



REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

MAINTENANCE CHALLENGE FUND AND SAFER ROADS FUND BIDS

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the outcome of two Department for Transport (DfT) bids for funding from the Maintenance Challenge Fund and Safer Roads Fund; and for Committee to approve the delivery of the two schemes.

Background

2. The DfT's Roads Funding: Information Pack published in January 2017 announced that a £75m Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund would be made available in 2017/18. This Fund is to enable local highway authorities in England to bid for major maintenance projects that are otherwise difficult to fund through the normal annual 'needs based formula' capital maintenance funding they receive. Local highway authorities were able to bid for a maximum of £5m for an individual scheme.
3. The DfT's Roads Funding: Information Pack also announced a new Safer Roads Fund which totals £175m between 2017/18 and 2020/21; of which £25m is available in 2017/18. Analysis by the Road Safety Foundation has identified 50 specific sections of local 'A' roads where the risk of fatal and serious collisions is highest and the local highway authorities responsible for these roads would be eligible to bid for funding from the Safer Roads Fund to improve the safety of these specific sections of road. The Safer Roads Fund focusses on risk of potential accidents, rather than specifically addressing reported historic injury accidents.
4. Subsequently DfT invited local highway authorities to bid for the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund by the 31st March 2017; and to bid for the Safer Roads Fund by either 28th April 2017, or 29th September 2017. The submission of the two Bids in principal was included in the Highways infrastructure programmes 2017/18 report which was approved at the 16th March 2017 Transport & Highways Committee.

Maintenance Challenge Fund

5. Following an assessment of roads condition against the funding criteria, major maintenance works as a whole route treatment along the A38/A617 Mansfield & Ashfield Regeneration Route were prioritised for the Maintenance Challenge Fund bid because of a number of factors, including:
 - The A38/A617 transport corridor plays an essential role in delivering growth in the area:

- significant housing/employment growth is planned along it; therefore delivering the proposed improvements fits in with the major developments due to take place in the area
 - it provides a key east-west link between the M1 and A1 helping link residents/local businesses to the strategic road network and therefore to jobs/markets further afield
 - it has a hospital located on it and is an M1 diversion route
 - Since MARR opened traffic volumes on the route have increased, particularly for LGVs/HGVs servicing businesses operating from local industrial/retail parks. HGV volumes are 3-7 times higher than originally forecast, consequently accelerating deterioration of the roads. The proposed improvements will make this key route more resilient:
 - during the last five years, the A38/A617 corridor has suffered delays due to highway maintenance repairs through at least 10 failures; causing journey time delay for local businesses and residents during the works. This disruption will continue and increase in the future unless works are undertaken as proposed in the bid
 - the work involved is far greater than the annual block allocation for maintenance of 'A' road in Nottinghamshire. Using this funding and focussing on this route alone, ignoring the decline of the remaining 'A' road network, it would take an estimated seven years to undertake the work being considered as part of this bid
 - Delivering the maintenance improvements as a whole route treatment will provide cost savings – extending the useful life of the carriageway surfacing; reduction in temporary traffic management required to deliver reactive maintenance, as well as a reduction in the lost productivity from delays during the works; and reduced exposure to 3rd party claims
 - The proposals will also improve noise levels at two locations on the A38 identified through the DEFRA 2nd round noise-mapping.
6. The total cost of the works is estimated to be £6m. Bids to DfT were subject to a maximum £5m and required to provide a local contribution of at least 10% towards the total scheme costs. The County Council's bid therefore totalled £5m with a local contribution of £1m; made up of £500,000 from the County Council's capital funding allocation towards highways maintenance and £500,000 for the highway improvement works being undertaken as part of the s278 agreement for the Lindhurst development (which will complement the maintenance scheme).
7. On 1st August 2017 the DfT informed the County Council that the A38/A617 Maintenance Challenge Fund bid has been successful in securing £5m DfT funding which must be spent during 2017/18; and the Council is currently awaiting the grant conditions letter.

Safer Roads Fund

8. Two of the 50 local 'A' roads, where the risk of fatal and serious collisions is highest, identified by the Road Safety Foundation analysis extend into Nottinghamshire – the A634 (Blyth to Maltby) and the A161 (Beckingham to North Lincolnshire). The County Council were therefore invited to submit bids for road safety improvements on these roads to the DfT by 28th April 2017 for the A634 and by 29th September 2017 for the A161.

