



North Somerset Council Decision

Decision Of: Councillor Mike Solomon, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

With Advice From: The Director of Place

Decision No: 21/22 DP 498

Subject: Funding for the Neighbourhoods & Transport Capital Works Programme 2022-25 – as the Council's Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) implementation programme.

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: The Programme:

- will result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure of £500,000 or over;
- is a district-wide implementation programme and so is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Local Authority.

Background:

The Neighbourhoods & Transport Capital Works Programme 2022-25 ('the Programme') is a 3-year Programme (covering the 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years) and contains a number of identified schemes split into two separate but interlinked Programmes, covering:

- capital maintenance schemes ('the Maintenance Programme'): containing schemes for maintenance works of our existing assets including the highway, footways and cycleways, fencing, bridges and structures, drainage and flood risk, street lighting and traffic signals, and;
- integrated transport improvements ('the Integrated Transport Programme'): covering schemes identified to improve active travel access to services, public transport, road safety, safer routes to school, street space management (including electric vehicle infrastructure and parking improvements).

These two Programmes form the overall Programme and contribute towards the objectives of the West of England's [Joint Local Transport Plan 4](#) (JLTP4), adopted by North Somerset Council (NSC) in March 2020. The Programme covers North Somerset's schemes; the other West of England authorities draw up similar programmes.

The Programme is a 3-year programme, in accordance with Department for Transport (DfT) recommendations and best practice to allow forward planning and the best use of resources. This has been difficult in the last two years, with funding settlements being determined by the DfT for just the one forthcoming year and with relatively short notice. The second and third years of the Programme are therefore dependent on actual funding and any changes arising from previous years, as well as annual condition surveys (for the Maintenance Programme).

For 2022-23 the Integrated Transport Programme will be a one-year Programme to allow our delivery teams to help clear the backlog of schemes delayed due to resource issues associated with the pandemic, other new workstreams such as Active Travel Fund and the nationwide shortage of highway engineers.

The approach to the 2022-23 Programme has been as per the three stages below:

1. **Executive Member approval** is gained through this Decision Notice to accept the funding for the Programme and approve the broad areas of spend against each Programme area.
2. The **Maintenance Programme** would start to be delivered as soon as the highway condition surveys are complete and resulting schemes are identified and prioritised. This has been the case prior to the start of the new financial year (2022-23).
3. The **Integrated Transport Programme** is being finalised as the last of the 3 stages, following very recent confirmation on various funding sources (see Funding section below).

This approach allows the Executive Member to delegate to officers the identification of the top priority schemes for delivery against the Council's priorities and policies. The Executive Member, with advice from the Place Policy & Scrutiny Panel where appropriate, has the opportunity to review the programming and delivery of schemes through the monthly update to Councillors on scheme delivery. The Executive Member is also able to review the final Programmes once they are recommended by officers and approved by the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods & Transport as part of the briefing on this Decision Notice.

As well as increasing the Council's Capital Programme as a result of the funding confirmations received from the Department for Transport, this Decision also seeks approval to accept £310,000 of capital Active Travel Fund 3 (ATF3) funding from the Department for Transport (confirmed on 18th March 2022) to fund our Weston Central Liveable Neighbourhood and School Streets Package schemes.

Decision:

(1) To accept the funding (listed in Table 1 below) for the Neighbourhoods & Transport Capital Works Programme 2022-25 and delegate to the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Transport the allocation of funding to individual schemes within the Programme

(2) To approve the broad areas of spend allocated to each section of the Maintenance and Integrated Transport Programmes based on the policy justifications given in the Costs section below

(3) To increase the Capital Programme by an overall £829,000 to a total budget of £8,801,000 for the Neighbourhoods & Transport Capital Works programme

At the 2nd February 2022 Executive meeting a budget of £7,972,000 was initially approved based on estimated grant funding allocations from the DfT. The actual DfT allocation has risen to by £479,000 to £8,451,000 and the Council has also been allocated an additional £310,000 Active Travel Fund 3 (ATF3).

