

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

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| TO: | HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 29 th JUNE 2022 | AGENDA ITEM: | |
| TITLE: | HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/2023 | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR KAREN ROWLAND | PORTFOLIO: | ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & COMMUNITY SAFETY |
| 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 progress of year-3 (2022/23) of the 3-year £9M Highway Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23.
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of the Council's additional £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital Investment Programme and to give spend approval for this investment.
- 1.3 To inform the Committee of the Council's additional £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Highway Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programme and to give spend approval for this investment.
- 1.4 Appendix 1: £9M Residential Roads 3- Year Investment Programme Update
Appendix 2: Financial Implications Report £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital and £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Highway Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programmes.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress of the £9M Residential Roads & Pavements Investment Year-3 Programme 2022/2023.
- 2.2 That the committee grants spend approval for the Council's £8M additional 5-Year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Capital Investment in Residential Roads & Pavements Maintenance Programme.
- 2.3 That the committee grants spend approval for the Council's £4M additional 2-Year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Capital Investment in Bridges & Structures Maintenance Programme.

- 2.4 That the Committee gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the proposed Capital Highways & Traffic Services Programme, as per section 4 of this report.**

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2022-2025 sets out the Council's priorities for Reading and provides direction for staff in 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 2022.
- 3.2 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the delivery of new transport & highway infrastructure in order to manage levels of congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst accommodating the significant levels of planned economic growth.
- 3.3 The Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for Reading to 2026. Consultation on a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) was undertaken from 4th May to 30th August 2020. The new strategy is being developed to help achieve wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, the Climate Emergency and improved air quality. The LTP will be heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, including enhanced cycling and walking routes to improve air quality. The new strategy is being aligned with other Council strategies including the Local Plan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- 3.4 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 3.5 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 3.6 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 3-YEAR (2020/21-2022/23) RESIDENTIAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
 - **ADDITIONAL £8M COUNCIL FUNDED 5-YEAR (2022/23-2026/27) RESIDENTIAL ROADS & PAVEMENTS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
 - **ADDITIONAL £4M COUNCIL FUNDED 2-YEAR (2022/23-2023/24) BRIDGES AND STRUCTURES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**
- 4.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is informed by and supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities including its

commitment to address the climate change emergency and seeks to ensure that the Council is “fit for the future”, with sound finances that allow the Council’s future funding challenges and spending pressures to be met in as sustainable a way as possible.

- 4.2 The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to deliver a balanced and affordable budget that ensures the Council’s finances are sustainable in both the short (one year) and medium term (three years). The Strategy is also informed by the Council’s Vision: “to ensure that Reading realises its potential - and that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success”, as well as its Corporate Plan priorities:
- Securing the economic success of Reading
 - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs
 - Protecting and enhancing the life outcomes of vulnerable adults and children
- 4.3 The Strategy builds on work over the previous 3-4 years to stabilise the Council’s financial position and build reserves back to a more robust level and seeks to facilitate vital investment in core infrastructure to drive efficiency improvements, facilitate service redesign and thereby manage pressures within demand led services. This invest to save approach provides for a robust financial position going forward and enables vital and valued services can continue to be delivered.
- 4.4 As part of MTFS an ambitious capital investment programme is being delivered with the Council investing **£9M** (over 3-years from 2020/21 to 2022/23) Capital and an additional **£ 8M** (over 5-years from 2022/23 to 2026/27) in Reading’s local residential road and pavement network. This welcomed investment is over and above the annual Local Transport Block Funding settlement from the (DfT) for highway maintenance work to improve the condition of local residential roads and pavements and reverse a deteriorating highway network.
- 4.5 In additional to the Council’s investment in Reading’s local residential road and pavement network, the Council is investing a further **£ 4M** in Reading’s bridges & structures to address ‘very poor’ and ‘poor’ structural assets to improve their condition and reverse these deteriorating Council structural assets over a 2-year period (2022/23 to 2023/24).
- 4.6 The Council has and will continue to actively bid for appropriate external funding including Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all its highway & traffic assets.

