

CHESC 6/03/23 – Proposal for Exceptional Revenue Funding for Highway Maintenance 2023/24

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Background (1)



Pressures on highways maintenance:

Focus on Safety

- Maintenance activities are largely focussed on safety critical activities – maintenance deficit in non essential areas of work.

Impact of Extreme Weather.

- Last year - long dry summer, followed by extremely wet November/December followed by prolonged freezing temperatures.
- Melting roads, wide-scale flooding, storm damage from high winds, and large numbers of potholes
- Resources diverted to deal with extreme events

Background (2)

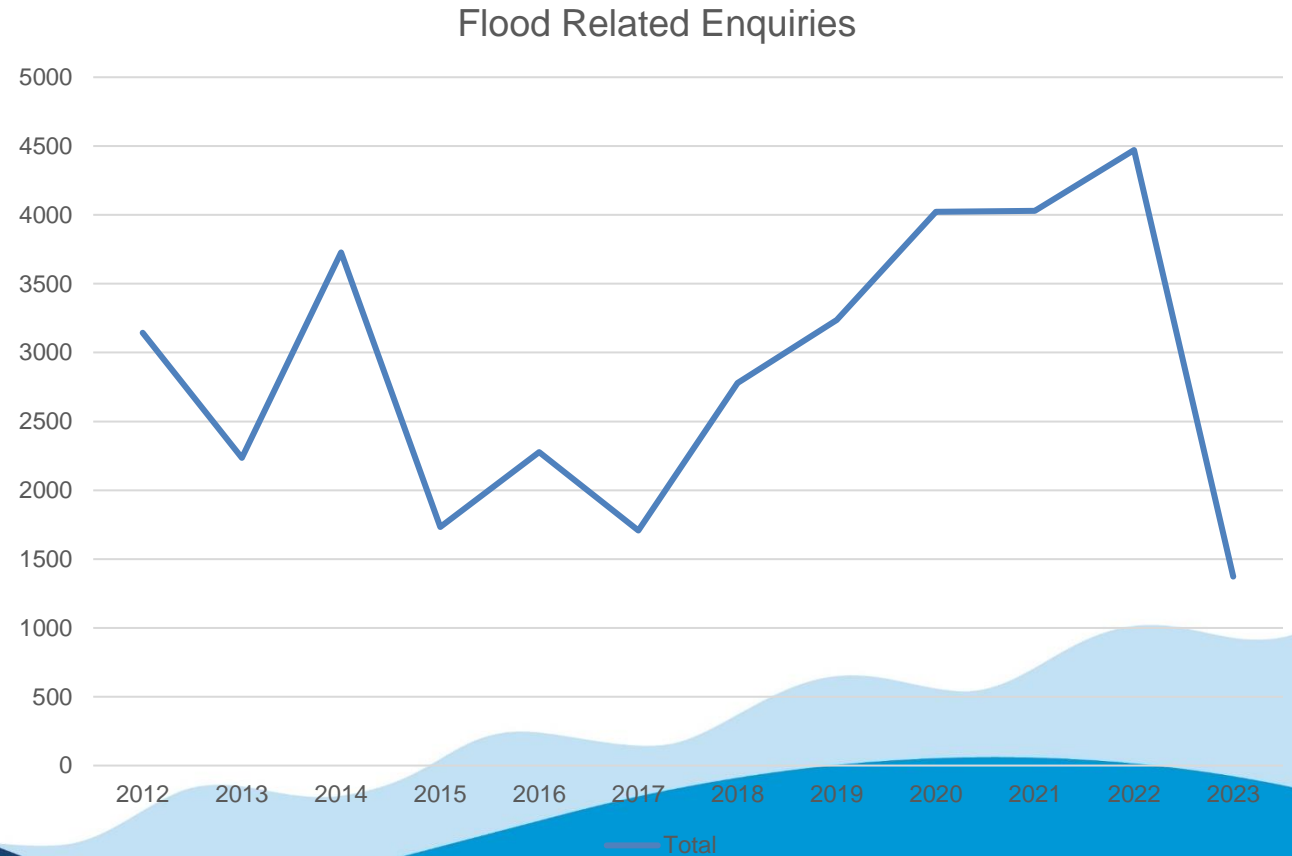


Result – backlog in maintenance/increased volume of reactive safety work:

Safety Jobs - In January 2023, 7174 jobs were raised, the most ever on record and a 250% increase on January 2022.

