



21 February 2024

<b>Title</b>	<b>Highway Maintenance Programme 2024/2025 &amp; 2023/2024 Highway Maintenance Update</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Sam Shean
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Karen Rowland, Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Healthy Environment
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Committee note the progress of year-2 (2023/24) Council's additional £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital Investment Programme.</li> <li>2. That the Committee note the progress of year-2 (2023/24) Council's additional £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Bridges &amp; Structures Capital Investment Programme.</li> <li>3. That the Committee is informed of year-3 of the 3-year Department for Transport (DfT) Highway Maintenance Award 2024/25 Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport &amp; Highway Maintenance) settlement.</li> <li>4. That the Committee is informed of the additional DfT Road Resurfacing Fund Allocation for Reading of £7.726M following the reallocation of High-Speed Rail (HS2) budget for the period 2023/24 to 2033/34.</li> <li>5. That the Committee is updated on the completed Highway Maintenance 2023/24 DfT Local Transport Block Funding Capital Works Programme.</li> </ol>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of year-2 (2023/24) of the Council's additional £8M 5-year (2022/23 to 2026/27) Highway Capital Investment Programme.
- 1.2 To update the Committee on the progress of year-2 (2023/24) of the Council's additional £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Bridges & Structures Capital Investment Programme.
- 1.3 To inform the Committee of year-3 of the 3-year Department for Transport (DfT) Highway Maintenance Award 2024/25 Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement.
- 1.4 To inform the Committee of the additional DfT Road Resurfacing Fund Allocation for Reading of £7.726M following the reallocation of High-Speed Rail (HS2) budget for the period 2023/24 to 2033/34.
- 1.5 To provide the Committee with an update on the completed Highway Maintenance 2023/24 DfT Local Transport Block Funding Capital Works Programme.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council approved Shaping Reading's Future our Corporate Plan. The Plan reflects 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) to include to current Year-3 priorities.
- 2.2 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 2.3 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 2.4 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

## 3. The Proposal

### Background

- **£8M Council Funded 5-Year (2022-2027) Residential Roads & Pavements Investment Programme**
  - **£4M Council Funded 2-Year (2022-2024) Bridges and Structures Investment Programme**
  - **£1.838M DfT Annual Local Transport Plan (LTP) Award for 2024/25 for Bridges and Carriageways**
  - **Additional £7.726M 11-Year (2023/24 to 2033/34) DfT Road Resurfacing Fund for Bridges and Carriageways**
- 3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 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.
  - 3.2 The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 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;
  - 3.3 The Strategy builds on work over the previous 5-6 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.
  - 3.4 As part of MTFS an ambitious capital investment programme is being delivered with the Council investing £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 Grant settlement of £1.838M from the (DfT), the additional DfT Road Resurfacing Fund 11-Year Allocation for Reading of £7.726M and follows on from the successfully delivered £9M Council investment in Residential Roads

& Pavements between 2020/21 to 2022/23, which continues improving the condition of local residential roads and pavements and reverses a deteriorating highway network.

- 3.5 In addition to the Council's investment in Reading's local residential road and pavement network, the Council invested 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).
- 3.6 The DfT announced additional funding of £7.726M of 11-years (2023/24 to 2033/34) to be allocated to Reading. £232k has to be committed within the current Financial Year (2023/24) and £ 232k in 2024/25. The remaining £ 7.262M to be split over the financial years 2024/25 to 2033/34.
- 3.7 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 highway assets.

