

<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet member Infrastructure and transport</b>
<b>Decision date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 6 August 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Capital Investment in Infrastructure 2020/21 Public Realm Annual Plan:</b>  <b>£2m investment in C and U Roads</b>  <b>£2m investment in infrastructure assets</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Engineering manager</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To authorise spend / investment in the highway asset and infrastructure following resolution at council meeting 14 February 2020 to allocate £2m from Hereford Transport Package to repair and maintain C and U roads in 2020/21.

To authorise spend of Investment in Infrastructure budget £2m in 2020/21 from capital programme to deliver improvements to the infrastructure assets set out within this report to improve resilience and safety of the highway network.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) £2m to be spent in 2020/21 on the U and C road network following resolution at meeting of the Council held on 14 February, 2020. The proposed delivery programme, following assessment/survey of the whole network, will be confirmed in a further cabinet member report: and
- (b) £2m investment in infrastructure capital programme budget is invested and spent as set out below:
  - a. £380k Drainage works in Lea Flood Alleviation Scheme
  - b. £300k Drainage investment in capital schemes to alleviate public realm flood sites and damaged / broken assets.
  - c. £20k Improve signage at gauge boards at known flooding areas and diversion routes such as A438 Letton.
  - d. £300k Investment in structures.
  - e. £500k Highway safety scheme.
  - f. £100k Invest in the Public Rights of Way damaged infrastructure resulting in closed networks.
  - g. £100k Playground investments.
  - h. £100k Footpath Improvements.
  - i. £200k Winter Fleet investment.

## Alternative options

1. Not to invest £2m in Infrastructure assets and/or not to invest £2m in repairing C and U roads. This option is not recommended as be contrary to the council resolutions on 14 February 2020.

## key considerations

2. The proposed investment as set out in the report will improve the condition of the network, improve highway safety and minimises the risk on the network which supports the council's county plan and ambition for Herefordshire:
  - Environment: protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live.
  - Community: strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together.
  - Economy: Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources.
3. The Council meeting held on Friday 14 2020, item 42 of the minutes, resolved that the proposed capital programme for 2020/21 would be amended to re-allocate £2m for the Hereford Transport Package and be used to repair and maintain the U and C roads network. At this meeting council also approved the capital programme budget of £2m investment in highway infrastructure and assets. (The investment is set out in Appendix A)

4. This funding aims to provide sustained investment, support an ongoing programme of works of targeted investment in the asset and supports the councils highway asset management strategy which sets out 5 key components of which sustained investment is key:
  - Major investment £20m invested in 2014/15 and 2015/16 to fix roads in the greatest need for repair.
  - Sustained investment over the whole life of the highway asset.
  - Reduce the need for reactive temporary pothole repairs.
  - Shift our routine resources further towards preventative activities
  - Provide the support that enables routine maintenance work to be delivered locally
5. There are 2 key elements of the investment:
  - £2m investment in C and unclassified road network in Herefordshire following resolution at council meeting 14 February 2020 and;
  - £2m 2020/21 budget investment in the highway asset infrastructure as set out in the capital programme approved at the council meeting on 14 February 2020.
6. The highway asset should provide a network that facilitates the efficient and safe movement of people and goods whilst protecting the quality of life within the communities. The investment will be used to address some of the deterioration and risk concerns in the public realm network.
7. Optimal asset management will enable the asset to be maintained with regard to the most efficient whole life cost with the lowest possible carbon footprint due to minimal maintenance resulting in an efficient and safe infrastructure. The additional investment will be directed to areas identified in this report; lifecycle planning will be integral to ensuring value for money taking into account the whole life and performance of the asset.
8. The investment is in the public realm, as such the council will commission these works through the public realm contract with BBLP, which was put in place through a competitively tendered process and the council will ensure its duty to secure best value is met through scrutiny of the cost and quality of the works commissioned with these funds.
9. The two projects are capital investments and as such, will be allocated unique budget codes that will be used for monitoring and reporting by the corporate project management team alongside the annual plan management process.
10. Investing the £2m in the C and Unclassified roads, resolved at the 14 February 2020 council meeting, will be prioritised on known data held within the asset management team. The data will be cross referenced in year surveys producing a map-based interface to identify areas of repair. The new survey data will be gathered to provide intelligence on the current condition and enable the outcome performance to be measured. Where drainage problems exist in areas identified for investment, the defects will be corrected at the time of the works. The project, as set out in the Asset Management Plan will be subject to whole life cycle planning to ensure the investment will provide the desired outcome, value for money and best use of resources and materials available.

