

<b>Report title</b>	Investing to Improve Our City's Roads in 2024-2025	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Craig Collingswood Environment and Climate Change	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	John Roseblade, Director of Resident Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Transportation	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	John Charles Tel Email	Head of Network Management 01902 555752 <a href="mailto:John.Charles@wolverhampton.gov.uk">John.Charles@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Resident Services Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Cabinet Member Briefing	27 February 2023 5 March 2023 7 March 2023

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### Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the list of projects for development and implementation as part of the Highway Capital Programme 2024-2025, as set out in Appendix 3.
2. Authorise the Head of Network Management to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendix 3 including surveying, site investigation, options appraisal, Feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising, and public consultation, as appropriate.
3. Approve capital budgets for 2024-2025 for the projects marked 'Approve' in the 'Decision' column of Appendix 3 for implementation, subject to the confirmation of funding.
4. Authorise the virement of existing approved budgets for 2024-2025 totalling £105,000 within the Highway Capital Programme to other projects as per table 3.4.

5. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve the implementation of any development work on projects detailed in Appendix 3 subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
6. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve the implementation of any delivery works not exceeding £1.0 million on projects covered in Appendix 3 subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
7. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the highway capital programme, maximising use of resources.
8. Authorise the Chief Operating Officer to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in Appendix 3 and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, make traffic regulation orders as required.

### **Recommendations for noting:**

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The expenditure and progress made in delivering £30.9 million worth of projects in the Transportation Capital programme during 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and forecast in 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 2.
2. The Council's continuing success in bidding for additional funding and delivering new projects through the West Midlands Combined Authority.
3. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer will approve any new supplementary capital and revenue budgets for any projects from Appendix 3, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
4. The Head of Network Management will make applications and bids for additional external funding noting that agreement ahead of submission will be obtained from the Director of Finance and appropriate governance will be followed to amend budgets on receipt of such funding.
5. The Director of Finance will approve the Council entering into funding agreements with the various funding bodies to receive both capital and revenue grant funding in respect of the delivery of projects included in this report.
6. This Highways Capital Programme Report is complementary and aligns with the work of the Black Country Transport and Wolverhampton Major Transport Investment Programme that it also seeking approval at this meeting.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek approval to a programme of capital projects to develop and maintain both the Wolverhampton highway network for the financial year 2024-2025, subject to available resources and annual review.
- 1.2 Cabinet is also asked to note the £30.9 million expenditure and progress made in delivering the extensive investment in the City's network between the financial years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 An efficient safe and smooth flowing highway network that accommodates all modes is an essential element of economic productivity and social connection. City of Wolverhampton must make the most of investment opportunities to enhance and improve its highway network, supporting businesses and helping to achieve our sustainable regeneration ambitions and climate change commitments.
- 2.2 The programme of works directly supports the priorities and objectives of Our City, Our Plan, ensuring that our communities and businesses are well connected, supporting our vital local businesses, and enhancing the protection and generation of jobs. The underpinning principles of 'Driven by Digital' and 'Climate Action' run through the programme, including multi-million-pound investment in Smart infrastructure.
- 2.3 This report establishes the key projects and programmes that will be developed and delivered in 2024-2025 and reiterates the substantial investment in our highway network over previous years.
- 2.4 The highway capital budget proposals included in this report for 2024-2025 total £9.7 million and are funded by a mixture of external grants, and previously approved council resources. Further detailed background information, including the consideration of how schemes are prioritised, is given in Appendix 1.

## **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 Appendix 2 shows the outturn and expected outturn for years 2020-2021 through to 2023-2024 and notably that approximately £30.9 million has been invested in our highway network during this time.
- 3.2 Notable schemes that have progressed in 2023 – 2024 year are set out in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Notable schemes delivered 2023-2024	
Programme	Comment
<b>Highway Maintenance Carriageway and Footway</b>	Purbrook Rd, Deans Rd, School Rd Tettenhall, Bushbury Rd, Stafford Street (inbound), Ring Road/Waterloo Rd junction, Wright Avenue Estate
<b>Highway Maintenance Surface Treatments</b>	Finchfield Hill, Wightwick Bank, Tinacre Hill, Windmill La, Patshull Ave & Marsh La, Third Ave, Bradley La, Wergs Rd, Oxford St
<b>Highway Maintenance: Other</b>	Approx 24,550 streetlights now upgraded to LED (approx. 1600 conversions remaining). Approx. 170 Smart photocells installed on streetlights to support remote lighting level control.
<b>Highway Maintenance: Structures</b>	Lyndale culvert, ongoing structural review of weight restricted bridges
<b>Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP): Road Safety &amp; Safer Routes to School</b>	Black Country Route/Lunt Island, Oxford St/Hare St, Bushbury La, Stowlawn Primary School, Bhylls Acre Primary School, Castlecroft Road Zebra
<b>LNIP: Intelligent Transport Systems Network Development</b>	Expansion of CCTV network, roll out of VMS to support introduction of new car park guidance system for Civic quarter car parks. 70 smart gulley sensors installed supporting remote monitoring. Extension of existing mesh network to support roll out of smart technology such artificial intelligence, speed counts, vehicle counts and journey time infrastructure.

