

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	18 NOVEMBER 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/2021 PROGRESS REPORT & SPEND APPROVAL		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMERCIAL SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Year 1 progress of the £9M Highway Capital 3-year Investment programme 2020-2023.
- 1.2 To update the Committee on the progress of the £1.432 Million Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance 2020/2021 award) programme (including Band 3 Incentive Funding).
- 1.3 That the Committee notes the additional DfT capital award of £908,000 for 2020/21 and gives spend approval for the proposed road, bridges & flood reduction programme, as set out in paragraph 4.9.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the Year 1 progress of the Council's 2020/21-22/23 £9 Million Highway Capital Investment Programme.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the progress of the £1.432 Million Highway Maintenance Award for 2020/2021 from the DfT Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement.
- 2.3 That the Committee accepts the £908,000 Additional Highway Maintenance Award for 2020/2021 from the DfT Local Transport Block Funding (Challenge and Pothole Fund) settlement and gives spend approval for the proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Council in June 2018 approved Shaping Reading's Future - Our Corporate Plan 2018-21. The Plan reflects the Council's priorities for Reading and provides direction for delivering services to meet the needs of the communities within the Borough whilst working to a budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) agreed at Council in February 2020. An annual refresh of the Plan was published at Council in June 2019.
- 3.2 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 3.3 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 3.4 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

4. THE PROPOSAL

BACKGROUND - £ 9M COUNCIL FUNDED HIGHWAY INVESTMENT

- 4.1 The Council carried out a Residents' Survey with its Citizen Panel in September 2018 as part of the Council's on-going conversation with residents. The aim of the survey was to gather information to inform customer service delivery in a number of ways. More specifically, the survey asks about residents' views of their neighbourhoods and of Council services, which has helped the Council to understand what residents really value in their local areas and services, in order to make decisions on budgets and services that reflect those values.
- 4.2 Over 65% of respondents said that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Respondents were asked what they thought needed improving and the number one consensus (58%) said that the condition of roads & pavements needed improving.
- 4.3 The Council has listened to the residents of Reading and has committed a £9M Capital Investment over 3 years in Reading's local residential roads and pavements. The work was originally programmed to be delivered through allocating £3m per year over the 3 year period. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic delaying the preparation and start of the Year 1 programme, it was necessary to reprofile the £9m capital investment to £1.5m in year 1 and £3.75m in each of year's 2 and 3. The reprofiling of the programme was approved during the Policy Committee meeting held on 18th May 2020.

PROGRAMME PROGRESS - Highway Maintenance 2020/2021

Year 1 of the £9M COUNCIL 3-YEAR CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS

- 4.4 Year-1 £1.5M Capital Investment in local residential roads and pavements is set out in the table below:

2020 / 2021	Spend Proposal (Works Only)
Minor Residential Roads Surfacing	£1,000,000
Pre-Patching Minor Residential Roads	£250,000
Pavement (footway) Resurfacing	£250,000
TOTAL	£1,500,000

4.5 Minor Residential Roads Surfacing (£1,000,000 + £ 250,000 Pre-Patching)

- 4.5.1 The Council advertised and awarded the competitive tender to Eurovia Infrastructure Limited to deliver 63 local residential road improvements, refer to Appendix 1.

- 4.5.2 An extensive Communications Strategy was developed to inform residents of the investment and improvement by the Council on local residential roads and pavements. The Communications Plan included residents' letters, an infographic to visually explain the surfacing process, as well as a colouring competition. An extensive and proactive social media strategy was also undertaken by the Council's Communication Team.

- 4.5.3 The contractor commenced with the residential road surfacing on the 5th October 2020 using 2 No. surfacing teams and has made good progress. The process involves surfacing of Micro Asphalt material which is an appropriate local residential road product. The material is water based so cannot be laid during heavy rain nor during very cold spells, which prevents the material setting.

Although October is late in the year to be surfacing with this material there is still enough daytime warmth to progress the schemes until later in the Autumn, when colder weather and shorter days prohibit any further laying. Any scheme not completed at that point will be included in early spring 2021, when the contractor will return to complete the surfacing programme and to carry out any necessary remedial works. To date (4th November 2020) the contractor has surfaced 33 roads which represents approx. 53% of the overall programme, refer to Appendix 1.

- 4.5.4 The Highways & Drainage (H&D) in-house operations team have been carrying out extensive pre-patching in advance of the residential road surfacing programme. Any defect that warranted attention, irrespective of its depth were repaired, thereby providing added structural integrity to the road construction. Due to the lockdown restrictions during the initial Covid 19 pandemic, defects under parked cars could not be addressed at that

time; the H&D team are embedded with the contractor and are plugging all defects on the day of surfacing to ensure that the micro asphalt is laid on a structurally sound road base.

