

Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 – Summary Report

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Committee:	25 March 2024 at 15:30
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Denise Gaines
Report Author:	Andrew Reynolds
Forward Plan Ref:	ID4496

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme for consideration by the Executive Member for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive Member for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel approves Year 1 (2024/25) of the Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The Highway Improvement Programme will be funded from existing capital budgets. It also forms part of the Council's approved Capital Programme. Financial Officer – Shannon Coleman-Slaughter.
Human Resource:	None arising from this report. HR Officer – No comments received to email sent on 01 February 2024.
Legal:	None arising from this report.

	Legal Officer – No comments received to email sent on 01 February 2024.			
Risk Management:	Failure to maintain the asset will affect availability, value, safety and the Council’s ability to meet its legal duty to maintain a safe network under the Highways Act 1980.			
Property:	The public highway is an important and valuable asset. Failure to maintain it will devalue the asset and conflict with the Government’s aim to implement Highway Asset Management and Whole Life Accounting.			
Policy:	The programme meets the requirements of the Council’s Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 in that maintenance of the road network is not being considered in isolation. Many other transport policy links will be achieved in areas such as road safety and active travel. The programme contributes towards the Council’s Strategic Priority “ a prosperous and resilient West Berkshire ”.			
	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		See Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment, Stage 1.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?			X	

Environmental Impact:		X		<p>Highway Improvement works by their nature produce additional carbon emissions. Every effort will be made to try and minimise this by using alternative materials (low temperature asphalts for example) where possible, use of local recycled materials and the use of electric plant. The Highways Asset Management Plan is currently being updated with a view to assessing how highway operations can be delivered carbon neutral.</p> <p>Not maintaining the Highway Asset could result in key routes falling into disrepair and having to be restricted or closed altogether. This would result in longer journeys and increased carbon. It is therefore considered that maintaining the highway in line with good asset management will have an overall neutral effect on the environment.</p>
Health Impact:		X		No major Health Implications arising from this report.
ICT Impact:				Not applicable.
Digital Services Impact:				Not applicable.
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			A well maintained and safe highway network for all road users, will provide an effective network to help stimulate movement across the district to enhance the local economy and help achieve the Strategic Priority “ a prosperous and resilient West Berkshire ”.
Core Business:	X			The programme will contribute positively towards the following priorities, “ a prosperous and resilient West Berkshire ” and contribute towards “ Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency ”.

Data Impact:		X		See Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment.
Consultation and Engagement:	Consultation is not formally undertaken as the programme is based on objective data from technical surveys. However, any comments received from stakeholders during the previous 12 month period are considered and all local Ward Members and Town/Parish Councils are advised of scheme details in advance of work commencing. The full programme will also be published on the Council’s website.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme has been developed in accordance with highway asset management principles as detailed in the UKRLG/HMEP Asset Management Guidance, Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management “Well-managed Highways”, the Transport Infrastructure Assets Code “Guidance to Support Asset Management”, Financial Management and reporting and the Council’s approved Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP).
- 4.2 In accordance with the requirements of the Transport Infrastructure Assets Code, the improvement programme (structural repair, surfacing, surface dressing) is fully funded from the Capital Programme.

5 Introduction/Background

Introduction

- 5.1 Purpose of this report – the Executive Member for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel approves Year 1 (2024/25) of the Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27.

Background

- 5.2 The Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme will help contribute towards the Council Strategic Priority to “**a prosperous and resilient West Berkshire**”. It will deliver key infrastructure projects in relation to the road network.

The Council’s approach to highway maintenance and asset management is described in the Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 (LTP) and the Council’s approved Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP). The HAMP policy is currently under review. The new document will support the Corporate Strategy and will illustrate how highway asset management aligns to the West Berkshire Vision 2036 and its aspiration that West Berkshire is a place where everyone is given the chance to thrive, regardless of their background.

Adopting a best practice Highways Infrastructure Asset Management approach will assist West Berkshire’s vision to be environmentally sustainable.

The Council's Environment Strategy 2020-2030 puts forward a range of actions setting the Council on the path to achieve its primary target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

The asset management approach aligns to the Council's Environment Strategy 2020-2030 supporting a cross department approach to achieving the Council's targets specifically contributing through;

- Recycling waste materials and use recycled material, both in the office and on site where practical within schemes adopting a circular economy approach.
- Supporting environmentally friendly methods of transport, such as bicycle and on-foot.
- Promoting the use of buses as a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people.
- Working to ensure that West Berkshire's footways and cycleways are kept in good order.
- Prioritising investment in infrastructure that enables residents to use more sustainable transport options.
- Enabling a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks.
- Ensuring the durability of the highway infrastructure especially given extreme weather events.
- Continuing to increase the number of charging points for electric vehicles in West Berkshire.
- Building carbon assessments into decision making tools for schemes.
- Identifying locations across the highway network where the Council can adjust operations to promote, protect or preserve the biodiversity of the natural habitats and ecological features of those sites.
- Undertaking research into biodiversity net gain in respect to the management of the highway asset, utilising this information to further shape the Council's approach to asset management.

