

Report to Cabinet

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| Title: | Highways Capital Schemes Development |
| Date: | 23 October 2017 |
| Date can be implemented: | 31 October 2017 |
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| Local members affected: | ALL |
| Portfolio areas affected: | Transportation |

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process is used to set the capital maintenance budgets and targets over a four year period. For each asset, potential schemes are assessed against a range of criteria and the prioritisation process described in this report determines which specific schemes are delivered for the available budget each year to achieve the County Council's objectives whilst providing the best value for money. Member's involvement is ensured through annual meetings and the inclusion of Member priorities wherever possible for locally important assets

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to

- **Note the approach set out in this report to be used to develop the Capital Maintenance Programme to create forward programmes of schemes for all of the County's key highway assets over a 4-year rolling period and that the Cabinet Member signs off the approach and the resulting annual capital programmes.**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

- 1 Buckinghamshire County Council's highway infrastructure one of its most valuable asset, valued at £4.6bn. It provides a transport network for both businesses and private users and is critical in supporting the three main aims of the County Council's Strategic Plan. TfB's Capital Maintenance Programme (CMP) has been targeted at the County's carriageways and is in its seventh year after it was identified that substantial investment in Buckinghamshire's roads was urgently required.
- 2 Since 2011, well in excess of £100M has been invested to improve, maintain, and prolong the life and condition of the Buckinghamshire carriageways,. The work identified to take place in 2017/18 forms part of a 4-year rolling programme with an additional £44m of the County's budget to be invested on the road network between April 2018 and March 2022.
- 3 There has been a steady improvement in the condition of the County's carriageways as a result of this increased investment. The County's main roads are now in a comparable condition to our neighbours although there is still a significant backlog of potential and worthwhile schemes. Over the same period, BCC's other key assets – Footways, Structures, Street Lighting and Traffic Signals – have either been held at their existing condition or have been allowed to marginally decline in a managed way.
- 4 The MTFP process is used to set the capital maintenance budgets over a four year, medium term. The discussion is informed by data-led life cycle planning for all the key asset groups. An MTFP with a large amount of certainty allows for the development of a more effective CMP as it provides a greater opportunity for efficiencies and to better manage public and member expectations.
- 5 The County has adopted a Highway Network Maintenance Hierarchy assigning each road into a category as outlined in the table below. The County considers the lowest Hierarchy 4b as "Local Roads" and the remainder as "Strategic Roads".

| Hierarchy Category | Hierarchy Name | General Description |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 2 | Strategic Route | Most heavily trafficked A roads |
| 3a | Main Distributor | Other heavily trafficked A and other roads |
| 3b | Secondary Distributor | Lightly trafficked A roads, most B roads, heavily trafficked C roads and traffic-sensitive bus routes |
| 4a | Local Interconnecting Link Road | Most Other C roads and non-traffic sensitive bus routes |
| 4b | Local Access Road | Roads providing local access |

Strategic Roads

- 6 CMP schemes on the Strategic Network are prioritised using multi-criteria analysis that considers each scheme's contribution to achieving asset management objectives. The prioritisation criteria are used to develop a Value for Money ranking for each scheme. Therefore, the contribution each scheme or collections of schemes make in achieving those objectives and addressing performance gaps determines their priorities. The Asset Management (AM) objectives are:
- AMO1 Maintain a Safe Network
 - AMO2 Manage Highways Effectively and Efficiently
 - AMO3 Maximise Network Availability
 - AMO4 Optimise the use of and Protect the Availability of Natural Resources
 - AMO5 Improve Accessibility for All
- 7 These objectives are best met through a balanced strategy including preventative and replacement treatments. The criteria are used to create scheme priorities by assigning points depending on the schemes fulfilment of the criteria. The following criteria are used:
- Condition
 - Hierarchy
 - Occurrence of Potholes
 - Occurrence of Complaints
 - Occurrence of Insurance Claims
 - Conservation Areas
 - Flooding Areas
 - Skidding Data
- 8 In addition to the prioritisation criteria above, a value for money assessment takes account of the cost of the allocated treatment and the anticipated life of the treatment using the following formula.

$$\text{Value for Money Score: } \frac{\text{Total Points} \times \text{Scheme Area} \times \text{Treatment Life}}{\text{Scheme Cost}} = \text{VfM}$$

- 9 The Value for Money (VfM) score prioritises those schemes that best address the criteria with a treatment that lasts the longest for the lowest cost. This assessment has been developed by the Asset Management Team in line with guidance from the Department for Transport to include value for money in prioritising schemes. This is the definition of value for money used to prioritise schemes on TfB's strategic network.

