

## Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

From: Executive Director for Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2023/030

Outcome: To approve the County Council's forward programme of highways maintenance capital schemes. This will provide clarity and visibility of forthcoming maintenance schemes, in accordance with Authority's approved asset management policies.

Recommendation: What is the Committee being asked to agree?

- a) To approve the 2 year forward programme of highway maintenance capital schemes 2023-2025 (Appendix One);
- b) To agree that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make minor amendments to the programme of highway maintenance capital schemes, in accordance with the Authority's approved asset management policies;
- c) Agrees that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can commission the delivery of the highways maintenance capital programme, via existing contracts that have been formally procured; and
- d) To note the indicative highway maintenance capital programme for the following 3 to 5 years 2025-2028 (Appendix Two)

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 This report seeks the committee's approval for the highway maintenance capital programme for the next 2 years (2023/24 and 2024/25). This is provided as Appendix One to this report.
- 1.2 The following 3 to 5 year programmes (2025/26 - 2027/28) for various asset groups are set out in Appendix Two, providing improved forward planning of Highway capital programme delivery. This is an indicative list of those works we have identified as being a priority based upon our latest asset condition intelligence. The list will become more detailed and refined as we move forwards. We will update this indicative list based on our latest condition surveys each year.

# 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The County Council has approved policies setting out its asset management approach to the maintenance of the highways for which it is responsible. This approach is predicated upon a long-term, preventative strategy for highways maintenance which makes best use of the capital funds available to the Authority.
- 2.2 The programme of capital schemes is developed by officers using objective condition data, together with assessments of the rates of deterioration of highways assets. Whilst objective condition data is the primary arbiter, other factors are considered when developing the forward programme of schemes. Such factors include accident records, third party claims, local knowledge, and reports from councillors and the public.
- 2.3 A key part of the development of the programme is aligning the location and timing of schemes with the needs of communities. Schemes are tailored to suite different sections of communities where possible, seeking to ensure that a well-maintained and serviceable network is available to all classes of users.
- 2.4 The resultant programme of schemes is designed to apply the right maintenance treatments to assets, at the appropriate points in their life cycles. Such a preventative approach means that maintenance treatments are timed to prevent assets deteriorating further and then requiring much more expensive, environmentally damaging treatments at a later date. The programme is not focussed on a "worst first" basis. The preventative approach can lead to schemes being undertaken which appear counter-intuitive and programmes that do not allocate funding on a geographical basis.
- 2.5 The Authority receives its base capital funding from DfT for highways maintenance via two funding streams. The Highways Maintenance Block amount is calculated via a national formula. The Incentive Fund amount is dependent on a yearly self-assessment of our Highways Asset Management Approach. Cambridgeshire County Council is in the highest funding band, Band 3. This is expected to provide £2,082,000 of DfT funding for Highways Maintenance.
- 2.6 Authorities are assessed for Incentive Funding based upon their responses to a broad range of questions regarding highways asset management. DfT assesses these responses and places authorities within one of three bands. To achieve maximum funding, an authority must

be placed within Band 3. The Council has previously achieved Band 3 status. A key component of this assessment process is that authorities need to demonstrate that they have a forward programme of capital schemes and that this programme has been developed based upon asset management principles. This report and associated programme of schemes will be key in supporting the Authority's case for top band status in the Incentive Fund. To further demonstrate the linkage of the programme of schemes to the Authority's asset management policies, the proposed programme will be incorporated into the approved Highways Operational Standards (HOS) document as an appendix to that document, subject to approval of the programme by this committee.

- 2.7 The Authority's asset management policies used to develop the programmes of schemes consider the resilience of the county's highway network and the programme has due regard to managing the impacts of climate change. The proposed 2 year forward programme of schemes places more emphasis on drainage and flood prevention than has been the case in previous years.
- 2.8 The proposed programmes of schemes provided as Appendix One and Appendix Two reflect the budgetary allocations, as approved by the Council's business planning processes. Schemes are identified in years one and two, whilst those scheduled to be undertaken in years 3, 4 and 5 will be assigned to specific years following further development and co-ordination with other works on the highway network.
- 2.9 The committee is also asked to delegate to the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of this committee, the commissioning of the delivery of the schemes in the capital programme, via those contracts that have been formally procured and include the provision of such works. Such delivery vehicles include the Council's contract with Milestone and the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework Contract.

### Soil Affected Roads

- 2.10 The Council is responsible for a significant number of roads that are founded on peat type soil. Around 1660km or 38% of our road network are on this type of soil. This soil type is susceptible to seasonal expansion and contraction. This extreme and sometimes rapid movement of the underlying soil causes the roads to distort and crack. The maintenance of these roads represents a significant challenge for the authority, both in terms of keeping the roads safe and managing their overall deterioration.
- 2.11 Work is underway to quantify the network level of risk and to develop management plans to support user safety whilst effective long-term solutions are sought. The scale of the problem requires expenditure beyond the scope of existing highways budgets and the monies provided by Central Government. Officers' early assessment of the likely costs suggests the cost to improve the condition of the c120 affected roads could be as high as £300million. Officers expect to have an initial report in April.
- 2.12 CCC Officers are leading a regional consortium of Suffolk, Peterborough and Norfolk in discussions with Department for Transport to seek support for innovative solutions and additional funding to enable these roads to be effectively managed and maintained into the

future.

Discussions are at an early stage. H&T Committee will be kept informed of progress.

- 2.13 Officers are managing the safety of road users whilst funding and engineering solutions are sought. The main routes affected are being inspected more frequently, including (but not restricted to) Sixteen Foot Bank, Forty Foot Bank and Chain Causeway. Localised safety maintenance, including patching and crack repairs, is being undertaken to help keep routes safe. In some cases, temporary traffic signals and speed restrictions have been installed to keep affected roads safe.
- 2.14 Work continues, seeking novel engineering and funding solutions to this significant challenge facing the service. Officers will be seeking industry wide views over the next few months.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 Environment and Sustainability

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The asset management approach to highway maintenance is the basis for the formulation of these programmes of work. This approach is predicated upon preventative maintenance treatments being applied to highways at the appropriate points in their lifecycles. Such preventative maintenance minimises the need for deeper, more expensive treatments to be applied at later dates.
- It is these deeper treatments that are the most environmentally harmful since they require greater use of materials (including virgin aggregates) and associated transport. These carbon emissions are exacerbated by road users having to travel further via diversion routes and having to wait at traffic control, such as traffic signals.
- Given the above, the over-arching principles that inform these programmes of work are a key factor in minimising the environmental effects and carbon footprint of the highways maintenance service.

#### 3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.3 Places and Communities

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Our Highways are the conduits supporting and connecting communities and businesses across Cambridgeshire and beyond. Well managed and maintained highway infrastructure supports the local and national economy providing a safe environment for public travel and the movement of goods

#### 3.4 Children and Young People

There are no significant implications for this priority

#### 3.5 Transport

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- A properly maintained highway network is a key enabler for the transport of goods and passengers across the county and beyond.

- The programmes of work associated with this report are instrumental in facilitating all relevant modes of travel on the county's highways, with due regard to the prioritisation of active travel.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 regarding the Incentive Fund and its relationship to the development of a programme of schemes that is in accordance with asset management principles.

The Capital Highway Maintenance Programme 2023-25 is built on the basis of the 2022/23 grant levels (the Business Plan assumes the same level of grant for 2023/24 and onwards as the 2023/24 grant allocations have not yet been announced). Therefore, once the grant allocations are announced an update will be brought to Committee to make Committee aware of the grant allocations and any changes to the Programme.

The report details the 2-year forward programme for capital maintenance schemes and the indicative priorities for Years 3-5. The funding for any schemes previously programmed for 2022/23 but not completed will be rolled forward to allow them to be completed alongside the approved 2022/23 programme

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraph 2.9 regarding the commissioning of the delivery of the programme via contracts that have already been subject to formal procurement procedures.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

These programmes have been developed in accordance with the asset management approach as set out in the Highway Operational Standards (HOS). Key changes to the HOS are subject to Equality Impact Assessments.

The HOS sets out that highway repairs and treatments may be prioritised where those with protected characteristics might be adversely impacted.

These programmes of work contribute to the provision of an inclusive highway network.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

When identifying and prioritising schemes, information from a variety of sources is used. Whilst objective condition data is the primary arbiter, reports from members and communities are actively considered during the program development process. This local involvement is augmented by reports from users of the highway and reports of highways defects made via the online system.

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

The programmes of capital schemes will help ensure that all classes of highways are maintained, including facilities for active travel, such as footways, cycle routes and Rights of Way.

A well-maintained highway network is a key contributor to access to health and care facilities.

The provision of a safe, well-maintained network of highway will help reduce accidents and hence will contribute to reducing demand upon health and care services.

#### 4.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

##### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

There are no significant implications within this category

##### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

**Positive**/neutral/negative Status:

The programme of schemes is predicated upon timely maintenance interventions, obviating the need for deeper, more disruptive treatments at later dates.

This will mean that users of the county's highway network will face less disruption due to roadworks. Therefore, there will be less need for traffic to undertake additional mileage due to diversion routes and traffic will spend less time waiting at traffic lights and other forms of traffic control. The reduction in anticipated disruption will mean that less carbon is emitted from the affected traffic.

It is the deeper, more expensive treatments that require the greatest use of materials and virgin aggregates. Therefore, the timely interventions advocated in the proposed programme of schemes will minimise the need for construction traffic and its associated emissions.

##### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

There are no significant implications within this category

##### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

There are no significant implications within this category

##### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

There are no significant implications within this category

##### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

**Positive**/neutral/negative Status:

Please see comments under 4.8.2. The resultant minimisation of disruption and construction traffic will help reduce air pollution, including particulates from traffic.

##### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

**Positive/neutral/negative Status:**

A well-maintained highway network, that is able to remain available during extreme weather conditions, is an essential contributor to the resilience of the services provided by the Council and other agencies. The highway network is the key conduit for the many of our front-line services to reach communities. These programmes of work contribute to the provision of such a safe, serviceable network of highways.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Linda Walker

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User?

Yes

Name of Officer: Jon Munslow

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jon Munslow

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

## 5. Source documents guidance

### 5.1 Source documents

None