

## **Highways and Transport Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Department for Transport funded Safer Road Fund Scheme – A537
<b>Report of:</b>	CLT Lead Officer: Andrew Ross – Director of Infrastructure and Highways
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	HT/04/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	Sutton and Macclesfield East

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1.** This report seeks approval to deliver a Safer Road Fund Scheme on a section of the A537 Buxton Road ‘Cat & Fiddle’ between its junction with the Silk Road in Macclesfield and the Cheshire East boundary with Derbyshire (“the Scheme”) that will help reduce the number of road traffic collisions and associated casualties on this important route, including the number of people killed or seriously injured. The Scheme is fully funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) grant received by the Council.
- 1.2.** It is proposed that the Scheme is procured and delivered through the Council’s Highway Design, Maintenance and Construction Service contract 2018 (“the Highway Service Contract”).

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1.** Approves the delivery of the A537 Buxton Road, Macclesfield Safer Road Fund road traffic collision and casualty reduction scheme through the Highway Service Contract, subject to the Ringway Jacobs target costs for the scheme satisfying the Council’s best value requirements.
- 2.2.** Authorises the Director of Infrastructure and Highways in consultation with the Highways and Transport Committee Chair to take all necessary actions to implement the Scheme using the funding provided by the Department for Transport.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The Government has established a Road Safety Fund as part of its ongoing investment in the national transport infrastructure. The aim of the funding is to provide financial resources to local authorities to help upgrade some of the local roads across the country where the risk of fatal and serious collisions is highest. The Department for Transport worked with the Road Safety Foundation to identify these roads and invited the relevant local highway authorities to submit funding bids to upgrade and improve their roads to help reduce casualties from road traffic collisions and improve road safety.

3.2. The Department for Transport identified three roads in Cheshire East:

A532 West Street, Crewe
A536 Congleton to Macclesfield
A537 Buxton Road, Macclesfield

3.3. The Council prepared and submitted a successful bid for each scheme which would enable the design and delivery of improvements to these roads to bring road safety benefits for residents and users of the public highway in the borough.

3.4. A successful paper was presented to Cabinet in February 2020 that resulted in approval to proceed with the A532 and A536 schemes. The A537 scheme was listed in that paper but approval was not sought at the time as the funding from the Department for Transport had not been received. The funding for the A537 scheme has now been provided to the Council.

3.5. At the time of the Council's bid submission to the DfT, the five year collision data showed that between 2012 and 2017 there had been 69 personal injury accidents, 1 fatal, 19 serious and 40 slights. Causal factors in collisions included loss of control, particularly on bends, excessive speed for the conditions and exceeding the speed limit.

3.6. The proposed scheme seeks to improve road safety for all users on this key transport and leisure route in the borough, particularly where collision cluster sites have been identified. The aim is to reduce the number of collisions and casualties, especially the numbers killed and seriously injured and to reduce the risk of a near miss or collision for all road users on this route.

3.7. The original average speed camera system was introduced in 2010/2011 and helped deliver a significant reduction in the number of collisions and casualties. The existing cameras are now over 10 years old and operate in a varied and harsh environment. The plan is to replace them with the latest camera system technology which will enable monitoring and

enforcement in clear conditions but also during periods of poor day time visibility and in night conditions, something that isn't possible with the existing cameras.