THE PROPOSAL

PROPOSED PROGRAMME - Highways Maintenance Proposal 2022/2023

- 4.7 The Council carried out a further Residents’ Survey with its Citizen Panel in December 2021 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.

- 4.8 83% of respondents (compared with 77% in 2020) 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 38% (compared with 47% in 2020) said that the condition of roads & pavements needed improving.
- 4.9 The Council also partake in the annual National Highways & Transport Satisfaction surveys and the 2021 outcome is showing some encouraging signs of resident's satisfaction levels improving with Reading coming 3rd best performing Council with 11 indicators coming out top.
- 4.10 The Council continues to listen to the residents of Reading and the £9M Capital Investment over 3 years (2020/21 to 2022/23) and a further £8M Capital Investment in Residential Roads & Pavements over a 5-year period (2022/23 to 2026/27) will accelerate the resurfacing programmes and reverse the deteriorating condition of our highway asset in Reading's local residential roads and pavements. The Council is also funding £4M Capital Investment in 'poor' & 'very poor' Bridges & Structures to reverse the decline of these assets.
- 4.11 The Council is investing a further £12M in the next 5-years (2022/23 to 2026/27) in improving Residential Roads and Pavements, and Bridges & Structures, which is over and above the committed £3,75M (year-3 of the £9M) investment in Residential Roads & Pavements, as set out in the table below:

| Project | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Residential Roads Surfacing (Y3 £9M) | £3,075,000 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Pavement Resurfacing (Y3 £9M) | £ 675,000 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Existing Committed Capital Funding | £ 3,750,000 | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Project | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
| Residential Roads Surfacing (Y1 £8M) | £2,000,000 | £1,250,000 | £1,250,000 | £1,250,000 | £1,250,000 |
| Pavement Resurfacing (Y1 £8M) | £0 | £ 250,000 | £ 250,000 | £ 250,000 | £ 250,000 |
| Bridges /Structures (Y1 £4M) | £1,500,000 | £2,500,000 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| New Capital Investment | £3,500,000 | £4,000,000 | £1,500,000 | £1,500,000 | £1,500,000 |

Residential Roads Surfacing Investment: 2022/2023

- 4.12 Financed by the **£ 3.75M** Year-3 of the Council's £9M 3-year investment (2020/21 to 2022/23)
- 4.13 For category 3 roads (residential and other distributor roads) there is generally no skid or condition information available therefore priorities have to be established as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. The common types of deterioration are, for example, the number of potholes, rutting, the amount of patching and cracking.
- 4.14 A visual assessment of the road surface condition for minor roads is therefore carried out annually using the Council's agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the carriageway condition against various criteria. Those roads with the highest scores are then subjected to a further engineering assessment and those which, again, score highly through this process as well as being considered appropriate, are recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year's minor roads surfacing programme, subject to budget availability.
- 4.15 Based on the above a list of schemes was prepared and recommended for action in 2022/2023. The list also shows the **516** road schemes have been delivered by the £9M 3-year investment programme so far, including Micro Asphalt, Hot Rolled Asphalt and concrete road surfacing.
- 4.16 In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration outside of the scope of normal maintenance work, the programme of works would be reviewed and if necessary, a reallocation of funding within the budgets would be made to undertake higher priority carriageway schemes.
- 4.17 Due to the size of the extensive investment programme, the Council will continue to engage Statutory Undertakers / Utility companies early to reduce the risk of newly resurfaced roads being dug up and also ensure that other planned major transport schemes are considered within the multi-year programme. It is noted that City Fibre is also rolling out an extensive super-fast broadband programme, however, the majority of their installations are within the pavements and verges, some unavoidable clashes have occurred.
- 4.18 A number of cycle routes are included within the programme where they are located on residential roads.

It should be noted that a number of local cycle routes are on classified main roads. Funding for those roads will come from the Department for Transport's capital funding award, rather than out of the Council's £9M 3-year capital investment programme. The annual highway maintenance programme will consider improvements to routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which will be available for public consultation as part of our transport strategy consultation next month.