- 3.3 The schemes for approval in 2024-2025 are set out in Appendix 3. Funding for both the Highway Maintenance Fund and the Local Neighbourhood Investment Plan (formerly Integrated Transport Block) have also been subsumed into City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS).
- 3.4 As an accountable body West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will be allocating funds through its Single Assurance Framework with incremental approvals being agreed relative to the stage each project is at within the lifecycle (i.e. strategic / outline / final business case). Funding for the estimated scheme totals has not necessarily been secured but approval is sought to pursue development and funding opportunities.
- 3.5 Appendix 3 'Projects for implementation in 2024-2025 Local Projects and Maintenance' sets out the Highway Maintenance: Carriageway, Highway Maintenance: Footway, Highway Maintenance: Other, Highway Maintenance: Structures, Road Safety, Safer Routes to School and Network Development programmes for the year.

3.6 Table 3.3 below shows some of the headline priorities for local projects and maintenance in 2024-2025.

<b>Table 3.3 - Key local and maintenance priorities for 2024/25</b>			
<b>Programme / Project</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Estimated Scheme Total £000</b>	<b>Estimated Expenditure 2023-2024 £000</b>
Stafford Street	Repaving scheme	163	163
Amos Lane	Carriageway Resurfacing	417	417
Hickman Avenue	Carriageway Resurfacing	498	490
Sutherland Avenue	Carriageway Resurfacing	188	188
Hall Park Street, Bilston	Carriageway Resurfacing	167	167
Newhampton Rd West/ East	Carriageway surface treatment	237	237
Streetlighting replacement programme	Completion of upgrade to LED and introduction of smart technology	1304	1304
Newhampton Road West/ East	Road Safety Improvements	100	100
Ring Road Review	Review lining and signing at key junctions and links on ring road	130	130
Linthouse Lane	Road Safety improvements	60	60
Ring Road and City Centre Signage	Improved highway network management and public information; Support development and implementation of car park guidance system for Civic car parks	617	617
Continued roll out of UTC mesh communication network	Support SMART City Initiatives by rolling out smart technologies and communication infrastructure	140	140
Oxley Moor Rd culvert	Structural maintenance works	250	100
Wightwick County Bridge	Structural maintenance works	101	101

3.7 The full lists of schemes seeking approval for implementation in 2024-2025 are included in Appendix 3 and are illustrated in Appendix 5. Note that this report seeks approval of those schemes marked as 'Approve' in the Decision column. 'Prior' indicates that the scheme has already secured approval. The report also asks for delegated authority to bring forward schemes marked as requiring an Individual Executive Decision Notice (IEDN), where indicated, subject to available resources.

3.8 Included in Appendix 3 are the following Highways Maintenance Footway expenditure budgets for projects in 2024-2025 which will be funded by the virement of existing

approved expenditure budgets as shown below. In relation to Old Heath Road the scheme has been descoped and the funding reallocated to cover other projects.

Programme / Project	Project Status	Virement (from)/ to Project £000
Old Heath Road	Existing Project	(105)
Linthouse Lane	New Project	50
Ring Road Review (Road marking and signage)	New Project	55
<b>Total Existing Approved Budgets 2023-2024</b>		<b>(105)</b>

#### 4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

4.1 Options appraisals form part of each individual project development and prioritisation and are not discussed in detail in this report. As this is a comprehensive programme of improvements to manage and maintain the essential highway network – a do-nothing option is not viable.

#### 5.0 Reasons for decision(s)

5.1 The decision to approve the recommendations of this report is necessary to enable delivery of the Transport Capital Programme in 2024-2025.