Local Roads

- 10 For Local Roads that do not have a strategic role (Hierarchy 4b Local Access Roads), the County Council follows its "Think Councillor" approach. Members attend an annual meeting to consider the future programme in their Division. Members have each created a prioritised list of local schemes for their Division in consultation with their Local Area Technicians (LATs) and based on advice and information from the Asset Team
- 11 In order to maintain reasonable equitability for local roads, expenditure in each division will be monitored over the period of the rolling programme and compared to the road length and relative condition. Schemes will be added and removed in each division to maintain equitability over time.

Footways

- 12 In the last five years, the majority of schemes have been prioritised in conjunction with Local Members. The prioritisation of capital maintenance footway schemes in Buckinghamshire now mirrors the carriageway approach. Busier footways are prioritised using condition and other data whilst the local footways are Members' choices with advice and information provided to aid prioritisation.
- 13 Busier footways will be prioritised based on:
- Condition
 - Hierarchy
 - Occurrence of Potholes
 - Occurrence of Complaints
 - Occurrence of Insurance Claims
 - Opportunities for Collaboration
 - Scale and Value for Money
 - Opportunities to improve access for the mobility impaired
- 14 In a similar manner to local carriageway schemes, in order to maintain reasonable equitability, Local Footways expenditure in each division will be monitored over the period of the rolling programme and compared to the road length and relative condition. Schemes will be added and removed in each division to maintain equitability over time.
- 15 The categorisation of footways within the hierarchy is being reviewed and Members and Local Area Technicians will be consulted on the hierarchy over the winter of 2017.

Structures

- 16 Highway Structures in Buckinghamshire receive regular condition inspections. The inspections record the condition of each structure and are used to identify potential works and treatments for those structures in the worst condition. The impact of these works on the improvement of condition is compared to the cost of the work to give a consideration to value for money. The schemes that offer good value money are then taken forward for further consideration.
- 17 Schemes are then prioritised according to the considerations seen in the bullet points below. The schemes which address most of these considerations, or are deemed to have the largest impact, gain the highest priority. A programme is developed and costed for the highest priority schemes in accordance with the available capital budget. Schemes are prioritised based on;
- Safety
 - Hierarchy
 - Heritage
 - Presence of Utilities
 - Maintenance History
 - Long Term Condition
 - Potential impact of closure
 - Flooding
 - Environmental impact
 - Impact on Stakeholder
 - Accessibility
 - Innovations and Modernisation

Street Lighting

- 18 TFB tests a proportion of its street lights each year to assess their condition. Each column is then placed into the following condition bands:
- Red – Columns that are to be cut down imminently
 - High Amber – Columns with Advanced Corrosion at their base
 - Low Amber – Columns with Slight Corrosion at their Base
 - Green – Columns that are in Good Condition
- 19 Column replacements are prioritised on a worst first basis, i.e. the 'Red' and 'High Amber' Condition Bands. These columns are subject to the highest political and safety pressures. A proportion of the capital budget is also allocated to other activities such as updating lanterns to modern LED and replacing underground cabling and electrical feeder pillars. This is also allocated on a risk basis.

