



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

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| REPORT TITLE: | LOCAL TRANSPORT CAPITAL BLOCK FUNDING – POTHOLE FUND 2023-2024 |
| REPORT OF: | SIMPSON, VICTORIA A. 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) Local Transport Capital Block Funding – Pothole Fund 2023-2024 into Wirral Council's Capital Programme for Highways Structural Maintenance and Bridge Maintenance. The report also requests approval for the additional funding to continue delivery of the approved programme of works previously identified at the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers).

The effective delivery of the council's 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

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

(1) Authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

(a) Accept the Pothole grant funding of £764,771.28 allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, LCRCA

- (b) Approve the continued delivery of the approved programme of works previously identified at The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers).
- (c) 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.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 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.

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 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has received grant funding from the Department of Transport (DfT) to be spent on highways maintenance and improvement within the Liverpool City Region. This is pursuant to a Budget 2023 commitment and is in addition to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement reported at The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers)
- 3.2 The DfT is committed to allocating the funding to local highways authorities so they can most effectively spend it on maintaining and improving their respective networks based upon local knowledge, priorities and circumstances. DfT strongly advocates a risk-based whole lifecycle asset management approach to local highways maintenance programmes.
- 3.3 LCRCA proposes to make a total sum of £764,771.28 available to Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council to spend exclusively on improvements to and maintenance of roads.
- 3.4 It is proposed that this additional funding will be used to continue delivery of the approved programme of works, previously identified at The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers).
- 3.5 The Pothole funding is to be expended by 31 March 2024.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All schemes as set out in the programme at Appendix 2 at the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers) are to be funded from this additional Pothole Funding which is £764,771.28 together with 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.

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 Pothole Fund 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.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to undertake a programme of works with the approved funding could result in the council not meeting its statutory duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All Council Members were consulted and provided with an opportunity to suggest locations for inclusion in original approved programme of works as reported in The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023 (Minute 71 refers). 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 A resilient highways network is critical to ensuring high-quality walking and cycling route surfaces and the quality of journeys for bus passengers. 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 2 (Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 14 March 2023, Minute 71 refers) 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.

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

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) for Local Transport Capital Block Funding (Pothole Fund)
Specific Grant Determination (2023/24): No 31/6680

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

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|--------------------------|
| Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee | 14 March 2023 |
| 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 |

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| Leader of the Council Decision - Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2020/21 | 24 March 2020 |