#### 6.0 Financial implications

6.1 The Transportation Capital Programme is made up of a series of individual projects and programme of works with potential schemes totalling £9.7 million in 2024-2025 per Appendix 3.

6.2 This report seeks budget approval for those schemes marked in Appendix 3 as 'Approve' in the Decision column and shown in the 'Allocation of 2024-2025 Resources to Projects for Approval' column totalling £5.3 million. 'Prior' indicates that the scheme has already secured budget approval. This includes £2.3 million of slippage which has previously been reported and approved in Capital Programme reports in 2023-2024. This also includes further additional slippage that is now anticipated from 2023-2024 of £2.2 million. It should also be noted that those schemes marked as IEDN are expected to be brought forward under supplementary budget processes subject to available resources. Any budget approvals secured by IEDN will be subsequently reported in the quarterly capital programme report to Cabinet. The funding for all these schemes is from a variety of sources as set out below:

6.3 **CRSTS, Highways Maintenance Fund and Local Network Improvement Plan budgets** - Transport capital budget proposals set out in this report will be predominantly funded as party of the CRSTS funding allocation. West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) received a resource of £1.05 billion for the region, which includes Highway

Maintenance Fund (HMF) and the Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP) budgets (formerly Integrated Transport Block).

- 6.4 WMCA as accountable body will be allocating funds through its single assurance framework with incremental approvals being relative to the stage each project is at within the lifecycle (i.e. strategic / outline / full business case). Notwithstanding this the WMCA will ensure HMF and LNIP funds can be deployed by Local Authorities in an agile manner, with local autonomy over these funds.
- 6.5 At the time of this report WMCA have in principle approved the following CRSTS allocations for HMF and LNIP as per table 4 below with the final 2024-2025 allocation to be confirmed by WMCA Board in March. Schemes utilising this grant are included in Appendix 3 as 'approve' subject to WMCA confirmation that funds are available per the allocation letter.

Grant Detail	2024-2025	2025-2026 to
	Grant Total £000	2026-2027 Grant Total £000
S31 Transport Highways Maintenance Fund	3,325	6,650
S31 Transport LNIP (former ITB)	1,442	2,884
Pothole fund 2023-2024	500	0
	<b>5,267</b>	<b>9,534</b>

- 6.6 Over and above these allocations the WMCA have secured additional £750,000 Network North resources for Wolverhampton from the DFT for local highway maintenance from 2023-2024 to 2033-2034. With potential for further resources to be allocated to the Midlands up to 2033-2034. The current Network North funding will be distributed based on maintenance capital funding formula. Although this has not yet been formally awarded to the Council it is expected that the 2023-2024 funding will also be expected to be utilised by 30 September 2024. These are included on Appendix 3, as Carriageway Resurfacing schemes marked as IEDN for allocation to schemes, once this has been awarded to the Council.

Grant Detail	2024-2025
	Grant Total £000
Network North Fund 2023-2024	375
Network North Fund 2024-2025	375
	<b>750</b>

- 6.7 Through the governments new policy paper 'The plan for drivers' a new £30m Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant (TSOG) was announced funded from the DfT's wider Highways Maintenance Block and includes £10 million to be shared between all English local highway and transport authorities outside of London, and £20 million of targeted funding which will be awarded to areas with obsolescence issues through challenge bid process for which a bid was submitted in autumn. We are awaiting confirmation from WMCA regarding the funding allocation for the direct award grant and a decision by DfT on the outcome of the challenge bid process is expected during Spring 2024. These are included in Appendix 3 marked as 'IEDN':

Grant Detail	2024-2025 Grant Total £000
CRSTS: Halogen Replacement Programme (WMCA)	300
Plan For Drivers: (Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant) (WMCA)	100
Plan for Drivers: (Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant) (Challenge bid)	500
	900

