



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

23 September 2020

Report Title:	Highways Programme 2020/21
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member - Environmental Services
Cabinet Member	Councillor Andy Bowden
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	Open
Key Decision	Yes
Public Notice issued	Yes 25 August 2020
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Report of	Lisa Harris Executive Director of Place Services lisaharris@sthelens.gov.uk 07968 616638
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Borough priorities Please mark X for any priority supported by this report NB Use Section 4 - Background Information to explain how each selected priority is supported	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities for our residents	X
	Support a strong, diverse and well-connected local economy	X
	Create a green, thriving and vibrant place to be proud of	X
	Be a modern, efficient and effective Council	

1. Summary

1.1 To approve the Engineering Capital and Revenue Programme for 2020/21.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) **Accept the Transport Single Investment Capital Pot Allocation of £2.213m, from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Comprising £1.573m for Highway Maintenance and £0.640m for Integrated Transport.**
- ii) **Accept the Transport Single Investment Pot Key Route Network allocation of £0.751m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.**
- iii) **Accept the Highways Pothole and Challenge Fund Part 1 of £1.668m from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocated to them by the Department for Transport.**
- iv) **Accept the Highways Pothole and Challenge Fund Part 1 of £0.140m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocated to them by the Department for Transport.**
- v) **Accept the Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund Part 2 capital funding of £0.742m from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority allocation.**

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to accept grant funding from the Combined Authority to support the recovery from COVID-19 restrictions and to facilitate maintenance and improvement to the highway infrastructure that includes the delivery of walking and cycling measures in the financial year 2020/21.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Council's highway infrastructure assets have a total value of around £ 1.8bn (Gross Replacement Costs) primarily forming 780km of adopted highway network. This report outlines a major programme of investment in developing its highway network to support economic, social and environmental renewal. The report details the Council's continued investment and improvement in the Borough's Highway Infrastructure as outlined below:

Table 1 - HIGHWAYS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2020/21

Programme	Investment £ (000)
Highway Maintenance Fund	3.241
Integrated Transport Block	0.640
Key Route Network	1.493
Pothole Fund	0.140
Revenue Works	3,351
Total Highway Programme 2020/21	£ 8.865

Highway Maintenance Funding, Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Incentive Fund

- 4.2 In April 2016, the Government confirmed the level of transport capital funding that would be allocated to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). This single transport budget forms part of the Single Investment Fund and includes all existing capital maintenance funding streams, including:
- Integrated Transport Block funding
 - Highways Maintenance funding
 - Highways Maintenance incentive funding
- 4.3 The funding allocation includes highway maintenance "Incentive Funding" which the Department for Transport (DFT) invited highway authorities to bid for in January 2016. The LCRCA has been granted a level 3 status (the highest) as part of its devolution deal. The Government's expectation is that the performance requirements for this level of funding is met by each local authority and this will need to be demonstrated. The LCRCA are working with all highway authorities within the region to ensure that level 3 status will be achieved. St Helens Borough Council is currently working towards the continued improvement of our highway asset management plan and associated policies, these will be presented to Cabinet for consideration later in the year. This will ensure that we fulfil the eligibility criteria for Incentive funding.
- 4.4 The LCRCA will receive £132.5m between 2016/17 and 2020/21, this equates to £26.5m per annum. All funds will from part of the Single Investment Fund which is governed by an

Assurance Framework and therefore provision was made for £26.5m of transport funds to be detached from the main Single Investment allocation. Allocations in all previous years has been based on a historic formula split between Highway Maintenance block and the Integrated Transport Block.

- 4.5 A proportion of the funding is retained by the Combined Authority in order to provide financial support to City region wide projects. The table below details the allocation of the retained funds of the transport block.

Table Allocation of Retained Transport Funding

	Allocation (£000)
Building and Maintaining a City-Wide Evidence base	1.000
Bus Alliance Support	0.500
Rail Enhancement Support	0.500
Mayoral Combined Authority Priorities	2.500
Key Route Network	5.500
Total	10.000

