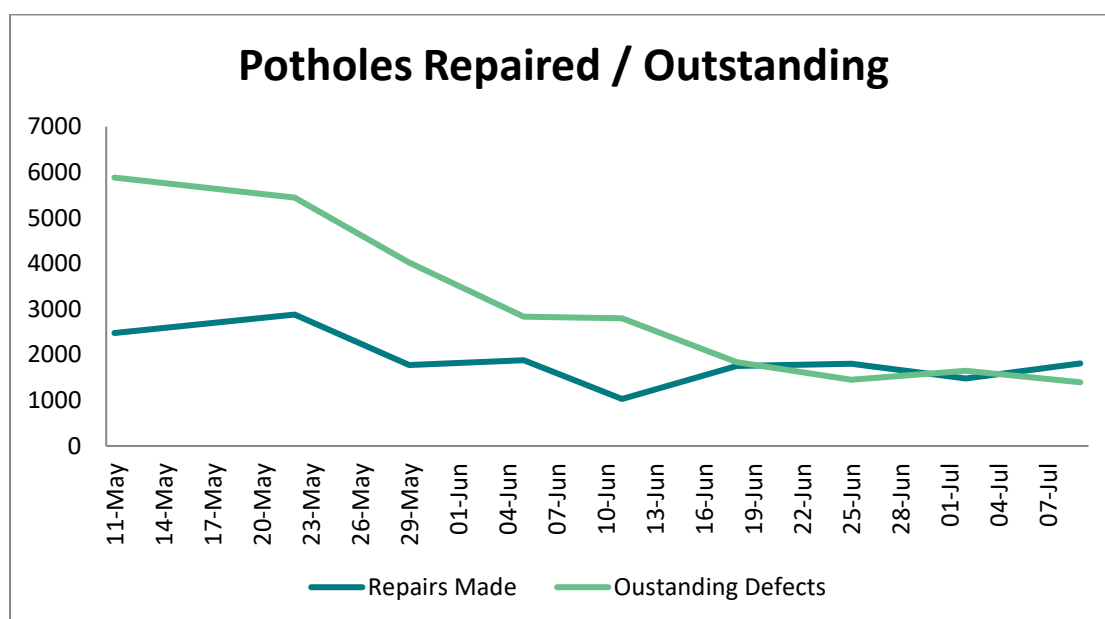


After some of the most damaging winter freeze-thaw conditions in years, we were left with over 5,885 outstanding potholes across the county by the end of May 2018. To combat this Skanska drafted in additional defect gangs to repair up to 2,881 potholes a week. This has had a substantial impact on the outstanding defects which are now at 974 (as of 23rd July) – a reduction of 83% in just three months.

These remaining 974 defects need to be viewed in context and there is clearly a difference between 'outstanding' and 'overdue'. With over 8,000 miles of network (the largest for any authority in the UK) defects are reported by both our Highway Inspectors and the public at an average of 2,083 defects each week. Devon Highways are committed not only to reduce the winter backlog but also to repair newly reported defects within a timescale appropriate to the risk they create.



In the past three months additional focus has been given to the South of Devon. At one stage in late May there were 3 times more defects here than in any other part of the County; peaking at 3,284 defects. With Skanska redistributing and recruiting additional gangs into the area the numbers outstanding have been brought back in line with the other areas with 126 potholes remaining at the time of writing.

To improve the long-term productivity and efficiency of the service we have sought to ascertain the reliability of information originating through our online reporting system known as the Public Information Portal (PIP). In some parts of the County analysis has shown that for PIP reported defects, approximately 81% are duplicates or do not meet the minimum criteria for intervention. When a gang attends a pothole that is either a duplicate or is not at actionable level Devon County Council are charged even though no work has been carried out. In addition, this means a reduction in productivity as this time could have been used to repair genuine defects.

In addition to providing more user-friendly information to guide the public when reporting defects online we are also undertaking a trial whereby an inspector visits the PIP reported defect to assess if any work is required before a gang attends. This assessment is done on a risk-based approach meaning that dangerous defects will be given priority rather than the road maintenance category setting the timescale for repair. The trial is currently confined to the East of Devon but if it proves ultimately successful then it will be rolled out further.