

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 7 JULY 2014

SUBJECT:	POTHOLE REPAIR FUND – GRANT ACCEPTANCE AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR STUART WHITTINGHAM HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to accept grant from the Department for Transport (DfT) in the sum of £462,452 and sets out the proposed approach to using this funding for Cabinet approval.
- 1.2 The maintenance of public highways is a statutory duty for the Council as local highway authority.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Wirral Council, along with all other local highway authorities except those with highways maintenance PFI project in place, were recently invited to bid for funding from a £168 Million pothole fund recently announced by the government.
- 2.2 The application invited Councils to answer a range of questions, as well as providing supporting evidence, about how their highway networks are managed and maintained. The questions asked covered the following specific topics:
- Highway assets data
 - Management of potholes
 - Strategy and action plans for encouraging walking
 - Management of utilities activities on the highway
 - Highway Asset Management
 - Efficiencies in delivering highway maintenance
 - Cross boundary collaboration
 - Adoption and sharing of best practice in highways management
- 2.3 The nature of the application process did not allow the Council to bid for a specific amount or describe how or where any grant allocated from the fund would be spent.

- 2.4 The Council submitted its full application for funding on 22 May, and as part of the process was required to publish the bid on its website.
- 2.5 The Council has now been advised that it has been successful in securing £462,452 from the fund and this report seeks approval from Cabinet to accept this grant and spend this money based on the approach outlined in section 3.0 of this report.

3.0 PROPOSED APPROACH TO USING THE FUNDING

- 3.1 It is proposed that this funding is used to undertake a programme of repairs which will involve addressing at least 8800 potholes between now and the end of March 2015.
- 3.2 Whilst the maintenance of highways is a statutory function, and the service prioritises repairs based on safety needs, it is proposed that the grant funding will be used to repair non-safety related defects in the road to address the principles of this particular fund, which is to reduce the number of road defects which are of concern to all users but which do not reach safety intervention criteria in the Council's Highways Maintenance policy.
- 3.3 Regular updates on delivering this programme will be provided on at least a quarterly basis via the Council's website to comply with the DfT reporting requirements and it is proposed that every effort is made to ensure an equal split in funding/ repairs between Wirral's four neighbourhood constituency areas.

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 4.1 A potential risk is that the Council fails to implement sufficient pothole repairs with the funding allocated or fails to implement the programme by the end of March 2015.
- 4.2 This risk is mitigated by the Council's strategic Highways Services Contract with Bam Nuttall which provides certainty regarding work prices and the operational capacity and capability to undertake this large-scale programme.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There are no implications under this heading.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 8.1 Any grant accepted will need to be added to the Council's Capital Programme for 2014/15, and expenditure is required to be completed within this financial year.
- 8.2 Delivery of the repair programme using the grant will be carried out using existing staff resources to plan and manage the programme, including regular reporting on

progress. The repair work will be carried out by the Council's term contractor through the Highway Services Contract.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The maintenance of public highways is a statutory duty for the Council as local highway authority.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?
- (b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 13.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the acceptance of the grant from the Department for Transport in the sum of £462,452 and approve the proposed programme based on the approach outlined in section 3.0 of this report.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 14.1 This funding will help the Council achieve key objectives in relation to maintaining and enhancing the condition of the highways network.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The Government announcement regarding the Pothole Repair Fund can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-urged-to-apply-for-168-million-pothole-repair-fund>
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The Council's application and supporting documentation can be viewed at:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/transport-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/highway-maintenance/ pothole-fund-bid>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	