



EXECUTIVE

21st December 2023

Report Title	Approval of Department for Transport (DfT) Additional Highway Maintenance Funding 2023/24 and 2024/25
Report Author	Graeme Kane, Executive Director of Place and Economy (interim)
Lead Member	Cllr Matthew Binley, Executive Member for Highways Travel and Assets

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To approve the addition to the capital programme of additional highway maintenance capital funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 announced by the Department for Transport (DfT).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Department for Transport has announced the start of an eleven-year plan to invest in highway maintenance arising out of the cancellation of the northern HS2 line. This report seeks approval to add the first two years funding of £1.069m per year in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to the capital programme. The programme of work to utilise this additional funding will take account of the current priorities in the list of identified maintenance schemes.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive accepts and notes the addition of £1.069m of new funding from the Department for Transport to the capital programme for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to be used to deliver the current priorities in the list of identified maintenance schemes.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendation: This additional funding will add to the existing capital budgets for highway maintenance and enable more maintenance schemes to be completed.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered: The Council could choose to not accept the additional funding from government which would result in a real terms reduction in funding for highway maintenance as current allocations for this year and next year make no provision for inflation.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The additional capital funding being provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) has been made available to the Council as the first part of the £8.3bn Network North initiative recently announced by the Transport Secretary.
- 4.2 The funding is for an eleven-year roads investment plan arising out of the cancellation of phase 2 of the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail project. The funding will be used in the same way as existing DfT capital maintenance allocations to maintain the highway network in North Northamptonshire to a safe standard in accordance with the Northamptonshire Asset Management Plan, and Network Management Plan.
- 4.3 In confirming this funding, the DfT have introduced new reporting requirements, which will allow local people to see for themselves how the additional money is being spent. These include that all local authorities receiving this funding should:
 - publish by March 2024 a summary of the additional resurfacing work they will deliver with the new funding over the next 2 years.
 - thereafter publish quarterly reports summarising what additional work they have done, and which roads have been resurfaced;
 - publish later in 2024/25 a long-term plan for their use of the full 11-year funding and the transformation it will deliver. The DfT has reserved the right to withhold some or all the additional funding from authorities in future years if it is not satisfied that the authority is increasing its highway maintenance expenditure and activity in line with the funding uplift from Government.
- 4.4 The capital maintenance programme consists of a range of maintenance schemes developed annually on a needs basis from information derived from condition surveys and safety inspections. This new funding is provided on the same basis as the existing Highway Maintenance Block needs element

allocations that Department for Transport provide all councils annually, and can be used for resurfacing/reconstruction schemes, inlaid patching works or permanent repairs to potholes. The capital programme complements the routine highway maintenance activities provided through the revenue budget.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The Executive could decide not to accept the additional funding from the Department for Transport into the capital programme.
- 5.2. This is not recommended as were the Council not to accept the funding this would result in a real terms reduction in funding for highway maintenance as current allocations for this year and next year make no provision for inflation. This would cause the condition of the highway network to deteriorate at a faster rate than it otherwise would. This would significantly increase the number of potholes that the Council is required to repair under its policy and as a result place further pressure on Council budgets.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Should acceptance of this funding be approved, work will begin to assess the current list of maintenance works that are unfunded to determine a programme of works to be delivered through to March 2025. From March 2024 the Council is required by DfT to publish externally its planned resurfacing programmes and provide quarterly reports on progress against those programmes.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals. This is additional funding for highway maintenance and the mechanism for utilising the funding is in place.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1 The highway maintenance service contributes to the Safe and Thriving Places commitment in the Corporate Plan and has a smaller impact on the Green, Sustainable environment commitment by working in ways to recycle materials where possible and use working methods the limit carbon emissions.

7.4 Risk

- 7.4.1 There are no significant risks involved in accepting this funding and adding it to the capital programme.

7.5 Consultation

- 7.5.1 No consultation is necessary to accept this funding and add to the capital programme.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- 7.6.1 This additional funding has not been considered by the Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 7.7.1 This additional funding has not been considered by the Council's Scrutiny Function

7.8 Equality Implications

- 7.8.1 There are no specific equality implications associated with this additional funding.

7.9 Climate and Environment Impact

- 7.9.1 Works carried out on the highways network will result in additional carbon emissions through the use of vehicles and equipment fuelled by fossil fuels. There is also an environmental consequence of using oil-based materials for repairs. Through the Council's contract with Kier Transportation, the contractor is required to switch to electric engines for all vehicles under 7.5t and electric hand tools, where practically possible. This transition has started and therefore the carbon emissions associated with the Council's highways maintenance are already being reduced. By maintaining the roads to a higher standard, the Council can help drivers to reduce their emissions by enabling them to drive more efficiently and to avoid potential accidents or damage to their vehicles.

7.10 Community Impact

- 7.10.1 There are no negative community impacts arising from this report.

7.11 **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1 No background papers are attached to this report.