9. Where a road crosses local highway authority boundaries, the authority with the majority of the road is required to lead on the bid and be the accountable body for any associated funding award. The County Council therefore led on the A634 (Blyth to Maltby) bid; whilst North Lincolnshire will lead on the A161 (Beckingham to North Lincolnshire) bid.
10. The section of the A634 (A631 Maltby to A1 Blyth) identified in the iRAP risk ratings was ranked 25th in the high risk category of the country's roads (based on the reported killed and seriously injured (KSI) accident records for 2012-2014). It is in the highway authority areas of Nottinghamshire and Rotherham MBC and passes through the conurbations of Maltby, Oldcotes and Blyth.
11. During the 2012-2014 period there were nine KSI accidents reported, including one fatal accident. As would be expected on a narrow rural single carriageway road of this type, accidents included single vehicle collisions, head on collisions, and overtaking accidents. These were distributed along the route with some small concentrations at particular bends. There were also more urban types of accidents within the conurbations of Maltby, Oldcotes and Blyth. In Oldcotes a mini-roundabout had a cluster of seven reported injury accidents in the period; with many accidents at the site involving two-wheeled vehicles.
12. A subsequent iRAP assessment carried out as part of the DfT's Pathfinders Study suggested a programme of improvements to the road. These are intended to address not only reported accidents, but also the risk of future accidents presented by highway alignment, infrastructure, and condition. The iRAP programme of improvements formed the basis of the Safer Roads Fund bid with alternative measures included where they were felt to be more appropriate or practicable, based on local knowledge.
13. The proposed scheme included in the Bid consists of predominantly conventional safety engineering measures including roadside barriers, shoulder widening, skid resistance upgrades, shoulder rumble strips, removal of roadside hazards, lowering of speed limits, installation of traffic signals, and central hatching.
14. The scheme is intended to reduce risk to road users over an extended future lifespan, and therefore reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the road over the next 20 years. Based on an analysis of the proposed measures, it is anticipated that a total of 25.2 fatal and serious Injuries would be saved over the 20 year analysis period following implementation.
15. The total cost of the scheme is £2.301m – £1.204m on Nottinghamshire's highway and £0.977m on Rotherham MBC's highway. The County Council bid for £2.181m with the County Council providing a local contribution of £120,000 from its local safety capital allocation over the two financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19. An update on the outcome of the bid will be reported orally to the meeting.
16. The County Council is currently working with North Lincolnshire Council to develop the measures for inclusion in the A161 (Beckingham to North Lincolnshire) Safer Roads Fund bid in order to submit the Bid by the 29th September 2017 deadline.

Other Options

17. The Council may choose to not accept either or both of the grant funding awards from the DfT.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. The funding will help improve the highway infrastructure in the county, and in doing so reduce road casualties and improve economic output in the county. The funding will also mean that the County Council saves money in the longer-term both on maintenance of its highway and on local safety schemes.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

20. The financial implications are covered in the main body of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. It is recommended that Policy Committee approves:

- a) The acceptance and delivery of the £5m Maintenance Challenge Fund DfT capital grant funding.
- b) The acceptance and delivery of the £2.181m Safer Roads Fund DfT capital grant funding.
- c) A variation of the capital programme is made and for NCC expenditure to be incurred as set out in the report.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS, MBE
Leader of the Council

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Constitutional Comments [SLB 23/08/2017]

Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments [PH 22/08/2017]

The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report. The capital programme will require a variation to reflect acceptance of any additional grant.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- A38/A617 Mansfield & Ashfield Regeneration Route Maintenance Challenge Fund Bid documents
- Safer Roads Fund Scheme A634 (A631 Maltby to A1 Blyth) Bid documents
- 16th March 2017 Transport & Highways Committee report – Highways infrastructure programmes 2017/18

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- Ashfields – Councillor Jason Zadrozny
- Sutton Central & East – Councillor Samantha Deakin
- Sutton North – Councillor Helen-Ann Smith
- Blyth & Harworth – Councillor Sheila Place
- Mansfield East – Councillor Vaughan Hopewell
- Mansfield East – Councillor Martin Wright
- Mansfield South – Councillor Stephen Garner
- Mansfield South – Councillor Andy Sissons
- Mansfield West – Councillor Paul Henshaw
- Mansfield West – Councillor Diana Meale