

**Report to the Isle of Wight Council Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration July 6<sup>th</sup> 2023**

- **Do the surveys prove successful?**

Any feedback is welcome by Island Roads. The annual survey is a useful addition to the other methods we use – including correspondence through the hub and reaction to social media – to collate information on how our services are viewed.

In terms of pure numbers, the survey generates a good response. This year there were 1,065 responses received – a 75 percent increase on the previous year.

- **What are the biggest challenges faced with the surveys?**

The principal issue with the survey is that it is self-selective – that is to say, people choose themselves whether to take part. In practice, this means that those with a particular interest in highway issues are more likely to take part than those who do not. This can lead to what researchers call self-selection bias whereby the group choosing to take part is not equivalent (in terms of the research criteria) to the group that opts out.

While a decent response rate was received, this year's uptake – higher than usual – is nevertheless less than the minimum researchers would usually accept as being statistically robust and, as mentioned above, neither is it demographically representative. This must be born in mind when assessing whether points raised could justify changes in practices and procedures.

February is month in which weather conditions are most likely to generate defects such as potholes which affect the quality of the network. Moreover, weather conditions are not conducive to major road improvement work so the survey also comes at a time when work to improve the network is not as visible as it is in other months.

The survey findings may also identify highway issues that are outside of Island Roads' control. For example, many comments blaming poor traffic management and work quality relate to third party works which have statutory powers to work on the network. During the survey period (February) there were 1835 utility works in progress (84% of all roadworks). Some comments also relate to the service levels, service provision and scope of Island Roads work which are set by the PFI contract and may also reflect where service cost-efficiencies have been developed with the council and service levels have therefore changed.

The above is merely intended to provide context to the survey. As previously stated, all feedback on the network and issues affecting it, is welcomed and taken seriously by Island Roads.

- **What happens with the data after the surveys have been completed?**

The survey is carried out via the survey platform Survey Monkey so the results are quickly available both as raw data and in graphic form. In addition, every response is

read and the key themes recorded. This means the responses are evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Both the hard data and the qualitative analysis informs a report and annual action plan setting out steps to, where possible, address the principal issues raised. This action plan sits alongside the continuous efforts to review and improve our services.

- **How are the results of the survey fed back to the public?**

The principal aim of the survey is to identify areas in which improvements can be made and also to highlight areas of good practice which can be built upon. There is no requirement to share the results with the public, however we would be happy to consider, with the agreement of the Isle of Wight Council, wider publication of the survey findings in future.

The main areas raised, and also misconceptions that may exist, are all fed into Island Roads' communications plan and help inform communication messaging and activity. For example, a series of features have been placed within the local media to address points of concern articulated in the survey. Common themes are also addressed in Island Roads' social media activity.

By way of a specific service improvement that was implemented following feedback in the annual survey, in 2022 Island Roads received feedback regarding the use of the Fix My Street (FMS) app. There were queries about its use and accessibility and this resulted in a video being produced with the help of Age UK, to help explain how to access and use the app for all users.

- **Who monitors the service improvement plan?**

The Service Improvement Plan is submitted to the Isle of Wight Council for review though it is the responsibility of Island Roads to monitor and deliver it.

- **How do the Isle of Wight Council and Island Roads work together to achieve service improvements?**

Though performance standards are set and applied in accordance with the Highway PFI contract, Island Roads also works with the IW Council on many levels – over and above the regular, formal, dialogue with the authority's contract management team - to achieve service improvements.

Examples of working together include:

The Communications Working Group – which reviews the correspondence sent out by Island Roads to elected members and members of the public.

Health and Safety Forum– comprising representatives from Island Roads, the council, and local industry. This body meets quarterly to discuss health and safety issues with the aim of promoting and applying the highest health, safety and wellbeing standards within the construction industry on the island. This group has, for instance, been key to implementing a new licensing scheme for scaffolding on, or affecting, the highway network.

Partnership Development Session - Island Roads and IW Council staff have come together for an ad hoc event at which ways to maintain and develop close and beneficial contractor/client working relationships have been explored.

Asset management workshop – held annually to give elected members an overview of services provided by Island Roads. These workshops help build relationship between councillors and Island Roads and present information to elected members which will help them provide informed answers to questions raised from members of the public.

Island Roads also liaises, with the support of the council, with community groups to understand the needs of vulnerable residents. We have been working with Age UK IW and Isle Access for the last few years, while next month staff will be undergoing training with IW Autism Inclusion Matters.

Transport Infrastructure Board - where we join the council and representatives from travel infrastructure companies to look at the Island transport strategy.

In day-to-day operations, Island Roads and IW Council staff work together on key local issues and initiatives. For instance, with the significant volume of works in the Ventnor area over recent years, it has been important for all of the teams to meet with local residents and councillors to discuss things in detail. This is done wherever possible with Town and Parish Councils.

## **Summary**

While the survey sample may seem small, it is important to Island Roads. The themes within the survey responses are generally recognised as key areas that drive public opinion and take up a lot of time of councillors when going through their mailbags (or inboxes). By seeing these emphasised clearly, Island Roads can again focus on other initiatives that may be able to help in these key areas, working closely with IW Council colleagues. It is worthy of note that Island Roads is almost fully staffed by local Isle of Wight residents who are members of their own communities. Our staff wish to know that other residents think of the services delivered and to help improvements be delivered for their island.

Island Roads encourages comment and correspondence with users. The Annual Customer Survey is valuable, together with the social media channels used and the Fix My Street web portal and app, that Island Roads invested in to bring customers closer to our services. This provides data to drive service delivery in accordance with the contract, but also to inform and aid areas for improvement.