

CABINET
24 MARCH 2020

HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/21

Councillor McManus, Cabinet Member for Community Services said:

“The quality of roads and highways is a big priority for residents, which puts it at the top of our agenda too. Wirral residents expect to travel on a transport network which is safe, efficient and of a high quality.

“This is what we work every day towards delivering and I am delighted we are now in a position to go even further. We are allocating over £2 million to ensure our transport infrastructure is fit for the future – improving our roads and making sure Wirral residents benefit from a first-rate highway network.

“This investment is thanks to our work with Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and our colleagues across the Liverpool City Region. It will help bring about further growth in our economy and ensure road users across Wirral continue to experience efficient and safer journeys on our highways”

REPORT SUMMARY

On the 24th January 2020, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Mayoral Combined Authority awarded £2,149,000 of Highways Maintenance funding to Wirral Council to support investment in our highways assets.

This report seeks Cabinet approval to accept this funding and allocate it between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting. It also requests approval for the first phase of the Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2020/21 for Classified Roads.

This funding will support the delivery of the Wirral Council Plan 2025, in particular the priority themes of ‘Working for an Inclusive Economy: Wirral residents have access to great jobs and good quality, affordable housing’ and ‘Working for a Sustainable Environment: Wirral residents live in a cleaner, greener Wirral’.

The maintenance of highways is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

This is a Key Decision included on the Council’s Forward Plan and affects all Wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to:-

- 1) Approve the acceptance of £2,149,000 of Highway Maintenance funding for 2020/21 awarded by the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority;

- 2) Approve the proposed allocation of the Highway Maintenance funding between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting as set out in the report;
- 3) Approve the detailed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2020/21 for Classified Roads totalling £949,000 as outlined in Appendix 1; and
- 4) Authorise the Director of Delivery in consultation with relevant Members to make necessary adjustments to the programme should the need arise due to financial, asset conditions or other factors.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Allocations for capital highway maintenance funding are now made from the transport fund element of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Mayoral Combined Authority's Single Investment Fund (SIF).
- 1.2 The investment in the maintenance of the highway network will enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to maintain the highway. The establishment of a prioritised programme allows both transparency that the Council is addressing those highway elements in greatest need of maintenance and proper management of the allocated finances, and to permit co-ordination of roadworks with the utilities' programmes of work.
- 1.3 Due to the age of the assets along with winter salting and freeze/thaw action which has a detrimental effect on the condition of highway surfaces, allowing further degradation due to the ingress of water, asset condition priorities may change as a consequence of the current winter's weather.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None. The programme is based on meeting the highest priority needs within the funding available against the condition and assessment criteria.

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 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 without the need for further prioritisation.
- 3.3 At the meeting of the Combined Authority on 2nd February 2017 it was further agreed that this approach would be generally retained.
- 3.4 The £2,149,000 allocation from the Mayoral Combined Authority is intended for all highway infrastructure maintenance. An assessment of the priority structural needs of the Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting elements of the network has been undertaken and the funding has been allocated accordingly.
- 3.5 At its meeting on 24th January 2020 the Mayoral Combined Authority also set aside a sum of £5.5M for the Key Route Network (KRN) and the allocation of this funding to Districts will follow over the next few months.
- 3.6 Accordingly, Cabinet is now recommended to approve the allocation of this funding as per Table 1 below.

Resources	Proposed Allocation
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority £2,149,000	Roads & Footways Classified Roads (excluding KRN) = £949,000
	Roads & Footways – Local (Unclassified) Roads = £1,000,000
	Bridges – works for retaining walls and minor bridges = £100,000
	Street Lighting – works to address long standing issues = £100,000
£2,149,000	£2,149,000

Table 1: Allocation of the Highway Maintenance Capital Programme 2020/21

4.0 ROADS AND FOOTWAYS - NETWORK CONDITION AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

4.1 In order to fulfil its duty to maintain the highway, it is necessary to consider how the Council will prioritise the maintenance schemes to be undertaken and what treatment the prioritised schemes should comprise in order to repair and prevent further deterioration of those lengths of road and footway. The following criteria are used in carrying out this analysis:

- (i) In accordance with national best practice the Council undertakes surveys of the highway network in order to determine the condition of the carriageways.
- (ii) Areas of constant repairs; mainly due to vehicle over-ride; are highlighted in the Highway Inspectors' safety inspections.
- (iii) Particular roads brought to the Council's attention, as warranting significant repair, by Constituency Committees, Ward Councillors, the public and Streetscene officers.
- (iv) Feedback from the Council's Highway Operations regarding the suitability of different repair solutions depending on the existing road condition and use.

