

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 16 April 2025
Subject:	Highways Capital Programme Update	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations	

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is twofold –
 - Re-profile the proposed spending priorities for the remaining years of the Highway Maintenance element of the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) funds, including structures, to take account of changing need for spend on structures. An updated scheme list for the structure's element will be presented in the Appendix.
2. The highway network is one of the most valuable assets that the Council operates, and is a fundamental connector of people, businesses, and the services that the Council provides. A well-maintained highway network supports our Council priorities as set out in Let's Do It.
3. As a highway network ages, deterioration increases to the stage where potholes form and require expensive reactive repairs. We have valued the deterioration of our network at approximately £5 million per year.
4. The funding we receive from the Department for Transport (DfT) generally only allows us to prioritise approximately £1.2 million per year for resurfacing schemes and structures. This is not sufficient and will lead to a deteriorating network.
5. Through HIS (Highway Investment Strategy) tranches 1, 2 & 3 an additional substantial investment in our highway asset has been made available since 2017/2018. This additional funding has allowed us to halt deterioration on our classified highways. The current HIS3 programme is addressing some member aspirations by prioritising works to the local network and is on-going. This is approaching its final year and will be the subject of a future report, so this report concentrates solely on the DfT element of the funding
6. Highway Maintenance CRSTS funds have also been allocated to Bury through GMCA from the Department for Transport. They are an amalgamation of funds received in previous years under the guises of pothole and challenge funding, together with highway maintenance and incentive funding.

7. Highway Maintenance CRSTS is a five year settlement of £12.745 million from 2022/23 to 2026/27. Some of the priorities for expenditure have altered since the previously approved report and therefore this report will focus on the remaining two years of the CRSTS settlement. This amounts to a total of £2.549 million annually
8. In line with previous years 50% of CRSTS will be allocated to planned maintenance, including highway resurfacing and bridge and structures maintenance. The remaining proportions will be allocated to preventative maintenance.
9. The table below summarises the proposed spending profile for planned maintenance schemes only, including structures, based on allocations of the above proportions over the remaining 2 year period from the 2025/26 financial year. The overall figures include an amount of slippage from previous years due mainly to inflationary pressures not having as significant an impact as anticipated, plus technical difficulties pushing some of the structures schemes further back in the programme

Year	Resurfacing (‘000s)	Structures (‘000s)	Total (‘000s)
2025/26	£ 1,140	£ 1,160	£ 2,300
2026/27	£ 1,820	£ 480	£ 2,300
Total	£ 2,960	£ 1,640	£ 4,600

10. The resurfacing schemes have been prioritised based on condition surveys, road hierarchies and other relevant data, including input from highway inspectors. These schemes are detailed are combined with HIS3 schemes as two ranked order lists for strategic and unclassified roads respectively.
11. The initial prioritisation of schemes has been shared with ward councillors as part of an engagement process culminating in the lists set out in the Appendices.
12. Anticipated inflationary pressures which saw construction prices increase significantly in recent years have slowed down, leading to underspends on schemes undertaken from the existing lists, such that reserve list schemes are already being scheduled. This underspend coincides with an increased demand for spending on structures due to outcomes from principal inspections and feasibility work. The above table includes for the resultant slippage on highway works along with slippage of structures costs from previous years