### **Proposed Programme - Highway Maintenance Spend Proposal 2024/25**

- 3.8 The Council carried out a Residents' Survey with its Citizen Panel during 2023 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.
- 3.9 80% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Over 60% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the way the Council runs things overall and 52% felt that Reading Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents. Respondents were asked what factors they thought needed improving. 33% (compared with 35% in 2022) said that the condition of roads & pavements needed improving.
- 3.10 The annual National Highways & Transport MORI Residents Satisfaction Surveys for 2023 has shown that the Council has 129 national indicators being above average and 45 indicators improving. Although highway maintenance indicators show a decrease in satisfaction from last year, which is in line with National Satisfaction results, Reading remains above the national average for road condition and in dealing with road repairs. The Council recognise that there has been a huge amount of activity on the public highway this last year, not only during the extensive road resurfacing programmes but by Utility companies carrying out urgent and planned repairs, as well as the super-fast broadband rollout, which may have affected the results for Reading. Our residential (unclassified roads) have improved from 35% green (good) condition to 80% green (good) condition and the on-going investment by the Council will further improve this indicator. The remaining 20% of residential unclassified roads are in an 'Yellow Condition' which are roads that are showing deterioration and should be considered for surfacing to prolong the life of the road. The Council do not have any 'Red Poor Condition' residential unclassified roads.
- 3.11 The Council continues to listen to the residents of Reading and the £8M Capital Investment in Residential Roads & Pavements over a 5-year period (2022/23 to 2026/27) will continue to accelerate the resurfacing programmes and reverse the deteriorating condition of our highway assets in Reading's local residential roads and pavements. The additional welcomed DfT 11-year Road Resurfacing Fund following the HS2 reallocation will assist the Council's ambition in bringing our roads to a good overall condition and in maintaining this good position in future years.
- 3.12 The Council's additional investment along with the DfT Grants Awards will deliver a total investment of £7.425M Capital Investment in local Residential Roads & Pavements and

Bridges & Structures during Financial Year 2024/25, as set out in the table below (awaiting LLFA Award):

	<b>2023/24 Spend (Works Only)</b>	<b>2024/25 Spend Proposal (Works Only)</b>
<b>Residential Roads Surfacing</b>	<b>£4,450,000</b>	<b>£3,750,000</b>
<b>Pavement / Footway Resurfacing</b>	<b>£ 450,000</b>	<b>£650,000</b>
<b>Bridges /Structures</b>	<b>£1,200,000</b>	<b>£2,500,000</b>
<b>Tree Planting</b>	<b>£150,000</b>	<b>£175,000</b>
<b>Innovation / Carbon Reduction</b>	<b>£350,000</b>	<b>£350,000</b>
<b>Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£450,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,600,000</b>	<b>£7, 875,000</b>

- 3.13 With the funding available we have prioritised the schemes based on nationally accepted technical assessment processes as well as visual engineering assessments.
- 3.14 The provisional programme for category 1 and 2 roads (mainly class A and class B roads and roads with high volumes of commercial traffic) surface treatment has been prioritised after assessment of carriageways using information from:
- SCANNER surveys which check the structural integrity and residual life of existing carriageways;
  - SCRIM (sideways-force coefficient routine investigation machine) surveys to check skidding resistance.
  - VIDEO SURVEY ASSESSMENT by Specialist Contractor.

Based on the above assessments the roads/sections of roads listed in Appendix 2 are recommended for treatment during Financial Year 2024/25. These are shown in priority order and will be progressed until the available allocation is spent. To make the most effective use of the budget available only the sections of the roads with a poor and deteriorating residual life, as identified from the SCANNER surveys and visual engineering assessments, will be treated.

- 3.15 Tenders for this work will be invited shortly and the documents will include reserve schemes so that in the event that returned tender prices prove to be more favourable than current estimates suggest, we will be able to undertake further scheme(s) within the available budget. In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration on roads not currently on the list, 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.
- 3.16 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 new video condition surveys to determine deterioration. The common types of

deterioration are, for example, the number of potholes, rutting, the amount of patching and cracking.

- 3.17 A video survey assessment of the road surface condition for minor roads was carried out using a specialist contractor. 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.
- 3.18 Based on the above a list of proposed schemes is detailed in Appendix 2. Estimated costs based on current contract expenditure are shown against each scheme and would suggest that up to 105 roads will be achieved in the programme.
- 3.19 In the event of unforeseen carriageway deterioration outside of the scope of normal maintenance work, the programme of works will be reviewed and if necessary, a reallocation of funding within the budgets will be made to undertake higher priority carriageway schemes.
- 3.20 Due to the size of the 8-Year Council investment programme (2020/27), the Council is engaging with 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 programme. The Council will also issue Section 58 Notices on the new Major Classified Roads that are programmed for resurfacing to protect the new surface as far as reasonably possible.
- 3.21 A number of cycle routes are located on residential roads and have been considered to be included within the Minor Roads Surfacing Programme.
- 3.22 It should also be noted that a number of local cycle routes are on classified main roads, including the new Active Travel Sites (Shinfield Road and Bath Road) and will be prioritised for resurfacing. The annual highway maintenance programme has considered improvements to routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

