



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Growth & Development
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director for Environment and Operations
<b>DATE:</b>	7 March 2024

<b>PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:</b>	Growth and Development
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	All Wards
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	Yes

**SUBJECT: Highways Capital Programme 2024/25**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To seek the Executive Board's approval for the allocation of funds detailed in the Highways Capital Programme for the financial year 2024/25.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- 1) Approves the Highways Capital Programme for 2024/25
- 2) Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Environment and Operations, in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Development, to amend, seek and accept tenders subject to adequate budget provision.

## 3. BACKGROUND

The Council approved its Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) in April 2011 with the following goals, to:

- Support the economy
- Tackle climate change
- Increase safety and security
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote quality of life, health and the natural environment
- Promote the management of the Council's transport assets.

These goals are aligned to our overall corporate priorities as outlined below:

- A more prosperous borough where no one is left behind
- Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential

- Deliver our climate emergency action plan
- Build happier, healthier and safer communities

The proposed schemes and projects that form the 2024/25 programme are aimed at achieving our overall corporate priorities along with our statutory obligations to maintain the highway network in the most cost-efficient way based upon the Council's overall asset management strategy.

The programme aims to provide a good, safe and resilient road network that supports communities and businesses across the borough to access employment, leisure, retail and education. The programme also promotes growth and development with section 106 monies being used to support highways improvement schemes to attract business development opportunities.

Maintaining a good road network also supports quality of life, health, safety and security by offering improvements to the built and natural environments encouraging the use of open spaces and active travel with up to 15% of the funding allocated to supporting our active travel aspirations in line with Active Travel England's recommendations.

Reduction in carbon usage and environmental impact is to be achieved through design and the use of innovative solutions where possible with materials, equipment and resources selected to reduce the impact of the proposed schemes as much as is practicable.

The carbon impact of schemes on this capital programme is to be captured where achievable and the data used to inform future decisions to progressively plan and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases generated by highway maintenance activities.

The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan has guided the production of the Highways Decarbonation Policy. As such a further action plan is currently in development to undertake a carbon benchmarking exercise to better inform choices and outcomes. The first stage of which is to capture and quantify carbon usage to evaluate areas where future reductions can be made. Through asset management and lifecycle planning the most efficient ways of reducing carbon long term can be considered

The recently approved Transport Decarbonisation Policy will also serve to offer guidance and inform decision to further reduce carbon usage.

### **Funding:**

On the 28th February 2022 the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed details of future Integrated Transport Block, Local Highways Maintenance Block, Pot Hole Funding and Incentive Funding stream allocations for 2022-2025. In addition to these funding streams the DfT have recently announced and confirmed by letter in December 2023 an additional amount of funding available for the 2023 and 2024 periods termed "Network North Plan funding".

It is also anticipated that this additional funding will be received over the next 11 years. The 2023/24 allocation has been confirmed with values from 2024 onward to be announced in due course by the DfT.

Integrated Transport Block (ITB) provides funding support to Local Authorities for transport capital improvement schemes worth less than £5 million. This funding is to be spent at the discretion of the local authority on small transport schemes, such as road safety, active travel and congestion alleviation schemes.

Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) provides funding to maintain highway assets including carriageways, footways, bridges, highway structures, drainage along with street lighting and traffic signal schemes.

HMB incentive element represents additional funding to maintain highway assets secured by maintaining a band 3 status through the DfT's self-assessment questionnaire.

Pothole funding allocation is part of 5 yearly instalments allocated to run alongside other funding streams between 2021/2025. The funding is to go towards ensuring potholes and other road maintenance issues are rectified.

Network North Plan funding is the first instalment of an anticipated 11 year funding model allocated to run alongside other funding streams from 2023/2034. Amounts for years 2023 and 2024 have been confirmed with amounts anticipated in subsequent years from 2025 to 2034 to be confirmed in due course by the DfT. This funding is to be used for local highways maintenance, particularly for the re-surfacing of carriageways, cycleways and footways to prevent potholes and other road defects occurring, as well as tackling other asset management priorities, such as keeping local bridges and other highway structures open and safe.

It is a condition of this funding (to 2024) that it is for additionality and that existing funding is not to be re-allocated for purposes other than highways maintenance. A further condition is that all local authorities receiving this funding should publish, by March 2024, a summary of the additional resurfacing work they will deliver with the new funding over the next 2 years.

Formal confirmation of the 2023 allowance was received in November 2023. As such and due to procurement timescales and weather constraints this allocation is to be utilised in the 2024/25 programme as distributed below.

The total DfT allocations for 2024/25 is £5,163,900.

The Highways Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix A.

Any further additional funding received from the DfT or through Section 106 contributions within the 2024/25 period will be reported as soon as confirmed and a further report will be brought forward.

In the event of additional funding being received schemes will be added to this programme to demonstrate the most economical and valuable use of the funding received in line with our corporate policies and asset management lifecycle planning programme.

