

**TO: EXECUTIVE
8 MARCH 2016**

**HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE WORKS PROGRAMME 2016-17
Director of Environment, Culture & Communities**

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The Council as part of its overall budget allocation makes provision for highway maintenance schemes. The funding is then targeted according to highway condition. In order to ensure most effective use of resource and the early booking of the plant and equipment, approval is sought annually to approve the targeting of funding to a those roads identified on a rolling list as being in greatest need. The most recent assessment prioritises the works as per Annex 1.
- 1.2 Approval is sought to target the budget against schemes in this list as the priority for spending for 2016/17 so far as the total budget allows.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the budget for 2016-17 be targeted at the indicative Highway Maintenance Works Programme as set out in Annex 1.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 As part of the revenue budget proposals the Council has consulted on a reduction in the revenue spend for highway maintenance and is currently consulting in further economies to the highway maintenance budget. The allocation of the Council's capital programme must also be considered in this context too. The proposals in this report therefore identify the priority work across the network to maintain the highway in as good a condition as resources allow.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The proposals seek to effect works according to priority needs based on an assessment of condition that also reflects general safety. The need to have a large range of schemes is essential in order to minimise delay and maximise operational efficiencies. The Annex is updated annually. Given the current financial position the Council faces and the reducing spend on highway maintenance, it would not be appropriate to allocate resources to anything other than that identified through a methodical and objective needs assessment.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The 2016/17 budget includes £1.560m for the non-routine highway maintenance schemes. This is the level of funding provided via the Department for Transport's (DfT) Highway Maintenance Capital Funding which is a reduction on last year.
- 5.2 From 2017/17 onwards the DfT will award Council's further funding based on their 'efficiency' assessments. Councils will be graded in three bands following completion of a self-assessment questionnaire and those in the higher bands will receive, on a sliding scale, up to 100% of the available additional funding based on the assessment of our bid. In Bracknell's case the maximum we can expect under this process is £94,000 in the financial year 2016/17.

Unrestricted

- 5.3 There is an additional £228,000 from the Council's own capital programme by way of capitalised revenue for road maintenance and street lighting. This is the funding we use for the schemes as indicated in Annex 1.
- 5.4 The DfT Highway Maintenance Funding allocation is not ring fenced and could in theory be spent according to local needs. However, the clear expectation is that it is used for the purpose intended. The revenue budget is used for basic maintenance purposes mainly related to ensuring safety to the users.
- 5.5 The level of maintenance demand far exceeds available budgets. Accordingly funding has to be targeted and, as per the Local Transport Plan, we prioritise spend according to an assessment of need having regard to the condition of the asset. To help in the understanding this year we have changed the form of Annex 1 so as to try to help make it more transparent as to where monies are being prioritised.
- 5.6 The nature of the actual work in any given street will vary and will only be fully defined once a more detailed survey has been undertaken. The form of treatment for each road will be the most appropriate for the nature and category of the individual road to ensure the most cost effective use of available budgets and preserve the useful life of the structure. On the A, B and C roads we generally use what are known as heavy duty inlays. These include the hot laid materials such as Hot Rolled Asphalts and Stone Mastic Asphalts. These are more expensive than the materials that we can use on the unclassified roads where we tend to use cold laid micro asphalt overlay treatments. At this stage in the process the costings have to be considered 'indicative'. The list is therefore no more than a statement of intention subject to the funds. In addition whilst the need to do the works may be noted at times the ability to do the work is restricted because of other plans for the network. Where possible we try to co-ordinate activity in order to minimise local disruption but also to try to avoid new surfacing being dug up shortly after it has been laid. Such streets remain on the programme and are carried forward into next year's plan.
- 5.7 Within the overall budget we plan to continue with our programme to maintain our bridge assets and protect sites where vehicle excursions could potentially occur via the DfT Highway Maintenance Allocation, capital and revenue budgets.
- 5.8 This report focuses mainly on the road surface within the total spend. Members will be aware that we plan to replace all the existing street lighting lanterns with LED lanterns connected to a central management system. This project is funded through an 'invest to save' bid approved by Council. In parallel with the lantern replacement programme we will continue to replace life-expired concrete street lighting columns at sites throughout the Borough.
- 5.9 All works are procured through our contracts which have been secured through competitive tendering. The Bagshot Road between Coral Reef and the Opladen Way/Ringmead junction is a priority project; the nature of the work here is extensive and will require a considerable amount of work to deal with the ongoing damage being caused to the road foundation due to the high water table. The cost of this work is not yet fully established as discussions continue with our contractors over the extent and technical detail of the road structure and timing of the site works.
- 5.10 The recommendation seeks approval to commit the budget as a whole. If approved the practice has not been to seek further approval. Ward Members are advised of the planned works in their Ward and the overall progress against budget is reported via the QSR. We need to take this approach and confirm the overall plan and level of

spend now in order to book the necessary plant and other necessary resources. The window of opportunity is tight.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has no further comments to add to this report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The approved 2016/17 capital programme includes budgets for Highway Maintenance works as stated in paragraph 5.1. Spend against these budgets will be monitored on a monthly basis and reported on in line with the 2016/17 capital budget monitoring timetable

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 There are no Equality Impact Issues.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 Should the Council fail to maintain the highway network to minimum standards, then the risk of litigation increases.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Not applicable. The works proposed reflect actual conditions.

Method of Consultation

7.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

7.3 Not applicable.

Contacts for further information

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