also extend to fairly low-cost works such as lining where small changes could still prove beneficial. We agree that it would be sensible for organisations that represent cyclists in the county to be invited to present the cycling perspective on a more regular basis as well as at the early stages of scheme planning.