



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12 March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2024/25
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 2024/25 into the Council's Capital Programme for Highways Structural Maintenance and Bridge Maintenance. The report also recommends acceptance of an indicative highway condition matrix that will be used to inform future programme investment decisions.

The Report supports the delivery of the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically the themes: Safe Resilient and engaged communities, Protect our environment, people focussed regeneration and promoting independence and healthier lives.

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 of the programme of works and the matter affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. the proposed programme of works for Wirral's Carriageways, Footway Improvements and Bridge Maintenance for 2024/25, using any relevant grant funding allocated to the Council by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement - Highways Structural Maintenance allocation, and the spending of the associated grant funding on these works, once accepted by the Council's Section 151 Officer, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report;
2. the indicative Red, Amber, Green - 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 the Council's highway structural maintenance programmes;

3. that the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised 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, in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee; and
4. that the Director of Law and Corporate Services be authorised to negotiate and finalise any grant funding agreements on behalf of the council, amongst the relevant subject areas over the next 3 years, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report and for any additional grant funding received during this period relevant to the subject area.

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 the Council for delivery of schemes on the Liverpool City Region's Key Route Network, 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 Key Route Network.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Committee could decide to not utilise 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 (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 3 years, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 The grant funding anticipated for 2024/25 is £4,150,000 with a further £745,000 for bridge maintenance works. This is higher than the £535,000 that the Council received in 2023/24 but lower than proposed settlements for the remaining two-years of the CRSTS. This increase is to fund two schemes Upton Road Culvert Sealing / Waterproofing and Moreton Road Bridge Refurbishment. Allocation of a further £1,000,000 for 2024/25 ring-fenced to the Key Route Network is also expected to be confirmed, making a total of £5,895,000 anticipated grant funding for 2024-25, all as set out at Appendix 1 to this report in table 1. Further Pothole funding received from the DfT during 2023/24 amounting to £764,771 and £546,730 is also set out at Appendix 1 to this report in table 1. Further, as yet unconfirmed, specific allocations are expected in 2024/25 and 2025/26 through the LCRCA relating to government-funded initiatives to support investment in the national road network. All of the current five-year CRSTS settlement, based on bids submitted during 2020/21, is indicative until final allocation by LCRCA, and is conditional on the Council adequately delivering its 2024/25 programme and providing regular and acceptable monitoring reports to the LCRCA.
- 3.3 The proposed programme for Carriageway and Footway Improvements for 2024/25 is included at Appendix 2 to this report This takes account of current anticipated grant allocation and the current network condition, feedback from ward Members and

risk-based prioritisation. This proposed programme of works shows an increase in network coverage from 195 roads/locations in 2023/24 to approximately 350 roads/locations 2024/25 due to increase in funds and use of surface treatments. carbon. The works will take place between April 2024 and March 2025 at times when the least network impact effects may be experienced. It should be noted that some roads not listed in Appendix 2 may also receive advanced works, such as pre-patching, for 2025/26 resurfacing, or other maintenance activity outside this programme during 2024/25.

- 3.4 An indicative three-year network condition matrix has also been developed following analysis of recent network condition data from survey data from Autumn 2022 and is set out in Appendix 3 to this report. The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 21 July 2022 approved this matrix, which indicates the likely numbers and locations of roads and footways which will receive re-surfacing, surface treatments and reconstruction works during this period. The most recent 2023 condition data is still being processed by officers, and once assessed the matrix will be revised and will help inform future programmes of work and the defrayment of any additional funding received. In the meantime, it should be noted that some of the roads highlighted 'R' Red may have already been repaired in 2023/24.
- 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 two 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 year 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 2025/26). 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 Work is ongoing on the lifecycle plans for Highways and Infrastructure, these are long term plans covering the next 30 years, looking the maintenance requirements of a whole range of highway assets, and the potential impacts of future growth, developments, climate, and financial sustainability to maintain the network. As part of that sustainable approach this programme supports change from being reactive to planned in the whole approach to how highway maintenance operations are carried out in line with the council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy. Increasing surface treatments in surfacing and patching, not only allows a more cost-effective sustainable approach to maintenance, but using thin layer materials, reduces waste and significantly lowers the carbon impact.
- 3.7 The general condition of the council's road network remains good and the condition performance data reported to this Committee indicates that classified A and B roads have been maintained within a steady state in recent years. However, the condition of the unclassified network has slowly deteriorated year on year. This is due to a continued under investment running at approximately £1.0 million to £1.2 million a year. As part of the preparation for the bidding of the CRSTS 2 funding, for which we expect to receive guidance later this year, officers are working on modelling scenarios which will indicate the relative impacts of funding levels on the network over the next 10 to 20 years. Officers will consider what levels of funding would be

needed to arrest the deterioration and what levels would be needed to improve the network condition to good or excellent across all respective road classifications. This modelling will be presented to Members by briefing note before the CRSTS 2 bidding process starts, which we anticipate will be before end of the current calendar year.

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 2024/25 which is £5,895,000. This is one component of the CRSTS grant and must be used 'in year' to fund highways maintenance improvement schemes only. Additional DfT Highways Funding Pothole Fund £764,771 and a further DfT Highways Funding Pothole Fund £546,730 is proposed for inclusion in the council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 making a total of £7,206,501.
- 4.2 The activity relating to the remaining years 4 and 5 of the CRSTS programme noted in this report will subsequently be progressed through the approval processes for this Committee and the Council's 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 Part 3 Section C of the constitution provides that express delegation is given to the Section 151 Officer to accept grant funding. This is subject to a requirement to report the acceptance of the grant funding to the appropriate Committee.
- 5.3 A grant funding agreement will need to be executed between the council and the LCRC for funding allocated through the CRSTS programme for 2024/25. Following scheme delivery, the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the relevant grant funding agreement 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 this 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 continuing to 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. A deterioration in the network can also lead to reputational damage to the Council from resulting in complaints.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All Council Members were consulted and provided with an opportunity to suggest locations for inclusion in this programme. The proposed schemes currently identified for 2024/25 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>

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 have used 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 when national guidance is released. 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 planning out old surfacing materials and replacing them.
- 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 2024/25 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; and 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 Funding 2024/25 – 2026/27
Appendix 2 Proposed Carriageway and Footway Improvements 2024/25
Appendix 3 Indicative Network Condition Matrix

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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	14 March 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	21 July 2022
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