**Pavement / Footway Resurfacing (£650,000) - Financed by the Council's 5-year investment programme and the 2024/25 DfT Local Transport Plan (LTP) Award for Bridges & Carriageways.**

- 3.23 Potential footway 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.
- 3.24 It is proposed to continue 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' overlain surface that 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.
- 3.25 The Council will continue to offer 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. To date we have installed 55

no. vehicle crossings as part of the pavement programmes, which is providing affordability to the residents of Reading.

- 3.26 The Council is committed to reducing carbon as far as reasonably practicable with all contract works, using all tools available, including innovation and highway tree planting where appropriate taking into account underground services and sight line visibility/safety requirements, to support the Council's carbon reduction and bio-diversity ambitions. To date 450 no. trees have been planted, with a further 200 no. planned this year. The Council successfully trialled and purchased a fully electric road marking machine that uses cold applied, low carbon MMA (Methyl Methacrylate), as well as low carbon bitumen preservation materials that will become 'business as usual' going forward. The Council will continue to explore, trial and bring low carbon alternatives to Reading.
- 3.27 The Council will continue 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 and to date 75 no. pedestrian crossings have been installed at road junctions.

**Other Carriageway Maintenance Works – Financed by the Council's 5-year investment programme and the 2024/25 DfT Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the DfT Additional Road Resurfacing Fund Award for Bridges & Carriageways.**

- 3.28 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.
- 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.

**Bridges & Structures 2022/24 (£2.5M) – Financed by the Additional DfT Road Resurfacing Fund Award**

- 3.29 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. Appendix 3 shows the proposed 2024/25 bridge and structures programme.
- 3.30 The Council is seeking DfT funding to address the IDR Bridge Bearings and Berkeley Avenue Strengthening schemes and propose to commence the detailed design and preparation works of the project during 2024/25 Financial Year.
- 3.31 The Council will continue to actively bid for appropriate external funding including DfT, Environment Agency (EA) & DEFRA grants to maximise the use of available funding to improve the condition of all highway assets.
- 3.32 The Department of Transport (DfT) 3-year Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance) settlement is for £1.83M per year for Financial Years 2022/23 to 2024/25
- 3.33 This settlement covers general headings of Major Carriageway, Pothole Reduction, Bridge / Structural Maintenance & Lead Local Flood Alleviation. The Highway Authority then needs to demonstrate that it has made suitable use of their allocation in accordance with highway needs and within the general criteria for which LTP maintenance funding is allocated.

#### **Department of Transport (DfT) - Reallocation of High-Speed Rail (HS2) Funding**

- 3.34 The DfT announced an additional Road Resurfacing Fund of £7.726M over 11-years (2023/24 to 2033/34) for Reading. £232k must be committed to the current Financial Year (2023/24) and £232k in 2024/25. The remaining £7,262M is to be split over the next 10 years 2024/25 to 2033/34. This is above the confirmed annual DfT Local Transport Plan (LTP) Year-3 (2022/23 to 2024/25) award of £1.838M. We await confirmation of our Annual LTP Grant Award for future years.
- 3.35 The Department of Transport expect all local highway authorities that are not in Mayoral Combined Authority areas to publish prominently on their websites a detailed plan for the additional resurfacing and other highways maintenance work they will deliver with the new 2023/24 and 2024/25 funding (for Mayoral Combined Authorities, this information should be published at a Combined Authority level). This must be done by Friday 15 March 2024, and a copy of the weblink shared with the Department.