- 4.6 The remaining funds of £11m are to be used for Highway Maintenance and are allocated to each of the member highway authorities of the Combined Authority. These allocations were approved as part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority budget on 24th January 2020. The St Helens allocation for Highways Maintenance is £1.573m.
- 4.7 Central Government requires that the Liverpool City Region identify a Key Route Network (KRN) of locally significant roads and that appropriate maintenance and investment be directed to support this Network, to provide the infrastructure to support the economic growth of the region. This work is overseen by the Merseytravel Committee, an evidence base to support a prioritised investment approach has been put in place. The Combined Authority have agreed that a portion of the capital maintenance allocation is targeted to the Liverpool City Regions KRN.
- 4.8 In October 2018, members for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority received a report on an important component of the evidence base, in the form of a Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP). This assessed the condition of the KRN's carriageway on a consistent basis the principle conclusion was that the condition of the highway network is degrading, and the current funding is not at a level to address the maintenance backlog. 16% of the KRN requires structural maintenance and 39% needs preventative maintenance. Analysis shows that to maintain a steady state (be that its current condition) the following is required:
- £12 million is required per annum for Structural Maintenance
 - £2.5 million is required for Preventative Maintenance
 - The current maintenance "backlog" is approximately £56.8 million
- 4.9 At its meeting on 5th June 2020, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority approved the disbursement of £5.5m that had been allocated to support the maintenance of the KRN. The approval funding for St Helens was £0.751m which will focus on those parts of the KRN located within the Borough and being in the poorest condition. This will inevitably reduce funding available for the remaining local network given this is the only external capital available to local authorities for highway maintenance. It should be noted that St Helens has the lowest proportion of KRN within the City Region.

- 4.10 An evidence led approach to the allocation of Capital Maintenance funding across the City Region will continue. Emerging data suggests that significant investment is required to bring the KRN up to an acceptable and consistent standard. This will inevitably reduce funding available for the remaining local network as this is the only source of external capital available to local authorities for highway maintenance. To support this recommendation each partner authority must submit a proposed programme based on road hierarchy for approval with an emphasis to deliver interventions which support the Mayoral and Liverpool City Regions priorities and strategies. Regular updates on scheme progress will be provided to the Combined Authority.

Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Allocation

- 4.11 After allocations to Capital Maintenance and KRN the remaining balance of the “Transport Investment” pot, is £10m this forms the Integrated Transport Block. The Combined Authority have agreed that this funding is allocated to support the Mayoral Combined Authority priorities and the City Regions key strategic themes. At its meeting on 24th January 2020, the Combined Authority agreed to retain a formulaic allocation (based on population) in 2020/21. Each partner was required to submit a programme of schemes for approval. The allocation of ITB for St Helens is £0.640m we will provide regular updates on scheme progress to the portfolio and Combined Authority.

Highways Pothole and Challenge Fund – Part 1.

- 4.12 In Autumn of 2019 the Combined Authority responded to an opportunity to bid for a share of the national Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund. On the 14th May 2020, in light of the COVID-19 emergency and the pressures on resources locally and nationally, the Department for Transport wrote to all local authorities to advise that it would be making a proportion of the fund available on a formula basis. This was to ensure that funding reaches each Combined Authority as quickly as possible. The Department for Transport also advised that it supplement this funding from the existing Pothole Action Fund and funding committed in the 2020/21 Budget to help repair potholes and maintain local roads. The Liverpool City region were allocated £12.662m.
- 4.13 At its meeting on the 5th June 2020, the Combined Authority chose to split its funding between a £1m pothole fund and £11.662m Highways Challenge Fund – Part 1. These allocations were then apportioned on a formulaic basis to each partner authority.
- 4.14 The Department of Transport have a preset formula to distribution money on the basis of potholes, this has been used to allocate the £1m bespoke pothole fund received in May 2020 to each local authority. St Helens allocation of £0.140m will fund a dedicated Pothole Repair Team that will be able to respond in times of adverse weather. This approach will ensure a speedy pothole repair service with a collaborative approach between Highways and Customer Services to provide a more efficient and effective service for our customers.
- 4.15 The £11.662m Highway challenge Fund part 1 was as also allocated as per the Department of Transport Formula, St Helens will receive £1.668m which will go to address highway priorities in the Borough.

Highways Challenge Fund – Part 2

- 4.16 As part of the Prime Minister’s “build, build, build” speech in Dudley on the 30th June 2020, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority received confirmation of an additional £5m to support highway maintenance works on the Key Route Network. This followed a bid for £5m into the Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund in October 2019, which was originally not supported by Department for Transport (DfT), as the fund was significantly oversubscribed. This funding is in

addition to the funds outlined above and must be expended in the financial year 2020/21. At its meeting on the 1st July 2020, the Combined Authority agreed to distribute the additional Highway Maintenance Challenge fund – part 2 as per its original bid proposal. St Helens will receive £0.742m.

Revenue Allocation

- 4.17 St Helens Cabinet at its meeting of the 26 February 2020, allocated £21m to the Environmental Services Portfolio revenue budget for 2020/21. Within this figure the Highways, Roads and Transport Services Budget of £10.9m was approved. This figure includes Road Safety and Capital Charges.
- 4.18 The Proposed Revenue Expenditure Profile for 2020/21 is £3,351m. This revenue budget will fund routine carriageway, footway and cycle way maintenance, maintenance of verges and trees, sweeping and cleaning, gully emptying, street lighting energy and maintenance, winter salting and design and supervision.