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

- 20 Our ITS assets are primarily traffic signal sites, but allowance is also made for other related assets such as car park signing, rising bollards etc.
- 21 Prioritisation of schemes involves a multi-criteria analysis with ITS sites being allocated points based upon meeting certain criteria. The delivery of schemes is often linked to external factors such as local development or strategic improvements. The delivery year for schemes therefore includes consideration of these factors and opportunities for collaborative working. The criteria considered are:
- Condition
 - Hierarchy
 - Age
 - Fault History
 - Power supply
 - Other Stakeholders

Programming and Budgeting

- 22 Each prioritised scheme is visited on site and assessed to review treatment type and extent of the scheme. Any changes due to this assessment are analysed and the scheme checked that it still provides good value for money. Schemes are then designed and target prices prepared.
- 23 Schemes are placed into their indicative delivery year based on the MTFP budget in priority order and to deliver the work output approved in the MTFP. Finally, the Cabinet Member is consulted on the recommended programme prior to his approval each year of both the indicative rolling programme and the detailed programme for the year..
- 24 The MTFP process allocates budget to each area. The prioritisation process described in this report determines which schemes are delivered for the available budget and is generally applicable regardless of the budget allocated.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

- 25 The approach described in this report is already in operation. It is in line with DfT guidelines and if not used may jeopardise future grant funding levels if it meant that we did not achieve the highest banding in the DfT Self-Assessment. However, a return to an entirely Member-driven process would provide greater opportunity for Members to direct the programme and may result in the programme being more closely aligned to local pressures.

C. Resource implications

26 This approach is already in operation and there are no specific resource implications associated with this revision.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self-Assessment

27 Value for Money is embedded in the prioritisation approach and is the primary driver of this paper.

E. Legal implications

28 There are no legal implications in revising this Policy.

F. Property implications

29 There are no property implications in revising this Policy.

G. Other implications/issues

30 There are no other implications in revising this Policy.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

31 This is a corporate issue affecting all Divisions. Member engagement is enshrined in the Communications Strategy included within the Asset Management Framework.

32 Members and their Local Area Technicians attended consultation meetings during January and February 2017. The meeting covered both the local and strategic programmes of work and included:

- Our final carriageway programme intentions for 2017
- Our 4 year rolling carriageway programme proposals based on technical data and previous discussions.
- Our Network Hierarchy – finalising which roads are “Local” and which are “Strategic”
- Any Specific concerns/additions/removals.
- Refresh of local priorities with addition of local roads in the division to the end of the rolling programme.
- Identification of footway priority schemes for the development of a rolling programme.

These meeting will be held each year and future discussions will be extended to include the other assets discussed above. Additional attention will be paid to meetings with new members to ensure that they have sufficient awareness of the process and time to explore the priorities for their division.

33 The results of these consultations have been used to finalise the programme, which has been communicated internally to allow for better planning and collaboration, but will not be published formally in order to manage public and stakeholder expectations. Meetings will be held each year to review and refresh the programmes.

I. Communication issues

- 34 A Communications Strategy ensures relevant information is provided to key stakeholders to inform them of current programmes. The 4-year programme will be utilised internally to promote better collaborative working and better responses to public enquiries allowing us to give an indication of when schemes are likely to be delivered, thereby improving customer satisfaction and awareness. The way schemes are prioritised would be communicated as part of our communication strategy.

J. Progress Monitoring

- 35 Progress in pursuing the implementation of the Policy and associated Strategy will be monitored by providing updates to the Asset Strategy Board and separately to TfB's Operations Board. In addition, regular Asset Management Boards take place which include the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Resources, Deputy Cabinet Member and Head of Service. These meetings guide activities addressing individual areas of interest or concern.

K. Review

- 36 The asset management team will continually review the criteria used in the prioritisation methodology together with their relative weightings, to ensure schemes are ranked to provide optimum value for money. As more data becomes available through TfB's asset management information system (Confirm) the prioritisation methodology will undergo further review and amendment. The asset team will implement a process of continuous improvement to ensure the capital maintenance programme is invested in a way that provides the best outcome from the authority.
- 37 The Process set out in this report is embedded in the Highways Asset Management Strategy and would be reviewed as that document is reviewed. An updated strategy is due for approval later in October 2017 and would be revised about every two years or should circumstances change which necessitate an update.

Background Papers

None

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 20 October 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk