

Culture, Housing, Environment and Planning Committee

17 March 2021

Planned Highway and Street Lighting Capital Programme 2021/22

Sarah Ireland, Executive Director, Corporate and Communities

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Hillary Gander, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainable Transport

Purpose

To detail highway (carriageway, footway and street lighting) planned maintenance works carried out during 2020/21 and present a proposed planned highway and street lighting maintenance programme for 2021/22.

Recommendation

To **resolve** that -

1. The current status of schemes from the 2020/21 planned highway works as detailed in **Annex 1**, be noted
2. Subject to any comments from the Neighbourhood Committees, the prioritised planned highway and street lighting capital maintenance programme for 2021/22, as detailed in **Annex 2**, be approved, with the Executive Director of Corporate and Communities delegated to deal with any in-year changes that may prove necessary in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and affected ward members.
3. To further note that the Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood Committee takes place on 24 March, so any additional comments from that Committee are considered by the Executive Director of Corporate and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Benefits to the Community:

Planned highway and street lighting maintenance programmes are developed to ensure that the highway network is safe and keeps people and goods moving.

Key Points

- A. Kingston Council's highway network comprising carriageways, footways and street lighting is the most visible, well used and valuable physical asset which the Council is responsible for. Achieving the Council's strategic outcome of "a sustainable approach to new homes, development and infrastructure which benefits our communities, in a well maintained borough", require continuous investment in the heavily used highway assets to maintain them in a serviceable condition. The highway maintenance needs are being reviewed on a continuous basis and prioritised on a Borough-wide basis. The proposed programme is set out in **Annex 2**.
- B. The Annual Highway Investment Programme has traditionally been made up of Council's capital funding to deliver the planned maintenance programme for

non-principal roads, and funding from Transport for London (TfL) for maintenance of principal roads, the TfL allocation at this time is nil but there may be an opportunity later in the year to bid for funds.

- C. The Committee is asked to approve the following:
- planned footway and carriageway maintenance to the value of £1.5 m; (indicative value footways £650.000 and carriageways £850.000)
 - street lighting programme including column replacement and luminaire LED replacement £1.957m. The indicative split between column and luminaire replacement is £440,000 on columns and the rest on luminaires.
- D. The 2021/22 budgets and the Medium Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) is due to be considered at the Finance and Contracts Committee and Partnership Committee.
- E. The allocation for 2020/21 for planned footway and carriageway maintenance was £2.0m, an increase of £250,000 for that year only, this has led to a decrease in 2021/22 as the money was brought forward to £1.5million. An update on the progress of 2020/21 Highway & Footway schemes is provided in **Annex 1**.

Context

1. The funding for the management of highway assets is under continuous scrutiny, with increasing pressure from government and the public for transparency, accountability and more efficient use of the limited resources available.
2. It is important to ensure borough roads and street lighting assets remain in good condition to ensure their longevity. Highway maintenance work is also necessary to reduce the Council's exposure, as Highway Authority, of the risk of claims for personal injury and damage. The need for footway and carriageway maintenance is identified through a combination of structural assessments, visual inspections and reporting.
3. Street lighting columns are identified for replacement based on their age and condition. Street lighting lanterns are identified for LED replacement based on their current energy usage.
4. Continuous capital investment in highway assets by means of rolling programmes is vital for ensuring the effective management of the assets. It also ensures that the reactive maintenance revenue budgets can be properly managed - if capital funding is reduced, there will be a deterioration in the condition of the assets. Given the Council's statutory duty to maintain a safe highway, this would then increase pressure on revenue budgets as the number of short term reactive 'fix' repairs increases.
5. Kingston's annual highway investment programme consists of Kingston capital funding, which is used to fund the planned highway maintenance programme for local roads, and TfL funding for the most urgent maintenance of the principal roads.

