

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
**Title of report:** Locality based unclassified road improvement programme

**Purpose of report:** To approve the methodology designed to engage with Councillors and allocate funding for the delivery of a £15M locality based unclassified road programme, and the resulting detailed programme of councillor ward priorities

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes  Spending more than £250k and impacting across all wards.
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Colin Parr - 11.01.21
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Eamonn Croston - 5.01.21
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft - 7.01.21
Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u>	Councillor Naheed Mather – Environment

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward Councillors consulted:** All

A place-based approach has been designed to engage with all Councillors in the context of COVID related restrictions on face to face meetings. The outcome of the process has established a deeper understanding of the local ward context and Councillors' unclassified road and pavement priorities. Enabling the development of a locality based unclassified roads programme of improvement with delivery starting in Spring 2021.

**Private or Public:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** The report contains no personal data.

## 1. Summary

A £15m 3-year locality based unclassified roads and pavement improvement budget was approved as part of the 2020/21 annual budget report on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. This provided additional funding in the Highways Capital Plan to help to address the backlog of unclassified roads in Kirklees that require immediate repair, currently estimated to be £152 million.

This network of unclassified roads is over 1440 km long. These roads and pavements providing an important part of the place-based infrastructure in our local communities, particularly as more people are walking and cycling in response to the Pandemic and restrictions in place.

This funding uplifted the two-year Highways Capital Plan to over £44 million which provides for investment in the highway asset including all 1900 km of roads, pavement, street lighting, structures, road safety, encouraging walking and cycling, flood management and drainage, traffic signals (UTMC), car parks and public transport provision.

The process developed builds on the Councils' place-based approach to engagement in delivering services in our diverse communities and will influence delivery of other Highways services in the future.

Approval is sought for the methodology used to develop the programme, following Councillor engagement to identify local priorities within wards. Also, approval for the detailed programme of ward priority pavement and road resurfacing schemes which will be delivered by March 2023 (Appendix A).

## 2. Information required to take a decision

### 2.1 Background

A £15m 3-year locality based unclassified roads and pavement improvement budget was approved by emergency decision April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. This provided additional funding in the Highways Capital Plan to help to address the backlog of unclassified roads in Kirklees that require immediate repair, currently estimated to be £152 million. The Council has committed to a place-based approach to developing services, and the Highways Service has built on this approach to engage with Councillors to create the locality unclassified roads programme for delivery by March 2023.

This funding uplifts the two-year Highways Capital Plan to over £44 million which provides for investment across the whole highway asset including road and pavement surfacing, street lighting, structures, road safety, encouraging walking and cycling, flood management and drainage, traffic signals (UTMC), car parks and public transport provision. This has helped meet concerns expressed about the level of funding provided by the Department of Transport for investment in the unclassified road network.

In addition to this investment through the Highway's Capital Programmes, the Council has also committed to substantial multi-million-pound investment

programmes including those funded through the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blue Prints, Transporting Cities Fund and the West Yorkshire Transport Fund.

## **2.2 Councillor engagement process**

A place-based approach was designed to engage with all Councillors in response to restrictions on face to face meetings imposed by the COVID pandemic. This was delivered by way of:

**Webinar** - A webinar was arranged for Councillors in August 2020 hosted by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment. This provided an overview of asset led Highways management; and outlined a place-based approach for Councillor engagement to inform the development of a locality based unclassified roads programme.

**Ward meetings** - Twenty-three online ward meetings were hosted over a period of five weeks which enabled Highways officers to engage with ward Councillors to establish an understanding of the local ward context; the extent of Councillors' understanding of asset management principles and to learn Councillors unclassified roads and pavement priorities.

## **2.3 Councillor feedback**

Councillors response and engagement in the process has been very positive. This process provided a forum for Councillors to gain a better understanding of Highways asset management and officers to have a deeper understanding of the place-based context and Councillor priorities for their wards.

The feedback indicated that Councillors were reassured that delivery of Highways services would be improved by this model of place-based engagement, that this fits well with the Council's general model for place-based working, would therefore provide a more united and holistic approach to asset management and, will enhance the future delivery of Highways services.

## **2.4 Ward priorities**

Councillors identified a total of 450 priority unclassified roads and pavement sites, with a value of more than £41 million. The value of these priorities is more than the total programme of £15m, and the remaining available programme of £11.8m (£3.2m already committed through Hotspots and Targeted Investment 20/21 and described below) over 3 years. This unmet demand at a local level demonstrates the value of this investment in unclassified roads and a potential opportunity to extend this programme beyond the current 3 years.

## **2.5 Methodology for allocation of funding and programme development**

It is recognised that the unclassified road network in need of immediate repair is not evenly distributed across the borough. The technical assessment of the asset shows that the length of unclassified road requiring immediate repair varies between wards from 15km up to 55km.

To reflect this variation in the quantum of unclassified roads requiring treatment across the 23 wards it is proposed to use a needs-based methodology which uses the length of road to inform the allocation of funding. This methodology has been used to establish funding allocation of between £450k and £700k per ward.

A number of other options were considered in the development of the programme, including:

- the funding of the top 3 sites identified by Councillors in each ward.
- an equal funding split across all 23 wards.

However, it is considered that a needs-based methodology reflects the variation in network length more appropriately than the other options considered and enables the programme to address the higher priorities identified by Councillors in their wards.

The proposed programme is developed from Councillors' top priorities to deliver a minimum of three schemes per ward and invest on (or near) the allocated funding for each ward. This provides a programme of over 120 schemes to a value of £11.8 m which are detailed in Appendix A.