- 4.2 All Ward Councillors were given the opportunity to contribute to the proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for roads and footways and submit lists of roads they considered to be local priorities for significant repair. The programme of schemes for Classified Roads is set out in Appendix 1 and Ward Councillor priorities are denoted with a “C”.
- 4.3 From the surveys undertaken, the existing condition of the highway network is reported through a small number of former National Indicators (NI). Choices relating to structural repairs to carriageway surfacing is dependent on a number of factors including cost, traffic flows and type and the condition of the underlying road and foundation. Certain routes require more expensive and durable surfacing whereas in other cases the priority, particularly on relatively lowly trafficked routes, is to prevent further deterioration of the road surface by sealing against ingress of water, whilst restoring skid resistance.
- 4.4 The road condition network is shown in Table 2 and details the last seven years. All the recorded measurements indicate the percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance for each classification of road. The condition of the Principal and Non-Principal Classified roads are key measures in the achievement of the Wirral Council Plan 2025.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Principal Roads	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	Awaiting data
Non-Principal Classified Roads	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	Awaiting data
Unclassified Roads	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	9%	Awaiting data

Table 2: Condition Data – percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance

5.0 PROPOSED ROADS AND FOOTWAYS STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/21

- 5.1 The proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for Classified Roads (Hot Rolled Asphalt or Surface Dressing schemes) for 2020/21 is set out in the attached **Appendix 1**. Schemes have been selected taking into account the funding described in Section 3.0 and the prioritisation criteria described in Section 4.0. All of the schemes in the programme will have been identified from the surveys as requiring maintenance intervention now.

- 5.2 It is proposed that the detailed programme for the £1,000,000 allocation for local (unclassified) roads **will be the subject of a future report to Committee in June 2020.**
- 5.3 In terms of valuing the benefits of Highways Maintenance, the Department for Transport (DfT) has published a model to value the benefits of maintenance that can be used by local highway authorities making decisions on maintenance funding; allowing local highway authorities to assess the economic cost and benefits of their proposed asset management strategies and compare between different options. Whilst detailed modelling has yet to be carried out for Wirral's proposals, the DfT cite that compared with continued use of a current budget, a scenario of a temporarily increased budget provides a benefit in terms of reduced user costs of £2.70 (discounted) for each extra £1 spent on direct works costs. This helps to negate the impact of past years' revenue cuts. Similarly, reducing the budget for 5 years resulted in a reduction in benefits of £2.90 for every £1 saved in direct costs.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial resources covered by this report are summarised in Table 1.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Preventative maintenance to the highway assets will increase their residual life and asset value, and future spending will be targeted to maintain the carriageway and bridges condition indicators at their current level.

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 9.1 The duty to maintain the highway is achieved in part through structural maintenance of carriageways, footways, bridges, highway structures and lighting and withdrawal or reduction of funding would mean that that duty would not be met to the same degree.
- 9.2 As with most highway authorities, the network is deteriorating, and without a structural maintenance programme to address the highest priority routes, then the network will deteriorate further, the asset value will decrease and the cost of carrying much greater maintenance at a later date will be disproportionately higher.
- 9.3 Withdrawal of funding would lead to the deterioration of the network. This would have an adverse effect on the amount of substantiated claims received by the authority for slips, trips and falls together with road traffic accidents.

- 9.4 There was no formal agreement from the Combined Authority beyond 2018/19 financial year as to how Highway Maintenance funds will be allocated
- 9.5 Allocations to the Combined Authority post 2021 are subject to all LCR authorities improving their DfT Incentive Fund Self-Assessment to a Level 3 score. Currently Wirral Council are at Level 2 but are working to achieve Level 3.

10.0 **ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Local Ward Councillors have been consulted as described in Section 4.2.

11.0 **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

- (a) Yes and impact review is attached –

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

12.0 **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The repairing of the highway is a major contributor to our carbon emissions.
- 12.2 The increased use of surface treatments means we are using considerably less fossil material, also, with no excavation we have no contaminated waste issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proposed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for Classified Roads 2020/21

BACKGROUND PAPERS

United Kingdom Pavement Management Systems (UKPMS) Survey Condition Data held by the report author.

Single Data List Items (Former National Indicators N.I.168, N.I.169 and former BVPI 224b.) held by the report author.

DfT Guidance on the benefits of highway maintenance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-highways-maintenance-economic-costs-and-benefits-tool>

<http://liverpoolcityregion->

[ca.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/meetings/LCRCA_Agenda_020218.pdf](http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/meetings/LCRCA_Agenda_020218.pdf)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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
Cabinet – Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2018/19	26 March 2018
Cabinet – Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17	27 February 2017