There is predicted to be a transport modal shift away from single use car journeys, which may, in some areas, decrease demand on West Berkshire's roads. The Council will monitor this shift and, where necessary, will influence changes that promote environmental sustainability.

5.3 Highway maintenance and improvements is one of the six local transport goals set out in the LTP. The LTP also shows how this goal and the Council's sustainable approach helps to address other key issues identified in the plan such as safer travel, minimising the impact on the environment, and improving accessibility. The LTP confirms that the Council will continue to operate a rolling Highway Improvement Programme refreshed annually through its supporting Implementation Plan.

5.4 There are approximately 1303km of public highway in West Berkshire (more than Reading and Wokingham combined), comprising 117km of "A" roads, 75km of "B" roads, 399km of "C" roads and 712km of unclassified "U" roads. Consequently, maintenance of the road network presents real challenges. However, by adopting an asset management approach, the Environment Department can identify and treat roads

at the right time to maximise design life at minimum cost. This approach has enabled the Council to maintain and improve the condition of the classified road network at a consistent level since 2009/10. This can be seen in appendix D.

Programme Development

5.5 The Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme detailed in Appendix C has been compiled using the results of technical surveys on the principal classified (A road), non-principal classified (B and C roads) and unclassified (U roads).

5.6 Since 2002, the Council has been carrying out a comprehensive programme of annual testing to determine the condition of the highway network and establish the Government's defined data sets for the condition of the principal classified, non-principal classified and unclassified road networks including skid resistance. For 2024/25, the national data sets are defined as follows and expressed as a % of road length under each class where maintenance should be considered:

130 – 01 Condition of Principal Roads

130 – 02 Condition of Non Principal Roads

130 – 03 SCRIM (Side-way force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine)

130 – 04 Carriageway work completed

5.7 Whilst there is no national requirement to report on the unclassified network, the Council continues to survey the unclassified network annually to establish its condition for the purpose of developing appropriate programmes of repair in accordance with current asset management guidance and best practice. For 2024/25, the local data set is defined as follows and expressed as a % of road length where maintenance should be considered:

BV224b Condition of Unclassified Roads

5.8 The condition of the classified network (A, B and C class roads) is measured using SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads) which was introduced in 2003/04. In 2010, SCANNER was also used to measure the condition of the unclassified road network (U roads). All surveys are performed in accordance with national standards and guidance.

5.9 The skid resistance of the busiest roads on the network (Maintenance Category 2, 3a and 3b) is measured using SCRIM (Side-way force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine). Using SCRIM and wet injury accident data, skid deficient sites have been identified and programmed accordingly and these are shown in bold text within the programme.

5.10 Details of the survey methodology, coverage and the Council's approach to highway asset management are described in the LTP and in detail within the Council's Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP). A summary of the methodology is provided in the following paragraphs.

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- 5.11 The road maintenance approach adopted by the Council has been to tackle stretches of road that in terms of their condition, are showing as “amber” to bring them back to “green”. “Red sections are maintained in a safe condition and, subject to their size, are either repaired under a separate patching programme or are included as a larger highway improvement project. The approach aligns with the guidance given in the Code of Practice on Transport/Infrastructure Assets and delivers better value for money in the medium/long term for any defined level of service or condition. In fact, this approach has already resulted in improvements across the range of performance indicators demonstrating that West Berkshire Council is achieving good value for money in respect of its investment in highway maintenance.
- 5.12 The traffic light system of red, amber and green is a methodology adopted to categorise roads based on survey data relating to surface texture, cracking, rut depth and ride quality.

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- 5.13 The programme provided in Appendix C covers the period 2024/25 – 2026/27 and lists in alphabetical order by Parish or Town those roads requiring treatment. The programme has been developed using cost estimates and a provisional annual capital budget of £6,206m for 2024/25.
- 5.14 It is important to note, that it may be necessary to make changes to the programme once detailed costings, available budgets and potential savings have been established.
- 5.15 The new Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme has been developed to deliver our set service levels of 3%, 3% and 5% (Principal Classified NI 130 – 01, Non-principal classified NI 130 – 02 and unclassified BV224b respectively). (These service levels or KPI’s are a %age of road that requires maintenance, lower is better).
- 5.16 A range of different surface treatments will be used, depending on the type and location of each road being treated. This can vary from dense macadam’s on minor estate roads, surface dressing (sometimes referred to as “tar and chippings”) in rural areas through to resurfacing (overlay or inlay) and complete reconstruction. Where a pre-treatment is required to strengthen the road, for example deep machine patching, to gain optimum effectiveness and value for money, these will normally receive a proprietary surface dressing treatment the following financial year. This preventative maintenance approach is important to maintain the condition and value of the highway network within West Berkshire.
- 5.17 For skid deficient sites, it should be noted that they may not display any of the normal visible defects like rutting, cracking, lamination, or “potholes”. Treatments would include surface dressing, micro asphalt, and retexturing (an abrasive treatment that restores texture to the existing surface). The skid deficient sites are shown in bold text within the programme.
- 5.18 Wherever possible, roads in residential and built-up areas will be resurfaced using materials that exhibit low surface noise when trafficked. In addition, every effort will be made to use local and recycled materials to contribute towards the Council’s Corporate Priority “**Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency**”.

