



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

REPORT TITLE:	CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2022-23
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to accept funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for the delivery of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Highway Structural Maintenance programme for 2022/23 so that supplier engagement and detailed design may commence, enabling the works to be completed in 2022/23.

The effective delivery of the Council's CRSTS structural maintenance programme contributes significantly to the Wirral Plan 2021-26, in particular: working for safe and pleasant communities, working for a sustainable environment, active and healthy lives and inclusive economy.

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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

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

- (1) Authorise the Director for Neighbourhood Services to accept the grant funding allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for the 2022/23 City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Combined Authority Transport Plan programme (Highways Structural Maintenance);
- (2) Approve the proposed programme of works for Carriageway and Footway Improvements for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A to this report;
- (3) 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 To ensure that the Council can undertake maintenance of the highway network in order 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 The Council could not accept the funding. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that the proposed schemes identified within this report enable the council to comply with its statutory duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. 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.
- 2.2 The funding could be used for other purposes. This is not considered an appropriate option as it would not meet the conditions of the funding award. Schemes and projects have been developed 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.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION - LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT PLAN & CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT

- 3.1 Since April 2021, the LCRCA have been in discussion with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the next round of transport capital funding, which is now known as the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund (CRSTS). The CRSTS is a new, consolidated fund for local transport investment in England's eight large metropolitan areas. The UK Government has committed at least £4.2bn of new money over the next five years, from financial year 2022/23 to financial year 2026/27. Existing funding for highway maintenance schemes has also been rolled into CRSTS as a move towards greater consolidation of transport capital funding streams.
- 3.2 On the 21 January 2022, the LCRCA announced the indicative level of transport funding that authorities were to receive for 2022/23.. Until the LCRCA budget for transport is approved, this report proposes to allocate the anticipated CRSTS funding (Highways Maintenance funding) in accordance with the Council's priorities. Wirral Council's CRSTS (Highways Maintenance) funding for 2022/23 is anticipated to be in the region of £5,800,000 (subject to the finalisation of ongoing discussions with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) , which is an increase in the level

of funding awarded in 2021/22) Recommendations in this report are subject to the approval of the LCRCA's budget at it's meeting on the 4 March 2022.

- 3.3 The Combined Authority Transport Plan articulates the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's (LCRCA's) vision for transport. The plan provides a single source of information on adopted transport policy and the Combined Authority's investment priorities.
- 3.4 Wirral's 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.
- 3.5 Approval is sought for acceptance of this proposed funding and an initial proposed programme of surfacing and footway works to allow for contractor engagement and detailed design to commence, enabling the works to be completed in 2022/23. 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. Following the elections in May, a further report will be presented to this committee, confirming funding together with a comprehensive programme of works for 2022-23 and indicative schemes for 2023-2027.
- 3.6 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 2021 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 initial programmes included at Appendix A to this report in accordance with the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and Strategy. To support the continued development and effectiveness of the programmes, over the next 24 months we will be working with our external partners to improve the clarity of our highway condition data so that Members and the public will find it easier to understand how work is prioritised.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The latest 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 2021-26. Last year's funding enabled us to keep a steady state on the overall highway condition. This year's increased funding should allow for moderate improvements.

Table 1. Network condition data 2020.

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%

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All schemes as set out in Appendix A are proposed to be funded from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (Highways Maintenance) indicative allocation for 2022/23 which is anticipated to be £5,800,000 and proposed for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme for 2022/23. Confirmation of this allocation is awaited from the LCRCA. The proposed £5,800,000 is a component of the CRSTS and is to be used in year to fund highways maintenance improvement schemes.
- 4.2 The initial programme of schemes presented are within this funding allocation, with a further report being made when the funding disbursement has been fully agreed and received.

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.
- 5.2 Following scheme delivery the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the funding was defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.
- 5.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of £100,000 is reserved to Policy & Resources Committee.

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 Failure to undertake the identified programme of works could result in the Council not meeting its Statutory Duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 Failure to undertake the identified programme of works would also result in a failure to support the delivery of the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Plan. Consequently, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding. Funding cannot be rolled forward if programmes of work are not delivered 'in year'.

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 2022/23 will be continually reviewed and the programme may be amended where necessary based on current road network condition data as detailed in Section 3.6, 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 will reduce congestion and improve journeys for active travel, bus and other users.
- 10.2 Increased use of low temperature 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 As part of our ongoing commitment to climate change we are trialling low temperature asphalt surfacing material.
- 10.4 A resilient highways network is critical to the delivery of bus priority measures and high-quality walking and cycling routes, as well as reducing noise and air quality issues. Increasing cycling and walking will help combat climate change. By encouraging and enabling people to travel more on foot and by cycle instead of private car harmful emissions will be reduced. Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is considered that the proposed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A helps deliver Wirral's wider Community Wealth Building commitments to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy that benefits local residents and supports the principles of community wealth building. As the schemes move into the delivery phase, all opportunities to secure community wealth and social value e.g. through Council contracts, will be explored.
- 11.2 The programme supports several key Community Wealth Building aims, including: Local Employment – creation of local employment and training opportunities through Council's Term Maintenance Contracts when delivering the surfacing and footway programmes; Maximising the Wirral Pound – buying supplies for footway schemes locally wherever possible to support business and employment. Green and Sustainable: protecting the environment, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently, within contractor's supply chain.

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

APPENDICES

Appendix A Proposed Carriageway and Footway Improvements – 2022-23

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
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	16 March 2021
Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Detailed Programme for Footways and Additional Highway Infrastructure	28 September 2020

Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Detailed Programme for Key Route Network	22 July 2020
Cabinet Member Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020-21 Local (Unclassified) Roads Programme	24 June 2020
Leader of the Council Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020/21	24 March 2020
Cabinet Member Report Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20 - Local (Unclassified) Roads Programme	26 April 2019
Cabinet – Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2019/20	25 March 2019