



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Cabinet - 21 March 2024

Capital Allocation to Highway Infrastructure Assets 2024-25

Purpose:	To confirm the Capital Work Programme for highway infrastructure assets.
Policy Framework:	The Revenue and Capital budget as reported to and approved by Council on 6th March 2024.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The proposed indicative allocations, together with the Financial Implications set out in Appendix A , are approved and included in the Capital Programme. 2) Authority is delegated to the Head of Service for Highways and Transportation with the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure to prioritise, finalise and allocate funding to the appropriate schemes in line with the prioritisation approach detailed in this report.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. At its meeting of 6th March 2024, Council approved the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2024/25. The Capital budget included an allocation of **£3.468m** for highway and infrastructure assets.

- 1.2. It should be noted that additional Capital funding of £5m was allocated in 2022/23 (to be programmed over 3 years). This was detailed in a separate FPR7 report but the additional funding is included below and in the financial summary for completeness.
- 1.3. In addition, a further allocation of £3m was approved in 2023/24 (to be programmed over 3 years). This was detailed in a separate FPR7 report but the additional funding is also included below and in the financial summary for completeness.
- 1.4. In addition, a £441k 0% loan has been approved to fund a programme of LED upgrades. Payable over 3 years following completion. This was detailed in a separate Delegated FPR7 report but the additional funding is included below and in the financial summary for completeness.
- 1.5. In addition this report is seeking to approve a further £1m allocation for 2024-25 funded by the Capital Equalisation Reserve.

2. Capital Programme

- 2.1. The City and County of Swansea's infrastructure is in need of significant investment and there is a significant backlog of works. The Authority is continuing to develop programmes of work based on the principles agreed as part of the all-Wales Asset Management Project. This will ensure spending is targeted based on a whole life cost approach which will minimise financial and service demands. Works are centred around the 5 year forward works programme (2020-25), with each major asset having a separate published programme.
- 2.2. Funding will be split between the different asset groups based in the main on total asset values, together with factors such as liability and exceptional demand. Carriageways will receive the largest allocation due to the value but also the risk of liability for claims and reputational importance.
- 2.3. The Authority considers a variety of different methods of repair and uses assessment approaches agreed across Wales. This enables decisions on the most efficient and effective approaches for managing the network based on a mix of preventative, reactive and planned maintenance works.
- 2.4. The scheme prioritisation approach provides a framework whereby any additional funding will enable schemes in the programme to be brought forward for completion. These will be selected using the same asset management approach used to produce the forward works programme. There will be a split of approximately 60/40 between corrective work (e.g. resurfacing a road in poor condition) and preventative work (e.g. extending the life of a road in average condition). Carriageway and footway schemes will be selected based on a review of factors such as network importance, condition, network use and likely deterioration. A score for each assessed road will be calculated and the highest scoring schemes will be programmed. This prioritisation will be balanced by the need to give cost

effective packages of work of similar types (for instance, surface dressing requires a minimum quantity of work to be cost effective when considering site set up costs).

3. Overview

- 3.1. It is critical to ensure that investment in the highway network is sustained to minimise future deterioration. For carriageways there is a calculated backlog of £70m. To maintain a steady state road condition and to avoid further deterioration, an annual capital spend on carriageways of between £7m to £8m per year would be required.

4. Allocation of the £3.468m Infrastructure Allocation.

The core allocation will fund the following priorities.

- 4.1. This allocation funds the final year of the 5 year programme of carriageway works. The programme for 2020-25 and is available at <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/highways>. The programme was heavily amended due to covid restrictions in 2020. There may be minor changes to this programme during the year as schemes may have been brought forward or pushed back for example to coordinate with utility works. Currently the programme is ahead of schedule.
- 4.2. The continuation of the Small Resurfacing Scheme programme **SRS** (formerly known as PATCH programme) which is complimentary to the main carriageway resurfacing programme will continue on a ward by ward basis. The budget is under pressure due to material cost rises, with tarmac rate rising by 30% over the last two years. Additional funding has been provided in the last two years to allow an expanded programme. This will continue whilst the additional funding is in place.
- 4.3. This allocation funds the last year of the 5 year programme of footway works. The list of schemes planned is included in the published programme for 2020-25. The detail of the proposed schemes can be accessed at <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/highways>.
- 4.4. There are significant funding challenges for maintaining the bridges and structures as there are 147 bridges, 50 culverts, 14 subways and 3 gantries within highway ownership. The programme to update bridges has been prepared to reflect requirements on strategic routes and those where strengthening is required.
- 4.5. The condition of highway and council owned retaining walls continues to give cause for concern. There is a need to carry out proactive works to prevent others from failing. There are currently 4441 retaining walls on the asset register with an approximate total length of 13.5km.
- 4.6. The River Tawe barrage infrastructure requires sustained investment to ensure operations associated with Marina and other water bourne activities & industries are maintained.

