

**ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE****Tuesday, 16 March 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2021-22</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks approval for the proposed programme of surfacing work and footway works so that supplier engagement and detailed design may commence, enabling the works to be completed in 2021/22.

The effective delivery of the Council's structural maintenance programme contributes to the Wirral Plan 2025, in particular: working for safe and pleasant communities and working for a sustainable environment.

The services carried out will take place across all Wards.

This report has been classed as a Key Decision and included on the Council's Forward Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the programme of works for Carriageway Improvements – Classified Roads 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report;
- (2) Approve the programme of works for Carriageway Improvements – Unclassified Roads 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 2 of this report;
- (3) Approve the programme of works for Footway Improvements 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 3 of this report, and

- (4) Authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to amend the delivery of the programmes having regard for available resources and risk-based prioritisation of locations selected for treatment.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 This investment in the maintenance of the highway network enables the Council to comply with its statutory duty to maintain the highway. An element of this funding will be specifically allocated to the Council for delivery of schemes on the Key Route Network (KRN), supporting the Council's main strategic routes providing links to economic growth and regeneration sites, and cannot be used for any other purpose.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's Highway Asset Management Strategy and KRN priorities, the programme has been developed using a risk-based approach and prioritised within the funding available against condition and assessment criteria is considered the most appropriate option.
- 2.2 Do nothing is not an option as an element of the anticipated funding will have been specifically allocated to the KRN with a reputational risk to the Council should we not invest it.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The highway network and other transport infrastructure assets together represent by far the largest capital asset the Council holds, and the value of replacing those assets is estimated to be £2.48 billion. The highway network for which Wirral Council is responsible comprises approximately 1,200 kilometres of road.
- 3.2 All Liverpool City Region (LCR) transport funds now form part of the Single Investment Fund (SIF) which is governed by an Assurance Framework. In 2016 /17 it was agreed that this funding would be allocated to districts formulaically with out the need for further prioritisation.
- 3.3 At the meeting of the Combined Authority on 2 February 2017 it was further agreed that this approach would be generally retained.
- 3.4 Approval is sought for the proposed programme of surfacing work and footway works to allow for contractor engagement and detailed design to commence, enabling the works to be completed in 2021/22. As all this year's Capital funding streams are yet to be confirmed the programme will be amended accordingly depending on quantum of funding received.
- 3.5 In 2020 Wirral Council appointed Gaist, a roadscape and highways technology company, to carry out a digitised visual condition survey of the highway network known as AssetStream. This allows rapid interpretation of asset data to support robust decision making on highways maintenance interventions and long-term strategic decision making supporting the Highways Asset Management Strategy. The plethora of data received from surveys conducted in late 2020 has been analysed by specialist engineers in Neighbourhoods directorate and that data, together with: professional experience; site inspections; reports received from the

public and reports received from Ward Members, has been used to formulate the programmes included at appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report in accordance with the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and Strategy.

- 3.6 Historically, Wirral's roads have been classified as in either Good (Green), Fair (Amber) and Poor (Red) condition. However, the latest condition survey enables roads to be classified in 5 bands, namely 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Fair', 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' condition. This will allow greater sophistication in the analysis of the data and therefore better investment decisions.
- 3.7 The current overall Wirral road network condition, based on recent surveys, is shown in Table 1. All the recorded measurements indicate the percentage of the network according to road classification. The condition of the Principal and Non-Principal Classified roads are key measures in the achievement of the Wirral Plan 2025.

