Report of: The Chief Highways Officer

Report to: Outer East Community Committee covering the wards of Cross Gates & Whinmoor, Temple Newsam, Kippax & Methley, Garforth & Swillington

Report author: Andrew Molyneux tel:0113 2475316

Date: 1 December 2015   **To note**

Highway Asset Management Strategy

1.   Purpose of report

1.1   The purpose of this report is to inform Outer East Community Committee of the process involved to develop the Highway Maintenance Local Road Programme and the strategic approach to scheme prioritisation.

2.   Main issues

2.1   The Best Council Plan sets a priority to deliver quality highways assets, to maintain the percentage of roads in need of structural repair at current levels.

2.2   Managing highway condition is a critical challenge for the council. The council is expected to manage an ageing network with high public expectations for safe, reliable and comfortable travel and to seek the most efficient use of limited public resources in doing so.

2.3   Highway maintenance revolves around three categories of routine, reactive and planned maintenance. Routine maintenance includes patching and minor works. Reactive maintenance is carried out in response to day-to-day statutory maintenance functions such as pothole repairs and accident damages. Planned maintenance delivers the reconstruction and resurfacing of streets. This report describes the approach to Planned Maintenance.

2.4   Asset management is key to the long-term investment in the condition of highways and understanding the effects of spending decisions can help to get the most from maintenance expenditure.

2.5   An asset management approach to highway maintenance is being promoted by central government as best practice and from December 2015 onwards they will measure performance in this respect and allocate reward funding as appropriate.

Planned maintenance process for local roads:

2.6   There is an inventory of 2,104km of local roads. Each year around a quarter of these are surveyed for condition. The survey delivers a condition ranking. This is combined with road use and factors such as other planned work in each locality to create an overall local road priority list.

2.7   The position on the list is broadly categorised on a traffic light system from Green = OK to Red = in need of structural maintenance. The aim of the planned highway maintenance strategy is to reduce the number of roads in the red band. This is to be achieved by treating 'Red' roads to return them to 'Green' and treating 'Dark Amber' roads to prevent them from deteriorating to 'Red'. Diagram 1 below shows a representation of the priority listing and the areas from which roads are chosen for the planned maintenance programme.
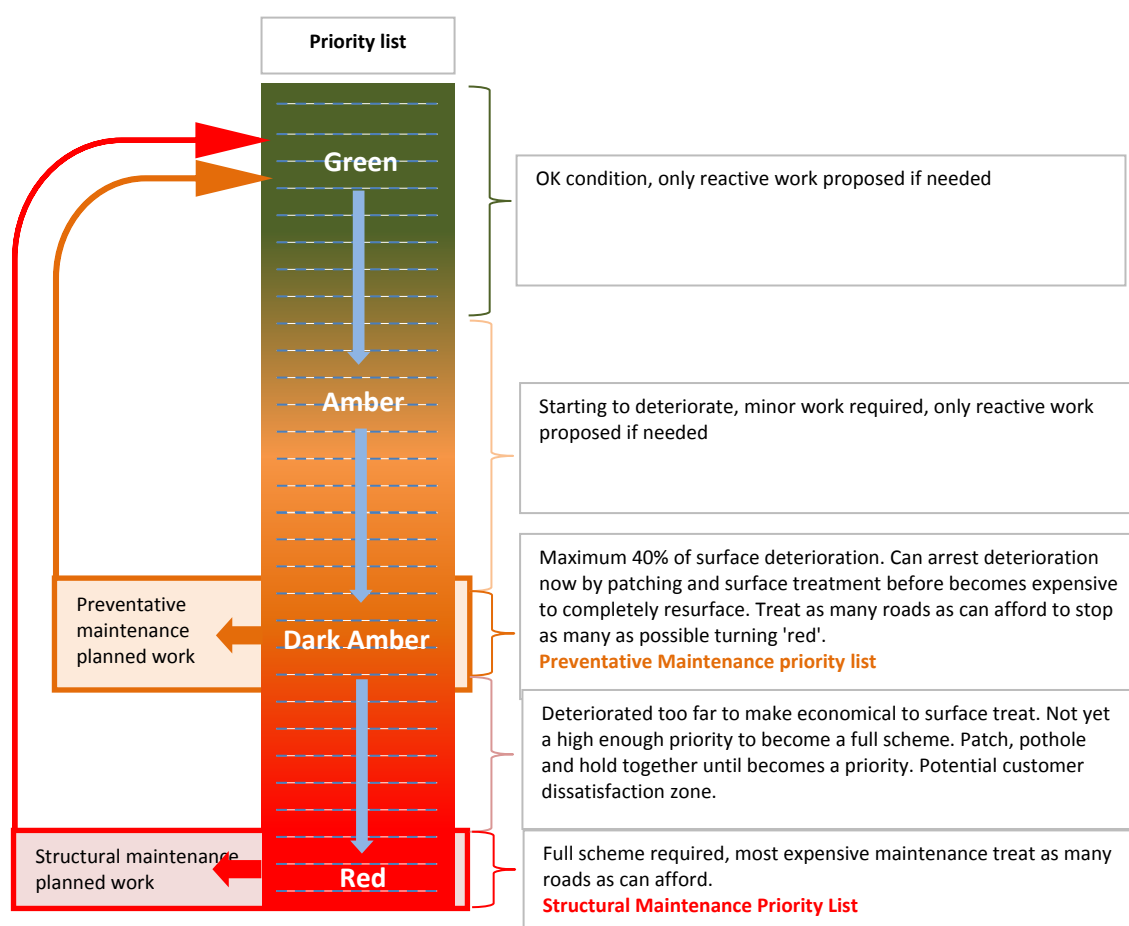

Priority list

Green — OK condition, only reactive work proposed if needed

Amber — Starting to deteriorate, minor work required, only reactive work proposed if needed

Preventative maintenance planned work

Dark Amber — Maximum 40% of surface deterioration. Can arrest deterioration now by patching and surface treatment before becomes expensive to completely resurface. Treat as many roads as can afford to stop as many as possible turning 'red'.
Preventative Maintenance priority list

Deteriorated too far to make economical to surface treat. Not yet a high enough priority to become a full scheme. Patch, pothole and hold together until becomes a priority. Potential customer dissatisfaction zone.

Structural maintenance planned work

Red — Full scheme required, most expensive maintenance treat as many roads as can afford.
Structural Maintenance Priority List

Diagram 1. The Highway Maintenance Priority List and Maintenance Treatments

2.8   The balance between how many roads to treat in the dark amber band and how many in the red band is based on a forecast of the deterioration of roads over the coming years to work out the best proportion in order to reduce the number in the red band over time. The forecast uses the rate of deterioration over the last 10 years to determine what is most likely to happen in the future. So far this has proved to be an accurate prediction tool.

2.9   In the 2015/16 programme around 1.5km of Dark Amber roads are repaired to every 1km of Red roads. Repairing a road in the red band is approximately five times more expensive than repairing a road in the dark amber band.

3.   OPTIONS

3.1   Prior to 2014 the budget allocation to local roads in the red band was divided into Wards pro-rata by road length, pothole data and liability claims. This budget was then applied to the red band road priority list for each Ward. This method meant that a ward in overall better condition were getting roads refurbished that were much lower in overall priority than roads in other wards. This in turn was leading to a marked difference in overall ward condition with the gap widening.

3.2   As part of the budget review in 2014 all services were asked to undertake reviews to drive efficiencies in service delivery. Highways looked at delivering the right treatment at the right time in the right place. The lifecycle plan predicted that if a more strategic approach was taken to repairing roads in the red band a greater benefit overall could be achieved in road condition (around a 4% improvement over 5 years). This approach was therefore applied to the highway maintenance programme from April 2015 onwards and reported in the Council's budget.

3.3   This strategic approach means that the roads across the Leeds district are maintained in order of priority with the aim of bringing roads in all Wards to a similar condition range. Wards that have the most roads near to the top of the priority list will receive a greater proportion of structural maintenance and wards with roads in overall better condition will continue to receive appropriate maintenance in the form of preventative maintenance (dark amber) to prevent as many roads as possible from deteriorating into the red band.

3.4   Allocating maintenance in this way complies with national best practice for efficient maintenance and will enable the authority to maximise government grant from 2016 onwards.

4.   Conclusion

4.1   The Best Council Plan sets a priority to deliver quality highways assets. A robust highways asset management strategy is instrumental to achieving this priority and maximising return on investment in highway maintenance. A balance of preventative and structural maintenance together with a strategic approach to highway maintenance across the city will deliver the most beneficial outcome for road maintenance in Leeds. A move towards this strategic approach was made as part of the budget review in 2014. Demonstration of a strategic asset management approach will maximise future central government grants for highway maintenance.

5.   Recommendations

5.1   Outer East Community Committee are recommended to note the content of this report and seek any further detail required from Highways Officers.

6.   Background information

6.1   None