## **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

### **Scheme Selection**

The schemes put forward for capital funding have been selected using a complex set of parameters specific to each asset group. At a high level these include the needs of the local community, the availability of funding, and the priorities of the local council. The overarching principle when investing funds into highway assets is to improve the overall condition and community value whilst implementing the most cost-effective maintenance treatments based on the whole life of the assets. This aligns with our current asset management principals, corporate missions and values.

### **Proposals**

This report details the allocation of available highway funding to deliver maintenance activities and improvement programmes on the public highway aligned with our asset management policy along with contributing to the councils overall corporate priorities.

Due to the responsive nature of the service to many variable and unknown outside factors the schemes and budgetary allowances presented cannot operate as fixed budgets but form the basis of our plan for the start of the 2024 financial year. Every effort will be made to adhere to these proposed schemes and budgets as planned. Further updates on progress and the delivery of schemes will be made and any emerging issues or pressures arising due to network demands which may call for changes or amendments to be made will be discussed.

### **Carry Forward**

Given the nature of construction works it is inevitable that the progress of some schemes is delayed through issues such as detailed design periods and consultation, approvals being sought, land issues and the availability and escalating costs of materials alongside severe and recently unpredictable weather events.

Consequently some schemes are not able to be progressed and delivered within the timescales initially envisaged. Such delays have led to an underspend on the 2023/24 programme. This has resulted in a carry forward of this funding into the 2024/25 programme to allow for the completion of these existing schemes and commitments.

Carry forward figures stated in this report are calculated using the current financial standing of each scheme and the anticipated expenditure forecast up to the end of the fiscal year. As such, the carry forward figures stated may be subject to change once actual expenditures are known at and following year end proceedings.

Following receipt of the year-end financial statement accurate carry forward figures are to be reported on and, if significantly different from those anticipated, schemes are to be adjusted accordingly and this report updated to incorporate any amendments and re-published for review.

Any changes to the approved 2024/25 programme will be reported via the Council's Executive Member for Growth and Development later in 2024. Changes to the Highways Capital programme as detailed within this report will be resourced from within the programme, and as such there will be no additional impact on Council finances. The equality impacts of each scheme are considered and assessed at the scheme design stage.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

All schemes proposed directly accord with the Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy, and support the

balanced growth which is identified within the adopted Local Plan to 2037 for Blackburn with Darwen.

Climate Emergency Action Plan: The proposed capital programme will have a negative effect on carbon usage which is currently difficult to quantify. This impact is inevitable given the construction activities and materials required to maintain our existing infrastructure this is also recognised as an industry wide challenge. Whilst there will be an impact from construction activities, carbon usage will be kept to a minimum through design and material choices. An action plan is being developed alongside the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan 2023/24 to undertake a data gathering exercise to understand our current carbon usage and inform our choices for next year's programme. New and innovative solutions along with technological advancements are being sought and investigated alongside other highway authorities working collaboratively on solutions through the Local Council Roads Innovation Group (LCRIG).

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding sources are identified within section 3 of this report. The programme will be closely monitored to ensure full spend and any further variations or amendments will be reported via the Executive Member for Growth and Development.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council has a statutory duty under Sections 108 and 109 of the Transport Act 2000 ("the Act") (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008) as local transport authority to ensure that the Council has up to date policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area. Each local transport authority must prepare a document to be known as the local transport plan ("LTP") containing its policies for the purposes above and its proposals for the implementation of those policies. The Council is currently working alongside Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Borough Council to ensure that a new joint LTP (LTP4) is prepared in line with any relevant timescales, and in accordance with any government guidance issued by the Department for Transport.

All schemes within the programme will be designed and implemented in accordance with relevant highway, transport, traffic and equality legislation; and will need to be procured in accordance with the Council's constitution, procurement law and; where relevant, European directives; and any grant conditions.

The Council will need to comply with the grant conditions and ensure that the tendering and contract award is in accordance with the Council's Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules and the Financial Procedure Rules

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

All professional fees will be met from allocations detailed, and staff time met from existing resources. External contractors will be procured to deliver schemes that cannot be delivered by internal resources. Procurement will be in line with current best practices identified by HMEP standards.

## **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

All schemes will be the subject of detailed individual consultations with the emergency services, stakeholders and the wider community.

The proposed works have been informed by the options expressed in the most recent National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey.

Residents and stakeholders will be informed prior to the start of the proposed works in respect to the nature of the scheme and their anticipated duration. This will be communicated via the Council's website, social media channels, leaflets and letters as appropriate. Customer feedback will be actively sought on completion of each scheme, with feedback analysed and used to improve the service in the future.

In accordance with the requirements of the Network North Plan Funding details of the additional resurfacing and other highway maintenance works to be delivered for this funding within the 2024/25 period will also be published and made available on the Council's website.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Carmel Foster-Devine, Mark Berry and Paul Fletcher</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	
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**BACKGROUND  
PAPER:**

Appendix A - Highways Capital Programme 2024/25 Part 1 (Published with No Finances)

Appendix A - Highways Capital Programme 2024/25 Part 2