## **2.6 Hotspot and other targeted investment**

On 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Cabinet approved programmes of work from the locality based unclassified roads budget to the value of £3.2m to enable work to continue despite delays caused by the pandemic. This ensured that delivery could be achieved in year 1 of the programme and work has been successfully delivered across the wards during the summer and autumn months to provide more protection to these lengths of road network before the winter season.

The "hotspot" programme comprises small surfacing sites distributed across the unclassified road network where road condition data identified locations with a high level of defective road surface, as well as residents and Councillor/MP complaints identified.

The recycling (Retread) and inlay programme is particularly suitable for more rural areas with fewer accesses to surrounding properties and was carried out in the summer months. It enables the road surface to be recycled insitu and re-laid with a minimum of extra material and binder added.

Investment in locations which provide modest improvements to the road network to support the running of major events such as the Tour de Yorkshire were also delivered. The Covid pandemic has resulted in these events being postponed but the works were continued as they provide wider community and economic benefits and completed in readiness for the events being held in future.

### **3. Benefits and risks**

The programme of over 120 proposed schemes will provide:

- Improvements in the condition of roads by reducing the overall backlog in unclassified roads in need of immediate repair and improve pavement condition as well as addressing the higher priorities of Councillors across the 23 wards.
- A more attractive streetscene and improve the public realm in local areas.
- Road and pavement surfaces that are easier to use as a pedestrian and cyclist at a time when these modes of travel are being encouraged and are experiencing increased participation.
- Potential reduction in the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> party claims in relation to road and pavement condition.

There will be a need to co-ordinate the delivery programme alongside 3rd party works, notably utility company works (both planned and emergency), which could potentially delay the commencement of some individual schemes. There will also be a need to minimise disruption to the network and ensure that Covid compliant measures are in place e.g. outside schools and businesses. The ward priority schemes will be developed to minimise the main risks highlighted above and delivered over the remaining two years of this three-year programme.

### **4. Implications for the Council**

#### **4.1 Working with People**

The locality based unclassified roads programme has been developed in close collaboration with Councillors.

#### **4.2 Working with Partners**

Maintenance and improvements to the transport network are vital for the development of local businesses and helps develop Kirklees as a quality place where people want to live, work and visit.

#### **4.3 Place Based Working**

A place-based approach, engaging with Councillors to understand the local ward context and priorities is at the heart of the process to develop the locality based unclassified roads programme.

This engagement process will inform a more holistic place-based approach with integration into the Council's model for place-based working so improving delivery of the Highways Service at a local level.

#### **4.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

The improvement in road and pavement surfaces will have a positive impact on encouraging walking and cycling; a more sustainable mode of transport leading to a potential reduction in emissions.

Whilst works are taking place the permit scheme will help the Council minimise delay and disruption from works, including: a reduction in the average duration of works on

permit streets and days of disruption saved through permit application assessments. The reduction in average works days and days of disruption contribute to the Council's response to the climate emergency as it provides a reduction in carbon through reduced numbers of works vehicle movements and less congestion and disruption during works.

## **5. Improving outcomes for children**

Investing in our roads and pavement infrastructure in and around our district can improve opportunities for children to enjoy their environment and opportunities for active travel to access their schools and local facilities.

## **6. Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

The locality based unclassified roads programme is part of the Highways Capital Plan so will be managed and monitored by the service in accordance with Council Financial Procedure Rules that delegates authority to manage the Plan at Service Director level.

## **7. Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**

An IIA stage 1 screening assessment was undertaken for the March report and the summary indicated that no Stage 2 assessment is required.

Whilst this has been undertaken for the detailed Highways Capital Plan, by its nature the plan is made up of many varying schemes so an aggregated approach for the overall plan has been used with all schemes in the locality unclassified road programme falling below the threshold of £250k which require their own assessment.

## **8. Consultees and their opinions**

A place-based engagement process with Councillors has been at the heart of the development of this programme with feedback on the process described in section 2.3.

This report has been prepared in consultation with Strategic Directors, Service Directors, Heads of Service, Portfolio Holder for Environment, through discussion at Senior Leadership Team and Portfolio Briefing.

## **9. Next steps and timelines**

The proposed programme of ward priority schemes will undergo detailed development and procurement with delivery starting in Spring 2021 and completion by March 2023. Delivery of the HotSpot, Retread and event support programmes have been ongoing during the summer and autumn.

Cabinet will be informed of progress as part of the regular reporting of the Highway's Capital Plan process. This engagement process will also inform a more holistic place-based approach with integration into the Council's model for place-based working so improving delivery of the Highways Service at a local level.

## **10. Officer recommendations and reasons**

That Cabinet approve:

1. The methodology for place-based Councillors engagement described in this report.
2. The funding allocation and the creation of the detailed locality unclassified roads programme to the value of £11.8m as shown in Appendix A.
3. The delegation of powers to the Service Director in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment to enable amendments in accordance with the Council financial regulation for the purposes of expediting efficient delivery of this programme.

## **11. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder endorses the officer recommendation that Cabinet approve:

1. The methodology for place-based Councillor engagement described in this report.
2. The funding allocation and the creation of the detailed locality unclassified roads programme to the value of £11.8m as shown in Appendix A.
3. The delegation of powers to the Service Director in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment to enable amendments in accordance with the Council financial regulations for the purposes of expediting efficient delivery of this programme.

## **12. Contact officer**

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## **13. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Papers:

Appendix A - the detailed locality based unclassified roads programme 2021 to 2023

Decisions which impact on this Capital Plan:

Emergency decision 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.

Capital Plan amendments 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **14. Service Director responsible**

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