

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Growth & Prosperity Scrutiny – Review of Highways Maintenance
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 18 January 2011
Cabinet Member: Councillor Wogens
CMT Member: Director for Development and Regeneration
Author: Clive Perkin, Assistant Director, Transport & Highways
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Ref: CP/01/11
Key Decision: N
Part: I

Executive Summary:

The Growth & Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel, through a Task & Finish Group, undertook a review of Highway Maintenance during November and December 2010. Their final report is attached, including their recommendations as follows:-

1. That the Transport & Highways Partnership review service levels in relation to Highways Maintenance to improve value for money. This will take into account the character and type of highway/footway, intervention levels and repair times and types. The maintenance regime should also be reviewed alongside this to consider the introduction of a targeted safety inspection programme which should also allow a more flexible of approach for the determination of temporary/ permanent, potholes, patching, together with the materials used
2. That Highways Maintenance be assured of greater emphasis within the Transport & Highways capital programme alongside new works, but not at the expense of other areas of prioritised work.
3. That an Invest to Save Bid be submitted by officers to successfully secure additional capital funding. This is expected to focus on footway repairs as these are currently the cause of the greater percentage of insurance claims and payouts and is therefore likely to demonstrate the quicker payback.
4. That despite the current difficult economic climate and the budget position of the authority, that the council should consider giving a higher priority to highway maintenance needs over and above other priorities included in the councils Capital Programme. The condition of our carriageways and footways will otherwise continue to deteriorate at a rate we will not be able to address and the authority will be storing up a larger financial pressure for the future.
5. That the Council's Insurance Reserve be reviewed to identify whether an element could be diverted to planned preventative term maintenance instead.

It is recommended that further work is undertaken by Officers to identify what if any of these recommendations are appropriate to take forward.

Corporate Plan 2010 – 2013 as amended by the four new priorities for the City and Council:

Supporting Growth: Maintaining our streets to a suitable standard contributes to the quality of the built environment and assists communities travelling within the city. This in turn supports the Growth of the city through the creation of high quality transport networks and public realm.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel in full would potentially have significant impact on the Council's Capital Programme, particularly where approved schemes are already under contract. However, failure to implement any of the recommendations may well result in increasing levels of funding being diverted away from maintenance into insurance claims or more costly Highway repairs at a later date.

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

The right balance of intervention in the Highway network through routine maintenance and Capital resurfacing is required to minimise Health & Safety concerns.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

A. To note the following recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel.

1. That the Transport & Highways Partnership review service levels in relation to Highways Maintenance to improve value for money.
2. That Highways Maintenance be assured of greater emphasis within the Transport & Highways capital programme alongside new works, but not at the expense of other areas of prioritised work.
3. That an Invest to Save Bid be submitted by officers to successfully secure additional capital funding.
4. That despite the current difficult economic climate and the budget position of the authority, that the council should consider giving a higher priority to highway maintenance needs over and above other priorities included in the councils Capital Programme.
5. That the Council's Insurance Reserve be reviewed to identify whether an element could be diverted to planned preventative term maintenance instead.

B. To request officers to review and report back on each of the recommendations.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

1. Accept Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel: This is not possible as they cut across a number of priorities and service areas and thus further analysis is required in the first instance.

2. Do not accept the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel: This would be premature pending further analysis.

Background papers: Growth & Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Task & Finish Group
December 2010 – Review of Highways Maintenance

Sign off:

Fin SG/Dev F10110 043		Leg JAR/1 0575.		HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											