The £829,000 increase is all financed from DfT grant funding allocations;

- £519,000 2022/23 LTP allocation
- £310,000 Active Travel (ATF3) funding.

Reasons:

To enable the delivery of the Maintenance and Integrated Transport Programmes using the funding allocated to the Council.

Options Considered:

The only option considered is to accept funding to continue to deliver our statutory Maintenance and Integrated Transport Programmes. Without a funded physical implementation plan containing transport improvement schemes, the JLTP4 is just a policy document and the Council would struggle to implement transport connectivity and road safety improvements to the North Somerset transport network. With no identified maintenance programme, the transport network would deteriorate into an unsafe condition, which would result in severe financial, legal and socio-political implications.

Financial Implications:

This Decision Notice seeks approval to allocate and spend the funding sources listed in Table 1 below. It should be clarified that our ability to act on our policies are very much dependent on the funding we are able to secure, as well as the resources that we have to deliver them.

Funding:

The Maintenance Programme is funded predominantly from central government via the Department for Transport's (DfT) Highway Maintenance Block (HMB), as well as an incentivised additional amount available for authorities based on self-assessment of their highway asset management policy and strategy. The Maintenance Programme is supported by additional central government funding such as the Pothole Fund, as well as an NSC Capital top-up contribution.

The Integrated Transport Programme is also funded by central government, via the DfT's 'Integrated Transport Block' (ITB) funding, but is also supported by various NSC capital funding and external funding including S106 contributions from developers and other successfully secured funding such as the Active Travel Fund (ATF).

In Autumn 2021, central government announced funding levels at the national scale for the 2022-25 (3-year) period and on 28th February 2022 the Department for Transport confirmed individual local authority settlements. These are shown in Table 1 below, alongside the NSC Capital contribution, as well as the 2020-21 and 2021-22 funding amounts for comparison.

Table 1: DfT confirmed funding allocations: 2020-25

Year	Pothole Fund	Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) – needs element	HMB – incentive element (indicative)	Integrated Transport Block (ITB)	Active Travel Fund 3 (ATF3)	NSC Capital (NSC)	Total
2020-21	£2.610m*	£3.229m	£0.672m	£0.972m	£0	£1.250m	£8.733m
2021-22	£2.227m	£2.227m	£0.557m	£0.980m	£0	£1.250m	£7.241m
2022-23	£2.227m	£2.227m	£0.557m	£0.980m	£0.310m	£2.500m	£8.801m
2023-24	£2.227m	£2.227m	£0.557m**	£0.980m	£0	TBC	£5.991m
2024-25	£2.227m	£2.227m	£0.557m**	£0.980m	£0	TBC	£5.991m

*The 2020-21 Pothole Fund was merged with the Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund into a 'Pothole & Challenge Fund'. This is why the £2.610m for 2020-21 is higher than what is supposed to be the five equal instalments of £2.227m that NSC are due to receive from the Pothole Fund between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

** Indicative for 2023/24 and 2024/25, subject to the results of the proposed local authority engagement detailed in the DfT's grant funding letter.

Costs:

This section of the report details where NSC is proposing to spend the above funding on both its Maintenance and Integrated Transport Programmes.

Table 2: Proposed broad areas of spend for Maintenance Programme

Maintenance Programme area	2022-23	2023-24*	2024-25*
Highways PRN** (A roads)	16%	21%	26%
Highways Non-PRN (B & C roads)	19%	21%	29%
Highways Unclassified	23%	11%	11%
Footways and Cycleways	7%	7%	4%
Fencing	<1%	<1%	1%
Patching	7%	8%	10%
Bridges & Structures	8%	9%	3%
Drainage & Flood Risk	14%	17%	10%
Street Lighting	3%	4%	5%
Traffic Signals	1%	1%	2%
Management costs and contingency	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*2023-24 and 2024-25 Programmes are subject to change via annual update of Programme

**PRN = Principal Road Network

The Maintenance Programme has been prioritised with the above funding amounts due to the NSC's commitments in the [Highway Asset Management Strategy and Highway Asset Management Policy](#) which outline the following principle: to maintain a 'steady state on A and B roads whilst allowing and mitigating the decline of C and U roads', in the context of limited and decreasing funding for local authority highway maintenance from central government. The 2021 update to the policy and strategy updated the previous 2015 version with the main themes for changes being:

- Reflecting the new NSC Corporate Plan
- New code of practice
- EV chargers
- Cycleways
- New Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4)

The principles above and the resulting funding proportions allow highways maintenance and asset management officers to identify, prioritise and start delivering Maintenance schemes as soon as the data from condition surveys are received and formulated into schemes. This allows teams to get ahead and schedule works at optimal times of the year.

