

Highways Network Management Works Programme 2024-25

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Decision:	02/05/2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Denise Gaines
Date Head of Service agreed report: <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	N/A
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	N/A
Report Author:	Neil Stacey
Forward Plan Ref:	ID4511

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2024-25.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel approves the proposed Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2024-25 as presented in Appendix C of this report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The Highways Network Management Works Programme will be funded from various Capital and Revenue budgets approved as part of the Council's overall budget for 2024-25.
Human Resource:	N/A
Legal:	Some projects on the programme will require the assistance of Legal Services, particularly the drafting and sealing of Traffic Regulation Orders.

Risk Management:	Projects within the Programme will be managed in accordance with the relevant processes in respect of financial and health & safety risks.			
Property:	N/A			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			Some of the projects will be implemented in such a way as to improve conditions for vulnerable road users, particularly disabled people.
Environmental Impact:	x			Some of the projects will deliver infrastructure to encourage or enable sustainable travel and will therefore have a beneficial impact on the environment.
Health Impact:	x			Some of the projects will deliver infrastructure to encourage or enable active travel and will therefore have a beneficial impact on the health of those using the infrastructure.

ICT Impact:		x		
Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			Some of the projects to be undertaken as part of the Programme will support the Council Strategy Priorities “Tackling the climate and ecological emergency” and “Thriving communities with a strong local voice”.
Core Business:		x		
Data Impact:		x		
Consultation and Engagement:	All Ward Members have been consulted as to the content of this report. No comments, suggestions or queries were received.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2024-25.
- 4.2 The Council’s Capital Programme and Revenue budget for 2024-25, approved at the Council meeting in March 2024, allocates funding for the delivery of a range of projects and services, many of which are the responsibility of the Highways Network Management team in the Environment Department. The purpose of the Programme is to list the projects and services proposed to be delivered each financial year and to confirm a formal mandate to proceed with them. This report presents the proposed programme to the Executive Member for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel for approval.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The following explains the need for a Works Programme and the type of projects and services that it contains.

Background

- 5.2 The Highways Network Management Team, within the Environment Department, is comprised of five sub-teams, described as follows:

5.3 The Traffic Management & Road Safety team's responsibilities include:

- (a) The management and regulation of traffic (for example by implementing speed limits, parking restrictions and installing associated traffic signs);
- (b) Investigating road traffic accident records and implementing measures to prevent such accidents;
- (c) Implementing engineering measures to improve safety outside and close to schools;
- (d) Providing cycle training to children;
- (e) Collecting vehicle speed data and undertaking engineering and education measures to encourage compliance with speed limits;
- (f) Road safety education campaigns, particularly aimed at vulnerable road users.

5.4 The Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) & Sustainable Travel Infrastructure team is responsible for:

- (a) Maintaining, operating and improving the Council's stock of traffic signals and variable message signs;
- (b) Using computer-based systems to optimise the operation of traffic signals to manage traffic flows efficiently;
- (c) The ongoing development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the identification of future schemes to improve sustainable travel infrastructure;
- (d) The delivery of smaller projects associated with improving sustainable travel infrastructure;
- (e) Installing, maintaining and monitoring Electric Vehicle Charging Points on the Highway.

5.5 The Projects team is mainly responsible for delivering a variety of large projects, some of which are listed in the Capital Programme in their own right. The Projects team also assists the Traffic & Road Safety and ITS teams to deliver small and medium sized projects, including those related to sustainable travel infrastructure. This team also carries out feasibility assessments and compiles cost estimates for potential future projects.

5.6 The Highways Development Control team:

- (a) Assesses the Highways impact of planning applications and determines appropriate mitigation measures to accommodate any adverse impacts;
- (b) Provides a street naming and numbering service;
- (c) Supervises the construction of developer-led projects on the Highway.

5.7 The Streetworks team:

- (a) Manages and co-ordinates applications for permits to undertake works on the Highway;
- (b) Inspects third party sites;
- (c) Where necessary, issues fixed penalty notices to works promoters who do not comply with the conditions of their permits.

5.8 The Traffic Management & Road Safety, ITS & Sustainable Travel Infrastructure and Projects teams all contribute to the delivery of the Works Programme, whereas the Highways Development Control and Streetworks teams do not deliver their own projects on the Highway.

Comment on the 2023-24 programme

5.9 The 2023-24 programme, included:

- (a) Five safety/accident reduction schemes,
- (b) Six signing improvement schemes,
- (c) Three active travel schemes, including the construction of the new footway/cycleway on the B4000 between the A34 junction and Stockcross,
- (d) Three school safety projects, including the implementation of a “car free school streets” scheme in Thatcham,
- (e) Temporary road closures for 27 street parties for the King’s coronation,
- (f) 2,603 Bikeability courses.

5.10 Unfortunately, however, the team has struggled to implement projects which include traffic regulation orders, for example speed limits and parking restrictions. This is due to key posts being vacant for much of the year and difficulties in recruiting new members of staff with the required skills and experience. There is therefore a backlog of projects of this nature and the expectations of stakeholders will need to be managed until suitable and sufficient staff resources are in place.

Additional information regarding changes to Speed Limits

5.11 Requests for new or amended speed limits are considered by the Speed Limit Review Task Group, which consists of Council officers, Members and the Police. When assessing the requests the Task Group considers current guidance (principally the Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 ‘Setting local speed limits’), traffic survey results, the number of recorded injury accidents and the local road environment. Any changes agreed by the Task Group can only be implemented subject to a statutory consultation process.

