

**HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE: ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND THE IMPACT OF  
THE WINTER WEATHER ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- i. Update the committee on the proposed works for 2010/2011 in relation to the allocation of additional funds for Highway Maintenance.
- ii. Inform the committee on the spend profile for footway and carriageway works from the mainstream capital and revenue budget for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.
- iii. Inform the committee of the impact on the highway network caused by the exceptional winter weather.

**Part A Additional funds for Highway Maintenance**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A report to the Environment and Community Services Review Committee, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2002, highlighted the need for additional investment in highway maintenance to address 'areas of highway at risk.' To date, through the support of the Committee an additional £2.76 million has been invested in maintaining the city's roads and footways. This contribution has assisted in improving the condition of the highway network resulting in the city's roads being in the top 5% nationally according to the latest Audit Commission reports. In addition the number of claims made, for accidents on the highway network, since the additional investment commenced has reduced significantly from over 700 in 2003-2004 to 214 in 2009-2010.
- 2.1 At its meeting in February 2010 Cabinet recommended to Council that an additional £400,000 be made available for investment in Highway Maintenance.
- 2.2 Cabinet, at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010, will be requested to approve the 2010/2011 schedule of highway maintenance works to be funded by the additional £400,000. Details of the 'spend by treatment type' are outlined in Appendix A.
- 2.4 In carrying out its programme of works the Council has consulted and worked with Gentoo as the majority of 'areas of highway at risk' are in locations in which it is the registered social landlord.

### **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 Appendix B lists the proposed spend profile by Regeneration Areas for 2010/2011. Funding has been spent in all Regeneration Areas since 2003 and this has been noted in previous reports. It should be noted that the spend profile may vary slightly through the year depending on the type of works undertaken and the associated actual costs. The work continues to be prioritised in order to minimise risk to the public. Photographs in Appendix C illustrate some of the risks that the funding will be used to address. Photographs in Appendix D illustrate some of the completed schemes from 2009/10.
- 3.2 As work is undertaken on site other maintenance works maybe identified and these will be funded from existing Highway Maintenance Budgets. Managing the works this way will ensure that economies of scale can be achieved as well as reducing disruption to the public.
- 3.3 Continued liaison with Gentoo will ensure that any works to improve areas 'off highway' are carried out at the same time resulting in an enhanced environment for all. These works would be funded by Gentoo.
- 3.4 It has been estimated that a further £2.8million was required to address outstanding and new risks. It is therefore expected that although this year's allocation will be expended not all of the original risks identified will be addressed and further investment will be required. Allocations made to date have been made against a background of tight budgetary constraint. Any case for additional funding or bid for 2011/2012 will be considered as part of the preparation and consideration of the council's medium term financial strategy.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL PROFILE**

- 4.1 Appendix E identifies the amount allocated to footway and carriageway maintenance schemes and routine repairs from the Capital and Revenue mainstream budgets of £3,370,056 for 2009/2010 and £3,512,000 for 2010/2011. The figures include the elements from the budget of additional resources of £360,000 and £400,000 for the respective financial years and which are detailed in the Cabinet reports 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010. The figures in Appendix E do not include the highway maintenance budgets for drainage, road markings, safety fence and emergency repairs as they do not contribute towards the length of footway or carriageway surfaced. The spend profile may alter during the year due to new risks being identified and associated changes in priorities.

## **Part B The Impact of the Winter Weather on the Highway Network**

### **5.0 BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The winter of 2009-10 has been recognised as the worst for 30 years. The prolonged winter weather and the successive action of freezing and thawing caused severe damage to the highway network. Most of the

damage that has occurred is visible in the form of potholes whilst elsewhere damage to the foundations of the roads has remained unseen but is likely to manifest itself through structural failure in the near future.

- 5.2 Freezing conditions are a regular occurrence on UK roads throughout most average winter periods and usually the freeze/thaw periods last a few days at a time, meaning that the extent of any damage is minor and manageable. However, the prolonged severe conditions from mid December 2009 to the end of February 2010 meant that this damaging cycle continued for longer than normal. The resulting damage has not only received national media attention but as, would be expected, generated many local reports from residents and road users. The Council has responded to ensure that the priority for action has been to repair potholes to ensure the safety of road users. This placed a burden on routine maintenance budgets. We continue to identify damage caused as a consequence of the winter weather.

