

Report of the Strategic Director – Regeneration & Culture to the meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 28 March 2013

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Subject:

The transfer of responsibility and budgets to Bradford South Area Committee for decision making in relation to Highway Repairs.

Summary statement:

As part of the Council's Devolution Review Highway Repairs has been identified as a Service function which has been devolved to Area Committees. This paper sets out the proposed arrangements for Area Committee agreement on how this function will continue to operate following devolution.

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1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Executive has identified the Highway Repairs function to be devolved to Area Committees.

This report outlines the proposed basis on which the devolution of budgets for there active Highway Repairs function which has recently transferred to the Planning, Transportation & Highways Service will be implemented and sets out the scope of Area Committee decision making from 2013-14.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. At its meeting of 28 March 2013 this committee considered a report on the devolution of highway repairs budgets to area committee for local determination. The report provided the committee with further information about the proposed devolution of highway repairs budgets which were to be considered at Executive than had been provided in the November 2012 report. The proposed devolution methodology contained in the report concentrated on the devolution of a proportion of the overall budget used for undertaking CAT3 & CAT4 repairs (i.e. those repairs which had sufficient lead in time for the committee to be involved in their prioritisation).

- 2.2. At the March meeting the committee subsequently resolved that:

(1) That consideration of the Highways Repair Devolution be deferred until June 2013 meeting of this Committee to allow for the Strategic Director (Regeneration & Culture) to submit a detailed report in line with the concerns expressed by Members at the November 2012 meeting of the Area Committee.

- 2.3. Whilst the overarching approach to devolution was approved by this Committee in the report of the Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services in November 2012 this report now provides the committee with the additional budget information requested and a revised proposal for devolution.

3.0 BACKGROUND TO HIGHWAY REPAIRS

- 3.1. The need to undertake highway repairs throughout the District is identified through a variety of sources including:

- General public calls to the customer contact centre;
- Inspections as a result of service requests dealt with by the Area Teams or as a result of observations by highway officers in the course of undertaking other duties; and
- Programmed condition, safety and other surveys.
- Safety Inspections.

Where repairs to the highway are required these are categorised depending upon the severity of the issue into one of four categories (CAT1, CAT2, CAT3 or CAT4). Each category has a target repair time which has been agreed with the Council's Insurers

as a way of mitigating the Council's insurance premium for highway related claims. CAT1 repairs should be undertaken in 24 hours; CAT2 repairs in 5 working days; CAT3 within 28 days and CAT4 within 6 months.

4.0 PROPOSAL FOR AREA COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING

- 4.1. Following resolution of Executive that the budget for all categories of repairs should be devolved to the area committees this report now includes proposals for this approach to be adopted in the Bradford South constituency for the Committee's ratification.
- 4.2. Historic spending on CAT1 & CAT2 repairs throughout Bradford District has typically been at a level of 36.6% of the total budget allocation, the remainder of this budget being used for more permanent, programmed repairs under the definitions of CAT3 & CAT4. In the case of Bradford South the budget for CAT1 & 2 repairs would equate to a budget of £124,000 for 2013/14 using the agreed funding allocation formula or 17.4% of the overall CAT1 & CAT2 repair budget for the District.
- 4.3. As has been explained previously the timescales for these works being carried out is such that pre-notification and prioritisation by this committee is seen as unworkable. Therefore, the proposals for devolution of this element of the highway repairs budget is that a report be presented to the committee on a quarterly basis of expenditure against this budget together with the numbers of incidents responded to which fall within the CAT1 & CAT2 definitions.
- 4.4. Calculation of the proportion of CAT3 & CAT4 budget allocations, again using the approach approved by Executive is based upon three metrics (a) a basic allocation of 20% of the budget to each area (b) an allocation of 55% of the budget based on the length of highway network in the constituency area to be maintained and (c) a final allocation of 25% of the budget based on the percentage of the population living in the area taken from the 2011 census. On this basis the allocation of the CAT3 & CAT4 budget allocated to the Bradford South committee would equate to £226,000 or 18.3% of this element of the budget.
- 4.5. Aggregating these two elements together gives a total budget allocation to Bradford South Area committee for highway repairs of £350,000 for 2013/14 which equates to 18% of the overall budget. A detailed comparison is given in the table below:

Constituency Area	Population (2011 Census)	Population %	Network Length %	Allocation % age		Total Allocation %
				CAT1 & 2	CAT3 & 4	
Bradford East	113,820	21.8	16.9	17.4	18.7	18.2
Bradford West	114,761	22.0	17.7	18.1	19.2	18.8
Bradford South	101,545	19.4	17.2	17.4	18.3	18.0
Keighley	97,150	18.6	25.7	25.0	22.8	23.6
Shipley	95,176	18.2	22.5	22.1	20.9	21.3
Total	522,452	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1: Highway Repairs Budget Allocation Percentages

- 4.6. The decision making proposal for this direction of the CAT3 & 4 budget would, as previously described operate as follows:

- Lists of all CAT3 repair sites and CAT4 schemes based on an officer assessment of the engineering need for the works will be presented to Area Committees for consideration. Or, where committee dates do not permit, details of the planned CAT3 programme will be discussed with the committee chair and retrospectively reported to the committee.
 - The Area Committee, as Highway Authority, will be responsible for prioritisation and allocation of the above budget to undertake the CAT3 and CAT4 work within their constituency boundary.
 - The works would then be delivered throughout the financial year as and when resources are available given the other competing demands outlined in paragraph 5.1 below.
- 4.7. Any further one-off payments to the Council in relation to dealing with severe weather damage would be similarly apportioned (subject to funding conditions) as CAT3 or CAT4 priority works and a further programme of works would be prepared for the committee's consideration and prioritisation.

5.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. Availability of operatives and funding to carry out CAT3 & CAT4 repairs is dependent upon a number of factors some of which are beyond the control of officers, including, but not limited to, the following;
- Sickness cover for higher priority (CAT1 & CAT2) repair crews;
 - Winter maintenance operations and stand-down times; and
 - Variable and currently increasing numbers of CAT1 & CAT2 potholes, flagging repairs, damage repairs, drainage issues etc. – all requiring attention in priority over CAT3 and 4 works.

6.0 OPTIONS

- 6.1. The Area Committee can decide to approve the recommendations as detailed in this report, or amend them, or suggest alternative recommendations for which officer advice will be given.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 7.1. In the current financial year the total highway repair budget for CAT1, 2, 3 and 4 repairs is £1.946m.
- 7.2. Resources to deliver a programme of Highway Repairs programme of works are available within the Council current staff resources.

8.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1. The volume of CAT1 and CAT2 repairs received in any given year is not predictable although over recent years it has seen an increasing volume due to the impact of severe winters and flooding on the District's highway network. Of necessity CAT 1 & 2

repairs have first call on the budget and resources provided to maintain the highway and hence the level of funding, and resource, available for CAT3 & 4 works in any given financial year could fluctuate year-to-year and even within financial years.

9.0 LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 9.1. Legal implications of the further devolution of budgets to Area Committees will be reviewed by the City Solicitor and any issues and constitutional amendments required will be considered at the Council's Annual General Meeting.

10.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Links to Area Committee Action Plans 2011-14

The development and implementation of the proposals in this report support priorities within the Area Committee Action Plans.

10.2. Equal Rights and Diversity Implications

There are no significant equal rights implications arising from this report.

10.3. Sustainability Implications

Increased local decision making has the potential to create more sustainable solutions to local issues.

10.4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts

There is no impact on the Council's own and wider District's carbon footprint and emissions from other greenhouse gasses arising from this report.

10.5. Community Safety Implications

Maintenance of the highway network is essential to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians and road users alike.

10.6. Human Rights Act

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

10.7. Trade Union Implications

There are no Trade Union implications associated with this report.

10.8. Ward Implications

The information in this report is relevant to all Wards.

11.0 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1. That the Area Committee agrees the devolution of decision making to Area Committees outlined above.
- 12.2. That a report be presented to this committee at the earliest opportunity confirming the following:
 - Service delivery plans for the year;
 - Performance and financial information on the operation of the service;
 - Proposals for involving citizens in service delivery; and
 - Opportunities and challenges for the service.

13.0 APPENDICES

None

14.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 14.1. Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 10 April 2013 - Methodology for Allocation of Devolved Service Resources to the Five Area Committees.
- 14.2. Report of Strategic Director (Regeneration & Culture) to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee, 28 March 2013 – The Transfer of Responsibility and Budget to the Bradford South Area Committee for Decision Making – Highway Repairs.
- 14.3. Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to the meeting of Executive, 16 March 2013 – Methodology for Allocation of Devolved Service Resources to the Five Area Committees.
- 14.4. Report of the Strategic Director (Regeneration & Culture) to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee, 22 November 2012 – The Transfer of Responsibility and Budgets to the Bradford South Area Committee for Decision Making – Highway Repairs.
- 14.5. Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Strategic Director of Environment and Sport to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1st November 2012