5.12 The task group recommended that four speed limits be amended as a result of the reviews undertaken in September 2021 and May 2022 and these are included in the

proposed Works Programme. Unfortunately, due to staff resource issues, these limits have not yet been implemented at the time of writing and are therefore carried forward into the 2024-25 programme. The task group recommended a further four limits be implemented following its meeting in February 2024 and are also included in the 2024-25 programme.

- 5.13 The Council is committed to implementing more 20mph speed limits in residential areas. A pilot scheme to introduce a 20mph limit covering the majority of residential roads in Theale is already in progress following a separate resolution of the Executive, ref [EX4435](#). This pilot scheme will determine the Council's future approach to the implementation of 20mph speed limits.

Additional information regarding Active Travel Infrastructure Projects

- 5.14 Active travel infrastructure projects involve the construction of new, or improvements to existing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Since the pandemic there has been a step-change in the amount of funding available to local highway authorities for this type of project. A new national body, Active Travel England, has been set up by the Department for Transport to oversee and allocate funds to local councils to deliver improvements to active travel infrastructure. As well as funds awarded by Active Travel England, the Council has allocated its own capital funding to active travel schemes. The Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan ("[LCWIP](#)") sets out plans to develop a network of walking and cycling routes and helps to prioritise the many requests for this type of project that are received.
- 5.15 Larger scale active travel infrastructure projects are normally implemented by the Projects team and are subject to stakeholder consultation before construction.

Additional information regarding Bus Infrastructure Projects

- 5.16 Similarly to active travel, the Department for Transport has also awarded the Council funding for bus infrastructure improvements, as detailed in the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme. This is a mixture of revenue and capital funding and must be delivered by March 2025. This work will be delivered in conjunction with the Transport and Parking Team.

Proposals

- 5.17 The proposed programme is included as Appendix C. Most projects have been included as a result of requests from stakeholders over the course of previous months or years, but some activities reflect statutory requirements such as the maintenance of traffic signals or the management of the school crossing patrol service.
- 5.18 The Network Management team aims to complete the projects listed in the programme before the end of the 2024-25 financial year, assuming that the team is fully staffed, with the exception of larger projects which extend across two or more years. Further projects may be identified over the course of the year and added to the programme, but unless they relate to an urgent safety issue, these will be highlighted as new projects and will receive a lower priority than those already on the programme.

- 5.19 Where a stakeholder request requires a significant amount of work to assess whether it should be implemented, it is added to the “Assessments, Reports and Feasibility” section of the programme. Only when the assessment has concluded that the request should be implemented will it be added to the relevant section of the programme.
- 5.20 Non-project based activities, particularly services delivered by the Traffic and Road Safety team, are also listed on the programme, for example road safety education and speed management initiatives.
- 5.21 Reactive work, such as responding to customer requests, is included in the programme. However, it should be noted that although estimates have been made regarding the volume of such work, the delivery of project-based work can be delayed by high priority reactive work related to petitions and Council motions due to the need to respond to time-critical issues within reasonable timescales.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Not publishing a Works Programme. Without an approved programme of, however, the Network Management team would have no formal mandate to implement any particular improvement schemes or deliver any particular road safety initiatives. There would be no formal, published record of the projects that the team has committed to delivering. This could require several separate decisions to be made over the course of the year, which would not be an efficient use of time for either Officers or Members and is therefore not recommended.

7 Governance

- 7.1 The Programme will be updated on an ongoing basis and progress towards delivery of the various projects and services will be reported quarterly to the relevant governance board.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Highways Network Management Works Programme gives the Network Management team a formal mandate to implement a series of highway enhancement projects and to deliver a range of non-project services within the agreed budgets. This report presents the programme to the Executive Member for approval.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment (stage 1)
- 9.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment (stage 1)
- 9.3 Appendix C – Proposed Highways Network Management Works Programme 2023-24

Corporate Board’s recommendation

Not applicable as this is an Individual Executive Member Decision

Background Papers:

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: All wards are affected by the work of the Highways Network Management team to some degree.

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2			

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	To approve the proposed Highways Network Management Works programme for 2023-24.
Summary of relevant legislation:	Various provisions of the Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please indicate which priority and provide an explanation
Name of Budget Holder:	Neil Stacey
Name of Department:	Environment Department
Name of assessor:	Neil Stacey
Date of assessment:	14/03/2024
Version and release date (if applicable):	N/A

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:	The aim of the programme is to summarise the projects to be delivered and services to be provided by the Highways Network Management team during 2023-24.
Objectives:	To deliver improvements to the highway network.
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing the safe and expeditious movement of traffic; • Facilitating and promoting active travel.
Benefits:	Road users will benefit from the improved facilities that the various projects provide.

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	Positive	Children and older people tend to be disproportionately vulnerable when using the highway and their needs are given particular consideration when assessing, planning, designing and implementing Network Management projects.
Disability	Positive	Disabled people tend to be disproportionately vulnerable when using the highway and their needs are given particular consideration when assessing, planning, designing and implementing Network Management projects.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.

Race	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Sex	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	This group does not tend to be either more or less vulnerable when using the highway.
Further Comments:		

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The needs of all groups of road users will be considered consistently and fairly when implementing the projects on the programme.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
There is often a balance to be struck between the needs of different groups or road user and it is possible that a project could make an improvement for one group whilst having an adverse impact on another group. This balance is considered for each individual project rather than at a programme-wide level.	

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Neil Stacey

Date: 29/06/2023

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Place
Department:	Environment
Team:	Highways Network Management
Lead Officer:	Neil Stacey
Title of Project/System:	Highways Network Management Works Programme
Date of Assessment:	14/03/2024

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><small>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><small>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><small>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><small>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p>		

Appendix C

Proposed Highways Network Management Works Programme 2023-24

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