The maintenance of our Highways PRN (A roads), Non-PRN (B & C roads) and Unclassified roads have benefits for the surface quality of the significant on-road sections of our cycling network. However, the [Climate Emergency](#), our resulting net zero carbon by 2030 target and our [NSC Active Travel Strategy](#)'s flagship target to triple walking and cycling by 2030 mean that we need to go further with our investment in our Footways and Cycleways maintenance programme with active travel being the most open, fair and green way of travelling. Although NSC's funding allocation for Footways and Cycleways for 2022-23 has increased by 1,434% since 2018-19, it still represents just 7% of the £7.511m NSC has been allocated to spend on our Maintenance Programme for 2022-23. The more significant update to our [Highway Asset Management Strategy and Highway Asset Management Policy in 2022-23 will allow us to consider increasing the proportion of Maintenance spend on this area of our transport network accordingly.](#)

Table 3: Proposed broad areas of ITB spend for Integrated Transport Programme

Integrated Transport	2022-23
Active Travel	33%
Local LCWIP schemes	(20%)
Strategic cycling schemes	(6%)
Active Travel Fund	(7%)
Public Transport (Bus & Rail)	11%
Road Safety	15%
Street Space Management	41%
Major Schemes*	0%
Pipeline Schemes & Programme Management	<1%
Totals	100%

*our Major Schemes programme is not funded by Integrated Transport Block but is shown on the IT Programme for completeness.

The Integrated Transport Programme is proposed to be funded using the above funding proportions due to our commitments as part of the following policies and strategies:

- [North Somerset Active Travel Strategy \(2020-2030\)](#), which aims to ‘Make walking and cycling the natural choice for a cleaner, healthier and more active North Somerset’, targeting a 300% increase in walking and cycling by 2030. Improving public health is one of four key objectives;
- [North Somerset Corporate Plan \(2020-24\)](#), which commits to ‘A transport network which promotes active, accessible and low carbon travel’.
- [Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2021-2024\)](#) – increasing physical activity and mental wellbeing are two of seven priorities.

More detailed information is included under the ‘Corporate Implications’ section below.

Legal Powers and Implications:

Development and implementation of initiatives and schemes identified by JLTP4 will be delivered under the Council’s powers as Local Highway Authority (Highways Act 1980).

Climate Change and Environmental Implications:

The strong commitments to decarbonisation of both the Integrated Transport Programme and Maintenance Programme are outlined at Appendix 1 below.

Consultation:

The JLTP4 was subject to a substantial consultation with all partners, public and interested parties which took place in February and March 2019 and received over 4,200 responses, many of which were from North Somerset. The consultation showed strong support for reducing carbon emissions.

Public and stakeholder consultation on the [NSC Active Travel Strategy](#) (November 2020 to January 2021) resulted in 312 responses to the consultation overall. Responses set a clear message of support to adopt the strategy with just 6% of respondents believing the North Somerset active travel network is ‘good’ (4%) or ‘very good’ (2%); showing that change is both needed and wanted. Furthermore, 77% of respondents voted either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that we need to do more to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists over private motor vehicles wherever possible and 91% agreed that an increase in active travel is needed to help North Somerset reduce its carbon emissions from transport.

