

North Yorkshire County Council**Executive****24 July 2018****The Case for Additional Highway Maintenance Investment****Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services****1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Executive for an extra £3M of North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) funding from the Council's Reserves for structural highway maintenance and to set out the proposed treatment strategy and the benefits that this extra investment would bring.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the damage experienced on North Yorkshire's road network during the winter months, Members will recall that in addition to £1.65M from the National Pothole Action Fund (PAF), the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded NYCC recently a further £1.65M. This was in addition to the expected PAF allocation of £1.64M, which is for the repair and prevention of potholes on the highway.
- 2.2 This extra money was an unexpected but very welcome development and this report contains details of a proposal to allocate an additional £3m of funding from the County council's reserves as match funding for the PAF, to be spent across 2018/19 and 2019/20. The additional £3M, would be in recognition of the severity of deterioration that has occurred on localised parts of the network; a figure broadly similar to the extra PAF allocation.
- 2.3 The proposal would continue to demonstrate that when Government provides extra money for highway maintenance, the County Council is willing to match this extra investment in the network. Prioritising and funding highway maintenance in this way follows a now well-established pattern, e.g. in a similar way to when the County Council contributed £20M for highway maintenance when the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) awarded £24M from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) between 2015/16 and 2020/2021.

3.0 Proposal for Spending the Money

- 3.1 Following detailed analysis based largely on the most recent results of the Council's road condition assessments, the additional funding will be targeted at addressing the effects of winter damage to the road network, which can be seen clearly across North Yorkshire.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the £3M will enhance the existing programme of works being carried out across the county which is aimed at improving the overall condition of the network through a mixture of resurfacing, structural patching and surface dressing coupled, where appropriate, with pre-surface dressing patching, which will help prevent the occurrence of potholes in the future.

4.0 Proposed Treatment Strategy (Surface Dressing and Pre-Surface Dressing Patching)

- 4.1 The Council recognises the value of surface dressing as a relatively inexpensive treatment, which provides the greatest reward for the least outlay. It shields the surface from the deteriorating effects of the sun, sealing narrow cracks which prevents the ingress of water, thus slowing down further weakening of the surface layers. In addition, the use of textured chippings rolled into the surface also improves the skid resistance of the newly treated surface.
- 4.2 As a standalone treatment, it is most suitable only for those roads with minimal surface deterioration and minor cracking. Roads that have more substantial defects, e.g. major cracking, rutting and other surface deterioration, require preparatory works to remove the defective areas prior to surface dressing; in these cases it is usual practice to carry out pre-Surface Dressing Patching (PSDP), typically in the year before surface dressing is programmed.
- 4.3 Whilst not popular with all road users, mainly because of the loose chippings which are an inevitable part of the process, given the speed of the operation and the short time motorists are inconvenienced, we recognise its importance as a key element in our strategy for maintaining the network.
- 4.4 There are also a variety of other benefits associated with Surface Dressing, which is a key element of our treatment strategy, because it improves skid resistance, making the road safer to drive on. In addition, it makes the road waterproof and protects it against frost and winter damage as well as extending the life of the carriageway surface by up to ten years. In summary terms, surface dressing offers a quick, efficient and cost-effective way of maintaining skid-resistant and waterproofed road surfaces, thus helping to prevent future deterioration.
- 4.5 It is also comparatively low-cost at just a fifth of the price of more major resurfacing works. Critically, this means that we can treat a much larger proportion of the road network each year, e.g. 200 miles of road can be surface dressed for the cost of resurfacing 40 miles. Additionally, it prevents much more expensive work being needed later.
- 4.6 The surface dressing programme takes place between mid-April and the end of August because the process requires warm, dry weather to make sure the dressing becomes established. Loose chippings may initially be a problem, which is why there is a speed limit of 20mph during the early life of the dressing. It is important that traffic is allowed onto the new surface as chippings only become fully embedded under the action of vehicle tyres. The new surface is left for 14 days to allow the chippings to embed, after which point any residual chippings can be swept up before road markings are repainted.
- 4.7 Whilst it is inevitable that there may be some minor delays to traffic, every attempt is made to reduce the disruption to road users while the work is undertaken; this includes providing advance notice to those directly affected by the works and where possible, traffic will be allowed to pass any machinery using manually operated 'stop/go' boards whilst the works are being carried out. In some cases roads may be too narrow for this and drivers may have to use an alternative route for a short period.

