

Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy

Cabinet – 18 June 2015

FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULE 7 CAPITAL ALLOCATION TO HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

Purpose:	To confirm the Capital work programmes for highway infrastructure assets
Policy Framework:	The Revenue and Capital budget as reported to and approved by Council on 24 February 2015
Reason for Decision:	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No. 7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) – to commit and authorise schemes to improve infrastructure assets
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: - 1) Authorises that the proposed allocations, together with the Financial Implications set out in Appendix A , are approved and included in the Capital Programme.
Report Author:	Stuart Davies
Finance Officer:	Jayne James
Legal Officer:	Christopher Allingham
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At its meeting of 24 February 2015, Council approved the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2014/15. The Capital budget included an allocation of £3.28m for highway infrastructure assets.

1.2 Furthermore, an additional allocation of £1m for 2015/16 has been made from insurance reserves to deal with cost avoidance by undertaking further repairs.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 The City and County of Swansea's infrastructure is in need of significant investment. The highway capital programme has been put in place to target the worst areas, in line with the Highway Asset Management Plan and Programme 2015-2020. This will ensure spending is targeted based on a whole life cost approach which will minimise financial and service risk.

3.0 Key Proposals

- 3.1 There are significant funding challenges for maintaining the bridges as there are 157 bridges, 44 culverts, 13 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.
- 3.2 The condition of highway retaining walls continues to give cause for concern. A number of recent collapses have required intervention and have or are to be funded from the urgent infrastructure budget. However, there is a need to take proactive works to prevent others from failing. This budget will also in the future, pick up all retaining walls within Council ownership. There are currently 404 retaining walls on the asset register with an approximate total length of 13km.
- 3.3 The River Tawe barrage infrastructure requires sustained investment to ensure operations associated with Marina and other waterside activities are maintained.
- 3.4 Street lighting infrastructure is still a cause for concern. 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. The majority of these have now been replaced, but further testing will identify more columns that need to be removed and replaced.
- 3.5 There is a significant backlog of works to refurbish footways. This also remains a concern as the issue is reflected in the level of third party claims for trips and falls.
- 3.6 The programme to install dropped crossings to meet the requirements of the Equality Act will continue for the foreseeable future.
- 3.7 Longstanding works to reduce flooding on the highway will be implemented across the Authority. This will include specific works on several culverted watercourses.

Investment this year has increased by over £1m to over £4m to address the backlog of repairs required on Swansea's roads. It is critical to ensure that investment in the highway network is sustained in future years.

- 3.8 An allocation has been made to deal with un-adopted highways and infrastructure on a prioritised basis. This is aligned with the move towards a "corporate ownership of assets". Paved and surfaced areas that are not part of the adopted highway are managed by Highways & Transportation who will inspect and maintain in accordance with an overall Asset Management Plan. A sum is therefore included to allow resurfacing and improvement to these areas on a prioritised basis.

- 3.9 There is a significant amount of work required to ensure that the Baling Plant and Household waste Recycling Centres are brought into compliance with the requirements of their Environmental Permits, now that the Authority has taken over responsibility for their operation from the Swansea City Waste Disposal Company. This work was started in 2013/14, however outstanding works include further surface repairs and drainage works.
- 3.10 The condition of the cycleway network is generally satisfactory but there are sections that are nearing or past the end of their life. An allocation for cycleway surfacing work is included.
- 3.11 There is a need to replace a significant percentage of highway safety barriers, and the programme will continue this year.
- 3.12 Works are required to mitigate the impact of windblown sand along the foreshore in Swansea as there are regular clearance costs and associated problems with surface water drainage systems. There are proposals to implement trial measures to reduce the level of windblown sand. These works will be partly funded by Natural Resources Wales and partly funded by the City and County of Swansea.
- 3.13 Recent winter storms have damaged sections of the coastal defences which require investment to prevent further damage. The programme includes for investment on the coastal defences along Loughor Foreshore.

4.0 Allocation

- 4.1 In the current year the funds will be allocated as follows:

Bridges and Retaining Walls	£405k
Marina & Barrage	£65k
Street Lighting Refurbishment	£250k
Footway Renewals	£650k
Dropped Crossings	£ 20k
Drainage/Flooding Works	£375k
Carriageway Resurfacing	£2,125k
Council-Owned but Unadopted Areas/Private Streets	£ 90k
Car Park Resurfacing and Improvements	£20k
Cycleway Surfacing	£30k
Replace Safety Barrier	£40k
Baling Plant Compliance	£100k
Coastal Defence Works	£100k
Windblown sand mitigation works	£10k
TOTAL	£4,280K

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 The Capital investment in Highway and related Infrastructure will assist all road users and the inclusion of funding for dropped crossings will particularly help less mobile pedestrians and wheelchair users.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 **Capital** - The full cost of the Highways and Other Infrastructure works for 2014/15 amounts to £4.28m and will be fully funded by the Authority's own resources. Details are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 6.2 **Revenue** - Future maintenance expenditure will be met from respective Revenue Service budgets. An effective capital investment programme will help reduce future revenue pressures.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 This investment will assist the Authority in discharging its statutory duty to maintain the Public Highway. All Procurements and Contracts intended to be let in respect of the above Schemes will need to be in accordance with current UK Legislation and EU Directives as well as complying with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Background Papers: Revenue and Capital Budget approved by Council on 24th February 2015

Appendices:

Appendix A - Financial Implications