11. The £2m highway asset and infrastructure project is the amalgamation of capital projects which were identified and submitted as part of the capital programme for 2020/21. This was considered and approved at the council meeting held on the 14 February 2020. This investment is aimed at ensuring public places are safe and resilient to the impact of weather and climate.
12. The investment in infrastructure will continue sustained investment and support ongoing programme of works targeting areas of the asset to manage and minimise decline before larger more costly repairs are required. The draft county plan was set out in appendix A of the cabinet meeting and identified the key areas of investment which apportioned funds to invest in areas which were subject to initial bids such as investment in drainage, network safety, public rights of way, structures, play grounds and winter service fleet (Gritters).
  - The drainage works will support delivery of the Lea Flood Alleviation scheme, improve flood signage and provide gauge boards for Letton and address drainage problems county wide.
  - Network Safety will deliver a project at Old Gore crossroads, junction of the A449/B4224. This is a rural crossroads which has been subject of a number of low cost measures over the previous 20 years, The impact of the schemes are limited, the delivery of a significant scheme is aimed to address the safety concerns, this will be the introduction of traffic lights to provide a positive method of control. The aim of the scheme is to reduce casualties in this location.
  - Public Rights of Way have a number of routes closed due to bridge damage, there is a need to maintain the highway routes and to keep open. The investment will not address all the sites but will address the key higher priority routes. Since the report was prepared more sites have been identified, this is due to the flood events.
  - Structures have been identified as requiring investment to support the annual plan works and manage the risk on the highway network. The bridges, safety barriers and embankments have been subject to supporting surveys pre and post flooding. The programme of works is under review due to additional information which will allow reprioritisation. At the time of the report to council in February 2020, the areas for investment identified were:
    - i. A449 Biddulph Way
    - ii. A438 Russian Cottage
    - iii. B4224 How Caple
    - iv. Bredwardine Bridge.

Due to the recent flood events, this list may change, the programme will be provided using the most recent available information.

- Playgrounds are subject to routine inspections and maintenance ensuring that they remain safe and usable. The sites are becoming difficult to maintain and as such at risk of closure. The proposed funding will address some of the concerns, specifically the surfacing element.
- The condition of the county's footways and cycleways have been gradually deteriorating as a result of pressures across the wider highways asset. There is a list of schemes where the deterioration of these routes has reached a point where interventions are

needed. Improvement of these assets to ensure that they function as an enabler for modal shift between car usages to active travel measures. The routes identified are either safer routes to school or key links to other important services such as hospitals and transport links or to employment areas.

- The Winter Fleet Strategy has been prepared to ensure the fleet is:
  - i. Sufficient and reliable to enable the routes to be completed for the season.
  - ii. Efficient, economical, environmentally friendly and resilient.
- The council operate 17 gritting vehicles, there is a programme of investment which will replace vehicles on a needs basis and invest in refurbishment where possible which will extend the life which will ensure a fit for purpose fleet for the winter service. The allocated fund will be used to provide the investment required for 2020/21.

13. The council will commission these works through the public realm contract with BBLP, which was put in place through a competitively tendered process and the council will ensure its duty to secure best value is met through scrutiny of the cost and quality of the works commissioned with these funds.

## **Community impact**

14. The investment contributes to the county plan ambitions by protecting the environment, safe communities and providing infrastructure that supports our economy. The investment will ensure the network is resilient to the extremes of weather and ensuring the safety and availability of the infrastructure for our public and users of Herefordshire's highway network.
15. In preparing this part of the capital investment for 2020/21, the service put forward areas of concern and pressures in the service which need to be addressed, without the investment, the deterioration in the network would increase adding further pressures and change in condition in the forthcoming years which would impact on the safety and enjoyment of the public realm network.

## **.Equality duty**

16. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

17. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our service providers Balfour beatty living places are aware of their contractual

requirements in regards to equality legislation. This decision will have no negative impact on the council or BBLP's compliance with this duty.

## Resource implications

18. The combined total of these allocations (£4million in total) will be delivered through the Public Realm Contract 2020/21 annual plan. This will enable the appropriate resources including, project management, design, supervision and delivery to be allocated and for the project to be managed appropriately ensuring best value.
19. Unique budget codes will be allocated and assigned to the corporate project management team to monitor and report to the capital programme. Both projects were approved at Council in February 2020 to be funded from corporate borrowing.
20. There are no implications to revenue funding, however, capital investment should ease the revenue budget in reducing the need to carry out additional repairs over the whole life of the asset.

Capital cost of project	2020/21	Total
	£000	£000
<i>Investment in Infrastructure Assets</i>	2,000	2,000
<i>Investment in C &amp; U Roads</i>	2,000	2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2020/21	Total
	£000	£000
<i>Corporate Funded Borrowing</i>	4,000	4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>4,000</b>

## Legal implications

21. The council has significant responsibilities under the Highways Act 1980 and other related legislation to ensure that the highways and the public realm more generally is maintained. This additional investment assists the council in demonstrating that it has met its legal obligations.
22. The council will commission these works through the public realm contract with BBLP, which was put in place through a competitively tendered process and the council will ensure its duty to secure best value is met through scrutiny of the cost and quality of the works commissioned with these funds.

## **.Risk management**

23. The sustained investment will reduce the overall risk in highway safety, investing in key elements of the asset and winter service that address some of the challenges in the network. The maintenance backlog for carriageways alone is set at £87.77 million, whilst this is significant, the investment is part of the continued sustained investment over the whole life of the highway asset with an ongoing programme of works that is targeted at treating roads as they are showing signs of deterioration, fixing roads before they need larger, more costly repairs.
24. The £2million capital investment programme and the additional £2million investment in C and U roads was approved at full Council on the 14 February 2020 ensuring funding is available for delivery of the projects.
25. Delivery of the programme is to be in year, due to the current Covid 19 situation, there is a risk that delivery will be outside the 2020/21 programme. Delivery will be managed through the public realm annual plan to manage the risk and ensure delivery in year.

## **Consultees**

26. As part of the revised consultation process for key decisions, Council members and group leaders were consulted, no comments have been received.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Capital Investment Business Case.

## **Background papers**

None identified