

Agenda Item 35.

TITLE	Highway Maintenance Plan and Programme for 2018/19
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 January 2018
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Chris Bowring, Executive Member for Highways and Transport

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The benefits of highway maintenance works and programmes aligned to Wokingham Borough Council's adopted Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy are:

- management and development of the highway asset aligned with corporate objectives
- delivery of highway services and schemes that are shaped by stakeholder expectations and customer requirements
- maximising the use of resources and budgets to ensure value for money for highways users and the residents and businesses of Wokingham borough

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

- 1) consider and comment on the related requirements, initiatives and improvements underway and being proposed for the year ahead
- 2) note the Highway Maintenance Programme for the financial year 2018/19

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides an update on highway maintenance activities and the planned highway maintenance programme for the year ahead, to be delivered by the final year of the Wokingham Highways Alliance, a partnership of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), WSP professional services and the term contractor Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) including:

- highway safety inspections, reactive works and assurance checks
- WBC's adopted Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2016
- the highway maintenance programme for the financial year 2018/19
- major highway projects to support Strategic Development Locations (SDL's)
- new requirements promoted by central government
- highways and transportation communications initiatives
- improvements underway and proposals for new contracts from April 2019

Background

The Highways and Transportation Service is a key service committed to keeping the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated of improvements and developments within the service, along with any specific requests made by the Committee.

Wokingham Highways Alliance is partnership operating since 2008 of Wokingham Borough Council (the Council), WSP professional services (WSP) and the term maintenance and construction contractor Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) delivering the highways and transportation services to Wokingham. The existing contracts are due to expire in March 2019, and the Council has been preparing for new contracts to be operating from April 2019 aligned to stakeholder and corporate requirements.

Highway safety inspections, reactive works and assurance checks

Highway maintenance works are divided into reactive works resulting from safety inspections and enquiries from members and residents, and planned highway works. Reactive works usually take the form of filling potholes or patching to keep the network safe, whereas planned works are preventative works that represent better value for money, as they are planned and programmed well in advance therefore delivered more efficiently. The long-term aspiration for effective highway management is to improve and increase the planned works programme, which will improve the highway network condition reducing the requirement for reactive short-term works.

The Council has a team of highway inspectors who carry out safety inspections of the highway network by a defined inspection frequency, and order repairs of highway defects from BBLP that are above a defined intervention level (measurement). These follow prescriptive government requirements detailed in Wokingham's Highways Maintenance Management Plan 2013 (HMMP) available to view at this link:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/search/?q=highway%20maintenace%20policy>

Compliance with the 2013 plan protects the Council should a highway user suffer injury or loss, and subsequently claim against the Council. The Council has one of the highest defence rates from third party accident claims of the 200 highway authorities operating across the UK, which suggests a robust and fit for purpose system.

No BBLP operative, is allowed to undertake a specific task unless they have the required skills and appropriate qualifications. They are fully inducted before they commence work on the contract, ensuring full awareness of agreed processes and procedures. Works supervisors are issued with a manual, which includes standard details, method statements, and risk assessments that are bespoke to Wokingham, ensuring works are delivered to a safe and consistently high standard. BBLP works agents carry out audits of completed works to ensure that the finished product meets the required standard. The Council's own staff inspect all major works before payment is made, and a proportion of the 7,000 annual reactive works tickets (patching and potholing) are checked for compliance. In addition to this, each year two external quality audits are carried out across the contract in Wokingham to ensure that a robust quality system is in place.

WBC's adopted Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2016

There has been significant improvement in Highways Asset Management since the Executive approved the Council's Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy in 2016, now available to view or download at this weblink:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/search/?q=highways%20asset%20management>

The adopted Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy and subsequent operational plans have assigned various "asset owners" as detailed in the framework diagram below to ensure effective management of all the different parts of the highways asset valued at £4B (£1.3B gross replacement cost plus £2.7B land value).

WBC's highways asset comprises:

736 km Road length: Includes 8 km of non-Highways England motorway A329(M)
3,286 streets (613 traffic sensitive-18.5%)