13. It should be noted that there are also risks of some parts of the network deteriorating quicker than others, which could also mean the rank order of proposed schemes may need to change to reflect future condition.
14. The DfT funding allocations were traditionally split to allow capital maintenance of the Council's highway structures based on a fixed percentage of the overall allocation. The dwindling scale of the allocation in relation the comparative costs of undertaking refurbishments of structures has meant that one year's structures allocation is not sufficient for an individual major scheme. Consequently, there have been recent years where no works were undertaken to structures, but larger percentages are required when major works become necessary. The following works are required to highway structures in the coming years
15. Miscellaneous Structures and Feasibility – The Council's structures priorities change annually following results from principal inspections which can often highlight major safety issues. Miscellaneous schemes under this heading are often urgent due to the increased health safety risks associated with structures, but without a specific budget. There may also often be preliminary, feasibility and investigation, preparatory and design work required in order to progress larger scale schemes not yet in the main programme of works, or to prepare work bank schemes for bids for future external funding
16. Market Street Bridge - The bridge carries Market Street, near to Bury town centre over the East Lancashire Railway line. A principal inspection has identified a number of concrete bearing plinths that support the bridge have or are failing. Further investigation has been undertaken to determine why these plinths have failed and a scheme of repair has been designed to repair the failed plinths and associated defects. The amended programme of structures reflects the costs of the final scheme following detailed design. The complex nature of these works and the impact on the highway and East Lancashire Railway operations has delayed the start of these works, which are due to commence shortly
17. Eagle & Child Retaining Wall – This structure retains the A56 in Ramsbottom. Recent inspections noted bulging and other defects to the wall and heavy deformation of the footpath to the front of the wall. Investigative works and design has now been undertaken masonry for repairs/refurbishment of the wall, but the start of construction is being hampered due to agreeing easements / access to the adjoining land, which is adjacent to the garden of the public house / restaurant.
18. Subways & lighting - The Structures Team have been undertaking an ongoing improvement project to subway lighting converting existing lighting units to more efficient LED unit, which also aligns with the street lighting strategies

19. Walshaw Bank Footbridge – This footbridge is in very poor condition and requires replacing, together with refurbishment works to the abutments and training walls
20. Woodhill Bridge – This structure is a masonry arch bridge which has extensive defects to the masonry and requires repairs, rebuilding and pointing to the masonry arch, spandrels and training walls
21. Protective Systems to Structures – the life of structures can often be greatly extended by renewing protective systems to steel elements or renewing waterproofing to bridge decks. There are a number of smaller structures currently in need of treatment to prevent further erosion of the main steel elements

Recommendation(s)

22. It is recommended that the updated programme of structures schemes in Appendix 1 are approved.
23. It is recommended that delegated authority given to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations to approve any changes in the ranking required by fluctuations in construction prices and network deterioration that are recommended by officers be extended to include structures to allow flexibility for shifting priorities.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

24. The Council as the Highway Authority in Bury has a statutory duty to maintain those parts of the public highway, including structures deemed to be publicly maintainable.
25. The condition of the Council's highway and bridges stock is assessed annually, leading to changing priorities year on year, which needs to be reflected in the on-going programme as some parts of the network and associated structures deteriorate more quickly than others

Alternative options considered and rejected

26. To continue with the previously approved programme, which would not fund some vital structures works and lead to unacceptable health and safety risks

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: P.Stokes, A.Southgate

Position: Head of Engineering & Streetscene, Group Manager (Major Projects)

Department: Operations

E-mail: p.stokes@bury.gov.uk, a.m.southgate@bury.gov.uk

Background

27. Cabinet Report (16/03/23) – Highways Capital Programme – Highway Maintenance Funding 2023/24 – 2026/27 and Integrated Transport Block 22/23

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

28. Well maintained highways provide better environments for our local communities and support the activities of businesses, enterprises and people. The consultation across all wards, has ensured a collaborative approach has been taken with local communities involved

Equality Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the outcome(s) of an initial or full EIA and make **specific reference regarding the protected characteristic of Looked After Children**. Intranet link to EIA documents is [here](#).*

29. EIA is not required as this is an update and information report. Full EIAs may be required for individual works detailed within this report.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the Environmental impact of this decision. Please include the impact on both **Carbon emissions** (contact climate@bury.gov.uk for advice) and **Biodiversity** (contact c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk for advice)*

30. We use various materials to carry out resurfacing, which are carbon intensive. The transportation of the materials to the site will also contribute to the carbon footprint of the programme, together with the construction machinery used during the project. However the project may result in reduced carbon emissions in the long term by improving local road conditions and reducing the need for regular reactive repairs which can lead to fewer carbon emissions from maintenance activities.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Further deterioration of the highway network and associated structures.	If approved, it will allow adjustment of CRSTS funding to reflect current needs

Legal Implications:

31. The Council as the Highway Authority has a statutory duty under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, to maintain those parts of the public highway, at public expense.

Financial Implications:

31. There are no direct implications on the MTFS resulting from the proposal which, if agreed, will be reflected in the updated capital programme for delivery

Appendices:

Please list any appended documents.

Appendix 1 – Proposed Structures Programme 2025/26 to 2026/27

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning