

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
DATE: 10 March 2020

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To approve the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2020/21 and its implementation as set out in the body of the report and Annexes 1 and 2.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the overall Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2020/21 (Annex 1) is approved;**
- 2.2 **That highway maintenance funding for 2020/21 is targeted towards the Highway Maintenance Forward Programme (Annex 2) having due regard to priority, availability of road space and available budget;**
- 2.3 **That the implications for resourcing the delivery of the work programmes are noted (paras 5.13 to 5.15).**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The proposals in this report identify the current highway and transport priorities across the network. The schemes seek to facilitate transport in line with the Council's Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and ensure that the Council maintains the highway in as good a condition as resources allow, having due regard to the Council's intervention policy based on network condition.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Failure to approve the Highways and Transport Capital Programme would prevent the delivery of the Council's obligations as a Highway Authority and be contrary to the position set out in the Council's adopted Transport Policy (LPT3).
- 4.2 Given the necessary reduction in highway maintenance funding levels in previous years, it would not be appropriate to allocate resources to anything other than the priorities identified through methodical and objective needs assessments.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Transport Programme

- 5.1 The Transport Capital Programme is formed to support the adopted LTP3 which sets out the key transport challenges and opportunities facing Bracknell Forest through the period 2011-2026. Schemes are developed taking account of wider policy goals alongside strategic and local transport needs. Issues such as deliverability and public impact/acceptability are also reflected within the scheme selection.

- 5.2 Core funding for the 2020/21 programme is made up of an Integrated Transport Grant from Central Government (£720k) alongside developer contributions for transport mitigation measures via S106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts – totalling £3.4m. In addition, the Council has been successful in securing additional funds from Central Government through the Local Growth Fund (LGF) which is aimed towards implementing transport measures linked to economic growth and carbon reduction with a focus on removing pinch points. LGF funding (£5.519m) has been awarded for A3095 (south) corridor improvements and further enhancements to the A322/A329 corridor.
- 5.3 A required local contribution from Borough Capital (£200k) will support completion of the A322 Downshire Way scheme which has been substantially funded by the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund in preceding financial years.
- 5.4 As well as large scale schemes, the Council continues to implement local improvements that support the Local Transport Plan. These focus on improving access, mobility and travel choice, highway capacity and road space allocation, road safety, residential parking and traffic management. Additional match-funding has been committed by Silva Homes (£100k) to support further provision of residential parking schemes in priority areas.
- 5.5 The overall Transport Capital Programme for 2020/21 totals £9.939m and is contained within **Annex 1**. This expenditure significantly exceeds the 2019/20 programme value of £5.4m.

Highway Maintenance Programme

- 5.6 The Highway Maintenance Capital Programme seeks to ensure that the Council maintains the highway network in as good a condition as resources allow, giving due regard to public safety. It also supports objectives within the Council's adopted LTP3. The Highway Maintenance programme continues to focus on the integrity of a wide range of highway assets including carriageways, highway structures, drainage and street lighting.
- 5.7 Funding for the 2020/21 programme is made up of a Highway Maintenance Grant from Central Government (£1.369m) alongside a further Government allocation based on an 'efficiency' assessment of the Council's approach to highway maintenance - BFC currently receives the maximum enhancement of £285k.
- 5.8 A continued local contribution from Borough Capital of £200k will support road and footway maintenance. A further £400k Borough Capital is allocated toward an essential lamp column replacement programme. The latter is a recognised consequence of 'New Town Inheritance' whereby assets require capital replacement at the same time - lamp column condition/integrity is now emerging as a significant highway risk.
- 5.9 The overall Highway Maintenance Capital Programme for 2020/21 totals £2.254m and is contained within **Annex 1**. Even with this level of funding, the level of demand for planned maintenance far exceeds the available budget. Accordingly, funding must to be targeted according to an assessment of need based upon the condition of assets and **Annex 2** sets out the current results of that objective assessment.
- 5.10 In relation to road and footway maintenance, the details of work will vary between streets and will only be fully defined once the effects of the recent winter months have been established. The form of treatment for each road will be the most appropriate for the nature and category of the individual road to ensure (i) the most cost-effective use of available budgets; and (ii) preservation of the useful life of the asset.

- 5.11 Given the demands upon road network access (including for utility works), the availability of specialist plant and the objective of minimising local disruption, the final maintenance programme may need to vary. Local Members will be advised in advance of planned works within their Ward.
- 5.12 The Council also makes additional provision in its revenue budget for reactive highway maintenance work. This is used for routine and urgent maintenance purposes on all highway network assets and also includes the delivery of the winter service (road gritting) and the 24/7 emergency response service. The sum allocated within 2020/21 is circa £2.4m.

Resourcing Delivery

- 5.13 Following the merge of the Highway Asset Management and Transport Development Divisions in April 2019, a review of the newly combined Highways and Transport Division has identified opportunities to make service efficiencies and financial savings. The Highways and Transport function was also identified within the Council's transformation programme.
- 5.14 A forthcoming restructure of the Highways and Transport Division will result in a reduction in professional engineering posts and consequentially this will reduce capacity in some areas. In order to maintain delivery of the approved Highways and Transport Capital Programme from April 2020, resources will no longer be available to deliver the following:
- (i) the investigation of Member or public generated requests for minor improvement schemes, outside of approved in-year work programmes. New schemes will be added to a future works list for assessment at the appropriate stage;
 - (ii) the preparation of bespoke responses to routine resident enquiries on typical issues, e.g. speeding and parking. These exceed 1000 per annum and information will instead be provided regarding the Council's position and the suggested courses of action.
- 5.15 Member commitment to these necessary service efficiencies is key in order to maintain a consistent and focussed approach to priority areas of work on the highway network.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The approval of the Recommendation falls within the decision-making remit of the Executive under Part 2, Section 5 of the Council Constitution.

Director: Finance

- 6.2 The sums detailed within the report form part of the 2020/21 Capital Programme for the Place, Planning and Regeneration Directorate. This report identifies the specific schemes on which this funding is to be allocated.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in preparation for the formal publication of the adopted LTP3. There are no direct negative equality/diversity impacts arising from the works proposed in this report. The identified schemes improve safety and accessibility for all road users.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Stakeholders will vary dependant on individual schemes and their impact. Applicable consultation processes will precede scheme implementation.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Not applicable at this time.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Not applicable at this time.

Contacts for further information

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