

MEETING:	ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 APRIL 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS - UPDATE
PORTFOLIO AREA:	HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update the Committee on current highway maintenance standards and the plans that are in place to improve the long term condition of the highway network and better satisfy the needs and desires of Herefordshire's communities in regard to roads maintenance.

Recommendation

THAT subject to any comments the Committee may wish to make the report be noted.

Key Points Summary

- An additional £4.7 Million is being invested in the highway network during the 2010/11 financial year which will enable a programme totalling £11.7million of highway maintenance to be delivered.
- This will counter the impact of this last winter on the condition of A, B and C roads, with the targeted performance remaining at the levels set in September 2009.
- As priority for investment is given to the classified road network, the action in relation to the condition of the unclassified road network will seek to ensure that it is returned to 2009 levels.
- A revised means of assessing footway condition is being introduced. This will take account of the condition of footways across the county. The previous BVPI indicator only took account of high usage footways, such as in the city and town centres.

Alternative Options

1 None.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The report provides an update on the current highway maintenance targets and action to achieve them.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The Environment Scrutiny had identified, as part of their work programme, the need for an update report on highway maintenance standards.

Key Considerations

Road Condition

- 4 The impact of the recent severe winter weather on the highway network and outline the strategy that is being adopted to returning the County's roads to an acceptable standard over the coming year was reported to this committee on the 22nd March 2010.
- 5 Prior to this winter, as part of the revised service delivery partnership arrangements with Amey Herefordshire, the Council set enhanced road condition targets. These targets were to deliver improved road condition on A roads, to a level that only 5% of this network should be considered for maintenance, only 8% of our B and C roads, to require maintenance and unclassified road network to have its overall condition stabilised at 17% by length in need maintenance.
- 6 The targets for A, B and C road condition are included in the Local Area Agreement. Attaining these national indicator targets drives funding into the County and are considered a priority.
- 7 As reported to the 22nd March meeting of this committee, the damage to the network caused by the severe winter weather was estimated as £5M. It was also reported that an additional £3.7 million had been identified from various existing Council funds to respond to this damage and enable a £10.7 million programme of highway maintenance to be delivered during the coming year. As members may be aware, in response to lobbying by the Local Government Association and Herefordshire Council direct, the Government announced additional funding for highway authorities to invest in highway maintenance as part of the recent budget announcements. As a result, Herefordshire has been allocated a further £1.0174 million which will enable a further expansion of the maintenance programme to over £11.7million. This additional funding from central government is welcomed and will enable further maintenance schemes to be delivered.
- 8 Given the circumstances set out above, it is anticipated that the performance targeted for our A, B and C roads will be attained in 2010.
- 9 As the use of the currently available funding will prioritise the classified road network, performance targets for the condition of the unclassified roads are being reviewed. The aim for the condition of unclassified roads will be based on sound asset management practice and seek to ensure that the condition does not fall below the 2009 standard of 23%.
- 10 A comprehensive programme of highway surfacing is to be delivered over the coming months and as a result of the additional funding we can expect to see 218 km (135 miles) of road treated this financial year. The breakdown of treatment types is listed

below

Surface Dressing 89 Km

Resurfacing 39 Km

Micro asphalt 13Km

Patching 77k (total length of treated carriageway)

- 11 The detailed programme of works is currently being finalised and will be circulated to all local members shortly so that they are aware of works planned within their ward. In addition, a briefing on the maintenance programme for the County is being arranged to inform all Members of how the programme will be delivered.

Footway Condition

- 12 The method of footway assessment has changed; previous methods of assessment only encompassed high priority areas (eg Town Centres). The new inspection system now covers a variety of footpath locations. The historical method of footway assessment was through a Detailed Visual Inspection (DVI): Annual survey for BVPI 187 is made up of a random sample of 50% on the class 1, 1A and 2 footways approximately 14 km in length.
- 13 The Footway Network Survey (FNS) is replacing the DVI survey: this is a walked Course Visual Inspection (CVI) type survey on all classes of footway. The FNS starts in 2010 and will cover 25% of footways annually.
- 14 In addition to the survey for BVPI 187 we have, in the past, undertaken additional CVI footway surveys: This survey covers all classes of road and footway in Hereford, the market towns and larger villages, this uses the same four categories as the FNS survey. From this we have been able to gain a better understanding of the condition of the entire footway asset. This CVI survey has been used in the recent years to produce planned footway maintenance jobs and has been steadily lowering the amount of defective footways in the county.
- 15 We are currently working to establish meaningful performance targets using the new FNS methodology, which should provide a better indication of the condition of the footways throughout the County. This in turn should enable us to target improved footway condition standards that reflect the experience of pedestrians across the county.

Conclusion

- 16 Ensuring the effective maintenance of the highway network is a priority and the standard of highway maintenance will continue to be a key target against which the delivery of Highway Services by Amey Herefordshire is monitored. Bearing in mind the challenge as a result of this winters severe weather, the additional funding and through effective joint working, the programme of highway maintenance over the coming year will return the network to an acceptable standard.

Community Impact

- 17 The highway network is a vital and highly visible community asset which supports the local economy and contributes to the character and environment of the County. The

quality and usability of our highways matters to the people of Herefordshire.

Financial Implications

18 None as a direct result of this report.

Legal Implications

19 Herefordshire Council, as the Highway Authority for all roads in the County except Trunk Roads and Motorways, has the duty to maintain the highway in line with its character and usage. This duty is set out in detail in the Highways Act 1980.

Risk Management

20 The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to maintain highways within the County and the Highway Maintenance Plan sets out the approach taken to meeting this duty. Poor road condition, can have implications for road safety, the local economy and claims against the council for damage to property. Failure to effectively maintain the network could prevent the achievement of corporate and LAA targets for road condition. The additional funding and approach to delivering a significantly expanded highway maintenance programme over the coming year seeks to mitigate these risks and return the network to an acceptable standard.

Consultees

21 None

Appendices

22 None

Background Papers

- The Environment Scrutiny report titled, 'Highway Maintenance Standards', as presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd November 2009 and available via the Council's web site.
- The Environment Scrutiny report titled, 'Winter damage to the County's Roads', as presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd March 2010 and available via the Council's web site.