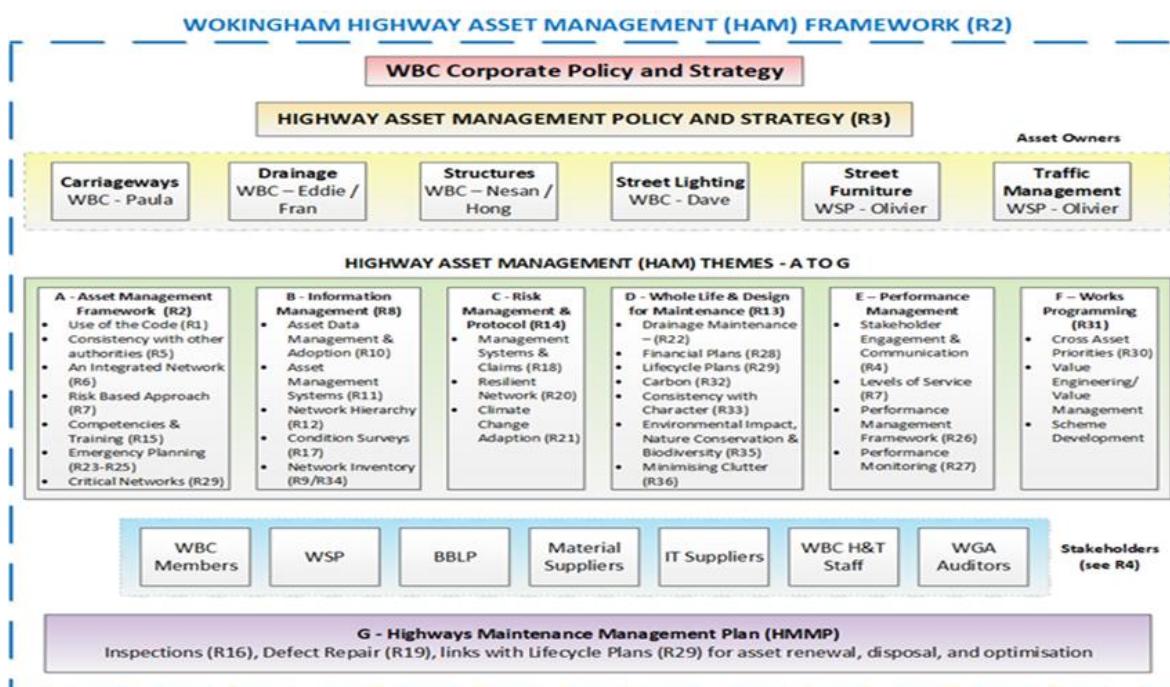
820 km Footway length

8 Million m² Highway Verges

250 Structures (including 166 bridges)

16,000 Street lights

30,000 Road gullies



Effective asset management promotes increased planned works, and lower levels of reactive works including patching and pothole filling. This is considered a more efficient use of funding, although it is recognised that keeping the network free from defects and safe for highway users is of paramount importance across the Highways and Transport service. Programmes of planned works are currently produced annually, consulted upon with the Executive Member for Highways and Transport and published on the Council's website.

The Highway Maintenance Programme for the financial year 2018/19

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL: STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE ROADS PROGRAMME 2018/2019	
<i>To maximum grant funding from Central Government via the Department for Transport, Councils must demonstrate effective highways asset management via an annual return. A key requirement ensures that Wokingham's 735km highway network valued at £1.3B (gross replacement cost) is continually subject to technical surveys, assessments and analysis and the data generates an annual road maintenance programme, ensuring investment goes where it most in need rather than being allocated on a regional or ward by ward basis. Wokingham Borough Council committed to this technical approach via the adoption at Executive Committee of the Wokingham Highways Asset Management Plan and Strategy in November 2016, which can be accessed at this weblink:</i>	
<i>http://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=129&Mid=1954</i>	
Road resurfacing schemes	Ward/s
A3032 High Street, Twyford (The Grove to Springfield Park)	Twyford
A3032 High Street, Twyford (Weavers Wy to Twyford c,road)	Twyford
A4 Bath Road (Holmehill Drive to Pound Lane)	Sonning
A4 London Road (TV Park rbt to Suttons rbt, eastbound)	Bulmershe and Whitegates
B3030 Robin Hood Lane (Winnersh crossroads to Garth Cl)	Winnersh
B3430 Nine Mile Ride (Sandhurst Road to Heathlands Road)	W'ham Without/Finchampstead North
B3016 Jubilee Road (War Memorial to The Village)	Finchampstead South
Hilltop Road (Hilltop spur road to London Road service road)	Bulmershe and Whitegates
Amberley Drive	Twyford
A33 Swallowfield Bypass (Lambs Lane to Barge Lane SB)	Swallowfield
B3430 Nine Mile Ride (Heathlands Rd to New W'ham Rd)	Wokingham Without
Redhatch Drive (around Collins Drive)	Hillside
Simons Lane (A329 Reading Road to Walter Road)	Emmbrook/Winnersh
Zinnia Close	Emmbrook
Charvil Lane (B4446 to Charfield Cottage)	Sonning
Suttons Park Avenue (end loop)	Bulmershe and Whitegates
A329 Berkshire Way North Bound Offslip	Wescott
Surface Dressing Programme	Ward/s
Cantley Crescent	Emmbrook
Marks Road	Emmbrook
Valley Crescent	Emmbrook
The Rise	Emmbrook
Copse Drive	Emmbrook
Clifton Road	Emmbrook
Sewell Avenue	Emmbrook
Swallowfield Road (Arborfield Cross rbt to Greensward Ln)	Arborfield
Scotts Drive	Emmbrook/Evendons
Hinton Road (A321 to Waltham Rd)	Hurst
Lambwood Hill (Bourough Boundary to Mortimer Road)	Shinfield South
Swallowfield Street (Basingstoke Rd to The Street)	Swallowfield
A321 Broadwater Lane (Hogmoor Lane to Whistley Green)	Hurst
A4130 White Hill (White Hill House to Aston Lane)	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe
A4130 Henley Road	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe
Byways	Ward/s
Doles Lane	Barkham/Evendons
Oaklands Lane	Wokingham Without