6. Progress on the delivery of the £2.0m 2020/21 planned highway maintenance programme is provided in **Annex 1**.

Proposal and Options

7. The proposed highway maintenance programme for footways, carriageways and street lighting is presented in **Annex 2**.
8. The carriageway resurfacing programme has been prioritised according to the extent of the deterioration and classification of the network, with heavier traffic levels being a higher priority in order to keep them in a safe condition.
9. The footways identified have been assessed and prioritised where the risk of trips and falls due to uneven surfaces or broken and rocking slab paving is considered greatest, and insurance claim data is used to corroborate this. A large part of the cost is for reconstruction of vehicular crossovers.
10. The replacement of 'rigid' artificial stone paving (ASP) slabs with 'flexible' bitumen macadam surfacing (DBM) is recommended where there is considerable evidence of tree root damage and/or continuous footway overrun, which results in ASP slab damage, trips and safety hazards. To retain ASP at these locations may require the new paving to be reinforced by laying the new slabs on concrete or installing bollards to minimise the risk of further damage. DBM surfaces are generally preferred by mobility impaired people using wheelchairs or mobility vehicles due to a better ride quality. It should also be noted that lifetime maintenance costs for DBM are approximately 20% less than ASP, as there is a reduction in the frequency of necessary repairs due to their flexible construction.
11. The street lighting column replacement programme in Annex 2 is based on the age of street lighting columns.
12. All street lighting columns automatically now receive LED luminaires as they are the most energy efficient. The Council is committed to addressing our climate emergency response to deliver 100% conversion of lighting units to LED lighting over the next 2 years, and a comprehensive programme is being developed with our new street lighting contractor to deliver this.
13. The approved programme will be reviewed during the year to allow for any unexpected changes and to ensure that it can be delivered within budget.

Consultations

14. As requested through the Neighbourhood Chairs' Forum, the planned maintenance footway and carriageway list has been submitted to the four Neighbourhood Committee Meetings as an information item and any comments will be reported at

the meeting. Because the Maldens and Coombe Neighbourhood Committee takes place on 24 March, any additional comments from that Committee are recommended to be considered by the Executive Director of Corporate and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

15. Letter drops to all affected residents/businesses will be carried out by the Council Contractor 10 working days in advance of the works commencing, advising them of the arrangements and timescales. Copies are also sent to ward councillors. Customer satisfaction surveys will be undertaken by our Contractor following completion of the works for quality assurance purposes. The results will be used to identify and implement any service improvements.
16. Prior to footway schemes commencing, residents will be given the opportunity to apply for a new vehicle crossover or extend an existing one, and these works will be undertaken during the footway improvement scheme. This approach has proved beneficial in the past to all parties and is critical to ensure the integrity of the new footway is protected and avoids vehicles crossing the footway without a crossover to access properties.

Timescale

17. Work will be scheduled to commence as early in the new financial year as possible. The actual timing of scheme works will be determined and coordinated with other activities, such as statutory undertakers' planned works, school holidays and other relevant events as part of the Council's network management duties.
18. Prolonged periods of very wet, cold or hot weather can have a significant influence on the work programme and priorities. Additionally, emergency works by statutory undertakers may result in some schemes being delayed to a later year. In this event, it is proposed that the next road(s) on the prioritised list would be brought forward for implementation.

Financial Context

19. Everything the council does needs to be seen in the context of an increasingly challenging financial environment. Kingston is not alone in its challenges, one in three of all councils fearing they will run out of funding to carry out their legal duties by 2022/23.
20. However, this position is particularly stark in Kingston. The demand for services is increasing while the funds available to meet these needs continues to fall. In 2010 the council received £66m in government grant - by 2018 that had been cut to zero. This means that it is a continual challenge to find adequate funds to meet needs.
21. Despite these challenges the council has a drive and commitment to ensure it is doing the best for residents and communities.

Resource Implications

22. Proposed footway, carriageway and street lighting renewal work will be funded through the rolling capital funding programmes. The carriageway and footway work will be undertaken through the Council's term maintenance contractor for this type of work, F M Conway; and the street lighting through our street lighting contractor, Volker Highways.

Legal Implications

23. The Council is the Highway Authority for its administrative area and has a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 (the 1980 Act) to maintain the highways for which they are responsible.

24. If a person believes he/she has suffered damage as a result of a failure to maintain the highway, the Highways Authority has a defence under Section 58 of the 1980 Act if it proves that it "had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic".

25. In order to avoid the risk of damage and resultant claims the Council must continue to maintain the highways for which it is responsible to ensure they remain reasonably safe and are not dangerous for traffic or pedestrians.

26. With regards to the provision of lighting on the highway as Highway Authority the Authority has discretionary power under Section 97 of the 1980 Act to provide street lighting on roads for which it is responsible. However in exercising its powers as to the extent, nature, maintenance and operation of street lighting the Highway Authority must act reasonably and in the interests of road safety.

27. Consideration should be given to the implications of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) and the potential impact on lower light levels on crime and disorder.

Risk Assessment

28. The Shared Risk Register for the highway and street lighting contracts will be reviewed at regular contract management meetings.

Equalities Analysis

29. Highway maintenance schemes are designed to provide safe usage for all types of road users, including those with mobility difficulties and visual impairments.

Sustainability Implications

30. Improved carriageway condition smoothers traffic flow and provides better riding quality for cyclists. Footway resurfacing improves conditions for pedestrians and encourages walking. LED replacement is more energy efficient and extends asset longevity.

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Background papers - None