- 5.19 In line with the Council's agreed policy, any road included in the programme for resurfacing with traffic calming measure (speed cushions) will have those cushions reinstated to the current specification. The opportunity will also be taken, where appropriate, to review any existing other traffic management arrangements. This will normally involve consultation with residents, Ward Members and the Town or Parish Council.
- 5.20 Details of the annual programme are widely distributed to all local Town and Parish Councils and Ward Members. Regularly updated information is also available on the Council's website.

Programme Changes

- 5.21 From time to time, circumstances change which may necessitate alterations to the programme. Such circumstances may include unforeseen circumstances on site, utility activities and excessive demand on contractors and/or materials, new technical data or accelerated deterioration as a result of severe weather conditions. If a programmed scheme has to be deferred, where appropriate, a suitable replacement site will be selected from the programme in agreement with the Executive Member Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.

Proposals

- 5.22 By approving year one (2024/25) of the Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme, the Council will continue to meet its duty to maintain the highway in a safe and serviceable condition by undertaking the appropriate work on the network in a timely and cost-effective manner (Highway Act 1980). A well maintained and safe highway network for all road users, should result in reduced accidents/third party claims, a safer environment, and an effective network to help stimulate movement across the district to enhance the local economy.

6 Supporting Information

Appendices C, D and E (attached to report).

7 Options for consideration

- 7.1 Do nothing – Failure to undertake the Highway Improvement Programme will affect the availability, value, safety, and the Council's ability to meet its legal duty to maintain a safe network under the Highways Act 1980.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The Highway Improvement Programme has been developed in accordance with the Council's approved Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) using surveyed condition data and should be approved ready for implementation in April 2024.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment.

9.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment.

9.3 Appendix C – Three-Year Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27.

9.4 Appendix D – Condition Indicators.

9.5 Appendix E – Summary of Members Comments.

Background Papers:

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wards affected: Some Wards, Town and Parish Councils.

Officer details:

Name: Andrew Reynolds
Job Title: Asset Manager
Tel No: 01635 519076
E-mail: andrew.reynolds@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;**
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.*
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:	That the Executive Member for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel approves Year 1 (2024/25) of the Three Year Highway Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27.
Summary of relevant legislation:	Highway Act 1980.
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:	Andrew Reynolds
Name of Service/Directorate:	Jon Winstanley
Name of assessor:	Andrew Reynolds
Date of assessment:	31/01/2024
Version and release date (if applicable):	

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 type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input 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:	To maintain the public highway in a safe and serviceable condition to comply with the Council’s duty to maintain the highway as outlined in the Highways Act 1980.

Objectives:	To maintain the condition of the public highway in accordance with the service levels set out in the Council's Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP). To comply with Government Guidance.
Outcomes:	The Council continues to meet its duty to maintain the highway in a safe and serviceable condition by undertaking the appropriate work on the network in a timely and cost-effective manner.
Benefits:	A well maintained and safe highway network for all road users, reduced accidents/third party claims, safer environment and an effective network to help stimulate movement across the district to enhance the local economy.

(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	The proposed improvement programme does not specifically impact on any "Age" groups.	Improving the condition of the road network will benefit all "Age" groups.
Disability	The proposed improvement programme does not specifically impact on any "Disability" groups.	N/A
Gender Reassignment	No particular "Gender Reassignment" groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No particular "Marriage and Civil Partnership" groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	No particular "Pregnancy and Maternity" groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Race	No particular "Race" groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Religion or Belief	No particular "Religion or Belief" groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A

Sex	No particular “Sex” groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	No particular “Sexual Orientation” groups will be disadvantaged.	N/A
Further Comments:		
Highway Improvement works affect all users equally. However, provisions will be made on a scheme by scheme basis, to ensure that all users can access the highway in a safe and appropriate manner in accordance with current Health and Safety Legislation.		

(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"/>
Due to the nature of the works, minor disruption could result and affect the public, but this will be mitigated by maintaining access to private properties and businesses (whenever possible) during the work and providing the necessary signage to divert traffic.	
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"/>
Due to the nature of the works, minor disruption could result and affect the public, but this will be mitigated by maintaining access to private properties and businesses (whenever possible) during the work and providing the necessary signage to divert traffic.	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a EqlA 2.

If an EqlA 2 is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the EqlA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

(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: Andrew Reynolds

Date: 31/01/2024

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

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
Service:	Environment
Team:	Asset Management
Lead Officer:	Andrew Reynolds
Title of Project/System:	Three-Year Highway Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27
Date of Assessment:	31 January 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><i>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”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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	Yes	No
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?		
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"/>
Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised		

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.