Road Classification	Percentage of Asset Group in Condition band				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
'A' Class Roads, Principal	45%	6%	45%	3%	1%
'B' Class Roads, Non - Principal	43%	3%	51%	2%	1%
'C' Class Roads, Non - Principal	35%	3%	55%	5%	2%
Unclassified Roads	29%	5%	54%	8%	4%

Table 1. Network condition data 2020.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has recently indicated that in 2021/22 the government's allocation to LCRCA for highway maintenance is expected to be £13m lower than in 2020/21; £21.1m compared with £34.2. However, further applicable grant funding streams may be available during 2021/22.
- 4.2 Based on indications received regarding devolution of the LCRCA transport allocations it is anticipated that Wirral will receive an initial £3,500,000 for highway maintenance including £390,000 ringfenced to the KRN.
- 4.3 The estimated cost of delivering all the proposed schemes at Appendix 1, 2 and 3 is greater than the anticipated capital funding for 2021/22 and provides for a three-year programme. This is to allow certainty of priority, having regard to available resources, yet flexibility to revise the programme in the event of network constraint issues, or individual scheme estimates revisions once designs are prepared in detail.

## 5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on the Council, as Highway Authority, to maintain highways at the public expense. The Council also has a

devolved duty to maintain and improve Liverpool's City Region's Key Route Network in accordance with Section 6 of the Highways Act 1980.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and monitoring of these schemes. Maintenance activity will be carried out through the Highways Service or discrete contracts as appropriate.
- 6.2 Preventative maintenance to highway assets will increase their residual life and asset value, and spending is targeted to maintain carriageway condition indicators.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The highway network is constantly deteriorating hence without a structural maintenance programme to address the highest priority locations, the network will deteriorate further, the asset value will decrease and the cost of carrying out more significant maintenance interventions at a later date will be disproportionately higher.
- 7.2 Withdrawal of funding would lead to deterioration of the network which would have an adverse effect on the number of substantiated claims received by the authority for slips, trips and falls together with road traffic accidents.
- 7.3 Failure to deliver the programme in year would result in reputational damage to the Council and potentially the City Region and may affect future funding allocations.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 All members were consulted and given the opportunity to suggest locations for inclusion in this Programme. The proposed schemes listed but not currently identified for 2021/22 will be continually reviewed and the programme may be amended where necessary based on current road network condition data as detailed in Section 3.5, financial and other constraints, in consultation with applicable Ward Members.
- 8.2 The consultation process has followed the following guiding principles of fair consultation:
  - It should be at a time when proposals are at a formative stage.
  - Must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response.
  - Those consulted should be made aware of the factors that are of decisive relevance to the decision.
  - Adequate time should be given for consideration and response.
  - The product of the consultation should be conscientiously taken into account by the decision makers in finalising their statutory proposals/ when the ultimate decision is taken.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

(a) Yes and impact review is attached –

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017/delivery>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by improving the condition of road and footway surfaces, maintaining the network to enable the smooth passage of all road users.
- 10.2 Increased use of surface treatment solutions, in place of planning and resurfacing, which is a key consideration of works planned under this programme, leads to a considerable decrease in use of fossil fuel and disposal of contaminated waste. The Council intends to engage with suppliers to quantify reductions and available data will be reported separately.
- 10.3 Well maintained highways help support sustainable and active travel modes.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Linda Summers**  
(Inspection and Contracts Manager)  
telephone: 0151 606 2267  
email: lindasummers@wirral.gov.uk

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Proposed Carriageway Improvements – Classified Roads 2021-22

Appendix 2 Proposed Carriageway Improvements – Unclassified Roads 2021-22

Appendix 3 Proposed Footway Improvements 2021-22

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Gaist - Network Condition Data

Gaist Network Performance Indicators

Highways Asset Management Strategy

Highways Asset Management Policy

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Detailed Programme for Footways and Additional Highway Infrastructure	<b>28 September 2020</b>
Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Detailed Programme For Key Route Network	<b>22 July 2020</b>
Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Local (Unclassified) Roads Programme	<b>24 June 2020</b>
Leader of the Council Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020/21	<b>24 March 2020</b>
Cabinet Member Report Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20 - Local (Unclassified) Roads Programme	<b>26 April 2019</b>
Cabinet – Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20	<b>25 March 2019</b>
Cabinet – Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2018/19	<b>26 March 2018</b>