Capital Allocations

4.19 Integrated Transport Block

Traffic Schemes

- 4.20 Within the transport plan the Authority aims to improve road safety for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users by reducing the number of accidents and the severity of injury caused. In 2018/19, a skid resistance survey was undertaken on the Borough's roads and this identified areas where the skid resistance of the carriage way should be improved as it will in time pose a threat to vehicle movements-

Structural Maintenance Allocation

- 4.21 For 2020/21 the Structural Maintenance allocation funded is £3.241m. This allocation funds the major structural maintenance programme to improve the condition of the Borough's Highway Infrastructure.

Carriageway Resurfacing Schemes

- 4.22 The Highways Act 1980 places a duty of care on the Highway Authority to provide a safe network and the proposed programme of work reflects the need to maintain the highway and meet the Borough's legal obligations. The proposed carriageway resurfacing programme is based on road hierarchy and need and will be funded from the Structural Maintenance Allocation. The physical condition of the main roads in the Borough (the classified principal and non-principal roads) is surveyed every year which assists to identify those areas in most need and thereby identifies the appropriate projects to address the needs. A combination of patching, reconstruction, resurfacing and preventative maintenance will be required in order to prevent the potential failure of parts of the network. The proposed allocation for carriageway resurfacing schemes (non KRN) is £0.790m

Street Lighting Schemes

- 4.23 Since completion of the schemes in Better Lighting in Sustainable Streets (BLISS), the annual programme of works has been targeted at replacing older obsolete street lighting, primarily on district and local distribution roads in the Borough. For 2020/21 it is proposed that this programme should continue by using more energy efficient lanterns and replacing lighting

columns and lanterns which have exceeded their design life. The proposed allocation for street lighting to replace obsolete concrete columns is £0.500m

Bridges

- 4.24 The Bridges programme is based on condition surveys which is judged against the national assessment criteria to identify those structures which require remedial action to maintain their structural integrity. The Council is responsible for the maintenance of 275 bridges across the borough. The estimated cost of carrying out the proposed Bridges programme is £0.460m

CARRIAGEWAYS AND FOOTWAYS REVENUE PROGRAMME

- 4.25 The Council, as the Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to maintain the highway network in a condition to enable the safe passage of the travelling public. The borough's highway network comprises many diverse assets. It is therefore essential that we continue to develop the existing Highway Asset Management Plan which sets out how the Council will best manage its highway infrastructure asset and network taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities, asset condition and best use of available resources. The Strategy will be used to inform priorities in the Business Planning process and will be used to support the continuous improvement of our highway asset managed by capturing the outcome of using the optimum treatment or interventions and the whole life cycle of different asset groups. The estimated cost of carrying out condition survey's and developing the Highway Asset Management Strategy is £0.101m.
- 4.26 The Carriageway and Footway Programme deals with the unclassified roads in the Borough which make up approximately 80% of the highway network. Proposed schemes will be prioritised in accordance with the strategy detailed in the Highways Asset Management Plan. This Plan is based on a national code of practice and is linked with the Transport Asset Management Plan. It considers detailed visual inspections, mechanical surveys, together with reports gathered from Highways Inspectors, Members and residents, which enables priorities to be determined as indicated in the list of schemes. The proposed allocation for Footway repairs / reconstruction is £0.500m

Highway Drainage Repairs.

- 4.27 The Highway Drainage system in St Helens is designed to take water away from the highway surface, even with a well-maintained highway system, problems can arise during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall. There is a total of 33,000 gully assets in the Borough. We operate a cleaning schedule to routinely clean the gullies throughout the Borough. In addition to a routine cleaning schedule, ad-hoc cleaning operations take place in targeted locations based on risk assessed often required to resolve locations at risk of flooding. The estimated cost of carrying out additional targeted risk assessed priority for Highway Drainage repairs is £0.490m

4.28 The programme also includes an allocation for the following areas:

	Allocation £(000)	
Road Markings	0.100m	Funding only allows road marking's classified as a "priority" to be addressed
Safety Fence Repair.	0.100m	This funding will supplement the revenue budget to maintain the integrity of Safety fences located in the central reservation of high-speed roads.
Street Furniture.	0.200m	Street Furniture refers to items installed on roads or pavement to help keep drivers, cyclists and pedestrians safe. This funding will address the most serious and potentially dangerous defects.

5. Community Impact Assessment

The Community Impact Assessment identified the following key implications

- 5.1 The programme is designed to provide safe access to all road users and specifically caters for vulnerable road users.
- 5.2 The CIA found that the programme will deliver a broadly positive benefit. At present, no adverse impacts are expected to result from the programme.

