

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 16 July 2024

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Carriageway Patching

Purpose: To consider additional carriageway patching totalling £1m and options for facilitating expenditure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Consider whether to increase the carriageway patching funding allocation by a further £1m for 2024/25; and
 - 2) To identify the variation to the 2024/25 Capital Programme to facilitate the £1m increase, if approved.
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1 Background

1.1 The winter of 2023/24 had a significant impact on the condition of the highway. The number of potholes increased significantly as a result of the prolonged wet weather combined with periods of freezing temperatures. During the winter period the road condition declined resulting in a large number of defect reports.

1.2 Work to improve the condition has continued throughout the spring and into the summer to reduce the pothole backlog to seasonal levels. In 2023/24 29,357 potholes were repaired and since the start of the financial year we have completed a further 7,105 pothole repairs and completed 6,000 sq.m of resurfacing work. We have also completed 40 patches across 26 locations in the first quarter of the year. Whilst the work during the spring and early summer has reduced the pothole backlog to zero, additional funding to double the patching budget for this year would benefit the overall condition of the most used roads in East Sussex and provide greater resilience for the coming winter. This report considers increasing the extent of carriageway patching that could be achieved in 2024/25 with an additional investment of £1.0m.

2 Extent of Patching

2.1 The A and B road network are the most heavily used sections of the overall road network and therefore should be the focus of any additional expenditure. Work on the unclassified network will continue with our jet patching work which is proving successful in dealing with defects on these roads. The condition of our A and B roads would be improved by an increase in the patching budget. A £1m increase in the patching budget would provide for approximately 11,000 square metres of improved road surface on these sections of the network.

3 Funding

3.1 The revenue budget is under significant pressure, with a 2023/24 total outturn overspend of £10.5m and the 2024/25 budget being set with a £14.3m potential draw from the Financial Management Reserve, and therefore provides no flexibility to fund the additional patching works.

3.2 In reviewing the Capital Programme, the 2024/25 allocations remain largely committed to the delivery of approved schemes, with the only currently uncommitted element of the Capital Programme relating to climate change. The climate change programme has £25.8m budget allocated over the life of the capital programme. Should a decision be made to use the unallocated element of the climate change programme to fund additional highways patching work there may be the opportunity during the remainder of 2024/25 to replenish the climate change capital budget through the use of underspends that may arise in other Capital Programme schemes.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 If Cabinet agrees to invest an additional £1.0m in highway maintenance in 2024/25 it is recommended that this additional investment will be focussed on the A and B road network.

4.2 In order to facilitate additional expenditure, Cabinet are asked to identify the variation in the 2024/25 Capital Programme to facilitate the increase.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None