4.6 Pavement Resurfacing (£250,000) - Financed by the Year-1 Council Investment (year-1 of the £9M over 3-years)

4.6.1 As was the case with the 2019/2020 pavement maintenance programme, it is intended to focus the Council's Capital Investment year-1 programme on resurfacing and/or reconstructing damaged pavements/stretches of pavement using the Council's in-house Highway Teams, as they are a competitive and cost effective team, who are experienced in delivering patching and minor road & pavement schemes.

4.6.2 With the local residential road surfacing programme coming to a close in the late Autumn due to weather constraints, focus has now turned to delivering the residential pavement / footway schemes programme commencing mid-November 2020 and due for completion by the end of March 2021, refer to Appendix 2.

4.7 Major Roads Resurfacing Programme (2020/21) - Financed by the DfT Award

4.7.1 The Council advertised and awarded the competitive tender to Kiely Bros. Limited to deliver 18 Major Strategic Road improvements across the Borough, refer to Appendix 3.

The contractor commenced with the surfacing on the 28th September 2020 and has made steady progress. The programme is not as adversely affected by the weather as the minor residential road programme is and will be delivered by November 2020.

4.8 Bridge/Structural Maintenance - Financed by the DfT Award

4.8.1 The Council has maintenance responsibility for around 80 bridges and 300 other structures. Each structure is inspected in line with the Code of Practice for Highway Structures. Based on these inspections the priority for works within the capital programme is determined and a rolling 5-year programme is developed and updated annually. Appendix 4 details the schemes for 2020/2021 that are achievable within the available budget.

4.8.2 To date a range of schemes have been completed including 2 sections of Kings Road Culvert, strengthening of 2 sections of Kennetside retaining wall, bridge inspections & assessments, managing the abnormal loads, planned maintenance and reactive maintenance response.

4.9 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT FUND: ADDITIONAL AWARD Local Transport Capital Block Funding (Pothole and Challenge Fund) Specific Grant Determination (2020/21) No.31/5072

4.9.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) announced on the 3rd of June 2020 additional 'Pothole & Challenge Fund' grant for Local Highway Maintenance

allocations for 2020/21 to Local Highway Authorities for repairing potholes on the local road network and improving flood resilience. The Highway Authority needs to demonstrate that it has made suitable use of their allocation in accordance with highway needs and within the grant determination criteria for which LTP maintenance funding is allocated.

4.9.2 The £908,000 funding from the ‘£108 million to the South East’ was originally funding earmarked to Tranche 2b Bridges, but has been divided amongst all LA’s on the formulae basis and badged as ‘Pothole and Challenge Fund’.

4.9.3 Spend approval is now being sought for the £ 908,000 DfT award.

4.9.4 As in previous years the Local Transport Block Additional Funding settlement has been split into a number of different areas to make best use of the funds available, and it is intended to continue with this approach.

Against each heading is the proposed works allocation based on the DfT settlement for Carriageways & Bridges and Flood resilience.

The Council will continue to actively bid for appropriate external funding including DfT & DEFRA grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all highway assets.

TOTAL £ 908,000 for 2020/2021.

	2020/21 Spend Proposal (Works Only)
Pothole Reduction: Major & Minor Carriageway Resurfacing	£700,000
Bridge/Structural Maintenance & Flood Resilience	£208,000
TOTAL	£908,000

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 will contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Defects reported by members of the public on the Council’s public highway network are assessed / considered for appropriate action in accordance with the Council’s investigatory criteria.

6.2 Schemes are identified through an assessment process however members of the public also request sites, and these are considered as part of the assessment process.

6.3 The Highway Maintenance 2020/2021 Progress report and programme will be 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 proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 consists of improvement work to the 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 It was necessary to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer for each of the maintenance operations described in this report.

8.2 In each case, the tender process was conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the principles of the Open process as defined by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations"). Each contract was entered into based on the most economically advantageous tender received.

8.3 The 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 The proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 will be fully funded by the Council's £9M 3-year Capital Investment, the Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement for 2020/2021, the Additional DfT Challenge & Pothole fund and the Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding 2020/2021.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The proposed resurfacing contracts will include a carbon reduction and environmental element aimed at reducing the impact on the environment by the works. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the material by lower temperature products, use of recycled materials and reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment.

10.2 We will be ensuring through the procurement process that the successful contractor's operations support the Council's net zero carbon ambitions.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 'Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021 & 2019/2020 Maintenance Update' - Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee Report - 16 March 2020.

11.2 '£9m Capital Investment in Highways Maintenance Update' Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee Report April 2020

11.3 DfT Additional Challenge & Pothole Fund Award 2020/2021 letter - 11 September 2020.