

<b>9 February 2021</b>		<b>ITEM: 8</b>
<b>Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2021/22 - Highways Maintenance allocation and programme 2021/22</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> No	
<b>Report of:</b> Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead and Peter Wright, Maintenance and Infrastructure Strategic Lead		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Leigh Nicholson – Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection Julie Nelder – Assistant Director – Highways, Fleet & Logistics - Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Andy Millard – Director of Place Julie Rogers – Director of Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud - Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out how the Transportation Service within the Place Directorate will prioritise funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme (ITB) to enhance transport infrastructure and service provision within the Borough in 2021/22.

The report also sets out the DfT Block Allocation Programme for the Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud directorate in 2021/22. This programme is prioritised in alignment with Thurrock Council Highways Assets Management Strategy and Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.

### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny provide comment on the report and the following Cabinet recommendations:**
- 1.2 Endorse the ITB Capital Programme, policy and prioritisation direction for the DfT ITB Block funding under the key Policy areas of Road Safety**

**Engineering, Safer Routes to School, Area Intervention Programme and EV charging programme.**

- 1.3 Endorse the Highways Maintenance Block Allocation Programme (as detailed in Appendix 4) for 2021/22.**
- 1.4 Support the process which delegates authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the ITB programme (and additional funding allocations that may arise) taking into account local views and priorities.**
- 1.5 Delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the DfT Maintenance Block Allocation programme.**

**2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The DfT annual settlement provides the allocation for ITB schemes. The total ITB capital programme allocation for Thurrock in 2021/22 amounts to £971,000.
- 2.2 The ITB programme has the ability to deliver an extensive range of transport improvements which reflect the vision and aims set out within the Council's long term Transport Strategy (2013-26). Tackling congestion, delivering accessibility, improving air quality and making Thurrock's roads safer are core elements of the Transport Strategy which support sustainable growth and regeneration in the Borough.
- 2.3 It is important that the ITB programme is closely aligned with the emerging Local Plan and new Transport Strategy so as to make the most effective use of the funding available to deliver necessary improvements to the transport network. To achieve this, it is important for the programme to have a clear policy direction. There already exists agreed approaches to policy, priority and budget allocation for the Road Safety Engineering and Safer Routes to Schools programmes and a similar approach is required for the ITB programme.
- 2.4 The report also sets out the 2021/22 DfT Block Allocation Programme which is prioritised in alignment with Thurrock Council Highways Assets Management Strategy (covered in more detail in Section 5). This is the key document which ties into the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.

**3. Update and Analysis – Policy, Priority & programme**

- 3.1 The ITB funding is currently allocated to various programmes and projects. The table below illustrates the allocations from 2019/20:

Road Safety Engineering	£250,000
Safer Routes to School	£250,000
Freight Management	£175,000
Minor Works	£125,000
Parking Restrictions (including disabled parking bays)	£71,000
Passenger Transport	£50,000
Walking & Cycling	£50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£971,000</b>

- 3.2 Much of the programme is based upon historic allocations and as can be seen from the above table, nearly 40% of the ITB budget has not been allocated to specific highways improvement schemes and a large proportion of the work programme has been largely driven by ad hoc requests. It is considered more appropriate to direct funds to areas that need it the most, based upon statistical data. A new policy (TD4) is therefore proposed be developed to underpin a new Area Intervention Programme (AIP). Detail of the proposed policy is provided in Appendix 3 and details of the AIP are also provided.
- 3.3 The new programme is proposed within the 2021/22 ITB allocations. To allow for a robust policy approach to AIP, it is proposed to reduce the Minor Works and Parking Restrictions budgets and by removing the Freight Management budget in its entirety.
- 3.4 The introduction of the AIP builds upon the adoption of policy led approaches to other projects (in July 2019, an exercise was carried out to refresh the policies underpinning the Road Safety Engineering and the Safer Routes to School programmes, which has led to targeted interventions based upon accident statistics).
- 3.5 In light of the above, it is considered necessary and appropriate to adjust the allocations in the 2021/22 ITB programme as follows:

Road Safety Engineering TDP1	£250,000
Safer Routes to School TDP2	£250,000
Area Intervention Programme TDP4	£300,000
EV Charging Facilities TDP3	£75,000
Emergency Minor Works and Parking requests	£50,000
Passenger Transport	£50,000
Walking & Cycling	£50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£971,000</b>

- 3.6 The allocation for each project heading is identified in Appendix 1 and is based on the policy criteria. The allocation of £50k into Passenger Transport and Walking & Cycling is considered necessary to ensure improvements in those two areas, but may be accommodated through underspend to enable additional funds to be allocated elsewhere across the ITB programme. The provision of £50k into the Emergency Minor Works and Parking Requests is

proposed in the event that there is a severe adverse impact on the network that needs to be addressed.