Residential Pavements Resurfacing Investment: 2022/2023

- 4.19 Financed by the **£9M** 3-year Council funded Residential Roads & Pavement investment programme (year-3 **£675,000** 2022/23)

- 4.20 Potential pavement resurfacing schemes are identified as a result of visual condition surveys to determine deterioration. An assessment of the pavement surface is carried out on a rolling programme using the Council’s agreed criteria. The assessment process consists of scoring the pavement condition against various criteria; those pavements with the highest scores, as well as being considered appropriate, are then recommended for inclusion in the next Financial Year’s pavement maintenance programme, subject to budget availability.
- 4.21 It is proposed to split the focus of the Council’s Capital Investment pavement programme between a combination of resurfacing and/or reconstructing damaged pavements/stretches of pavements and surfacing with a slurry sealing or equivalent product, as this cost-effective process which provides a new ‘veneer’ thin overlain surface seals and ultimately extends the life of pavements, and which will accelerate the Pavement surfacing programme considerably. Both solutions will be delivered by the Council’s in-house Highway Works Team.
- 4.22 As in the £9M the Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council is offering residents discounted vehicle crossings in residential roads where pavement works are being carried out, provided they are requested in advance and satisfy the Council’s Vehicle Crossing Policy.
- 4.23 As in the £9M Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council will look to include highway trees where appropriate taking into account underground services and sight line visibility/safety requirements, to support the Council’s carbon reduction and bio-diversity ambitions.
- 4.24 As in the £9M Residential Pavement Programmes, the Council will look to install pedestrian dropped crossings at road junctions on the pavements being resurfaced to improve accessibility for all users of the public highway. The Council recognises that Reading is an old established town with historically older roads that were built at a time when accessibility was not considered during the design process. The pavement programme is an ideal opportunity to address this matter.

Summary Table of the £9M investment installations to date:

| Item | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23* |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of Residential Roads Resurfaced (Micro) | 63 | 187 | 199* |
| Number of Residential Roads Resurfaced (HRA) | 16 | 42 | tba |
| Number of Residential Concrete Roads Resurfaced (Miles Macadam) | 1 | 3 | 5* |
| Area of Road Resurfaced (Micro) | 98,335m ² | 677,510m ² | 284,000m ² * |
| Area of Road Resurfaced (HRA) | 70,387m ² | 100,293m ² | tba |
| Area of Concrete Roads Resurfaced (Miles Macadam) | 6,200m ² | 29,000m ² | 45,395m ² * |
| Number of Pavements Reconstructed | 17 | 19 | 6* |
| Number of Discounted Vehicle Crossings | 16 | 15 | 2* |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|-----------|
| Number of Pedestrian Dropped Kerb Crossings | 12 | 28 | 5* |
| Number of Trees Installed | 18 | 55 | 100*+ tba |

- * Denotes to date

Other Carriageway Maintenance Works

4.25 Financed by the **£8M** 5-year Council funded Residential Roads & Pavement investment programme (2022/23 to 2026/27) Year-1 **£2M** (2022/23)

4.26 It is recognised that there are roads which repeatedly do not meet the appropriate criteria for inclusion within the major carriageway resurfacing or residential roads surfacing programmes but would benefit from other maintenance treatment(s) to extend the life of these assets. Examples of such maintenance works are explained in more detail below:

- Following a SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) survey, where a carriageway surface appears, overall, to be in a good condition but would benefit from a surface rejuvenation to improve/restore skid resistance, extending the life of the road. This process would prove to be a cost-effective treatment, when compared with full scale resurfacing, enabling more roads to be treated.
- There are a number of concrete roads across the Borough which have previously been overlain with a thin flexible surfacing course. Over time this surfacing has locally worn away leaving a 'scabbed' surface. Typically, these areas do not meet the Council's current defect investigatory level to trigger repairs and as long as the underlying concrete slabs are in a stable condition, they are unlikely to increase in depth. Although such deterioration is aesthetically not pleasing, if the underlying concrete slabs are in reasonable condition, such roads do not score/rank as high as other roads for programmed maintenance work. Nevertheless, these roads would benefit from an appropriate treatment whereby the existing surfacing is either rejuvenated or replaced to not only improve the running surface but to also seal and protect the underlying concrete slabs, in turn, extending the life expectancy of these roads. The full length of Southcote Lane, The Meadway, Cressingham Road, a section of Northumberland Avenue, Newcastle Road, Corbridge Road, Hexham Road, Northcourt Avenue and Dawlish Road have successfully been treated/resurfaced during the 2021/222 and 2022/23 Financial Year's to date using a proprietary product/process.
- There are also examples of localised carriageway deterioration where the surfacing and/or sub-structure show signs of wear and tear in specific areas but not extensive enough to justify full-scale maintenance work to the complete carriageway area. In these situations, substantially sized patching, whether in the form of a surfacing only repair, a surfacing and base course repair or perhaps a greater depth full reconstruction repair, can rectify the issue locally and help to extend the overall life expectancy of the complete road.

- 4.27 The Council's £9M 3-year capital investment and additional £8M 5- year capital investment has enabled the Highways Team to develop a programme for future years to address these 'other' carriageway maintenance works.

Bridges & Structures 2022/2023

- 4.28 Financed by the £ 4M 2-year Council funded Bridges & Structures investment programme (2022/23 to 2023/24) Year-1 £1.5M (2022/23)
- 4.29 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. This welcomed additional Council investment will address the 'very poor' and 'poor' condition structures and extend the life of these structural assets. This investment is over and above the DfT annual award which together will assist in tackling the backlog in structural maintenance.
- 4.30 The Council approved an additional £ 7.2M Capital funding to address the IDR Bridge Bearings and Berkeley Avenue Strengthening schemes, however, as this scheme is the Council's strongest Bridges & Structures case to attract DfT funding, it is proposed to delay the scheme by a further year to allow a funding bid to be made when the opportunity becomes available. Spend approval and scheme update will be brought back to this committee at that time.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential - and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

- 5.2 The Highways Programmes will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2022/2023 objectives of:

- Healthy environment - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Inclusive economy - Enabling the infrastructure to continue to support the economy
- Thriving Communities - Remaining financially sustainable and to ensure everyone has an equal chance to use the public highway

- 5.3 TEAM Reading values:

Together - Collaborative working approach between the Council, consultant, contractors and the public

Efficiency - Continue to explore efficiency savings within the contract

Ambitious - Investing into the public highway assets

Make a Difference - Providing a safe inclusive public highway network for all users

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting in February 2019 and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions. To this end, Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite

Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. All relevant construction contracts will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.

- 6.2 Tenders for any subsequent contracts that are necessary will be invited to submit Environmental Implications proposals which will form part of the quality element of the tender evaluation. A social value quality submission will also be required to be submitted with tenders and evaluation.
- 6.3 Tenders also needed to include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within tender returns. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials, lower temperature bitumen's, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, use of electric vehicles and plant, move to renewable energy, as well as how they will achieve their own carbon reduction targets.
- 6.4 The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".
- 7.2 The public can report highway defects to the Council, including roads & , structures asset condition concerns, which are assessed and included within the annual review of the highway assets that inform the 'Annual Status Option Reports' (ASOR) with the proposed high priority schemes brought to Committee for consideration and approval should they meet the assessment criteria.
- 7.3 This report will be available on the Council's website following Housing, Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee approval processes.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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.

8.2 The Highways Maintenance programme 2022/2023 consists of improvement work to the Council's existing public highway network and will be making improvements to existing highway assets. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time and all users will have a safe & efficient public highway. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway.

9.2 The Borough Council, as Traffic Authority, has a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage the Council's network to ensure a safe and efficient network.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Highways & Traffic Services programme 2022/2023 will be fully funded by the Highways & Traffic Services Capital Budgets:

- Year-3 of the Council's £9M 3-year (2019/20 to 2022/23) Capital Residential Roads & Pavement Investment of £3.75M.
- Year-1 of the Council's £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2024/25) additional Capital Residential Roads & Pavement Investment of £2M.
- Year-1 of the Council's £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Capital Bridges & Structures Investment of £1.5M.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are none.