

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve an offer of additional funding for highway related maintenance from the Department for Transport in 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 1.2 An urgent decision is needed to allow for meeting the deadline for acceptance of 31 January 2013.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer recently made his autumn statement. He announced an additional £333 million for essential maintenance to renew, repair and extend the life of the highway network in England.
- 2.2 Of the total fund available, £215 million is allocated to local highway authorities in England. In the first year, £140m is available with a further £75m in 2014/15. The remainder will be allocated to the Highways Agency for work on the Strategic Road Network.
- 2.3 North Lincolnshire Council's indicative allocations amount to £630,000 in 2013/14 and £334,000 in 2014/15. A total over both years of £964,000.
- 2.4 It is for individual local highway authorities to target the extra funds where it is most needed. For example, on priorities such as road resurfacing, maintenance to bridges or repairing damage to the highway infrastructure caused by severe weather events, such as the recent flooding.
- 2.5 To promote greater transparency the council will need to commit to publishing a short statement on its website at the end of each financial year. This must set out how (what and where in terms of location) this additional funding was spent. Also, how it has complemented (rather than displaced) existing planned highway maintenance expenditure. Local authorities are also encouraged to consider how to minimise the disruption to business and other road users while the works are ongoing.

- 2.6 To draw down a share of the funds available, the council is required to respond to the 'offer' by 31 January 2013. As a result, the Cabinet Member is asked to make an urgent decision on whether to pursue a share of the funding available.
- 2.7 To secure these funds, the council is required to confirm the following:
- That funds will only be used for additional road maintenance and not in substitution for existing planned highways maintenance expenditure.
 - A commitment to publish a briefing note on the council's website by 30 April 2014 and 30 April 2015, copied to the Department for Transport, setting out how and where the extra funds were spent and how the additional funds complemented (rather than displaced) the wider highways maintenance spending.
- 2.8 Once the council has agreed to these conditions, the Department for Transport will confirm the specific funding allocation.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member has the following options for consideration:
- **Option 1** – to agree to the conditions and pursue the offer of funding from the Department for Transport.
 - **Option 2** – to reject the offer.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 **Option 1** is suggested as the best option. Officers are satisfied that the conditions attached to the offer are achievable. The funds will provide additional resources needed to contribute to the maintenance of the council's highway assets.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 North Lincolnshire Council's indicative allocations are for £630,000 in 2013/14 and £334,000 in 2014/15. Together, this totals £964,000 over both years.

5.1.2 The additional funds offered by the Department for Transport will assist in maintaining the council's highway assets.

- 5.2 There are no other resource implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

6.1.1 The Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on the highway authority to maintain, so far as reasonably practicable, the highway network in a safe condition. The funding available will help in achieving this outcome.

6.2 Diversity

6.2.1 Issues connected with the condition of roads and footpaths impacts upon all communities in the area. Some of the worst affected roads are in areas of deprivation. This includes areas with a high proportion of minority ethnic residents. Poor quality roads and pavements also particularly impact adversely upon disabled and elderly people. Making effective repairs to the highway network will inevitably benefit these diverse groups.

6.3 Risk and Insurance

6.3.1 Failure to maintain the network in a safe condition could lead to third party insurance claims arising from damage to vehicles through the existence of potholes in the road surface and our wider highway network. There is also a risk of prosecution should the prevailing road conditions result in a serious incident with negligence in maintenance to an acceptable standard considered to be a contributory factor.

6.4 There are no other implications.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Previous consultation with residents on the council's spending priorities has highlighted the importance to the public of good highway maintenance and the condition of roads and footpaths. During the recent winter period, the council has received numerous contacts reporting consequential damage to the highway network.

7.2 Accepting the recommendations will assist in responding positively to these concerns.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member authorises the Director of Places to accept the Department for Transport's offer of additional funding for highways maintenance.
- 8.2 That this decision is treated as urgent to allow for meeting the deadline for acceptance of 31 January 2013.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Department for Transport letter to all Leaders of English Highway Authorities (outside of London) dated 18 December 2012.