

Cabinet – 27 March 2019

Extract from the minutes of the Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 March 2019.

Highway Maintenance - Progress

37 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment, Infrastructure and the Economy on Additional Highways Maintenance Funding designed to ensure that condition of the highway network was as good as it could be and provided for a satisfactory standard being met.

The management of the highway assets was based on need with sites most in need of repair being prioritised. The aim was to achieve a point at which the highway asset could be maintained in a condition that provided optimum serviceability for minimum investment. Whilst value for money in highway maintenance was critical, the scope for greater efficiencies was always sought. Wherever possible, opportunities to carry out preventative treatments were being implemented to prevent road condition deteriorating identify maintenance needs. Whilst some £12.462m was received for maintenance from Government annually, as documented to the Policy Development Panel, those funds were insufficient to cover all of Dorset's maintenance needs across the whole highway network.

On that basis a bid was being made to Dorset Council for the necessary additional funding to ensure that the standard of the highway network was maintained and enhanced where practicable.

Officers explained what was done with surfacing, patching, drainage and ditching improvement works and how this was being achieved. Where practicable, a proactive approach was being taken to invest in the network, by way of interventions rather than having to react to issues when they arose and were reported.

Assessments made of what maintenance was required was continually being done. The reasons for what work was necessary, when this was being done and what benefits it brought was communicated in a number of ways, with social media being used to engage with public.

The Committee were pleased to see what progress was being made and the way that this was being done – in taking a proactive approach where practicable – recognising that it was essential that the standards of the network were maintained. How highway in conservation areas would be maintained was of importance to the Committee and that where practicable, the benefits of any additional funding might be seen.

They were keen that Town and Parish Council's continued to play their important part in identifying issues at an early stage and doing what they might to assist the Highway Authority. In investing to save, benefits would be realised in the longer term and not require such a demand on resources. On that basis they agreed

Resolved

That the additional schemes being constructed by the additional corporate funding and the proposals for the additional Department for Transport funding be noted.

Recommended

That having considered the recommendations made by the Policy Development Panel (PDP) in 2018, the Cabinet be requested to recommend that Dorset Council be asked to actively, and formally, consider reinstating essential highway maintenance activities in the future, requiring additional annual revenue funding equating to £3,733.960.

Reason for Recommendation

The recommendations made by the PDP are considered essential to address the backlog of issues associated with essential highway maintenance.