

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	2 NOVEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE - POTHOLE REPAIR PLAN 2017/2018		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR A PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform Councillors of the £97,000 share from the £70 Million Pothole Action Fund in 2017/18 which has been made available to Reading Borough Council for pothole repairs this Financial Year, following the announcement in the Government's Autumn Statement 2015.
- 1.2 To seek approval for a Pothole Repair Plan to deliver improvements to the condition of roads within Reading.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the £97,000 share from the £70 Million Pothole Action Fund in 2017/18 allocated to the Council for pothole repairs this Financial Year following the announcement in the Government's Autumn Statement 2015.
- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee approves the Pothole Repair Plan proposal outlined in Section 4.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

- 3.2 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 3.3 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Pothole Repair Plan

- 4.1 Reading Borough Council welcomes the £97,000 share from the £70 Million Pothole Action Fund in 2017/18, made available for this Financial Year, as announced by the Department for Transport (DfT). (DfT correspondence dated 13th January 2017 and DfT Roads Funding: Information Pack - January 2017, refers) As in previous years, we propose setting up a further Pothole Repair Plan, following the successful completion of the three previous Pothole Repair Plans. This will enable potholes of a lesser depth than the Council's normal investigatory criteria to be repaired, which helps to extend the life of roads until such time that they require a more comprehensive maintenance treatment.
- 4.2 The Council's standard investigatory depth for carriageway defects is 50mm. The Pothole Repair Plan, as in previous years, will enable the Council to repair defects of a minimum depth of 30mm.
- 4.3 It is recognised, however, that there are roads (typically concrete roads, overlain with a thin flexible surfacing course) where pothole/'scabbed' defects repeatedly do not meet the appropriate Council investigatory criteria (50mm depth) or even the lesser criteria of 30mm depth, defined under the Pothole repair Plan, to be repaired. In order to address such potholes, a proprietary pothole repair material has been trialled on roads such as Whiteknights Road and Southcote Lane enabling potholes in the region of 20 - 30mm to be repaired. Again, this helps to extend the life of such roads until they require a more comprehensive maintenance treatment. This Financial Year's Pothole Repair Plan will, for the first time, be expanded to include such 'reduced depth' repairs.
- 4.4 Potholes for inclusion in the Pothole Repair Plan will be identified by the Neighbourhood Officers through the cyclical statutory highway inspections or following ad hoc reports/complaints received by the Council.
- 4.5 Roads which only receive a cyclical highway inspection every 18 months, or those roads which are not now due another formal inspection before the end of this Financial Year, will be inspected for potholes at some point before March 2018 by the Neighbourhood Officers. This is to ensure that, in the interests of fairness, all roads receive an inspection under the Pothole Repair Plan and for appropriate repairs to be carried out.

- 4.6 This Pothole Repair Plan will operate concurrently with the statutory highway inspection regime, as was the case with the previous Pothole Repair Plans.
- 4.7 The delivery of this Pothole Repair Plan will be carried out using existing Highway Operative resources and plant/equipment.
- 4.8 The Pothole Repair Plan will commence immediately (November 2017) and continue through to the end of the Financial Year (31st March 2018). With the Plan commencing in November it will specifically target the winter season which, typically, is the time of year when potholes are more prone to develop due to the effect of precipitation combined with cold/freezing temperatures on the road structure.
- 4.9 An update on this Pothole Repair Plan will be included in the 'Highway Maintenance Update and Programme 2018/2019' report, which will be presented to Traffic Management Sub-Committee in March 2018.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Pothole Repair Plan will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan objectives of:
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active;
 - Providing infrastructure to support the economy;
 - Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Pothole defects on the Borough's highway network, which are reported by members of the public, are assessed / considered for appropriate action in accordance with the Council's investigatory criteria and, if applicable, in accordance with the Pothole Repair Plan operating at the time.
- 6.2 The Highway Maintenance Update and Programme 2017/2018 is available on the Council's website.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The Pothole Repair Plan consists of improvement work to the Borough Council's existing public highway network. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance and maintain highway structures.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Funded solely through the Department for Transport's £70 Million Pothole Action Fund in 2017/18 - £97,000 share allocated to the Borough Council.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Department for Transport 'Roads Funding 2017/18' correspondence - 13 January 2017.

10.2 Department for Transport 'Roads Funding: Information Pack' - January 2017.

10.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee 'Highway Maintenance Update and Programme 2017/2018' Report - 9 March 2017.

10.4 Department for Transport 'Pothole Action Fund Award' correspondence - 8 April 2016.

10.5 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee 'Severe Weather Pothole Funding Award - Additional Allocation 2014-2015' Report - 16 July 2014.

10.6 Policy Committee 'Highway Maintenance Update' Report - 10 June 2013.