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| Subject: | Highways Investment Programme |
| Reason for briefing note: | To update the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the process which supports the annual Cabinet report on highways investment |
| Responsible officer(s): | Ben Smith - Head of Commissioning Infrastructure Vikki Roberts – Contract Lead |
| Senior leader sponsor: | Hilary Hall - Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning |
| Date: | 2 nd November 2020 |

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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Royal Borough is the 'Highway Authority' with responsibility for the maintenance of highway assets. These assets include; carriageways, footways, bridges, public rights of ways, highway verges, ditches and drainage, street lighting, traffic signals, signs and street furniture (Appendix A refers). The carriageway and footway assets are the most valuable asset which are valued at approx. £1.2 billion.
- 1.2 The adopted Highway Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) and the Highway Maintenance Management Plan (HMMP), sets out the highway authorities' approach to asset management and how work is prioritised; in turn, seeking the best value from our financial investment.
- 1.3 The primary reason for adopting an 'asset management' approach is to promote a business focus to highway maintenance. It makes best use of limited resources and delivers efficient and effective highway maintenance. It takes a long-term view of how highways are managed, focusing on outcomes by ensuring that funds are spent on activities that prevent expensive short-term repairs. This makes the best use of public money whilst minimising risk.
- 1.4 The Royal Borough receives Local Transport Plan grant funding each year from central government for highway maintenance and transport schemes. In 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) separated the annual road maintenance block funding into two elements: (i) a fixed sum and (ii) an incentive fund. The Incentive Fund scheme was introduced to reward councils who demonstrate they are delivering value for money in carrying out cost effective improvements using good asset management practices.
- 1.5 Every year each local highway authorities in England (excluding London) are invited to complete a self-assessment questionnaire, in order to establish the share of the Incentive fund they will be eligible for. There are questions based around, asset management, resilience, customer and operational delivery. Each question is scored from 1 -3 (band 1 being the lowest, band 3 being the highest). Since April 2018 the Royal Borough has been awarded Band 3 status, which has secured the maximum level of funding available. Achievement of band 3 status is largely based on the robust asset management approach which is in place - had

we not achieved band 3 status funding for 2020/21 would have reduced by £110,000.

1.6 In addition to the asset-based approach, the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) offers high-level transport policy for the Royal Borough setting out how we will improve transport between 2012 and 2026. The plan aims to:

- *improve access to local services and facilities*
- *improve road safety and personal security*
- *support economic growth*
- *improve quality of life and minimise the negative impacts of transport*
- *tackle climate change*
- *Improve air quality*
- *improve bus journeys and times*
- *improve the quality of our road networks*

2. CAPITAL INVESTMENT

2.1 As part of the budget process each year, Cabinet and Council consider and adopt a capital investment programme which spans the breadth of services delivered across the Royal Borough. Levels of investment are driven by strategic aims, objectives and targets; business cases; adopted policy and affordability.

2.2 Following approval of the headline capital investment programme, a report is considered by Cabinet which recommends endorsement of the individual works programmes which have been objectively developed underpinned by technical assessment which drives prioritisation and funding allocation.

3. WORKS PROGRAMME PRIORTISATION

3.1 A summary of key factors in developing detailed works programmes for each headline budget is set out below:

Roads resurfacing

The annual resurfacing programme is developed based on technical assessment data collected through annual* SCRIM and SCANNER surveys. SCRIM surveys assess skid resistance while SCANNER data relates to surface condition (including profile, rutting and cracking).

(*Note: annual surveys are carried out on all A, B and C roads)

In addition, all streets are subject to a visual inspection on a set frequency dependent on road category. If any safety defects are recorded, a works order is raised and actioned. If the street regularly needs attention from core revenue, maintenance budgets, the Inspector may request that it is considered for more significant patching or resurfacing.

These assessments inform the annual programme of roads and the type of treatment that is required, either to try to prolong their life or where the road is beyond preventative measures, reconstruction or resurfacing.

Footway Programme

Footways form a vital link for pedestrian access, and it is essential that they are maintained in a safe condition. There are number of footways beyond their design life and require refurbishment to maintain the highway asset in an acceptable condition; protect residents; remove barriers to access and minimise financial risk through insurance claims. The programme also makes provision for providing disabled crossing points where appropriate and will help to enhance the visual appearance of the environment benefiting residents, pedestrian, and people with disabilities.

The works programme is prioritised based on visual walked inspections. Similarly, to roads, if the street regularly needs attention from core revenue, maintenance budgets, the Inspector may request that it is considered for more significant works.

Traffic Management schemes

On-going programme of measures to deliver the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. Schemes include areas identified as local concerns through petitions; priorities identified through ward members and from residents which are objectively assessed by our specialist traffic and road safety team. Schemes include the review of speed limits, speed management measures, new pedestrian crossings, junction capacity and operational improvements.

Local Safety schemes

This programme seeks to improve road safety and reduce the number of personal injuries as a result of road crashes. Road crash data is analysed by road safety specialists to identify prioritised sites which will deliver the highest impact.

Drainage Schemes

As Highway Authority we have a statutory duty to prevent flooding to property and the highway network such that it will not cause injury or loss of life or damage to adjacent properties. The programme target schemes that have been prioritised in order of their severity, impact and risk to the Council and users of the highway network. It also tackles minor improvement schemes that benefit communities.

Reduction in congestion and air quality

The programme incorporates several different initiatives to help reduce congestion and improve air quality. Measures include improvements to traffic signal-controlled junction to increase traffic flows; junction redesign which may remove traffic signals and upgrades to reduce energy consumption (for example: LED traffic signal heads) to help towards energy and carbon reduction. Schemes are prioritised by our specialist team.

Cycle schemes.

Cabinet adopted a 'Cycle Action Plan' (2018 – 2028) which includes: Guiding Principles; Vision, Aims and Objectives and an Action Plan which drives priorities for this programme.

Bridge Strengthening and parapet improvements.

A technical inspection regime is in place in line with adopted codes of practice for all bridges; highway structures and parapets. The programme tackles minor strengthening repairs and improvements which have been highlighted from general, principal and special inspections. A risk-based approach is adopted, and schemes are selected in priority order.

For schemes which exceed general levels of capital investment, (for example: repairs to Elizabeth Bridge (Royal Windsor Way) and Cookham Bridge) individual capital bids and supporting business cases are developed and considered.

APPENDIX A: ASSET SUMMARY

| Asset | Approximate Volumes |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Roads | 658km |
| Footways | 800km |
| Bridges / Structures | 300 |
| Street Lighting and electrical | 17,000 |
| Traffic Signals | 57 |
| Road drains | 26,000 |
| Public rights of way | 300km |
| Highway trees | 40,000 |