

Appendix A - Further essential background and detail on the proposal

Department for Transport (DfT) Funding Blocks

1. Bristol City Council receives annual funding streams from the Department for Transport (DfT) for investment in Bristol's highway infrastructure network as follows;
 - a. Integrated Block – this is block funding provided for small transport improvement projects such as road safety schemes, bus priority schemes, walking and cycling schemes and transport information schemes.
 - b. Highways Capital Maintenance Block - This funding block is primarily for structural renewal of highway assets such as, but not exclusively limited to, roads, footways, bridges, drainage, lighting and signals. Maintenance expenditure, principally funded by revenue, is mainly for reactive purposes and covers repair of worn or damaged roads and facilities, either short term patching or a permanent replacement. Planned, preventative maintenance, funded by the Capital Maintenance Block primarily, is the most cost effective method of keeping our highway assets in good repair. Indeed the Asphalt Industry Alliance suggest that it is at least twenty times more expensive to patch and mend than it is to undertake long lasting repairs, with preventative treatments postponing such costly interventions and providing the option for more financially sustainable options to be planned;
 - c. Highways Incentive Fund – This block funding is an element of the Highways Capital Maintenance Block being a top slice. The purpose of this funding block is to incentivise local authorities to take up, and apply asset management principles, to their maintenance programmes to ensure that we achieve the greatest benefit from our allocated resources. It is awarded based on Bristol City Council's ability to demonstrate that it is using asset management principles and rewarding those authorities who have an asset management strategy. Please see section 5 below for further details on asset management;
 - d. National Priority Infrastructure Fund – this is a new allocation commencing from April 2017 and has not been awarded previously to Bristol City Council. This will fund projects that demonstrate a clear and strong contribution to economic growth and tackle congestion on roads ensuring the UK's transport networks are fit for the future.

Investing in Highway network

2. Bristol City Council has, as part of its recent Corporate Plan consultation, reduced from April 2017 the revenue funding available for carrying out reactive highway maintenance. One of the critical factors in making this decision, was the understanding and acceptance, of the need for continued capital investment in the highway infrastructure network. The programmes and projects primarily funded by funding blocks, detailed in b and c above, are informed by condition data and information for different highway assets. This data, along with the expert technical knowledge and expertise of officers, identifies the priority areas requiring investment

on the highway infrastructure network. Officers align these priorities with Mayoral and Corporate priorities but the primary focus for these two funding blocks, as recommended by the DfT, remains on continued investment in our highway infrastructure network and improving its condition. The highway network is critical to maintaining the economic prosperity of Bristol, and its place as the primary City in the southwest of England and wider sub-region, for residents, businesses and visitors to the City.

Consultation

3. As detailed in Cabinet report recommendation number 2, the authority for decisions, as to what programmes and projects will be funded by these DfT block allocations will be delegated to the Service Director for Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport. As detailed above, sections b and c refer, the Highways Capital Maintenance and Incentive block allocations will be primarily prioritised using asset condition data and information aligned with both Mayoral and Corporate priorities.
4. Programmes and projects, to be funded by the two remaining block allocations, sections a and d above refer, being National Priority Infrastructure Fund and Integrated Block, will be subject to wider consultation with the Mayor and administration, local members, Neighbourhood Partnerships, public and businesses. Listed below are examples of projects and programmes that have been funded by these blocks in the past and also suggestions as to other projects or programmes that could be included in the future as follows;
 - Supporting transport infrastructure to the Arena and other major corporate projects;
 - Bristol MetroWest;
 - Casualty Reduction schemes;
 - Sustainable Drainage schemes;
 - Minor traffic schemes;
 - Public Right of Way improvements;
 - Rail Station Improvements;
 - Safer Routes to School projects;
 - Traveline;
 - Public Transport improvements;

Asset management

5. As noted previously the DfT are actively encouraging local authorities to use asset management principles in how they plan highway infrastructure maintenance programmes. Following these principles will ensure that the investment in our highway infrastructure network makes the most efficient and effective use of available funding. In addition the same principles are being adopted to ensure that Bristol City Council delivers revenue savings by the focussed capital investment in our highway infrastructure network.

6. Bristol City Council is starting from a relatively immature position with respect to the use of asset data, systems and processes. Significant early progress has already been made with a new asset management system, called CONFIRM, now operational and being used by the majority of services with the Transport Service. The reporting by the public of the majority of faults on our highway network is now being handled by this system, making response to such reports more streamlined and efficient. In addition to this officers are working proactively with other service areas outside of Transport e.g. Docks to see what further efficiencies maybe delivered by the use of our asset management system.
7. There are a number of milestones that officers are working on as follows;
 - a. Carrying out an Asset Management Maturity Assessment. This will identify the priority areas for improvement within the Transport Service;
 - b. Applying the learning from a above in terms of assessing, along with our knowledge on asset data and condition, how we should move forward. This will define our Asset Management Policy and Strategy. Officers will be consulting with the Mayor and his administration as this strategy evolves.
 - c. Carry out lifecycle modelling and Gap analysis for all of our existing highway infrastructure assets. This will show, based on the current and future levels of investment, what the lifecycle for those assets will be. This will be carried out in discussion with the Mayor and his administration but will need to be considered and reported to Cabinet. Decisions will need to be made as to the priority areas for continued investment and maintenance in our highway infrastructure network. Consideration will need to be made as to how this fits in within the Mayoral and Corporate priorities as well as the new West of England Combined Authority, Local Enterprise Partnership and business community.
8. Officers will be discussing the programme for how we move forward to a more mature position on asset management with the Mayor and his administration.