6 Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 The Funding awards are targeted to specific areas and therefore the degree of flexibility in the use of the allocation is restrictive. Given financial allocations fail to meet the Borough's substantial asset base requirements there is a need to have a robust and evidence method of identifying and prioritising need. The continued development of the Highway Asset Management Plan will be used to inform priorities in the Business Planning process and will support the continuous improvement of our highway asset managed by capturing the outcome of using the optimum treatment or interventions and the whole life cycle of different asset groups.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Cabinet is recommended to accept a series of measures within its overall budget of 2020/21 and identified in the report to undertake its asset management function in respect of Highway assets and encourage cycling / walking. More specifically, to support recovery from COVID-19 restrictions. The effective maintenance and improvement of the local highway network will support and strengthen the opportunities for growth within the Borough and the City Region.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 The capital grant requires approval from the Council's S151 Officer and will require that a grant agreement be put in place due to the short timescales for delivery the Combined

authority have chosen to make the allocation and approve spend whilst the legal agreements are being finalised.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

What are the implications for the following areas identified from the CIA?

8.2.1 Social Value - How does the proposal support employing local people, spending in the local economy, and local procurement?

8.2.1.1 Full details can be found in the Community impact assessment. Most contractors on the Council framework contract are local to the City region and employ a local workforce.

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment - How does the proposal impact on sustainability and the environment?

8.2.2.1 The programme includes significant investment into cycling and walking provision in order to help residents and businesses in the transition from car borne journeys to a more carbon neutral approach. Materials used in the construction and maintenance of road will where possible be recycled materials.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing - How does the proposal support and promote public health and wellbeing?

8.2.3.1 The programme includes significant investment into cycling and walking provision in order to help residents and businesses make healthier lifestyle choices. Less cars also helps the Council to address air quality issues experienced in parts of the borough.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights – What are the Equality and Human Rights implications? If there is an adverse impact what mitigation has been put in place?

8.2.4.1 Officers will ensure that the Council adheres to Government guidance to make provision for people with physical disabilities, such as crossing points and reducing street clutter.

8.3 Customers and Resident - What are the implications for our customers/residents?

8.3.1 Residents and businesses in locations that will be disturbed by works to the highways will be kept informed of the start and end dates and will be provided with a contact number in case of any emergency. We utilise Customer feedback and calls for service as part of the Highway Asset Management Plan to define the programme using technology to evaluate the success of programmes and this will be fed back to customers in time.

8.4 Asset and Property - What are the issues? Does the report propose and reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?

8.4.1 The Council, as the Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to maintain the highway network in a condition to enable the safe passage of the travelling public. The borough's highway network comprises many diverse assets. It is therefore essential that we continue to develop the existing Highway Asset Management Plan and to invest in the maintenance and development of this important asset. This report provides resources to enable the Council to undertake its physical asset management function.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource - What are the workforce implications? Have Senior HR Officers been consulted?

8.5.1 To deliver the capital and revenue projects associated with the financial allocations within this report will require enough human resource within the Engineering service. The majority of the programme will be delivered in-house with the assistance of external consultancy support when required.

8.6 Risks - What are the issues? How are we mitigating them?

8.6.1 The programmes will necessitate works being carried out on the live highway and contractors must comply with Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual. Contractors will be required to develop a Health and Safety Plan and the contractors' method statements for the construction of the works will be examined.

8.6.2 The proposed works will help to limit the Council's risk from claims relating to highways.

8.6.3 The 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' code implemented in October 2018 supersedes the previous codes "Well-maintained Highways, Well-lit Highways" and "Management of Highway Structures". Changing from the reliance on specific guidance and recommendation in the previous codes to a risk-based approach will involve appropriate analysis, development and gaining approval through the Authority's executive process. Officers will adhere to the Borough's Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspections and we will collaborate with our insurance provider, Liverpool City Region and neighbouring Highway Authorities in determining levels of service.

8.6.4 Risk of failing to expend the funding in the required timescales has been included in the Risk Register. Any risk of challenge is considered to be low due to the national context and the desire of the Council to support the delivery of walking and cycling and the enhancement of the highway network. There are considered greater risks associated with delaying the delivery of the measures set out in this report, and which need to be delivered quickly to support the sustainable recovery from COVID-19 restrictions for the reasons cited.

8.7 Finance - What are the financial implications – Revenue and Capital? VAT and Insurance? Contract and Procurement? Have the relevant Finance and /or Procurement Officers confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

8.7.1 The allocations of Structural Maintenance and Integrated Transport block funding are detailed within this report. The revenue implications are as the budget provision made at Cabinet on 26 February 2020 and approved by council.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications Are the recommendations within this report in line with existing council policies? If not, how is this to be addressed?

8.8.1 Recommendations within this report in line with existing council policies

9. Background papers

9.1 None.

10. Appendices

10.1 None.