- 4.7. Assessing the condition of street lighting infrastructure remains a priority and there are considerable investment pressures. A testing regime has been put in place to identify lighting columns at risk, and this resulted in a significant number of columns being removed. A large number of these columns have been replaced however there around 275 columns currently cut down testing has identified a further 2030 lighting columns that need to be considered for replacement over the next 3 years. There are also 575 lighting units switched off at the present time and a large number of jointing issues with the Authorities cable network. Grant funding has successfully been claimed in relation to replacement of historic lighting with LED's.
- 4.8. Longstanding works to reduce flooding on the highway will be implemented across the Authority. This will include specific works on several culverted watercourses. This element of the budget will also be used as match funding where Welsh Government funding streams are available.
- 4.9. An allocation has been made to deal with maintenance to Authority owned paved and surfaced areas that are in the public realm (non-Housing/Education/Facilities). This is aligned with the "corporate ownership of assets". Highways & Transportation will maintain the safety of these areas as problems are identified on a prioritised basis. This allocation also includes for providing emergency strips on a one off basis where there are life threatening emergencies on un-adopted privately maintained public highways (excluding private streets). This budget will also cover additional work on back lanes and parks.
- 4.10. A programme to undertake capital maintenance on highway safety barriers. The funding for barriers will focus on repair and renewal on a reactive/ as identified basis. The allocation has increased this year to allow for a periodic assessment of all highway safety barriers.
- 4.11. Damaged sections of the coastal defences require investment to prevent further damage and to repair ongoing damage caused by winter storms. The allocation also includes provision to investigate flood risks as identified by the Flood Risk Management Plan.
- 4.12. In the current year the Infrastructure funds will be allocated as follows:

Annual Allocation **£3.468m**

Carriageway Resurfacing	£900k
Patch	£700k
Footway Renewals	£550k
Bridges and Retaining Walls	£400k
Marina & Barrage	£50k
Street Lighting Refurbishment	£250k
Drainage/Flooding Works	£400k

Unadopted Council-Owned Streets	£33k
Car Park Resurfacing and Improvements	£30k
Safety Barriers	£80k
Coastal Defence Works and Flood Risk Management	£25k
Telematics Upgrades	£50k
Total	£3.468

5. Allocation of the additional £1m Allocation.

The Infrastructure funds will be allocated as follows:

Carriageway Resurfacing	£300k
SRS (PATCH)	£500k
Public Lighting Works	£200k
Total	£1m

6. Previous Approved funding for information only.

FPR7 22/23 Carriageway Resurfacing 2024-25	£500k
FPR7 22/23 Footway Renewals 2024-25	£200k
FPR7 22/23 Drainage/Flooding Works 2024-25	£300k
FPR7 23/24 Carriageway Resurfacing 2024-25	£1m
FPR7 23/24 Carriageway Resurfacing 2025-26	£1m
Delegated FPR7 23/25 Public Lighting LED's	£397k
Total 24/25	£2.044m
Total 25/26	£1m

7. Integrated Assessment Implications

7.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 7.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 7.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 7.2 The IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required.
- 7.3 The Capital investment in Highway and related Infrastructure will assist all road users. Individual projects will be subject to the IIA process on an individual basis where required.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. **Capital** - The cost of the Highways and Other Infrastructure works for 2024/25 funded by the WG General Capital Grant amounts to £3.468m core funding and £2.044m prior approved additional funding which includes the 24/25 profiled allocation of 44k from the £441k loan.
- 8.2. In addition, this report is seeking to approve a further £1m allocation for 2024-25 funded by the Capital Equalisation Reserve.
- 8.3. 2025/26 includes WG General Capital Grant of £3.468m core funding and £1m prior approved additional funding.
- 8.4. 2026/27 includes WG General Capital Grant of £3.468m core funding.
- 8.5. Above details are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 8.6. **Revenue** - Future maintenance expenditure will be met from respective Revenue Service budgets. An effective capital investment programme will help reduce future revenue pressures. Payback of the loan is covered in the previous Delegated FPR7 report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. This investment will assist the Authority in discharging its statutory duty to maintain the Highway. There are a number of duties imposed on the Council as a highway authority. Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a statutory duty on the highway authority to maintain the highway. Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a general statutory duty for a highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to use

and enjoy the highway. The proposed investment programme will help the Council to meet its duties. All procurement activity and contracts intended to be let in respect of the above Schemes must comply with current UK Legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A Financial Implications

Appendix B Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form