The plan should include summaries of:

- The additional resurfacing and other work either completed in 2023/24 or scheduled in 2024/25 using the additional funding in Budget 2023 and the further funding confirmed in their letter. This should set out the total volumes of additional work completed and specify particular roads, communities, or locations that have particularly benefited from it.
- The further additional work that will be completed during 2024/25 setting out both expected total volumes of additional work and where it is planned.
- How the Authority is introducing innovation in the delivery of highways maintenance and where it plans to go further.
- How the Authority is using its StreetWorks and other powers to ensure that resurfacing works are not undermined by repeated digging up of the same road by utility companies; and
- The total amount of investment in local highway networks for the previous 5 years and planned investment for 2024/25, split between DfT and local funding.

The Department will expect these same Local Authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities to publish quarterly reports, starting in June 2024, summarising their

resurfacing and other highway maintenance activities, with list of all those roads that have been resurfaced. Once a year these will need to include signed assurance from the Authority's section 151 Officer that the additional funding was spent on highway maintenance activities that would not otherwise have taken place on the 23/24 to 33/34 amount

During 2024/25 the Department will require local highway authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities without CRSTS allocations to publish a long-term plan for their use of the full 11-year funding and the transformation it will deliver. The Department will provide further advice on these long-term plans in due course, including on the extent to which they should be integrated with other local plans.

The Grant is a Road Resurfacing Fund for local highways maintenance, particularly for the resurfacing of carriageways, cycleways, and footways to prevent potholes and other road defects from occurring, as well as tackling other asset management priorities, such as keeping local bridges and other highway structures open and safe.

- 3.36 In previous years the Local Transport Block 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. (see para 3.12).
- 3.37 The Council has maintenance responsibility for around 80 bridges and 300 other structures, which are 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 3 details the schemes proposed for 2023/2024 that are achievable within the available budget. Whilst these schemes are all high priority, they will not necessarily be completed in the order they are listed, as other factors have to be considered when developing a scheme and programme to ensure they are achievable within the timescale / financial year. The current bridge backlog is managed by risk assessment, monitoring and if necessary interim measures.

### **Street Lighting - LED streetlighting Capital Programme Update**

- 3.38 The LED streetlighting upgrade programme has upgraded all the Council's standard streetlighting assets and delivered over 60% annual energy consumption saving. The Council's additional investment is addressing those units not included within the original LED programme, including conversion of all sign lighting, subway lighting and bespoke lighting units.
- 3.39 Streetlighting maintenance has reverted to its normal cycle of works, predominantly dealing with emergencies such as RTA damage, column testing and inventory updates. Street lighting is managed according to Highways asset management principles, inventory management and life cycle planning will be managed using the lighting module of the WDM system to coordinate with the pavement management and roads maintenance system. The system will support web based self-serve reporting of street lighting faults via a dedicated portal improving customer reporting and reducing the reliance on the current communication channels.
- 3.40 The Council reviewed its streetlighting specifications to reduce the brightness of the LED lanterns from 4,000k (kelvin), to 3,000k and below to reduce the environmental impact, as well as reducing the power supply to the LED lanterns on residential non-strategic roads from 100% power to 70% power. This power reduction provides an energy saving and reduced carbon for the Council without a noticeable change in lighting levels.

### **Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding for 2024/25 and later years**

- 3.41 No announcement has yet been made by DEFRA on the Lead Local Flood Alleviation grant for 2024/25. However, should appropriate funding become available this will be



reported accordingly to a future Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee.

- 3.42 There are several costly flood risk/surface water management priority schemes identified for Reading under the 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy' and the 'Surface Water Management Plan'. However, given that these are very costly schemes and, unfortunately, are unsupported by appropriate funding at this moment in time, it is highly unlikely that they will form part of the 2024/25 works programme. It is noted that responsibility for Main Rivers (Rivers Thames & Kennet) and 'Critical Ordinary Water Courses' (COW) remains with the Environment Agency. The Council are responsible for 'Ordinary Water Courses' and ditches.
- 3.43 The Council successfully secured £415k Local Levy Grant Funding from DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) to implement a Flood Alleviation Scheme at Stone Street, Reading.
- 3.44 Any future DEFRA grant will be used to address high flood risk sites and protect vulnerable properties. The Council will continue to carry out the annual ditch cleaning programme and to investigate/progress further schemes identified through flood modelling. A detailed list of works/schemes will be presented to this Committee for approval at a future meeting during the year to keep Councillors updated.