### Variation

- 3.7 Notwithstanding the proposed introduction of policy TD4 and the revised allocations the Council is likely to continue to receive regular ad hoc requests for improvements to be carried out on the transport network. Whilst there is limited flexibility within the programme once agreed, in some cases requests will need to be implemented within the current financial year rather than held pending a future programme. This might include works to protect the public from risk of injury or where serious deterioration on the network may have occurred.
- 3.8 The responsibility to authorise variations to the allocations is delegated to the Director of Place and the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.
- 3.9 Similarly, delegated authority can be used if additional Government funding (such as Safer Roads Funds and Active Travel) is allocated with little notice and if ITB schemes are subject to cost changes as a result of increasing scope or unforeseen revisions to schemes.

## **4. Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud Maintenance Block Funding**

- 4.1. The DfT annual settlement provides the funding for the Maintenance Block Allocation, depending on the HMEP banding achieved. The total funding allocation for Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud is expected to be £1,938,000.
- 4.2 Members are advised that the allocations are not 'ring fenced' for spend in the specific areas set out within the programmes therefore, Local Authorities have some flexibility to manage these allocations. As a result, the funding allocations may be amended within the total allocation to meet local needs on the network in accordance with the maintenance strategy. Appendix 4 provides a summary of how the DfT Block Allocation is allocated across the Council's maintenance programme.
- 4.3 The Maintenance Programme is built around the good practice principals set out in the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure. The Council's adopted approach to this is via the Highways Maintenance Strategy, which focuses on maintaining and prioritising the asset in the most efficient way. Not just focusing on the financial element, but also the end user. It is therefore generated using a data lead approach.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 Approving the recommendations set out in this report will enable the ITB Capital Programme and the Maintenance Block Allocation programme to be

implemented to ensure ongoing improvements to transport infrastructure, service provision and to ensure ongoing improvements are undertaken to the borough's adopted highway network.

- 5.2 Recommendation will also allow the SRF programme to be delivered within a revised delivery programme covering 2021/22 – 23/24.
- 5.3 Supporting / endorsing a clear policy approach for ITB projects provides a level of assurance and consistency for the policy approach that is taken to identify, prioritise and deliver key elements of the ITB programme in relation to Council priorities.

## 6. **Consultation**

- 6.1 The ITB Capital Programme has been developed in line with the priority areas identified and agreed in the Council's Transport Strategy, following extensive community and stakeholder engagement.
- 6.2 Local residents, interest groups and key stakeholders (including Community Forums, Bus User Group, Local Access Forum and Your Place, Your Voice etc.) have been influential in providing regular input for the evidence base that has informed the development of the ITB Capital Programme. Input and feedback from these groups has also supported the direction of the Safer Roads funding submission. A renewed focus on Community Forum engagement allows increased engagement and understanding of local issues. Ward Members will be advised of works affecting their respective wards.
- 6.3 The Maintenance Block Allocation Programme has been developed in line with the priorities identified and set in the Council's Highway Maintenance Strategy.
- 6.4 Once approved, the nature and time frames for delivery of the maintenance schemes will be shared with residents and stakeholders accordingly, with further, more detailed communications being carried out in advance of the works starting.

## 7. **Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 7.1 The ITB Capital Programme, Safer Roads Fund and Maintenance Block Allocation Programme will help improve and enhance the transport network across the Borough making it safer, less congested and more accessible, thereby promoting and supporting People, Place and Prosperity within Thurrock.

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**  
**Senior Financial Accountant, Corporate Finance**

The Council will be allocated £971,000 ITB capital and £1,938,000 Block Allocation for Maintenance for 2021/22.

The DfT funding allocation of £2,488,792 from the Safer Roads Fund is expected to be received in advance of the 2021/22 financial year. Further information is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/road-safety-recent-progress-and-future-work>

The cost of implementation will be contained within the funding announced by Government or built into future capital programmes.

### **8.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**  
**Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

The legal implications are included in the body of the report.

### **8.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**

Transport interventions should support improved quality of life in the Borough and its social and economic regeneration. Transport priorities for congestion & CO2 mitigation, accessibility, safety, air quality and climate change adaptation will aim to have positive impacts on the community. A CEqIA will be completed to assess the impacts.

Access to services and the safety of residents have been highlighted and will be addressed throughout the plan period. The ITB and Safer Roads programme takes account of specific areas of the borough and population where implementation will be prioritised to improve road safety, air quality and access to services, taking account of legislative considerations such as the Equality Act. These have been applied to the capital programme.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

9. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Transport Strategy
- DfT Safer Roads funding application

10. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – 2020/21 ITB Capital Programme
- Appendix 2 – Safer Routes to Schools schedule (*to follow*)
- Appendix 3a and 3b – Area Intervention Programme criteria and spread sheet
- Appendix 4 - Highways Maintenance Programme

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