



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

REPORT TITLE:	CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2023-24
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report requests approval for the disbursement of grant funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's (LCRCA) City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for 2023/24 into Wirral Council's Capital Programme for Highways Structural Maintenance and Bridge Maintenance. The report also requests approval for the disbursement of the indicative funding for years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 in the same programme. The report also recommends acceptance of an indicative highway condition matrix that will be used to inform future programme investment decisions.

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 under this programme of work will take place across all wards in the borough.

This decision is a Key Decision because of the value and the matter affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- (1) Approve the proposed programme of works for Wirral's Carriageways, Footway Improvements and Bridge Maintenance for 2023/24, using grant funding allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in the 2023/24 City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme (Highways Structural Maintenance), as set out in Appendix 2 to this report;

- (2) Approve the indicative RAG-rated highway network condition matrix as set out in Appendix 3 to this report, to be used by the Director of Neighbourhood Services as one of the decision tools when developing highway structural maintenance programmes;

- (3) Authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services:
 - (a) to accept the grant funding and any subsequent additional grant allocated to the council in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan programme (Highways Structural Maintenance),

 - (b) to, in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, to revise or amend the delivery or implementation of the work programmes, as deemed necessary, having due regard for the available resources and applicable risk-based prioritisation of locations selected for intervention and treatment, and

- (4) Authorise the Director of Law and Governance to negotiate and finalise any grant funding agreements on behalf of the council, amongst the relevant subject areas over the next 4 years, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The recommendations within this report are designed to ensure that the council can comply with its statutory duty, to maintain the public highway in Wirral, 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.
- 1.2 An element of this funding will be specifically allocated to Wirral Council for delivery of schemes on the Liverpool City Region's 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. The council will inevitably incur risk reputational damage should it not accept funding specifically allocated to invest in the KRN.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Committee could decide to not accept the grant funding offered. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that the programme identified within this report enables the council to comply with its statutory duties.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 21 July 2022 (Minute 24 refers) approved the grant funding allocated to Wirral Council in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan programme (Highways Structural Maintenance) amongst the relevant subject areas over the next 4 years, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 The grant funding anticipated for 2023/24 is £4,300,000, with a further £535,000 for bridge maintenance works. This is lower than the £5,800,000 Wirral Council received in 2022/23 but higher than proposed settlements for the remaining three-years of the CRSTS. Allocation of a further £1,000,000 for 2023/24 ring-fenced to the KRN is also expected to be confirmed, making a total of £5,835,000 anticipated grant funding for 2023/24, all as set out at Appendix 1 to this report in table 1. All of the five-year CRSTS settlement is based on bids submitted during 2020/21, is indicative until final allocation by LCRCA, and is conditional on the council adequately delivering its 2023/24 programme and providing regular and acceptable monitoring reports to the LCRCA.
- 3.3 The proposed programme for Carriageway and Footway Improvements for 2023/24 is included at Appendix 2 to this report. This takes account of anticipated grant allocation and the current network condition, feedback from ward Members and risk-based prioritisation. The works will take place between April 2023 and March 2024 at times when the least network impact effects will be experienced.
- 3.4 An indicative three-year network condition matrix has also been developed following analysis of recent network condition data and is set out in Appendix 3 to this report. This matrix indicates the likely numbers and locations of roads and footways which

will receive re-surfacing, surface treatments and reconstruction works during this period.

- 3.5 This matrix is an indicative guide only and presented in a RAG rating basis where 'G' Green indicates a likelihood of no significant maintenance interventions, within the next three years; 'A' Amber equates to a likelihood that significant maintenance interventions will take place within the next three years, subject to resources, but probably in the final two years of the five-year settlement period and 'R' Red indicates that significant maintenance interventions are proposed within the next two years (i.e. the current financial year, or in 2024/25). Where roads are classified as 'A' or 'G' this will not preclude them from consideration of reactive repairs including patching and repair of actionable defects such as trip hazards and potholes in the shorter term where necessary.
- 3.6 In order for the Council to provide a safe highway network and maintain revenue expenditure within the available budgets, it is essential that each year the highway network is assessed and inspected and that officers target the roads most in need of works, both planned and reactive. Without these interventions, officers would be unable to respond to Members enquiries and public liability claims would be likely to increase.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All schemes as set out in the programme at Appendix 2 to this report are to be funded from Wirral Council's CRSTS Highways Maintenance allocation for 2023/24 which is £5,835,000 and is proposed for inclusion in the council's Capital Programme for 2023/24. The £5,835,000 is a component of the CRSTS grant and must be used 'in year' to fund highways maintenance improvement schemes only.
- 4.2 The activity relating to the remaining years 3 to 5 of the programme noted in this report will subsequently be progressed through the approval processes for this Committee and the capital programme.
- 4.3 Grant-funded planned works investment in the highway network will help mitigate future reactive maintenance interventions and help control revenue budget pressures.

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 A grant funding agreement (GFA) will need to be executed between the council and the LCRCA for funding allocated through the CRSTS programme for 2023/24. Following scheme delivery, the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the relevant GFA funding was appropriately defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources will be used for the delivery of the programme. Highway maintenance activity will be carried out through the Highways Service delivery model approved by Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 16 March 2021, or discrete contracts procured in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules, 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 an effective structural maintenance programme targeted towards the highest priority locations, the network will deteriorate further, the asset value will decrease and the costs of carrying out more significant maintenance interventions at a later date will be disproportionately higher and the council's claims repudiation performance may be adversely affected.
- 7.3 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. The GFA will include conditions relating to deployment of funding resources and performance monitoring and evaluation of CRSTS programme delivery. If the GFA conditions are not met, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding and reputational damage to the council. Funding cannot be rolled forward if programmes of work are not delivered 'in year'.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All Council Members were consulted and provide with an opportunity to suggest locations for inclusion in this programme. The proposed schemes currently identified for 2023/24 will be continually reviewed and the programme may be amended where necessary based on current road network condition data, financial and other constraints, in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee and, where applicable, relevant Ward Members.

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.

The Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed here:–

<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 highway network properly will help reduce congestion and improve journeys for active travel, bus and other road users.
- 10.2 Officers are planning to trial low temperature asphalt surfacing material and increased use of low temperature surface treatment solutions, in place of planing and resurfacing, as part of the works proposed under this programme. This will lead to a significant decrease in use of fossil fuel and disposal of contaminated waste. The Council intends to engage with suppliers to quantify reductions and the available performance monitoring data will be reported separately. The use of surface treatments as a primary intervention, which is a key part of the council's maintenance strategy, leads to significant carbon equivalent savings when compared to traditional resurfacing comprising planing out old surfacing materials and replacing them. For example the Council treated a total of 137,407 square metres of road with surface dressing, between July and September 2022. This saved £1,648,884 and 1030t CO₂e when compared with resurfacing the same area with Hot Rolled Asphalt.
- 10.3 A resilient highways network is critical to the delivery of bus priority measures and high-quality walking and cycling route surfaces. As well as reducing noise and improving air quality promoting increased cycling and walking with better infrastructure 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 particulate matter and Carbon Dioxide 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 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 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 through existing contracts and any new procurement routes 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 the contractor's supply chain.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 CRSTS funding 2023/24 – 2026/27

Appendix 2 Proposed Carriageway and Footway Improvements 2023/24

Appendix 3 Indicative Network Condition Matrix

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) for CRSTS Highways and Non-Highways Maintenance Work 2022/23

Gaist - Network Condition Data

Gaist Network Performance Indicators

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with Section 5.2 (b) of its Terms of Reference.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	21 July 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	1 March 2022
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