Risk Management:

Table 4: Risk Management for Overall Programme 2022-23

Risk Threat/ Opportunity	Likelihood* (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Inherent Risk Score	Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact reduction	Mitigated Risk Score	FINAL RISK SCORE (Inherent minus Mitigated Risk)	Risk Owner Directorate
Availability of staff to implement schemes	3	4	12	Use term consultants and contract staff to manage peaks in workload	1	4	4	8	Head of Highway Technical Services
Scheme cost inflation (Integrated Transport)	3	3	9	Allow for cost inflations within budgets. Ongoing monitoring of budgets & spend. Work with clients to define scope.	2	2	4	5	Head of Highway Technical Services
Insufficient project management resources	3	3	9	Ensure officers have sufficient Continued Professional Development	3	2	6	3	Team Managers (service wide)
Insufficient funding for consultant support	3	3	9	Maximise in-house expertise and resource	4	2	8	1	Head of Highway Technical Services
Scheme cost inflation (maintenance)	3	3	9	Allow for cost inflations within budgets	3	2	6	3	Highway Asset Planning Team Leader
Deterioration in condition of network due to severe weather	4	4	16	Maintenance programme based on road condition surveys	3	2	6	10	Highway Asset Planning Team Leader
Term maintenance contract ends / contract performance leading to excessive costs and delays	3	3	9	Investigate alternatives in sufficient time / monitor and engage early with contractors	2	3	6	3	Highways Operations & Contracts Manager
Deterioration in condition of network due to reduction in works budget	4	4	16	Maintenance programme based on road condition surveys	3	2	6	10	Highway Asset Planning Team Leader
*Likelihood scoring key	1 = Unlikely	2 = Possible	3 = Likely	4 = Very likely					

Likelihood of risk & impact: High Risk, Medium Risk, Low Risk

Equality Implications:

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes / **No**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and a Health Impact Assessment were undertaken on JLTP4 (both available to be viewed [here](#)). Both concluded that there is likely to be an overall positive impact on the general public. Where adverse effects were predicted, mitigations were identified and added to the JLTP4 as required mitigations to be undertaken, allowing the JLTP4 to have an overall positive effect.

The equality implications of the larger Integrated Transport schemes will also be evaluated as part of the scheme development process. The Programme includes improvements that address mobility issues and assist people with disabilities, for example allocating a significant percentage of the Integrated Transport Programme to active travel and pedestrian priority improvement schemes. The Programme also includes improvements to public transport and walking and cycling networks that aid travel to jobs and services for those who do not, or choose not to, have access to a private car.

Corporate Implications:

This Programme helps the Council contribute towards achieving JLTP4's vision of: *'Connecting people and places for a vibrant, inclusive and carbon neutral West of England'* and the [Active Travel Strategy's](#) vision of *'Making walking and cycling the natural choice for a cleaner, healthier and more active North Somerset'*.

The strong alignment of both the Integrated Transport and Maintenance Programmes with Corporate priorities is detailed at Appendix 2 below.

Background Papers:

West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) – 2020 to 2036

This is accessible on the West of England's Travelwest website below:

<https://travelwest.info/projects/joint-local-transport-plan>

North Somerset Corporate Plan (2020-24)

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/North%20Somerset%20Council%20Corporate%20Plan%202020-2024.pdf>

North Somerset Active Travel Strategy 2020-30 (2021)

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/active-travel-fund/active-travel-strategy>

West of England Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2020)

<https://travelwest.info/projects/west-of-england-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan>

North Somerset Highway Asset Management Policy & Strategy (2020 Revision)

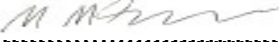
<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/20-21%20DP372%20-%20acc.pdf>

North Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2024)

[Health and wellbeing strategy 2021-24 | North Somerset Council \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2021-24)

Signatories:

Decision Maker(s):

Signed:  Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

Date: 13 May 2022

With Advice From:

Signed:  Director of Place

Date: 12 May 2022.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The JLTP4 promotes sustainable transport choices over the petrol/diesel car and includes policies to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport provision wherever possible.

Three of the plan's five key objectives directly contribute towards reducing carbon:

- 'Take action against climate change and address poor air quality';
- 'Contribute to better health, wellbeing, safety and security', and;
- 'Create better places'.