5.0 How the Proposed Extra Funding will fit with the Existing Capital Works Programme

- 5.1 We routinely carry out an annual surface dressing programme of just under 3.5 million square metres (sqm) (spread across nearly 900 sites) per annum at a cost of around £11M and already have a programme for 2019/20 with specific sites identified. These sites are receiving preparatory patching (PSDP) in 2018/19 funded from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital patching allocation.
- 5.2 We have also identified other sites for repair, which are being funded from the Government's Pothole Action Fund (PAF). This equates to around £3M of resurfacing and patching schemes, a proportion of which will also need surface dressing within the next year or so to avoid deterioration to the repairs.
- 5.3 If we are allocated a further £3M from Reserves, a proportion of this would need to be spent in 2018/19 on preparing sites for surface dressing in 2019/20. The monies would therefore be used to carry out patching repairs and other minor works such as drainage improvements, which would maximise the benefit of the subsequent surface dressing. Assessing how much of the network could be repaired and made ready for surface dressing is difficult to accurately calculate at this stage. Site specific assessments will be carried out though and a works programme identified in time for the works approval process; it is proposed that the Executive delegate the decision over the detail for how this extra funding be spent to the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services (BES) in consultation with BES Executive Members. Should this recommendation be approved, a report will be presented to their meeting on 17 August 2018.
- 5.4 The proportion of patching to surface dressing costs could range from 10% patch/90% surface dress to 50% patch/50% surface dress. As a consequence, the number of sites that could be treated is likely to range between ten and fifty. In the case of repair and reconstruction, some sites may require more extensive work (deeper structural patching).
- 5.5 Consideration will also need to be given between addressing the public's understandable desire to treat the 'worst first' and investing heavily in preventative treatment. The reality is that any additional works funded from the extra investment will need to include sites across the spectrum of patching needs.

6.0 Assurance

- 6.1 Any significant in-year increase in funding for highways capital maintenance will always represent a delivery challenge; however, Members will be aware that the County Council has a strong track record in delivering expanded highways capital works programmes and with the arrangements it has for delivering highway works, is always able to respond positively to injections of additional funding.
- 6.2 Officers are confident, that if the extra investment in the road network as set out in this report is approved, the additional money and the schemes it funds will be delivered on-time and to budget, with all the consequent benefit to the motoring public. Members should also note that the approach for spending the extra money is consistent with our longer-term strategy for highway maintenance, which seeks to improve the longevity of the network and maximise the benefit of every pound invested.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The approval of an extra £3M represents an addition to the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Capital Plans and this increase will be reflected in those Plans at Quarter 2. It is proposed that the funding source is the Council's Reserves (Strategic Capacity Unallocated).
- 7.2 Recognising the importance of the additional money tying in with the existing highways capital works programme and budget management process, it is proposed that the Executive delegate the decision over the detail of the schemes to be delivered using the additional funding, to the Corporate Director BES, in consultation with BES Executive Members. This would be consistent with the current approach where the Corporate Director BES, in consultation with BES Executive Members approves the detail contained within the three-year rolling programme and its associated spend, on annual basis in accordance with the limits contained in the approved Capital Plan. This element of the approvals process does not require a change to the Capital Plan.

8.0 Equalities Implications

- 8.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equality impacts arising from the recommendation. Should Members approve the provision of an extra £3M, the funding allocation methodology and scheme identification process is based upon the "Manage, Maintain and Improve" (MMI) hierarchy as set out in Local Transport Plan 4; which has already been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This concluded that whilst the introduction of fewer improvement schemes may have a greater impact on people with mobility difficulties or without access to a private vehicle, it was also considered that prioritising maintenance, through the MMI hierarchy was likely to produce a net benefit for people with the same protected characteristics; particularly in terms of age and disability.
- 8.3 Taking these factors into account, it is considered that there are no adverse impacts arising from the extra funding proposal. The Authority will continue to consider and pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty throughout the allocation of funding for the Capital Programme.
- 8.4 A copy of the 'Initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening' form is attached as Appendix 1.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The County Council as Local Highway Authority has a wide range of statutory duties imposed by a variety of legislation relating to highways and transportation, including a duty under s41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain highways maintainable at the public expense and a duty under s122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. Under s16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, the County Council is also required to manage its road network to secure the expeditious movement of traffic in that network. The recommendations in the report are aimed at complying with these duties in an efficient way.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- i. Approves the allocation of an extra £3M of NYCC funding from Reserves (Strategic Capacity Unallocated) for spending on highway maintenance in accordance with the proposed strategy as set out in this report; and
- ii. Delegates the decision over the detail for how this extra funding will be spent, to the Corporate Director BES in consultation with BES Executive Members.

DAVID BOWE
Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services

Author of Report: Allan McVeigh

Background Documents: None

<p>Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA')</p> <p>This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.</p>			
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services		
Service area	Highways and Transportation		
Proposal being screened	The recommendation for the Executive to approve £3M for highway maintenance from the Council's Reserves.		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Allan McVeigh		
What are you proposing to do?	To identify and deliver an expanded programme of highways capital works across 2018/19 and 2019/20 funded from £3M of County Council Reserves.		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To maintain the highway network in order to comply with the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and relevant legislation (see Section 9 of accompanying report).		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	Yes, a further £3M from the Council's Reserves (Strategic Capacity Unallocated).		
<p>Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristic</p> <p>As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? <p>If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.</p>			
Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/No info available
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex (Gender)		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	

Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
NYCC additional characteristic			
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No.		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No. Although an expanded highways capital works programme is likely to require involvement of the Council's term maintenance contractor and/or other framework contractors, it should not affect how they operate.		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	The allocation of funding is based on the "Manage, Maintain and Improve" (MMI) hierarchy set out in Local Transport Plan 4, which has been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This concluded that the introduction of fewer improvement schemes may have a greater impact on people with mobility difficulties or without access to a private vehicle as there will be fewer new facilities provided. Nevertheless, it is also considered that prioritising maintenance, through the MMI hierarchy is likely to produce a net benefit for people with the same protected characteristics; particularly in terms of age and disability.		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	<i>Barrie Mason</i>		
Date	09/07/18		