- 6.8 **Prior Years Funding** - Appendix 3 includes anticipated budget reprofile of £4.5 million from 2023-2024 based on the estimated outturn for 2023-2024 of £4.9 million included in Appendix 2. Once outturn for 2023-2024 has been finalised, any required adjustments for budgets impacting on the 2024-2025 programme, will be made in accordance with usual governance arrangements and those set out in this report. This outturn and potential slippage are funded from a variety of resources including funding approved internally, borrowing and Highways Management reserves, alongside external grants, s106 agreements, and allocations from CRSTS, and Department for Transport (DfT).
- 6.9 **Borrowing** – There is currently no proposals for borrowing contained within this report. However, any additional borrowing required to support the 2024-2025 programme will go through the usual budget approval processes.
- 6.10 All WMCA funded projects, including CRSTS, will be subject to scrutiny via the WMCA Single Assurance Framework. This offers a further layer of oversight on the financial position and value for money of any of these proposed schemes and ensures the application of public money is open and transparent. The Assurance framework sits alongside the WMCA Constitution and Financial Regulations.
- 6.11 This report also seeks approval of virements totalling £105,000 as per section 3.8 and table 3.4.
- 6.12 This report focuses on development projects for 2024-2025 and future years. The proposed package of projects shown in Appendix 3 will be developed and managed with the resources available and further developed over the period 2024-2025 onwards. Cost



estimates will be refined as projects are developed to produce a detailed design and identification of other costs such as service diversions. There is an intentional 'over programming' of projects to reflect the reality that some projects will inevitably be delayed due to unexpected circumstances or changes to priorities. Overprogramming aims to ensure that, as far as possible, the resources available can be fully utilised.

- 6.13 This report seeks approval of the budgets as detailed in the appendices at programme / project level. Further to this, the approved budgets will be included in the Capital Budget Outturn 2023-2024 including Quarter One Capital monitoring 2024-2025 report to be presented to the Cabinet later in the year. The final details of the 2023-2024 outturn position will also be presented to Councillors in that report.  
[ES/21022024/J]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 Under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, the Council, as the highway authority, is under a duty to maintain public highways.
- 7.2 The Road Traffic Act 1988, section 39 imposes a statutory duty on every Highway Authority in England to promote and improve road safety by disseminating information or advice relating to the use of roads.
- 7.3 The Act states that each local authority:
- A. Must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads, or parts of roads, within their area;
  - B. Must, in light of such studies, take measures as appear to be appropriate to prevent such accidents; and
  - C. In constructing new roads must take such measures as appear to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.
- 7.4 The Traffic Management Act 2004, Part 2, section 16 places a duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network.
- 7.5 Where appropriate, legal advice will be obtained in respect of the various projects as and when they become operational in respect of matters arising under the Highways Act 1980, The Town and Country Planning Acts, Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and other relevant legislation.  
[SZ/21022024/P]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 Equalities assessments will be undertaken for projects and programmes where appropriate and in accordance with City Council policies and agreed protocols. Full and detailed consultation will be undertaken before projects are commenced and in the event

of objections being received, these will be taken into consideration and the scheme modified if appropriate.

## **9.0 All other implications**

- 9.1 The work programmes set out in this report generally have environmental benefits, many of the Network Development projects are aimed at reducing congestion and hence air pollution. Other projects will improve environmental safety for highway users. The 'carbon footprint' associated with carrying out this work is offset by the benefits that will be achieved. The programmes and projects identified all support the climate change and Net Zero commitments of the Council and wider WMCA and form key elements for successfully achieving the aims of Our City, Our Plan.
- 9.2 The delivery of the programme as proposed will fully commit the existing employee resources available to support the Highway Capital Programme.
- 9.3 The safe and efficient operation of our highway network minimises the associated adverse health implications from reduced casualties because of traffic accidents, promotion of active travel modes through new infrastructure and reduced pollution from vehicles through congestion relief and prioritising sustainable modes of transport. Improved air quality will have a direct positive impact on people's health. The attraction of investment and creation of accessible housing and jobs is facilitated by investment in our highway, which will also improve the opportunities available to and wellbeing of our citizens.
- 9.4 As we continue the national recovery from the effects of Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, we see a change in travel behaviours and shifting demands upon the highway network. The safety and efficiency of our highway is essential not least to the continued economic recovery of the region, but also in supporting new lifestyle choices and accessibility needs. This programme specifically invests in the necessary improvements to support those changing demands on the network.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 WMCA Single Assurance Framework [single-assurance-framework-v3-sep-2022.pdf](https://www.wmca.org.uk/single-assurance-framework-v3-sep-2022.pdf) ([wmca.org.uk](https://www.wmca.org.uk))

## **11.0 Appendices**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Additional Background Information
- 11.2 Appendix 2: Projects Undertaken in Previous Years
- 11.3 Appendix 3: Projects for Implementation in 2024-2025: Local Projects and Maintenance
- 11.4 Appendix 4: Projects delivered during 2020/21 to 2023/24
- 11.5 Appendix 5: Projects proposed for implementation during 2024/25