

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
DATE: 19 March 2024

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25**

Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To approve the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2024/25 and its implementation as set out in the body of the report and Annex 1.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2024/25 (Annex 1) is approved.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The proposals seek to facilitate transport in line with the council's Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and ensure that the highway is maintained 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 demands placed upon 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

- 5.1 The overall Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2024/25 totals £6.918m, of which over 50% of funding is derived from external sources. The financial sources and proposed allocation to schemes and activity areas is shown in **Annex 1**.
- 5.2 Alongside the annual DfT grants for Transport Infrastructure and Highway Maintenance, the programme includes developer contributions via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 agreements which supplement the programme along with a local contribution from Borough capital. Given the ongoing highway maintenance challenges being experienced by all local authorities, the council has increased its core capital contribution to £3.2m in 2024/25.
- 5.3 The council's increased local contribution represents an uplift of £2m from 2023/24 and, combined with future increased allocations, will enable a greater focus on planned maintenance activities which over time will reduce the burden on revenue budgets for reactive maintenance repairs and unexpected incidents.

- 5.4 Typically, the annual programme varies in the apportionment of funding toward key highway and transport themes. The type of schemes being delivered will also vary within these areas. These fluctuations are a necessary consequence of emerging pressures, priorities and opportunities which the Council seeks to accommodate as a responsive highway authority. This may be the result of large or complex projects which require a greater level of funding, or opportunities to deliver schemes or secure external funding which is time limited. Therefore, in demonstrating delivery of key LTP3 objectives a broader view of the programme, over multiple years, is required.
- 5.5 **The Transport Capital Programme** is formed to support the adopted LTP3 which sets out the key transport challenges and opportunities facing Bracknell Forest. Schemes are developed taking account of wider policy goals alongside strategic and local transport needs such as improving access and mobility, providing travel choice, improving highway performance, enhancing road safety (including for school journeys), expanding residential parking and managing traffic. Issues such as deliverability and public impact/acceptability are also reflected within the scheme selection.
- 5.6 The importance of decarbonising transport requires a focus on sustainable modes of transport and providing residents with greater travel choice for everyday journeys. The 2024/25 transport work programme includes schemes to support walking and cycling which, alongside wider initiatives, contribute to the objectives of the government's Active Travel, Bus and Climate Change Strategies.
- 5.7 **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 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.
- 5.8 Despite the increased level of funding (i.e. the council's local contribution) the scale of demand for planned maintenance far exceeds the available budget. Consequently, funding must be targeted according to an assessment of need based upon the condition of assets.
- 5.9 Some details of maintenance work will only be fully defined once the effects of the recent winter months have been established. In the case of carriageway treatments, these 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.
- 5.10 Given the demands upon road network access (alongside utility works), the availability of specialist plant, weather dependant treatments and the objective of minimising local disruption it is necessary for the delivery of maintenance work to be flexible. Local Members will be advised in advance of planned works within their Ward.
- 5.11 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 2024/25 is £2.5m.

6 CONSULTATION AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Legal Advice

- 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.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 The sums detailed within the report form part of the 2024/25 Capital Programme for the Place, Planning and Regeneration Directorate. This report identifies the specific schemes on which this funding is to be allocated.

Other Consultation Responses

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

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in preparation for the formal publication of the adopted LTP3. The actions arising from this decision are within the scope of the LTP3 EIA and no direct negative equality/diversity impacts arise from these proposed works. The identified schemes improve safety and accessibility for all road users.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The highways and transport work programme contributes positively to the Council's strategic responsibilities for public safety in respect of its duties and services.

Climate Change and Ecological Impacts

- 6.6 The transport work programme incorporates walking and cycling schemes which, alongside wider traffic management interventions, contributes to a reduction in CO² emissions. In addition, the council continues to work with government and its agents on grant funding allocations for Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure. Further allocated funding is expected during 2024/25 subject to the demonstration of the next phase of chargepoints planned for the borough.
- 6.7 The highways work programme seeks to increase the use of low carbon materials and treatments within asset maintenance, alongside the application of low voltage or solar energy. This provides opportunities for a reduction in CO² during the life-cycle of highway assets.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.8 Highway and transport infrastructure plays a key role in supporting public health through contributions towards air quality, active travel, social connectivity and mobility. It improves access to education, employment, healthcare and other amenities and can reduce the risk of social isolation.

Background papers

None.

Contacts for further information

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