

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 April 2023

Report of the Director of Strategy and Performance

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

**Additional Budget 2023 Highways Maintenance and Pothole Repair Funding,
2023 to 2024**

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Brief Summary

Cabinet approved the 2023/24 Highway Block of the Capital Programme in March 2023. In the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Budget 2023 an additional £200 million for highways maintenance for the financial year 2023/24 was announced of which £5.122m has been made available for Lancashire. This report will focus on urgent decisions relating to surface dressing and preventative find and fix which need to be approved now for inclusion in contracts and delivery during the summer months.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C20 have been complied with. Compliance with Standing Orders C19 was not possible due to the funds only being announced in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Budget on 15 March 2023.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve that the Department for Transport's additional funds of £5.122m, made available in the 2023 Spring Budget announced on 15 March 2023, be added to the Highway Block of the Capital Programme.
- (ii) Approve the following from the additional funds:



- a. the addition of £0.787m for the surface dressing programme, including £0.265m for surface dressing of Hall Road, West Lancashire, and associated roads and £0.522m for an additional surface dressing programme, the detail of which will be presented for approval at the Cabinet meeting in May 2023.
- b. the addition of £0.500m to the preventative find and fix programme.

Detail

Cabinet approved the 2023/24 Highway Block of the Capital Programme in March 2023. In the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Budget 2023 an additional £200 million for highways maintenance for the financial year 2023/24 was announced of which £5.122m has been made available for Lancashire. This report presents proposals for the use of part of that funding for issues relating to surface dressing and preventative find and fix which need to be approved now for inclusion in contracts and delivery during the summer months.

The announcement states:

"The Department for Transport (DfT) is committed to allocating this funding to local highways authorities so they can most effectively spend this funding on maintaining and improving their respective network, based upon their local knowledge, circumstances and priorities. DfT strongly advocates a risk-based whole lifecycle asset management approach to local authority highways maintenance programmes. This considers all parts of the highway network, such as bridges, cycleways, and lighting columns – and not just the fixing of potholes. It is up to the respective highway authority how best to spend this funding to fulfil their statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980".

Surface Dressing is delivered through a contract with RMS (Road Maintenance Services) which is seasonal and weather dependant; the surface dressing season is from May to September. Approval for inclusion of the additional funds within the 2023/24 contract is required as an urgent decision in order to ensure the additional works can be programmed within the delivery season and the necessary Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders can be advertised and implemented.

The total additional surface dressing programme is £0.787m. This is composed of surface dressing for the Major Route Network and for Hall Road and associated roads in West Lancashire as described below.

It is proposed to spend £0.522m on surface dressing on the Major Route Network to reduce the rate of deterioration of the network as part of a recognised lifecycle planning and management of the A road network. Identification of the schemes had been undertaken in 2020 in anticipation of funds being made available from the Department for Transport for this purpose, which unfortunately did not become available. A draft programme has been prepared and is being costed. It is proposed to present the programme to Cabinet for approval in May 2023. It is also proposed to surface dress Pippin Street, Dam Wood Lane, Heatons Bridge Road and Hall Road,



(Lancashire West, Burscough and Rufford and Ormskirk electoral divisions). These roads were patched in 2022/23 in preparation of surface dressing the following season, however, increase in costs due to inflation meant that there were insufficient funds available for inclusion in the 2023/24 Capital Programme. The scheme estimate is £0.265m.

In March 2023, Cabinet approved £0.500m for preventative find and fix, jet patching, to address defects and preserve condition. This focuses on the Rural Unclassified Network and is delivered during the summer months. It is proposed to assign a further £0.500m to this programme from the new grant award.

Proposals for the remainder of the £5.122m allocation will be presented for consideration at the Cabinet meeting in May 2023.

Consultations

NA

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The schemes proposed are aligned with the Transport Asset Management Plan approach and delivering them will help reduce the risks of not being able to maintain the progress already made in Phase 1 of the Transport Asset Management Plan in improving the ABC network, through preventative treatment, and maintain it in a good condition through phase 2 of Transport Asset Management Plan.

The 2023/24 Department for Transport grant funding allocation also assumes that the county council will qualify for Band 3 Incentive funding through the Self-Assessment process. The assessment of officers is that the county council will be confirmed as qualifying for Band 3 funding. However, funding may be reduced if Band 3 status is not achieved. The Department for Transport has not yet confirmed the timescale for Self-Assessment process. It is proposed that any changes required to the proposed 2023/24 New Starts Highway maintenance programmes, in the event of the confirmed grant funding award being less than the assumed allocation, be reported to Cabinet at a future meeting.

It should also be noted that the delivery of the proposed programmes/projects is dependent on the 2022/23 highway maintenance programme outturn position which will not be known until spring 2023. The programmes may be subject to change after this date.

There is a risk that some of the detailed highway and transport programmes/projects may not be delivered or could be delayed due to changes to estimated costs, other priorities emerging within year because of bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances.



List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

