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## Highways Network Management Works Programme 2026-27

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decisions
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Stuart Gourley
<b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b> <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	N/A
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	N/A
<b>Report Author:</b>	Andy Alty
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID 4784

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### 1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2026-27.

### 2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways approves the proposed Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2026-27 as presented in Appendix A of this report.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	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 2026-27.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	N/A
<b>Legal:</b>	Some projects on the programme will require the assistance of Legal Services, particularly the drafting and sealing of Traffic Regulation Orders.

<b>Risk Management:</b>	Projects within the Programme will be managed in accordance with the relevant processes in respect of financial and health & safety risks.			
<b>Property:</b>	N/A			
<b>Policy:</b>	N/A			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
<b>B</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, for example disabled people and children.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			Some of the projects will deliver infrastructure to encourage or enable sustainable travel and will therefore have a beneficial impact on the environment.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	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.

<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	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”.
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>All Ward Members have been consulted as to the content of this report.</p> <p>No comments were received.</p> <p>Any further comments will be reported verbally at the Individual Decision meeting.</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Highways Network Management Works Programme for 2026-27.
- 4.2 The Council’s Capital Programme and Revenue budget for 2026-27, approved at the Council meeting in February 2026, allocate 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 Environment and Highways.

## 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 road 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 and implementation 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 responsible for delivering larger highway 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) Provides information to stakeholders, especially in respect of potentially disruptive work on the Highway;
- (c) Inspects third party sites to ensure compliance with permit conditions and technical specifications;
- (d) 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.

**Additional information regarding changes to Speed Limits**

5.9 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. The aim of this process is to ensure that speed limits are set consistently and at a level which will achieve a high level of compliance. Any changes agreed by the Task Group can only be implemented subject to a statutory consultation process.

5.10 The Council is committed to implementing more 20mph speed limits in residential areas where local residents support them. Following a pilot scheme to introduce a 20mph limit covering the majority of residential roads in Theale, further area-wide 20mph speed limit projects have been developed. 20mph projects currently sit outside the Speed Limit Review process and any requests for 20mph speed limits that are received separately will be considered as part of the development of area-wide projects.

**Additional information regarding Active Travel Infrastructure Projects**

5.11 Active travel infrastructure projects involve the construction of new, or improvements to existing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Active Travel England, an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport, oversees and allocates 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.

5.12 Larger scale active travel infrastructure projects are normally implemented by the Projects team and are subject to stakeholder consultation before construction.

### Capital Finance

5.13 Capital budgets were approved at the Council meeting in February 2026 as follows:

Network Management/Safety Improvements	95,000
Traffic Signal Upgrades	70,000
Active Travel Infrastructure	1,845,260
School Safety Programme	96,000
Speed Limits	200,000
	2,306,260

### Proposals

5.14 The proposed programme is included as Appendix A. 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.

5.15 Schemes are grouped together on the programme according to the type of project, which largely reflect the budget from which they are funded. Schemes are listed under each heading in priority order, which therefore reflects the order in which they will be delivered.

5.16 The Network Management team aims to complete the projects listed in the programme before the end of the 2026-27 financial year, assuming that the team is fully staffed, with the exception of larger projects which may extend across two or more years. Any projects which are not complete at the end of the year would be carried forward to following year.

5.17 Further projects may be identified over the course of the year and added to the programme in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways, but unless there is a compelling reason to deliver them quickly, these will be highlighted as new projects and will receive a lower priority than those already on the programme.

5.18 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.

5.19 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.

5.20 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 Options for consideration

- 6.1 It is considered that the approach outlined above is the most appropriate way of recording, managing and monitoring the various projects delivered by the Network Management Team. This approach has been developed over several years and refined in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
- 6.2 The alternative option would be to not have Works Programme. Without an approved programme, 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 Smaller projects, feasibility assessments and business as usual activities will be managed and prioritised in discussion with the Environment and Highways Portfolio Holder. Larger projects and substantial programmes of work will be governed via the Council's Corporate Programme 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

Appendix A – Proposed Highways Network Management Works Programme 2026-27

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### 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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or 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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## Appendix A – Draft Programme 2026-27