

CESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO : Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	17 th September 2012
Report of:	John Nicholson – Strategic Director, Places and Organisational Capacity
Subject/Title:	Motion on Highway Maintenance Funding Allocation
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr. Rod Menlove - Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the Notice of motion on Road Maintenance (proposed by Cllr D Brickhill and seconded by Cllr A Moran) to Cabinet for determination.
- 1.2 The motion is that the approach to the assignment of funding for road maintenance is based on:-

“That all pre planned road maintenance (except pothole filling) is to be carried out on an equal expenditure basis per Ward in direct proportion to the electorate in that Ward, unless the relevant parish councils resolve that they are satisfied with the state of their roads. A monthly report to all Councillors is to be published by 15th of each month by the Highways Department showing the work done in the previous month and the work to be done in the next month.”

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is proposed that planned maintenance activity continues to be identified and prioritised based on the condition of the network.
- 2.2 That the programme for the forthcoming month, as well as the works undertaken in the preceding month is published on the Service Information Centre (SIC) and is reported at a LAP level.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The authority has invested in software that allows the local highway officers to view the overall condition of the network; this software when combined with the JCAM tool introduced by Cheshire East Highways allows the team to prioritise investment such that the best value solution can be delivered.
- 3.2 The tools use data that is collected using nationally accredited survey techniques, the output is therefore objective and repeatable.

- 3.3 The tools are customisable to allow for different classes of road to be treated in different ways. This means, quite correctly, that Principal roads will be governed by a wholly different rule set to that which is used for unclassified roads including estate roads and cul-de-sac.
- 3.4 The current method also links back to the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance, Well Maintained Roads. This document groups similar road types together (main roads, busy distributor roads, quiet cul-de-sac etc.) and determines, from a risk management perspective, how a particular class of road is to be inspected and, by inference, maintained.
- 3.5 The systems' output is used to determine the treatment required and will also attribute a budget estimate to the scheme. In addition the system also tells the user how the scheme will impact on the performance indicator that is relevant to that section of road. These two pieces of data can then be combined to produce a cost benefit analysis for the scheme and a ranked priority.
- 3.6 It is also important to remember that some schemes will not be seeking to address the structural condition of a road but will be treating a different problem, for example low skid resistance.
- 3.7 By keeping the decision making process at a Borough level Cheshire East Highways' engineers are then able to best deliver a coherent programme of work that ensures that a similar level of service is delivered to all areas.

If budgets were to be split proportionately across the LAP areas based on population then there will, over a period of time, come a point where roads of a lower priority are being treated in some areas to use budget whilst in others there would be insufficient budget to treat higher priority roads.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards are affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Ward Members are affected by the proposal.

6.0 Policy Implications including

- 6.1 If the recommendation is accepted then there are no policy implications as a consequence of this paper.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Studies)

- 7.1 The recommendation does not have a financial implication based on the planned works being within the existing highway budget provision.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 The Borough has a legal duty to maintain the public highway under its control. Maintenance policy must therefore be consistent throughout the Borough to prevent potential legal challenge.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Failure to maintain roads in a consistent and coherent manner will potentially expose the authority to legal challenge.
- 9.2 Public perception, particularly in those areas where spend is seen as being less, will be adversely affected.
- 9.3 Potential that the available funding based on electorate is insufficient to complete works identified in the ward in any financial year resulting in further deterioration.
- 9.4 Failure to maintain key routes could result if funding was electorate based. In wards with a low electorate but with critical strategic transport routes, funding could be significantly reduced, with the likelihood of preventing important works being progressed resulting in the potential for failure on key routes. This would be damaging to significant numbers of travellers and to business and the wider economy of the Borough.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 Not applicable

11.0 Access to Information

- 11.1 The background relating to this report can be reviewed by contacting the report writer:

Name: Pryce Evans
Designation: Programme and Commercial Manager
Tel No: 01270 685879
Email: pryce.evans@cheshireeasthighways.org