

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	4th February 2015
3.	Title:	Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund: RMBC Scheme Bid
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

5.1

The report outlines the Department for Transport's (DfT) announcement on a Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund that Local Highway Authorities can bid into for schemes that address local highway maintenance issues. Officers have considered the DfT's criteria and developed a strategic corridor scheme centred on the A630 that would benefit from the submission of a bid into the fund.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That Cabinet supports the submission of a bid for the A630 Strategic Corridor Scheme to the Department for Transport's Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund (via the Combined Authority) as outlined in this report, total cost £11.6M.
- 6.2 That Cabinet supports a contribution from the Council to the scheme of 10%, that is £1.16M.
- 6.3 That Cabinet notes that there will be no further contributions from the DfT towards the scheme costs above their contribution of £10.44M (as set out in the bid) and that any expenditure above the estimated scheme cost (including contingency) of £11.6M rests with the Council.

7. Proposals and Details

As part of the LTP Highways Maintenance settlement for 2015/16 onwards, the Government has assigned a proportion of the budget to a challenge fund. The total sum available is £575m in two tranches spread over 6 years, the first tranche covers 2015/16, 16/17 and 17/18, the second tranche covers 2018/19, 19/20, and 20/21. This is to be allocated to major maintenance projects that would be difficult to fund from the needs-based element of the settlement.

Any English local highway authority outside of London can apply for funding. Where an authority falls within an Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) or Combined Authority (CA) bids should be submitted via the ITA/CA who should also provide a covering letter indicating the relative priority they attach to the different bids.

Eligible Highways Authority may submit a maximum of two bids, one small scheme (over £5m) and one large scheme (over £20m).

The Fund is designed to help maintain existing local highways infrastructure. The types of project that will be eligible for funding include:

- Major maintenance, strengthening or renewal of bridges, tunnels, retaining walls or other structures
- Major maintenance or renewal of carriageways (roads)
- Major maintenance or renewal of footways or cycleways
- Major maintenance or renewal of drainage assets
- Upgrade of street lighting

It is proposed therefore to submit a 'strategic corridor' bid meeting the 'small scheme' criterion, centred on the A630 route, consisting of two elements, namely;

- (1) Major works to be carried out to Crinoline Bridge (A630)** – scheduled inspections over the past 20 years have revealed severe leakage of the bridge joints which has allowed chloride salts to penetrate and attack the concrete bearing shelves, abutments and piers. More recent specialist inspections have identified severe corrosion and concrete spalling over large areas. The life expectancy of the bridge has dramatically reduced and the most cost effective solution is to rebuild the top of the abutments and replace the deck of the bridge to modern design standards.
- (2) Major maintenance works on the A630 (strategic network)** - The project would target carriageways and footways on the A630 that are in a critical condition as identified by condition data analysis. Opportunities to provide to align these works with other planned highway improvements e.g. cycle-ways, along this route.

The A630 runs between Rotherham's boundary with Sheffield in the west through to the Doncaster boundary in the east, forming key strategic links to the M1 from Rotherham Town Centre, the Rotherham urban area, and Waverley Advanced Manufacturing Park. The A630 Centenary Way plays a critical role in managing traffic movements through and around the town centre, forming part of both the inner and outer ring road.

Reactive maintenance on this route introduces delay to drivers and the structural weakness of Crinoline Bridge (near to the new junction of A630 Centenary Way and the A6021 Drummond Street) will ultimately require weight restrictions or closures to be imposed if left unaddressed. This would impose significant diversions and delay to drivers, bus passengers,

and freight movements resulting in a major adverse impact on the Rotherham town centre and urban economy.

8. Finance

The total value of the Fund is £575 million split over the next six financial years from 2015/16 to 2020/21. It is envisaged that the Fund will be split into two tranches.

All bids will need to demonstrate 'additionality', i.e. that DfT funding is not simply being used to replace other sources of funding which have, or would have, been provided. The DfT may also take into account interactions with other central Government funding streams and rules - particularly to seek to ensure that local contributions are not themselves funded by central Government. Local contributions will not therefore be able to be funded from Local Transport Plan (LTP) sources.

Small schemes submissions need to have a minimum DfT funding requirement of £5m; large schemes have a minimum threshold of £20m. **All schemes must have a promoter contribution of a least 10% of the total scheme cost. Promoters can contribute more than the minimum 10% contribution and four bands have been presented into which promoters will be grouped, namely:**

- **Local contribution 10%**
- **Local contribution 11% to 15%**
- **Local contribution 16% to 20%**
- **Local contribution >21%**

Levels of investment will be considered as part of the assessed criteria. Clearly, as the fund is a competitive process, the greater local contribution the greater the possibility the scheme has of being chosen.

The DfT require a letter from the Section 151 Officer confirming that the authority has the available funds to meet the total local funding contribution.

The financial implications associated with each element are shown below;

- (1) Major works carried out to Crinoline Bridge (A630)** - the value of works is £5.8M and officers have determined that the RMBC capital contribution should be £580k.
- (2) Major maintenance works on the A630 (strategic network)** - the value of works is £5.8M and officers have determined that the RMBC capital contribution should be £580k.

The total scheme cost is therefore £11.6M, and the total Council contribution is therefore £1.16M and it is likely that at least part of the Council's contribution would need to be provided through prudential borrowing, in addition to Council capital receipts. The DfT contribution will be £10.44M

9. Risks and Uncertainties

As this is a bidding process there is no certainty that any applications will be successful, even if local contributions are in place. Although the process is rigorous and requires significant resources, the opportunity to capture external funding to support a deteriorating highway asset should not be missed.

The above estimates include a contingency amount for each of the two elements of the scheme following a risk review meeting and a quantified risk assessment process. However, any additional expenditure above the scheme estimate above rests with RMBC and there will be no further contributions to the scheme from the DfT.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The condition of the highway network is a key priority as set out in the Corporate Plan

All areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained - we will make sure that Rotherham's roads and footpaths are safe to use, and that the condition is as good, or better than the national average.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund - Guidance
Local Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund – Assessment Criteria
[Challenge Fund Guidance on the Application process](#)

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