- 3.8.** Alongside the camera upgrade there are a range of engineering measures planned, including road surface treatments to improve skid resistance, upgrading existing and installing new safety barrier to reduce the severity of a collision where vehicles could leave the road on sections of steep embankment. Road sign and road marking renewals will also help to clearly delineate the route.
- 3.9.** The road safety improvements planned on the A537 'Cat & Fiddle route form part of the highway services work to deliver safer and well maintained roads as part of the Council's key priority of delivering 'A thriving and sustainable place' set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 3.10.** The Scheme is on the existing public highway and the proposed works will be contained within its boundaries and do not require the purchase of private land to facilitate the works.
- 3.11.** The improvement works for each of the Scheme is within the scope of the Council's Highway Service Contract in all respects, including geographic, work types and financial limits.
- 3.12.** The Highway Service Contract includes key requirements to provide value for money, efficient service delivery and innovation. Ringway Jacobs's performance is monitored closely and tracked through a performance framework. The Contract is an "open book" type contract that provides for Council staff to have access to all costs and supporting information. This enables the Council to undertake checks and audits to ensure that the contract is delivering services and schemes that provide good value for money and are subject to good contract and financial management.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1.** The delivery of all highway maintenance and improvement works on the public highway network in Cheshire East up to a limit of £5M (indexed linked) should be delivered through the Council's highway service contract.
- 4.2.** If the Highway Service Contract cannot demonstrate best value, the Council could explore alternative delivery options such as undertaking separate procurement exercises for each of the individual schemes or using a suitable framework.
- 4.3.** This would require resource from the Council's Highways and Infrastructure, Procurement and Legal teams, as well as a new authority to proceed on this basis.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1.** As part of the preparation for the recent procurement of the Highway Service Contract, the highway service specification was reviewed and developed based on the learning gained from the previous 2011 Highway Service Contract and developments in the industry over the previous seven years.
- 5.2.** One of the improvements was to increase the value of capital works that could be delivered through the Highway Service Contract up to a value of £5m indexed linked (the previous contract only allowed for works upto £250k). The reason for this was to enable smaller value highways and infrastructure schemes on the highway network to be delivered through the Highway Service Contract, with the aim of improving the efficiency of delivering such schemes and provide benefits for the delivery of the wider highway service.
- 5.3.** The efficiencies include not needing a separate Council-led procurement exercise for each Improvement Scheme. Instead the Improvement Schemes are directly delivered through the Highway Service Contract saving time and procurement costs. Through the Contract the improvement scheme is delivered by Ringway Jacobs who, as the Council's integrated Service Provider in a long term contract to maintain the public highways in the borough, have a vested interest in ensuring the quality of works for the long term.
- 5.4.** In October 2018 the Council awarded the Highway Service Contract to Ringway Jacobs Limited after a robust and competitive procurement process in full compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure and the EU procurement rules.
- 5.5.** This contract delivers the Council's annual revenue and capital funded highway maintenance programmes and as part of this provides for the delivery of highway and infrastructure schemes up to £5m index linked.
- 5.6.** Before a task order for an improvement scheme is placed under the Highway Service Contract, Ringway Jacobs must demonstrate to the Council, on an open book basis, that the proposed price represents best value for the Council. To do this Ringway Jacobs may competitively tender works with their supply chain and/or demonstrate the cost effectiveness by comparison to industry benchmarking information. Ringway Jacobs are required to undertake benchmarking of the Highway Service Contract costs for provision of schemes, services and professional service costs with other Ringway Jacobs highway service contracts, and Jacobs professional service contracts, as well as industry-wide costs for similar works and services and share these with the client team for consideration. This

benchmarking was identified in the Highway Service Contract bid submitted by Ringway Jacobs and is an important contract monitoring and value for money audit tool for the Council during the contract.

- 5.7. Once the task order to instruct the work is issued, the costs are monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis and tracked against budgets to ensure good project and financial management. The costs can be audited, as determined, by officers from the Highways & Infrastructure Client team, Finance and Audit teams to ensure correct charging and delivery of schemes and services to provide best value to the Council.
- 5.8. The Council has established the Minor Improvement Schemes Board to manage the delivery of this type of highway improvement. Each improvement scheme has an identified Senior Responsible Owner (“SRO”) and Project Sponsor. They report to the Board on progress, change, risk and any other issues requiring key project decisions. This Safer Road Scheme will be delivered through these governance arrangements.