Underneath these objectives are multiple policies, interventions and major schemes that will contribute to enabling sustainable travel choices to help address the climate emergency and improve air quality. The schemes identified for the Integrated Transport Programme were prioritised against the objectives of JLTP4. This included prioritising schemes that:

- encourage less car use on short journeys and improve active travel access to services;
- encourage public transport use (bus and rail);
- improve road safety and reduce car use on the school run.

Our Maintenance Programme is also committed to NSC's Corporate priorities of prioritising active travel and enabling the shift to a carbon-neutral transport network and are reducing carbon emissions through highway maintenance schemes and procedures wherever possible.

Supported by commitments in the [NSC Active Travel Strategy](#), we have increased the allocation to Footway and Cycleway maintenance by 758% since 2019-20. Further to this, we are increasing the proportion of funding allocated to Highways Non-Principal Road Network (PRN – B and C roads), the types of roads more popular for cycling. Additionally, our highway patching programme focusses a lot of work on the area of highway within the first 1 metre from the kerb; again, the most used and important part of the highway for safe and enjoyable cycling. Furthermore, the prioritisation of maintenance works to many of the Unclassified roads in the Maintenance Programme was based on improving roads that have LCWIP-identified ([Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan](#)), 'quick win' footway and/or cycleway improvements adjacent to them.

Additionally, through NSC's procurement process, contractors are obliged to demonstrate how their work with the Council contributes towards the corporate priority of reducing carbon emissions and becoming carbon neutral by 2030. NSC's highways maintenance teams use electric vehicles whenever possible when inspecting the highway and visiting or managing on-site maintenance schemes. These EVs are part of the NSC fleet which is made up of approximately 50% Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (with plans to increase this percentage).

Appendix 2: Corporate Implications

The Programme arises from the priorities and objectives of the [JLTP4](#), covering the years 2020 to 2036. JLTP4 was consulted on in public in February and March 2019 and following over 4,200 responses (and 3,500+ changes to the plan as a result), was adopted by the Council in February 2020. The West of England Joint Committee then adopted the JLTP4 in March 2020, resulting in JLTP4 becoming the West of England sub-region's overarching transport policy and transport planning document. NSC develops its Programme on the priorities contained within JLTP4.

The Programme is also an essential implementation plan in delivering each of the Council's three objectives as contained within the [NSC Corporate Plan 2020-24](#):

- A thriving and sustainable place;
- A Council which empowers and cares about people;
- An open and enabling organisation.

It also contributes to the following priorities of the Corporate Plan:

- A thriving and sustainable place:

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming safe and clean neighbourhoods
- To be a carbon neutral council and area by 2030
- A transport network which promotes active and low carbon travel
- An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth
- A broad range of new homes to meet our growing need, with an emphasis on quality and affordability

- A Council which empowers and cares about people:

- A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities
- An approach which enables young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives
- A focus on tackling inequalities, improving outcomes
- A collaborative way of working with partners and families to support children achieve their full potential
- A community which promotes learning and employment opportunities

- An open and enabling organisation:

- Engage with and empower our communities
- Manage our resources and invest wisely
- Embrace new and emerging technology
- Empower our staff and encourage continuous improvement and innovation
- Make the best use of our data and information
- Provide professional, efficient and effective services
- Collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

The Programme is also the main delivery vehicle of the policy commitments and physical infrastructure improvements stated in the Council's [Active Travel Strategy](#). Consulted upon in public between November 2020 and January 2021, this was adopted by NSC in July 2021, following overwhelming support from the consultation. The Strategy sets out how the Council will 'make walking and cycling the natural choice for a cleaner, healthier and more active North Somerset', in line with the Council's [Climate Emergency](#) commitment for carbon neutrality by 2030. The strategy aims to:

- Deliver safe and frequent active travel to enable improved public health;

- Tackle the Climate Emergency;
- Drive local economic development, and;
- Shape active travel neighbourhoods through an active travel focused planning system.

The strategy's key target is to increase walking and cycling trips by 300% by 2030.

The Programme also helps contribute towards the priorities contained within North Somerset's [Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2021-2024\)](#), with two of the strategy's seven priorities including increasing physical activity and mental wellbeing are two of seven priorities.