



# Northumberland County Council

CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

DATE : 8 FEBRUARY 2021

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## **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME 2021-22 AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN U AND C ROADS AND FOOTWAYS PROGRAMME 2021-22**

**Report of the Interim Executive Director: Rick O'Farrell**

**Cabinet Member: Glen Sanderson, Leader of Council**

### **Purpose of report**

This report sets out the details of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for 2021-22 and the draft Highway Maintenance Investment in U and C Roads and Footways programme for 2021-22 for consideration and comment by the Local Area Council, prior to final approval of the programme.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to comment on the proposals, so that their comments can be considered in the finalisation of both the LTP programme for 2021-22 and the Highway Maintenance Investment in U and C Roads and Footways programme for 2021-22.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2018-2021:

- 'Connecting - We want you to have access to the things you need'
- How - "We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone"
- 'Living - We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for'
- 'Enjoying - We want you to love where you live'
- Success Measures - "We want to make a difference"

### **LTP Programme 2021 - 22**

#### **Key issues**

1. The Local Transport Plan grant allocation is determined for the Council by the Department of Transport (DfT). The DfT have yet to announce the capital allocations for 2021/22 and beyond. Subsequently, at this stage an indicative settlement of £18,654,000 has been assumed, based on the LTP allocation received from the DfT at the start of 2020/21.

2. During the course of the delivery of the 2020/21 LTP programme, the Council received additional LTP capital funding from DfT for highway maintenance. £2,335,000 of this funding is as yet unallocated and it is proposed that £423,500 of this unallocated sum is used together with the £18,654,000 to provide an LTP programme of £19,077,500 for 2021-22. Further programmes to allocate the remaining £1,911,500 of the additional LTP capital funding will be the subject of further decision reports in due course. This is felt to be a prudent approach at this time given the uncertainty of the DfT allocations and to allow some flexibility for any other further issues or urgent needs that are identified to be addressed in year.
3. A sum of £62,500 of the overall allocation will be retained by the North East Joint Transport Committee to cover central transport costs of the Joint Transport Committee. A £19,015,000 Council Local Transport Plan has therefore been developed for 2021-22, consisting of improvements and maintenance schemes to address four key areas: Walking and Cycling; Safety; Roads; and Bridges, Structures & Landslips.
4. Appendix A to D sets out the details of the recommended LTP Programme for 2021-22.
5. The County Council also included in the Medium Term Financial Plan an additional capital investment of £15 million for highway maintenance of U and C roads and footways across 2020/21 and 2021/22. The funding is specifically targeted towards addressing the decline in the County's minor roads and footways.
6. A £10 million first phase of the programme was approved in 2020/21 and this report provides a programme for the remaining £5 million of this investment.
7. The investment, which is being delivered over two years, is on top of the overall funding for roads, walking and cycling set out in the LTP Programme 2021-22.
8. Appendix E to H sets out the details of the recommended Highway Investment Programme for 2021-22

## **Background**

### **LTP PROGRAMME 2021 - 22**

9. The DfT have yet to announce the capital allocations for 2021/22 and beyond. Subsequently, at this stage an indicative settlement of £18,654,000 has been assumed, based on the LTP allocation received from the DfT at the start of 2020/21.
10. During the course of the delivery of the 2020/21 LTP programme, the Council received an additional £11,421,000 LTP capital funding from DfT for highway maintenance. A programme for £9,036,000 of this additional funding was approved in August 2020, leaving an unallocated sum of £2,335,000. It is proposed that £423,500 of this unallocated sum is used to supplement the £18,654,000 to fund an LTP programme of £19,077,500 for 2021-22. This is felt to be prudent at this time given uncertainty of DfT allocations and should other further issues or urgent needs be identified in year. Further programmes to allocate the remaining £1,911,500 will be the subject of further decision reports in due course.
11. A sum of £62,500 of the overall allocation will be retained by the North East Joint Transport Committee to cover central transport costs of the Joint Transport Committee, leaving a funding allocation for the Council's 2021/22 LTP programme of £19,015,000.

12. As in recent years, the highway maintenance element of the settlement is expected to include a contribution from the Highway Maintenance Incentive fund initiative. The capital funding from this element assumes that the Council retains the highest possible band 3 status and receives the maximum available funding. Confirmation of the funding settlement from the DfT is expected by the end of March 2021.
13. The £19,015,000 Local Transport Plan programme developed for 2021-22 consists of improvements and maintenance schemes to address four key areas: Walking and Cycling; Safety; Roads; and Bridges, Structures & Landslips, the details of the 2021/22 LTP programme are set out in Appendix A to D.
14. The summary of proposed expenditure in 2021-22 across scheme types is as follows:

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Scheme Type</b>	<b>Proposed Expenditure</b>
<b>A</b>	Walking and Cycling	£1,525,000
<b>B</b>	Safety	£2,195,000
<b>C</b>	Roads	£12,140,000
<b>D</b>	Bridges, Structures and Landslips	£3,155,000
	<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>£19,015,000</b>

15. The LTP programme has been developed following a comprehensive review of the needs for the maintenance of the highway asset, identified road safety issues and potential improvement of the highway and transport network. Requests for improvements and maintenance received from the local community over time are recorded in the Directory of Requests database. County Council Members and Town and Parish Councils are provided with details of requests made from their own areas throughout the last year and they are asked to take these into account when considering their priorities for the programme.
16. Priorities for the 2021-22 programme were invited from County Council Members and Town and Parish Councils during summer 2020 and those put forward have been assessed against criteria from our Local Transport Plan and Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). These are then combined with consideration of road safety improvement needs, based on accident statistics and other data sources, and the asset management needs of the overall highway network, based on inspections, condition data and the network hierarchy, to determine an overall programme of capital investment.
17. It should be noted that in some cases the budget allocations contained in the Appendices to this report are estimates only. At this stage it is the issue or problem that has been prioritised for inclusion in the programme and the design process will provide options for finding a solution. The assessment of options takes account of a

number of factors including value for money and affordability. Costs will be firmed up as the proposals proceed through the design process.

18. It should also be noted that any schemes from the 2020-21 programme which are not completed by the end of the financial year will continue to be implemented in 2021-22 and are not detailed in this report.
19. A brief description of the types of highways and transport issues addressed by the LTP programme is set out below.
20. Priority for Integrated Transport is given to schemes that contribute to the achievements of the LTP objectives. The objectives reflect local needs and are related to national transport goals. These goals are:
  - to support economic growth;
  - to reduce carbon emissions;
  - to promote equality of opportunity;
  - to contribute to better safety, security and health; and,
  - to improve the quality of life and a healthy natural environment.
21. The improvement part of the programme is aimed at creating improvements for all types of users of the highway network. The allocations are split between different types of proposals aimed at making improvements for walking and cycling, as well as improvements for vehicular users such as public transport and road users. The improvements are designed to make the highway environment more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists, address areas of congestion and meet new and increased demands.
22. The Highway Capital Maintenance programme is split between different types of proposals aimed at maintaining the highway infrastructure by achieving objectives set out in the Council's Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). Funds are allocated across the programme by applying a scoring process that has been developed following asset management principles in order to deliver the TAMP objectives.
23. The majority of the highway maintenance programme is aimed at addressing the structural decline of our roads as they form the largest part of our highway assets. We also take account of the needs of the other asset groups such as footways and cycleways, drainage, structures and traffic management assets. A risk based approach is used to determine priorities for maintenance and is based on priorities at a strategic level, transport network level and asset maintenance level.

## **Walking and Cycling**

24. Improvements for walking and cycling are already a significant feature within the LTP programme. This year the draft LTP for 2021-22 has a specific allocation of £1,525,000 for walking and cycling as set out in Appendix A attached to this report.
25. This allocation includes £710,000 for schemes that directly improve the environment and provision for walking and cycling, as well as £815,000 for maintaining existing footpaths (rights of way), footways (along the side of the road) and cycleways (either part of the road or adjacent to it).
26. Alongside these specific allocations, it should be noted that much of the Safety element of the programme in appendix B will also contribute to ensuring that the highway environment is improved in a way that will encourage more walking and cycling, for example, £600,000 for the continuation of the 20mph programme at

schools, which will support cycling and walking by creating a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

27. It should be noted that the Council continues with its initiative to produce Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) in Northumberland's main towns. (Berwick Upon Tweed, Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Morpeth, Bedlington, Blyth, Cramlington, Prudhoe, Ponteland, Hexham, Haltwhistle). The LCWIPs will provide an evidence base for future investment in walking and cycling. The key outputs of LCWIPs when completed will be:
- A network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development;
  - A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment;
  - A report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.
28. Focusing on the main towns will ensure that key employment sites, travel to work areas, school transport interchanges and significant new housing developments are all considered. It is anticipated that as the LCWIPs develop then they will become a key consideration in future when bidding for external funding, seeking developer contributions and allocating funds within future LTP programmes for cycling and walking schemes.
29. The details of the draft LTP Walking and Cycling Programme of £1,525,000 for 2021-22 is set out in Appendix A, attached to this report.

## **Safety**

30. An allocation of £2,195,000 has been made to improve safety on the highway network. Details of programme are set out in Appendix B attached to this report
31. £670,000 is aimed at reducing the number and severity of road traffic casualties, through a programme of local safety schemes. Funding available for safety improvements to High Risk Sites will remain at the increased level of £350,000 compared to £220,000 in 2017-18. It also includes allocations of £200,000 for Rural Road Safety Improvements and £60,000 for Urban Road Safety Improvements.
32. £1,175,000 has been allocated to improve traffic management and traffic calming measures. Much of this funding will also create safer conditions where road safety concerns have been identified which will in turn encourage more walking and cycling. Specifically, an allocation of £600,000 has been made for further introduction of 20mph speed limits outside schools which will address safety concerns and should encourage more children and their parents and carers to walk or cycle to school.
33. A £350,000 allocation has been included to continue with the general refurbishment and renewal of existing signage and the replenishment of existing road markings. Both of these activities seek to improve the general safety for the highway user.

## **Roads**

34. This section of the programme is the largest part of the programme with an allocation of £12,140,000, which includes improvements for road users as well as the maintenance of existing roads, including drainage and safety fencing.
35. The programme is guided by the principles of effective asset management and is made up of £5,770,000 for named carriageway repair and drainage schemes (of which £2,520,000 is on major roads and the resilient road network and £3,250,000 on other local roads); £2,480,000 for surface dressing; £550,000 for micro surfacing

and retexturing; and finally £3,330,000 of general refurbishment which includes drainage, traffic signals, car parks, vehicle restraint barriers and footways as well as preparatory work for next year's programme.

36. The details of the draft Roads Programme for 2021-22 is set out in Appendix C attached to this report.

### **Bridges, Structures and Landslips**

37. An allocation of £2,225,000 has been made for bridge maintenance. Again, effective asset management is the main driver. This includes a programme that also addresses the maintenance backlog by providing bridge strengthening to a number of bridges as this continues to remain a key objective.

38. There is also an allocation of £930,000 for addressing landslips to enable stabilisation work as a cost effective approach to prevent the deterioration and potential loss of use of the network at critical locations throughout the County. This includes a further allocation to continue scheme development for the landslip at Todstead on the B6344. This landslip is currently the subject of ground investigation works and depending on the outcome of these investigations and design solutions identified, further funding will be sought for any identified repair solutions, including consideration of use of the unallocated LTP funding noted above.

39. The details of the Bridges, Structures and Landslips Programme of £3,155,000 for 2021-22 is set out in Appendix D, attached to this report.

### **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN U AND C ROADS AND FOOTWAYS PROGRAMME**

40. The County Council has included in the Medium Term Financial Plan an additional capital investment of £15 million for highway maintenance of U and C roads and footways across 2020/21 and 2021/22. The funding is specifically targeted towards addressing the decline in the County's minor roads and footways.

41. A £10 million first phase of the programme was approved in 2020/21 and this report provides a programme for the remaining £5 million of this investment..

42. The investment, which is being delivered over two years, is on top of this year's overall funding for roads, walking and cycling set out in the LTP Programme 2021-22.

43. Appendix E to H sets out the details of the recommended Highway Investment Programme for 2021-22.

44. The summary of proposed expenditure across scheme types is as follows:

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Proposed Allocations</b>
E	Rural Road Refurbishment	£2,330,000
F	Residential Road Refurbishment	£1,305,000
G	Small Works	£700,000
H	Footway Refurbishment	£665,000
	<b>Programme Total</b>	<b>£5,000,000</b>

45. The Highway Maintenance Investment into U and C Roads and Footway programme has been developed to address the deterioration of the lower categories of the network following a comprehensive review of the needs of all our roads and footways.
46. This programme will provide repairs to those minor roads already in poor condition, which will improve the overall condition of this network, building resilience and reducing long term costs. This will help to reduce the number of potholes that arise, improve condition and ride quality and minimise the need for future repairs in these areas. Funds have been allocated across the programme taking into account asset management principles in order to deliver Northumberland's Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) objectives.
47. The programme to address deterioration across the lower categories of our network has been split into three packages of work:
  - a. Rural Road Route Refurbishment which will address some of the worst sections of the minor road network across the County, providing essential structural maintenance and resurfacing as well as an additional 22km of surface dressing works over and above that already included within the LTP programme.
  - b. Residential Road Refurbishment which include the resurfacing of a total of twelve streets across the County's towns and villages which are considered to be in the most urgent need of repair. There will also be a programme of micro surfacing to a further twelve residential streets.
  - c. Small Works which will allow us to address those more discrete areas situated on the minor road network that are identified by the Area Teams to be in poor condition. Works will consist of smaller areas of resurfacing and structural patching.
48. Many of our pavements and footways are also in need of long term investment to improve their condition and make walking easier and safer for our residents. The programme therefore includes an allocation of £665,000 to address the deterioration of our footways which has occurred after many years of underfunding.
49. Improving the footways will support our aspirations to improve health and wellbeing by providing safe, easy routes for our residents to use as a key part of their daily activities. Improving the condition of this element of the network will bring an improvement in the local environment, a reduction in the number of tripping hazards and other defects reported and a reduction in the need for reactive day to day maintenance.

## **Next Steps**

50. Following consideration by Local Area Councils at their meetings in February, any comments received will be considered and the final 2021-22 programmes for the Local Transport Plan and Highway Maintenance Investment in U and C Roads and Footways will be prepared for consideration and approval by the Leader of the Council and the Interim Executive Director for Local Services.
51. Following agreement of the final programme, all County Council members and Town and Parish Councils who put forward priorities for the LTP programme will then be provided with further information regarding the outcome of the assessment of their

submission and whether it has been possible to include their priority schemes within the programme this year.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The proposed programmes are consistent with existing policies
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	<p>The LTP Programme allocations are within the expected budget available for 2021-22. The £18.654m quoted in this report is an indicative figure and confirmation of the final allocation is awaited from DfT and is expected before March 2021. Should the allocation vary from that expected the programme will be amended in the final decision report.</p> <p>The £5 million funding for the Highway Maintenance Investment programme is included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020-21 and 2021-22.</p>
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	Not applicable
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>As a key issue for Northumberland, the needs of those that are socially excluded have been taken into account in the development of this programme.</p>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<p>The programme has been developed to minimise risks to the travelling public.</p> <p>Risks to the delivery of any individual scheme within the programme will be considered during scheme development. By managing risk at scheme level risk to delivery of the programme will be controlled.</p>
<b>Crime Disorder &amp;</b>	The implications of Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been considered whilst developing this proposal, there are no perceived adverse effects.

<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The delivery of the programme will improve the highways and transport network in Northumberland for the benefit of the travelling public.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Schemes to encourage walking and cycling, as well as road safety and those which aim to reduce congestion will encourage modal shift and reduce overall carbon levels making a positive contribution to the achievement of the Council's Climate Change targets.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Schemes to encourage more active travel through improved infrastructure for walking and cycling, road safety measures and improvement to the condition of footways and roads all act to improve the overall health and wellbeing of our communities.
<b>Wards</b>	All

### **Background papers**

N/A

### **Report sign off**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Mason
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Chris Hand
Relevant Executive Director	Rick O'Farrell
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Glen Sanderson

### **Author and Contact Details**

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### **Appendices**

Appendices A to D – LTP Programme 2021-22

Appendices E to F – Highway Maintenance Investment Programme 2021-22