

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills
Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 April 2018
Subject:	Additional Highways Funding

Summary:

This report sets out the potential approach to the effective use of additional highway maintenance funding.

Actions Required:

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the existing and future programmes of work that have been identified. They are also asked to consider and comment on the detail contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and IT.

1. Background

All of our existing highway maintenance funding is focused on delivering the best outcomes for the highway user through the implementation of the Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan. Having this robust approach to the use of resources allows us to maximise the potential benefit to the road user as demonstrated by our recent CQC Efficiency Rating of 98% but it also ensures that we receive the maximum level of Incentive Funding from the Department for Transport.

The Highways Service has recently received additional funding from a variety of sources,

- £4m from the Councils own underspend/reserve which is available to spend during the duration of this Council.
- £1.7m from the Department for Transport's Pothole Fund which should be spent during the financial year 18/19.
- A further £3.3m allocated by Council in their 2018/19 Budget which is available to spend during the duration of this Council.
- A further £3.4m from the Department for Transport. £2.5m of which was already expected and was included in initial budget planning. This money should be spent during the 18/19 financial year.

At the time of writing this report, the Department for Transport had not yet confirmed our entire Capital Maintenance allocation.

There are a variety of potential uses for this additional funding which should follow the broad outline of our Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan. Programmes of work are being identified by the use of "heat maps" identifying those areas which have been the subject of customer complaints to the Customer Contact Centre.

The final agreed use of this additional funding will form the outline of the "Pothole Plan".

Suggested Treatments

Patching

The underpinning asset management strategy is to patch our roads where required as whole scale replacement or reconstruction is not always required and would be wasteful of resources. A further increase in our patching programme would reduce the number of potholes on the network and allow us to prepare roads for future surface dressing programmes.

Surface Dressing and Surface Treatments

Surface dressing or treatment of a road is the most cost effective method of maintaining our highway network. A surface dressing or treatment is much cheaper than full resurfacing or reconstruction but relies on the timely identification and treatment of sites. Our recent reorganisation into the Future Operating Model was partly designed to improve our ability to respond to this challenge. We have roads patched ready for dressing and additional funding would allow us to increase our surface dressing and treatment programmes for this year.

Thin Surface Course Replacement

Thin Surfacing was introduced as an innovation in the 90's and was used extensively in this Country as an apparent solution to the road maintenance problems at the time. Used successfully on the Continent where a denser material mix was possible due to more stringent tyre tread depth requirements. The less stringent requirements in this country led to the removal of fines from the material mix to increase texture and therefore skid resistance. Unfortunately this lack of fines means that as the bitumen in the mix ages its ability to bind the aggregate together is reduced and these materials are prone to catastrophic failure resulting in the sudden appearance of potholes. Lincolnshire had a legacy of thin surfacing as it was used extensively on the ex-Trunk Road network prior to their return to local authority control. We have had a long running programme to replace this material but additional funding offers an opportunity to accelerate this programme. Work is ongoing to identify further potential sites for replacement by correlating data from pothole complaints to the Customer Service Centre.

Residential Streets

Lincolnshire has a number of residential streets which were constructed during the 1970'S and 80's building boom to a less stringent specification than current estate

roads. These are the roads that many people start and finish their journeys on and many are beginning to fail with evidence of potholes and structural failure. These roads were often built as estates of several roads which are all likely to fail at about the same time. One proposal is to begin a programme of reconstruction of these estates by removing the failed material and replacing it with an increased depth of bituminous material to ensure a longer construction life. Efficiencies can be gained by procuring this work in concentrated pockets of work and by the complete reconstruction of the roads.

Some of these roads were constructed of concrete which will require a slightly different treatment which includes the removal and replacement of the bituminous surface and the introduction of an enhanced joint between the concrete bays. The concrete is left in place but movement between the bays is catered for by the introduction of the new joints.

Recycling Schemes

Road maintenance operations in the County generate a substantial amount of construction waste, mainly road planings. Much of this is inert but a proportion is identified as containing tar which some consider to be potentially carcinogenic. Tar has not been used in road for over 30 years but remains as a residual constituent of historic road construction. When identified, the Environment Agency insists that it is treated as controlled waste which can result in disposal costs of anything up to £120/ton. Our current disposal option is to a local operator with reduced disposal costs but this operator is currently the subject of ongoing discussions about compliance with planning conditions for the operation. This Council has developed a recycling strategy with licensed holding depots at three sites in the County. Tar bound planings can then be incorporated into recycled road surfacing material which is produced under carefully controlled conditions. We currently have around 12,000 tons of material in stockpiles which will need to be incorporated into recycled material. A number of schemes have been identified and are currently being designed to incorporate this material.

Retread

The Council has been treating a number of its minor roads with a programme of "Retread" for some years. This involves the removal of the entire road surface which is then mixed with additional material and binder before being re-laid. The finished surface is then treated with either a surface dressing or new surface course. We already have a proposed programme of "Retread" for this year but this could be increased with the use of additional resources. This process has the added benefit of using recycled material from our stockpiles

Road Markings

Our road marking programmes have been reduced over recent years as a response to the revenue funding position. We have continued to maximise the efficiency of our operation by combining renewal programmes with other works such as surface dressing. Additional funding offers the opportunity to increase our road marking renewal programme which should provide road safety benefits and the potential to improve the public perception of our highways service.

First Time Fix Pothole Gangs

The Council already operates a number of gangs to fully cut out and repair potholes. These either operate with the use of mobile hot boxes or with material collected from batching plants. The chosen operating method depends on the gang's proximity to a batching plant with the most efficient method being used. Our standard resource consists of 2 Hot Box Gangs, 3 First Time Fix Pothole Gangs, 15 Mobile Maintenance Teams, 4 Incident Response Vehicles and 2 Roadmarking Gangs. The Council is already operating with 3 additional first time fix gangs this year as a response to the damage caused by this year's winter. Additional resources would allow us to explore the use of static hot boxes in some depots, increase the number of Hot Box Gangs from 2 to 6 and to bring in 4 extra Mobile Maintenance Teams during winter when we historically have an increase in pothole numbers.

2. Conclusion

Additional highway funding is welcome and will help us to respond to scale of the damage to the network caused by the severe winter.

Work has already been undertaken to develop options for the effective use of this additional resource and includes,

- An additional programme of pre-surface dressing patching
- Additional surface dressing for this season 18/19
- A programme of reconstruction of residential streets
- A programme of works to small/medium scale patching sites
- An additional programme of "Retread" sites

Further work is ongoing to identify the following,

- A programme of additional patching
- A programme of thin surfacing replacement schemes
- A further programme of work to residential streets including concrete roads
- A series of schemes utilising recycling techniques
- A programme of roadmarking replacement
- Additional First Time Fix Pothole Gangs

3. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Paul Rusted, Infrastructure Commissioner, who can be contacted on 01522 553071 or paul.rusted@lincolnshire.gov.uk