



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Cabinet – 23 March 2022

Capital Allocation to Highway Infrastructure Assets 2023-24

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 2nd March 2023.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Approves the proposed indicative allocations, together with the Financial Implications set out in Appendix A , and that these are included in the Capital Programme. 2) Delegates authority 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 2rd March 2023, Council approved the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2023/24. The Capital budget included an allocation of **£3.468m** for highway and infrastructure assets.
- 1.2 It is noted additional Capital funding of £5m was allocated in 22/23 over 3 years. This was detailed in a separate FPR7 report. The additional funding is included in the financial implication summary for completeness.

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.
- 2.2. 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. The core funding is allocated to the highway capital programme (2020-25) which was developed with these principles.
- 2.3. The scheme prioritisation approach provides a framework whereby any additional funding will enable schemes in the 5 year plan 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. Key Proposals

- 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, 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 third 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. The allocation this year has been reduced to cover the additional budget requirement of the Morfa Culvert.

- 4.2. The continuation of the PATCH programme of minor resurfacing works 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 24%.
- 4.3. This allocation funds the fourth 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>. The allocation this year has been reduced to cover the additional budget requirement of the Morfa Culvert.
- 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. A major culvert collapse is currently being repaired, this received £500k of Capital funding via a separate FPR7 report. Additional funding will be allocated within this report. The allocation this year has been reduced to cover the additional budget requirement of the Morfa Culvert.
- 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 waterside activities 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. We also have 575 lighting units switched off at the present time.
- 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. Funding will be allocated to support an existing capital budget in relation to the collapse of a major culvert at Morfa.
- 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	£600k
Patch	£700k
Footway Renewals	£550k
Bridges and Retaining Walls	£395k
Marina & Barrage	£50k
Street Lighting Refurbishment	£250k
Drainage/Flooding Works	£400k
Unadopted Council-Owned Streets	£30k
Car Park Resurfacing and Improvements	£30k
Safety Barriers	£83k
Coastal Defence Works and Flood Risk Management	£30k
Telematics Upgrades	£50k
Morfa Culvert	£300k
Total	£3.468

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.1.1. 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'.
- 5.1.2. 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.
- 5.2. 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.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. **Capital** - The cost of the Highways and Other Infrastructure works for 2023/24 funded by the WG General Capital Grant amounts to £3.468m. 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. Legal Implications

- 7.1. This investment will assist the Authority in discharging its statutory duty to maintain the Highway. 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