Major highway projects to support Strategic Development Locations (SDLs)

Forming part of the Council's Core Strategy the Council is progressing new distributor roads comprising of North & South Wokingham Distributor Roads, Winnersh Relief Road and Arborfield Cross Relief Road and to support the SDLs via a national procurement framework managed by public sector partnership Scape Group. The Council has been dealing with WSP as the lead designer and Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering UK (a sister company of Balfour Beatty Living Places) under the Scape framework since 2016 and progressing with the planning, environmental and design issues and developing a robust construction delivery programme with supply chain partners for this considerable infrastructure programme. The preliminary work is nearing conclusion, and the Council will soon be moving into a new phase by agreeing a detailed design and construction programme to deliver the five distributor/relief roads by Winter 2021. It is planned that the construction programme with completion dates for each section of the five distributor/relief roads will be circulated and communicated widely, and via the community forums, from early in 2018.

New requirements promoted by central government

Central government has been promoting a Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) that requires all local Councils to adopt effective Highways Asset Management Plans, and more efficient highways maintenance services. Demonstrating compliance enables Councils to receive maximum annual block funding settlement from the Department for Transport (DfT).

All Councils submit an annual self-assessment technical submission each January, demonstrating how the Council is performing in this regard. WBC is expecting to reach the top band 3 status at the January 2018 self-assessment and following submission. To ensure this it is essential the Council continues to improve its delivery of the full range of highway maintenance services, including reducing its reliance on reactive works and moving to longer-term programming of maintenance and capital works considering the "whole life cost" of works, to ensure and demonstrate value for money and long-term thinking.

Additionally central government released a new code of practice in November 2016 titled Well Maintained Highways. The code requires (mandatory) a step change towards a "risk based approach" for highways maintenance and asset management across all asset classes, where all Councils must decide their own maintenance standards. Government have allowed a 2 year window for Councils to adopt their own risk based plans with a deadline of November 2018 to achieve this. The new code details 36 recommendations that must be considered and embedded into the way Wokingham delivers highways asset management and highways maintenance services.

WBC is considered one of the most advanced Councils across the 200 Highways Authorities operating across the UK regarding its progress with the new code. This has resulted in a positive article in the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's prestigious Transportation Professional in October 2017, plus WBC was asked to attend an industry "best practice" event with the Department for Transport in November 2017, to showcase WBC's progress to date in adopting and embedding the 36 recommendations of the new code of practice. WBC is one of the few authorities developing a web based tool called Wokingham Highways Asset

Management (WHAM) to deliver and demonstrate how it has embraced and is embedding the code. The WHAM web tool is due to go live early in 2018 and will be available via the Council's website and will be a single go to place for highway maintenance services for suppliers, Members, Town & Parish Councils and residents and very much supporting the self-serve principles of the 21CC.

A specific requirement of the new code during 2018 will be a wholesale revision of the Council's Highway Maintenance Management Plan 2013 detailed earlier in the report, to a new 2018 plan that fully adopts and embraces a risk based approach. This will allow the Council to deliver its highway maintenance services aligned to local needs and priorities identified at the stakeholder engagement events over 2016 and 2017, rather than the prescriptive standards formerly required by central government. It is a mandatory requirement that the Council adopts, published and embeds this new approach to highway maintenance before the November 2018 deadline.

Highways and transportation communications initiatives

Improving communication of works and projects on the highway network is top priority for the highways alliance partners. There have been significant improvements in the planning and programming of schemes and projects, looking to the end of the current alliance contracts to March 2019. This involves all the Council's highway projects, but also third party "works promotor" projects including developers and the statutory utility companies. A concept called "visual project management" has been introduced since early 2017, and over the year, the initiative has become embedded ensuring a collaborative approach to project management and delivery. This has led to improved network management, a more joined up approach between the alliance partners, improved management of projects and improved communications with Members, Town and Parish Councils and residents.

A Highways and Transportation Communication Strategy has been underway over 2017 and is emerging fully aligned to resident, stakeholder and Council priorities. The strategy will include a network impact assessment (self-serve), which will set communication requirements for all works promoters carrying out activity on the highway network. This will ensure all works promoters are clear of what is required to work on WBC's highway network, and who is required to undertake specific communication actions. It is proposed a Highways and Transport Communications Member briefing will be arranged for early 2018, when more information of this initiative will be provided.

Improvements underway and proposals for new contracts from April 2019

Improvements and streamlining of processes, response times and improved customer services remain a Council priority and the customer experience is centric to the 21st Century Council initiative. As an interim measure, the Highways and Transportation team introduced the HighwaysforMembers@Wokingham.gov.uk Inbox, which has provided excellent service to Members with an increased usage and satisfaction from Members since its inception in Summer 2016. Members are encouraged to use this inbox for the best the service available.

Over 2016 and 2017 there were a number of highways workshops held with key stakeholders including Members and Town and Parish Councils plus WBC's Highways and Transport annual residents' surveys were undertaken. In addition to

this, the Council ran a Wokingham Transport and Highways survey from the Wokingham website and hard copies distributed around the community buildings and libraries around the borough during November and December 2017. The survey was very popular with over 1,000 residents and commuters completing the survey by the end of December 2017. This considerable data source is currently being assessed and analysed and will inform future priorities.

The purpose of these workshops and surveys was to find out which parts of the highway network, and which highway and transport services are most important to our customers including elected Members and Town & Parish Councils. The opportunity was used to undertake transport visioning work, to understand what is likely to become more or less important as we move into the future, looking as far ahead as 2036, which is the same period of the emerging Local Plan and Local Transport Plan, which are both being reviewed. The engagement and sessions provided essential data enabling the service to evolve to meet the needs of stakeholders both now and into the future, including opportunities with the new highways and transport contracts that will come into effect from April 2019.

A summary of some of the information collated is provided below:

Challenges to 2036	Opportunities to 2036
Community Isolation	Local Plan and Strategic Control
Affordable Housing	CIL & Infrastructure Delivery
Congestion/Air quality	Improvement in IT & data
Move to a driverless world	Public transport/walking/cycling
Climate Change & Flood Risk	Health & Wellbeing

There have been several changes in personnel within WSP and BBLP over the last 6 months, which has improved the performance of the Highways Alliance. The teams and personnel are working in collaboration towards shared goals and a vision via a signed Memorandum of Understanding and Transport Vision to 2036 agreed in 2017. Further to this, a business improvement initiative has been created bringing new ideas, innovation and target areas in need of improvement across the service. This has brought an increased focus towards improving the quality of the reactive works service including patching and potholes and improving how we deliver the many highways projects on the network, and a focus towards improving stakeholder and customer communication.

A review of the current Highways & Transportation Services is underway as part of the Council's 21st Century Council programme Phase 2. It is programmed that the review and redesign of the service will be complete and implemented by Spring 2018. In parallel with this, and aligned to the stakeholder engagement during 2016 and 2017 new contract documents and specifications are being drafted that will come into operation from April 2019. The new contracts will include the following priorities:

- Smarter Working (21CC IT for staff & customers)
- One Team (partnership working/reduce man marking/duplication)
- Network Coordination & resilience (manage works & congestion)
- Providing Flexibility (network & technological)
- Customer Focus (self-serve, improved communication & managing expectation)
- Outcome based performance measures (Congestion / Journey Times / Air Quality)

Innovation (IT/Customer Experience & Satisfaction)

Evaluation criteria and performance measures for the new contracts, which will benefit along with 21st Century Council from new IT, will have a focus towards reducing congestion, promoting public transport/walking and cycling, environmental improvements like improving air quality, improved control of works and projects, introducing innovation and focus towards self-serve and enhanced customer service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	0	0
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	0	0
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	0	0

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The costs for this service are provided and delivered within existing contract and budget provision for the WSP and BBLP contracts

Cross-Council Implications

No specific cross cutting themes

List of Background Papers

None

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