## **6.0 DETAIL**

- 6.1 During the winter period the council received over 1400 reports from members of the public which represents a two fold increase on similar periods over previous years. There was also a marked increase in the number of claims for damage to vehicles from 11 to 42 compared to the same period last year.
- 6.2 This resulted in over 1170 emergency repairs being carried out. The cost of these repairs resulted in additional expenditure of approximately £130,000 on the highway maintenance revenue budget and £156,000 on the capital budget for 2009-2010. The additional expenditure has been contained within the respective City Services revenue budgets and the Local Transport Plan.
- 6.3 A recent condition survey of the unclassified residential highway network identified over 4,500 potholes which were in addition to those which had been repaired. An estimate of the cost to carry out permanent repairs of these potholes is £250,000.
- 6.4 In March, the previous government recognised the problems caused by the severe winter and made £100 million available across the UK to help address the issue. Sunderland's allocation is £293,000. However the new Government have indicated that this grant, as with all new grants announced this year, is potentially at risk under the spending review to be announced in the Autumn. If the grant is fully or partially allocated later in the year, it will be left to the authority to determine whether the funding will remain ringfenced for this purpose.
- 6.5 The council attended to approximately 1000 potholes in 2008/09 at a cost of £216k whilst in 2009/10 approximately 5,000 potholes were fixed at a cost of £318k. There remains, as a consequence of the winter, 4,500 potholes in need of attention which will cost an estimated £250k to repair. The additional £293,000 would clearly cover the cost of repairing the potholes and also allow for some significant structural road repairs should the funding be released.

6.6 In 2009/10 allocations of £460k, from the highway maintenance budget, were used to deal with all emergency carriageway and footway repairs as well as £85k for programmed road patching. This year the patching amount has been increased to £180k with the emergency repairs allocation remaining broadly the same. Any further re-prioritisation of the highway maintenance budget would impact on other areas of the service such as programmed scheme work, roadmarkings or drainage work for example. Without the additional government grant for the potholes, the repair programme will take longer to complete, running into 2 possibly 3 financial years.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report and continue its support for additional funding in highway maintenance.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Environment and Community Services Review Committee Report dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 2002.

8.2 Cabinet Report dated 15th February 2006

8.3 Cabinet Report dated 14th February 2007.

8.4 Cabinet Report dated 11th July 2007

8.5 Cabinet Report dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008

8.6 Cabinet Report dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009

8.7 Cabinet Report dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010

## APPENDIX A

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

Table showing budget proposed spend by treatment type.

Treatment Type	Cost £
Surfacing (Carriageway)	87,000
Surfacing (Footway)	100,000
Tile Removal/replacement	20,000
Trips	25,000
Kerbing	25,000
Verge works	15,000
Guardrails etc	20,000
Drainage	72,000
Miscellaneous	36,000
Total	400,000

## APPENDIX B

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Table showing budget proposed spend by Regeneration Area.

<b>Cost summary by Regeneration Area</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Sunderland East	40,000
Coalfield	111200
Sunderland West	81,400
Washington	100,000
Citywide various	67,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400,000</b>

## APPENDIX C

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Photographs illustrating some of the risks to be addressed i.e. trips, slips and deteriorating surfaces



## APPENDIX D

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Photographs illustrating some of the completed schemes. Risks eliminated include trips and falls due to a marked difference in height





## APPENDIX E

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#### 2009-2010 SPEND PROFILE

The table below identifies the spend profile from the mainstream Capital and Revenue Budget for 2009/2010 for footway and carriageway schemes and routine repairs including the additional funding of £400,000k.

Budget		Length surfaced	
Footway	Carriageway	Footway	Carriageway
£	£	km	km
1,726,056	1,644,000	7.61	12.61

#### 2010-2011 SPEND PROFILE

The table below shows the spend profile from the mainstream Capital and Revenue - Budget for 2010/2011 for footway and carriageway schemes and routine repairs including the additional funding of £400,000k.

Budget		Length surfaced	
Footway	Carriageway	Footway	Carriageway
£	£	km	km
1,800,900	1,711,100	6.76	13.84