## 6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. The Scheme is predominantly in Sutton ward with an advanced information sign replacement in Macclesfield East ward and will provide wider benefits for all residents and non-residents of Cheshire East who use this cross border route into the Peak District.
- 6.2. As with the other Safer Road Fund schemes information on the proposed works will be shared with the local ward members when ready.
- 6.3. Part of the scheme sits within the Peak District National Park and we will be keeping the Authority advised of the scheme.
- 6.4. Details of the bid submitted to the Department for Transport are available on the Council’s website via the following link: [A537 Safer roads fund bid \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## 7. Implications

### 7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. As set out in the body of this report, the Scheme can be compliantly procured via the Highway Service Contract. If the Highway Service Contract is not used, further advice from Procurement and Legal Services will be required on the most appropriate procurement route and a new authority to proceed on the chosen route will be needed.
- 7.1.2. If a Task Order is issued under the Highway Service Contract for this Safer Road Fund Scheme, the Task Order will incorporate conditions of contract as set out in the Highway Service Contract.

## **7.2. Finance**

- 7.2.1.** The Safer Road Fund scheme is included in the Addendum of the Council's capital programme approved as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2021. The Section 151 Officer has approved the scheme to move to the main capital programme under delegated powers.
- 7.2.2.** The scheme will be fully funded by Department for Transport grant of £2.49m.

## **7.3. Policy**

- 7.3.1.** The Scheme is in line with the aims and objectives set out in the Council's current Corporate Plan

## **7.4. Equality**

- 7.4.1.** An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the scheme as part of the process to design and deliver the scheme in line with the Council's current policy and practise and take account of the needs of all residents and users of the public highway.

## **7.5. Human Resources**

- 7.5.1.** There are no implications because of this report.

## **7.6. Risk Management**

- 7.6.1.** All highways and infrastructure projects have inherent risks, and these will vary for each scheme. The project teams for this scheme will deliver it in full compliance with the Construction Design Management (CDM) 2015. These seek to address and minimise risk from the early stage of design through to completion of construction on site and subsequent whole life maintenance requirements.
- 7.6.2.** The project management requirements include the development of a risk register and this will be monitored and updated as risks are identified and mitigated to minimise their impact on the safe and efficient delivery of the scheme. All risks will have assigned owners who are responsible for mitigating and managing them.

## **7.7. Rural Communities**

- 7.7.1.** The scheme is designed to improve the efficiency and safety of this important route which is open to use by all residents and visitors to the borough. The scheme affects the rural section of the A537 between Macclesfield and the county boundary providing essential connectivity for rural communities with the wider borough and national road network beyond.

## **7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

7.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

## 7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. The reduction in the number of killed and seriously injured as a result of road traffic collisions on the public highway in Cheshire East is a key aim of the Council and external stakeholders.

7.9.2. The Safer Road Fund scheme is being implemented to enhance road safety for motorised and non-motorised users on the public highway network within the borough. These road safety improvements aim to help reduce the number of fatal and serious road traffic collisions on the A537 between Macclesfield and the County boundary and deliver public health benefits for residents and users of the public highway.

## 7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. The Safer Road fund scheme is within the existing highway boundaries and is designed to support delivery of the Council's strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan by improving highway condition to enhance road safety for all road users.

7.10.2. Road safety enhancements help reduce the number of road traffic collisions and minimise disruption and congestion on the highway associated with such events. Road safety improvements can also encourage drivers to travel at lower and more appropriate speeds for the roads and conditions which can contribute to a reduction in vehicle emissions.

7.10.3. The road safety enhancements planned will help to promote lower and more appropriate vehicle speeds on this route into the Peak District National Park. The route is popular with cyclists and is also crossed by various public rights of way. Creating a safer route for all road users can help encourage greater use of more sustainable forms of transport and contribute to healthier lifestyles that benefit the environment.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Paul Davies, Contract Operations Manager, Highway Service <a href="mailto:Paul.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Paul.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a> 07748 650204
Appendices:	n/a
Background Papers:	'Department for Transport funded Safer Road Fund Schemes' Paper to Cabinet 10 March 2020  A537 Safer Road Fund Bid on Council web page: <a href="#">A537 Safer roads fund bid (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</a>

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