#### **Highway Maintenance Delivery Update 2023/2024**

- 3.45 The Council has carried out an extensive works programme of major carriageway resurfacing, specialist carriageway surfacing of concrete roads, minor residential roads surfacing, pavement resurfacing, streetlighting (LED Replacement), as well as a bridges/structural maintenance programme.

#### **Year-2 of the £8m Council 5-Year Capital Investment in Local Roads & Pavements (Including the DfT LTP 2023/24 Award)**

- 3.46 The Council advertised and awarded competitive tenders to deliver up to 700 local residential 'micro asphalt' and 'hot rolled asphalt' major roads, including concrete roads, refer to Appendix 2 over the full Council's 4-year Residential Roads & Pavement investment programme.
- 3.47 An extensive Communications Strategy was developed to inform residents of the investment and improvement by the Council at the start of the year-1 (2020/21) local residential roads and pavement programme. 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.
- 3.48 An annual review of the communication strategy is carried out following feedback from residents and Local Ward Councillors a 'lessons learnt' exercise was carried out and these are being incorporated in future work programmes.
- 3.49 The Highways & Drainage (H&D) in-house operations team carried 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.

#### **Year-2 of the £8m Council 5-Year Capital Investment in Local Roads & Footway Resurfacing**

- 3.50 As was the case with the first four years of the pavement maintenance programme, it was intended to focus the Council's Capital Investment programme on resurfacing and/or reconstructing damaged pavements/stretches of pavement in 2023/2024 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.

- 3.51 The residential pavement / footway schemes programme commenced in early April 2023 and is due for completion by the end of March 2024, refer to Appendix 2.

**Bridge/Structural Maintenance - Financed by the Council's 2-year investment (2022/23 to 2023/24) and the annual DfT LTP Award**

- 3.52 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 2 details the completed schemes for 2023/2024.
- 3.53 A range of schemes are underway including strengthening of Phase 6 Kennetside Retaining Wall, Reading Station Subway Ceiling Refurbishment (to commence March 2024), bridge inspections & assessments, managing the abnormal loads, planned maintenance and reactive maintenance response.
- 3.54 Appendix 2 refers to the works programme delivered by the Highway Maintenance 2023/2024 award from the DfT Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement.
- 3.55 Appendix 1 & 2 satisfies the Grant Determination requirements on the use of the funding allocation by the DfT for Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) 2023/2024 settlement.

**4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:

- Healthy Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economy

- 4.3 These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:

- People first
- Digital transformation
- Building self-reliance
- Getting the best value
- Collaborating with others

- 4.4 Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

**5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total carbon emissions. As set out in our Climate Emergency Strategy

this figure is lower in Reading with transport accounting for around 20% of carbon emissions, however significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

- 5.2 A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed which suggests a 'net medium positive' impact arising from adoption of the Transport Strategy.
- 5.3 A key driver to the successful adoption of electric vehicles is the ability to adequately charge vehicles. For some the natural choice will be through home charging in an off-street setting, but this will not be available for many, and Reading has a particularly high proportion of homes that do not have off-street parking. The Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy will provide a framework for a network of charging points across the borough and to remove barriers to EV ownership and help achieve our targets from our Climate emergency Strategy of increasing uptake of zero emission vehicles.
- 5.4 Tenderers will be required to submit an Environmental Implications proposal which will form part of the quality element of the tender evaluation. A social value quality submission will also be included to ensure that the most deprived Wards in Reading benefit.
- 5.5 Tenderers will be required to submit Carbon reduction and improved sustainability targets. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials, lower temperature materials, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, use of electric vehicles and plant, use of cold applied materials with lower carbon emission, as well as how they will achieve their carbon reduction targets.
- 5.6 The Council is committed to a tree planting programme to increase canopy cover, improve biodiversity and reduce localised flooding. The Council is committing up to 1% of the value of the highway capital programmes towards this initiative.
- 5.7 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. The Council will regularly review design standards, in conjunction with industry bodies, to take into account the extreme weather events (both extreme heat and extreme cold) to ensure sustainability of the public highway network.

