

EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO: HIGHWAYS**1. Cabinet decisions since the last Executive Report to the County Council**

- 1.1 There will have been 4 Cabinet meetings (18 July 2017, 25 September 2017, 23 October 2017, and 13 November 2017) since the last Executive Report to County Council. The items of business specifically attributed to this portfolio were:-

Cabinet – 23 October 2017

Cabinet agreed a strategy for the provision of charging points for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) on Hertfordshire's highways.

2. Consequences of Cabinet decisions before the last meeting of the County Council on 18 July 2017

- 2.1 On 10 July 2017 Cabinet approved the Transport Asset Management Plan Annual Report for 2016. This revised the condition targets for Hertfordshire's roads.

3. Anticipated/ future decisions to be made by Cabinet**3.1 Cabinet – 18 December 2017**

Forward Plan ref: A051/17 - Agree criteria for Winter Gritting programme for 2018/19;

Forward Plan ref: A075/17 - Evolution of Highways Drainage Service (review of the Cyclical Routine Drainage Maintenance Service and proposals to revive this service to improve its effectiveness and efficiency whilst ensuring that it is affordable and sustainable)

Forward Plan ref: A072/17 - Highway Service Review: (i) Potential extension of Highways Service Term (Ringway) Contract and (ii) Potential extension to the Client Support Term (Opus-Arup) Contract

Cabinet – 19 February 2018

Forward Plan ref: A081/17 - Consider the LED Dimming Strategy (level of lighting to be agreed)

4. Key Partnerships

- 4.1 Nothing to report.

5. Other comments

5.1 Following considerable efforts by all involved in the Highways Service, there have been significant improvements in service levels and the service is now stable and improving. In this vein, I was particularly encouraged to see the recent internal audit report (ref 20126/16/001) on the various improvement initiatives that have been undertaken in the highways service. This report gave these “Substantial Assurance” with no recommendations. The focus in the Highways Service now is on identifying and liberating trapped resources within the service that are not being used as efficiently and effectively as they could be, by redesigning service delivery and reinvesting these resources back in to the highways service. The following two items are examples of this type of service development.

5.1 Drainage

A more targeted ‘intelligent’ approach to the delivery of the gully emptying and cleaning service is being developed to ensure only gullies that need cleaning are emptied through revised maintenance frequencies. This approach makes use of improved asset data that Ringway have been collecting.

The new approach will see:

- No change to the current emptying and cleaning frequencies for vulnerable gullies and those on high speed roads.
- Gully emptying and cleaning frequencies being adjusted based on silt levels.
- Blocked gullies being cleared within 12 months of being reported/identified.
- Members of the public getting an acknowledgement of blocked gullies (that will then be added to the 12 month clearing cycle)
- More transparency of gully status through GIS mapping.

The aim is to introduce the new approach from April 2018. When cleaned, gullies will be rated as ‘good’, ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ based on the volume of silt recorded. Gullies recorded as ‘good’ could have their cleaning frequency changed from 18 months to 24 months. Changes would be applied on whole road sections. Gullies rated as ‘poor’ could be cleaned more frequently if the rating is recorded over two consecutive cleans.

5.2 Funding Routine Maintenance

I am proposing a new funding structure within the Highways Service for 2018/19 onwards that protects the £90k Highways Locality Budget (HLB) per member into the foreseeable future, releases revenue funding for officers to direct annual campaigns of routine maintenance and, therefore, avoid the need for the funding of future Restoration projects.

As a whole, we members have tended to spend more of our HLB on capital activity than the budget and less on revenue activity.

By increasing the capital element of HLB to £77k per member, approximately £1m of revenue funding can be liberated for much needed routine maintenance such as drainage, vegetation control and lining operations.

There will be opportunities for members to request to spend more, or less of their £13k revenue allocation, providing they make that request with clear details of their intentions well before the start of the financial year to enable works and budgets to be planned.

5.3 Highways Service Review

Following a thorough review of the current levels of service provided by Ringway and Opus Arup as Highways Service Term (HST) and Highways Client Support Term (CST) suppliers (also see 3 above) and their scope for further improvements, alongside a review of market conditions and an assessment of the cost and implications of re-procurement, officers have recommended extending both contracts by 5 years to the end of September 2024. A report on this matter will be considered by Highways Panel on 16 November 2017 and by Cabinet on 18 December 2017.

6. **Cabinet Panels**

- 6.1 Since the last Executive Report to Council, the Highways Cabinet Panel has met on 5 September 2017 and 16 November 2017. The matters discussed can be found at the following locations:

[Highways Cabinet Panel - 5 September 2017](#)

[Highways Cabinet Panel - 16 November 2017](#)

Ralph Sangster
Executive Member for Highways
November 2017