

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **22nd September 2022**
Report Subject: **Review of Highway Capital Works Programme 2017 – 2022**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader / Executive Member
Place and Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Head of Community Services, Clive Rogers**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
23/08/22	25/08/22	08.09.22			22/09/22			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny members with an update on the previous Highway Capital Works programme 2017 – 2022 and present options around a potential future 2022/23 works programme, subject to the availability of Funding.

2. Scope and Background

Highways Capital Works Programme 2017 – 2022

- 2.1 Building on the success of a previous Highways Capital Works Programme, which improved the nature and condition of the classified network, a programme targeting unclassified/ residential roads was approved by the Authority in 2017.
- 2.2 A capital sum of £2.115million was generated from a 20 year prudential borrow based on revenue contributions of £130k per year.
- 2.3 This Capital Sum has been augmented by Welsh Government Highways Refurbishment grant funding over the period 2017 to 2022 as detailed below:

Funding	Amount
Prudential Borrowing	£2,115,000
WG Grant 2017-2018	£553,000
WG Grant 2018-2019	£380,065
WG Grant 2019-2020	£409,776
WG Grant 2020-2021	£383,000
WG Grant 2021-2022	£602,000
BG Capital Programme Contingency 2021-2022	£310,000
WG Refurbishment Grant 22/23	Nil
Total	£4,752,841

Additionally, Council made available £317,000 from General Reserves in 2021/22 to undertake some additional patching works across all 16 wards within Blaenau Gwent, targeting around 400 sq. metres of highways repairs per ward covering residential roads.

Network

- 2.4 The current gross replacement value of the Highway Network is estimated at £1.093 billion and is the Authority's most valuable material asset.
- 2.5 Un-classified roads make up 74% of the total Highway network [198 miles] and forms the majority of the local road network – residential roads & rear lanes. The majority of reactive maintenance and insurance claims relate to the unclassified network.
- 2.6 Public perception of highways normally relates to the condition of local residential roads [un-classified roads]. Reactive repairs to pot holes and rutted surfacing are costly and the less effective way of maintaining the highway.
- Planned maintenance works as against reactive maintenance are the more cost effective way of maintaining the highway network.
- 2.7 The overall % of poor conditioned Un-classified roads pre-commencement of works was 17%. As a result of the previous four years this figure has been subsequently reduced to 11.4%.
- 2.8 To date 103 Residential highways have been resurfaced along with priority works to the A & B Classified Network.

A schedule of Works completed to date can be found in **Appendix A:**

2018/19 Phase 1 Programme of Works

2019/20 Phase 2 Programme of Works

2020/21 Phase 3 Programme of Works

2021/22 Phase 4 Programme of Works

Highway Capital Works Programme 2022-23 – Priorities & Options

- 2.9 It is appropriate that any capital expenditure made available for highway related improvement works will be expended in line with Authority's Highways Asset Management Plan [HAMP].
- 2.10 In accordance with the HAMP, with its identified priorities & risks to the Blaenau Gwent Highways Network, it is proposed that should funding be made available, any new 2022/23 programme will continue to pay due attention to high priority works to the Network whilst retaining a focus around improving the residential/ unclassified network.
- 2.11 Following on from the previous works programme it is proposed that a priority ranking of residential streets is determined, utilising the assessment matrix criteria that was developed in line with the specific features associated with residential highways as follows:

See **Appendix B:** Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads

See **Appendix C:** Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example

3. Options for recommendation

- 3.1** Option 1: No New Highways Capital Works Programme be undertaken in 2022/23 (preferred option)

This is recommended since there is no capital funding currently available or any indication that Wales Government will provide specific capital grants in future.

In the event that funding does become available the following options are proposed: -

Option 2a: Highest Priority Classified Roads (ranked in order of priority)

Estimated Total Cost £500,000

1. A467 Warm Turn Carriageway Resurfacing	£75k
2. Tafarnaubach Ind Est (Top Road) Resurfacing	£175k
3. Blaenant Ind Est Roundabout Resurfacing	£75k
4. Big Arch / Steelworks Road / GO Resurfacing	£50k
5. A4046 - Waun-Y-Pound Road, Ebbw Vale	£25k
6. College Road, Ebbw Vale	£100k

Option 2b As Option 2a plus 5 worst Residential Roads & Other Highway Related Works – Estimated Total Cost £1,000,000

Residential Roads: 5no priority residential roads £350k

Other Highway Related Works: -

○ Crash Barriers	£50k
○ Road Markings, signs and bollards	£35k
○ Speed Humps	£50k
○ Traffic Order Reviews	£15k

Options 2a & 2b may vary subject to the level of available funding that may be made available.

4. Evidence of how does this topic support the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 The report has been developed to provide an update on progress of the current Highway Capital Works programme 2017/22 and supports the key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan namely – “reinvestment in highways and improvements to the residential network”.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

Option 1- With no capital budget currently available no 2022/23 Highways Capital Programme of Works is proposed.

Option 2a is subject to the potential availability of Capital funding being provided at a later date (£500,000)

Option 2b is subject to the potential availability of Capital funding being provided at a later date (£1,000,000)

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

There are risks associated with not maintaining the highway infrastructure in terms of highway safety and increased insurance claims, increased reactive maintenance and public perception.

5.3 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

The overall % of poor conditioned Un-classified roads pre-commencement of works was 17%. As a result of the previous years investment this figure has been reduced to 11.4%.

6.2 Expected Outcome for the Public

Improved quality of residential and classified highways. Improved safety to highway network.

6.3 Involvement (Consultation, Engagement, Participation)

Where relevant, consultation, engagement and involvement with the public, members and interested parties have been carried out as part of the delivery requirements of the programme.

6.4 Thinking for the long term (forward planning)

Investment in the residential highway network in Blaenau Gwent is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, bringing our roads up to a good standard and improving our highway infrastructure to meet the service requirements of the future. -

6.5 Preventative Focus

By investing now will prevent problems getting worse with our infrastructure, thus making prudent decisions to invest now rather than later when the costs are likely to be higher through further deterioration and inflation.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

N/A.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

6.8 Decarbonisation and reducing Carbon Emissions

N/A.

6.9 *Integrated Impact Assessment*

N/A

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 These works are bi-annually reported to Corporate Overview Scrutiny (Contracts over £500k) and Annual Progress report to The Chair and Members of Place Scrutiny.

Background Documents / Electronic Link

Appendix A: 2018 – 2022 Phases 1 - 4 Completed Programmes of Works

Appendix B: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads

Appendix C: Highway Assessment Matrix – Residential Roads: Worked Example