## **6. Community Engagement and Information**

- 6.1 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".
- 6.2 The public can report highway defects to the Council via the Council's Web Page [Report a road or street problem - Reading Borough Council](#), the 'Love Clean Reading App', or by email [Highways@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Highways@reading.gov.uk) . These include drains, streetlights, road and structures 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.
- 6.3 This report will be available on the Council's website following Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee approval processes.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 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.

7.2 The Highway Maintenance programme 2023/2024 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 public highway. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- Procedural requirements – Applies and to be followed.
- Legitimate expectations of service users and the public to be consulted about changes to policy – Applies, Public Committee Reports and enhanced Communication Strategy in place.
- Public Health implications – Applies and to be included in tender.
- Risk management implications - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Health and Safety risk assessments - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Transparency of information and freedom of information implications - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Effects on the Armed Forces Community (Armed Forces Act 2021) - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Privacy Impact Assessment- Applies and to be included in tender.
- Impact on Human Rights Act duties - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Corporate Parenting - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Regulatory duties (though these may be covered also in legal implications) - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Changes brought about by European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act - Applies and to be included in tender.
- Community safety implications - Applies and to be included in tender.

Any other relevant issues - None

## **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, the safe passage along a highway.

9.2 The Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to reduce the risk of flooding.

## **10. Financial Implications**

10.1 The Highway Maintenance programme 2024/2025 (Spending Table Item 3.12 refers) will be fully funded by the following:

- £8M Council Funded 5-Year (2022-2027) Residential Roads & Pavements Investment Programme
- £4M Council Funded 2-Year (2022-2024) Bridges and Structures Investment Programme
- The Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement for 2023/2024).

- Additional £7.726M 11-Year (2023/24 to 2033/34) DFT Road Resurfacing Fund for Bridges and Carriageways
- The Council's £ 1.371M Investment into LED Streetlighting Investment.
- The DEFRA Lead Local Flood Alleviation Grant (LLFA) Funding 2024/2025 (tbc).

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

11.1 Tenders will go out early in the new Financial Year 2024/25

11.2 It is anticipated that the successful Tenderer/s will commence delivery and complete works within the new Financial Year 2024/25.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1 There are none.

## **Appendices**

- 1. Appendix 1: 2023/24 Programme Delivered**
- 2. Appendix 2: Proposed 2024/25 Delivery Programme**

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

### 1. Revenue Implications

Use this Table in the report or as an Appendix to set out the revenue implications:

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Employee costs (see note1) Other running costs Capital financings costs	100	100	100
<b>Expenditure</b>	100	100	100
Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	0	0	0
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	100	100	100

The net cost of the proposal can be funded from existing Revenue Highways & Traffic Services Budgets and capitalisation.

### 2. Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Proposed Capital Expenditure	232	7,425	tbc
Funded by Grant (specify) DfT LTP Award Grant DfT Additional Road Resurfacing Fund Section 106 (specify) Other services Capital Receipts/Borrowing	£232	£ 1,838 £ 948.2  £4,638.8	TBC
Total Funding	232	7,425	tbc

**Note:** where more than one option /proposal is being made it may be easier to set out the above information in an Appendix.

### 3. Value for Money (VFM)

This is a statutory service provision.

Tenders will be advertised in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and included a 60/40 split between tender price and quality. The size of the capital programmes will ensure that competitive tenders are received. Ambitious carbon reduction and sustainability targets will be incorporated with the tender evaluation.

#### **4. Risk Assessment.**

The Council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the public highway. The investment programme will reduce the risk to the Council and the public for decades to come. The on-going maintenance costs will be absorbed within existing revenue budgets for highway maintenance. Method statements agreed with winning contractor to ensure delivery during the current financial position and climate changes challenges (flood / heat / drought), as well as ensuring that disruption is minimised. Supply chain for products risk mitigated by the contractor buying large volumes & stockpiling materials based on the size of the capital programme.

Increasing fuel costs is and will remain a risk pressure, which will need to be managed throughout the programme.