Flooding enquires increasing years on year:
Large number of Priority 1
and Priority 2 drainage jobs in the system
(currently over 300)

Trees – 1,200 Priority 2 jobs in the system



Approach



- Focus in 4 key areas: drainage; potholes and carriageway condition; signs & road markings; and vegetation maintenance
- Existing condition and live asset data will be used to formulate programmes for priority focus.
- Area teams and engineers have local knowledge and intelligence.
- Work will be programmed and optimised to ensure that we get the best value and efficiency.
- Performance reporting will be undertaken via the quarterly PRR
- Comms plan to update customers and stakeholders
- Beneficial impacts - may inform options for future service specifications

Resources



- Delivery will be through existing highway contracts.
- Additional plant and people resources – early discussions have indicated that existing contractors have capacity but there is a risk of delay due to mobilisation periods.
- Greater demand on roadspace and higher likelihood of conflicts.
- Local Highway Operations – identifying/raising works. Proposal includes support for the team.
- We currently run programmes of the work activities so extension of these means we are well placed to programme the work but does increase workload on Ops staff.

Risks/Issues (1)



- The funding is one-off and whilst it will have a positive impact, the expectations on what the additional funding will achieve are likely to be far higher than what can reasonably be achieved.
- Estimates are indicative and early engagement with contractors is needed to understand practical timescales for delivery and the costs.
- Reactive service –unforeseen weather events/issues on the network may impact delivery
- Staff availability/ resources

Drainage (1)

1.	Increased frequency on annual cleanse £410k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial data analysis shows the largest volume of reactive work this year has been on the gullies currently maintained on an annual basis.• The gullies and drainage systems on the annual cleanse programme are generally those on the higher speed network.• Cleansing frequency increased to 6 monthly on an experimental basis. Output can inform future cleansing regimes.
2.	Extra CCTV provision for investigations £55k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An additional CCTV unit would allow for an extra 60 days investigatory work over the year.• Help to resolve some longer standing drainage issues which draw on the revenue spend.
3.	Small Scale Drainage. preventative work & ad hoc reactive/ £640k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three additional gangs to undertake pro-active small-scale drainage and preventative work such as freeing up gully grates, replacing grates, cutting grips, vegetation clearance.• Currently a backlog of 500 broken gullies and a considerable number of sites /hot-spots

Drainage (2)

4.	Temporary resource to support additional work/riparian responsibilities Approx. £120k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive approach to managing land-owner responsibilities associated with management of watercourses under riparian responsibility.• Will help resolve wider drainage issues that are the result of poorly maintained private watercourses.• Will include additional auditing and investigations.
5.	Mapping and data work Approx. £120k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mapping and data work – precise scope to be finalised.• Requirement for temporary resource to support digitisation of historic drainage records and improve data capture using frameworks.
6.	Sustainable Drainage Approving – scoping - £50k	Need to understand the volume of work that is likely to be undertaken by the proposed SuDS Approval Body and to address the resource and other implications associated with its establishment.
7	Ditches - Approx £150K	Historically, were routinely maintained on a 3-year cycle. Some ditch clearance in 22/23 . 3,000 linear metres of ditches to be maintained.

Potholes, Carriageway & Footway Maintenance (1)



8	Additional Velocity (Jet) Patcher £650k	<p>Procure one additional patcher, in addition to the 2 already scheduled to be deployed next year. This would allow for wider network coverage.</p> <p>Last year the patchers delivered approximately 9000 repairs, which equates to 20,000sqm.</p> <p>Whilst the Jet Patchers are deployed to focus on safety related defects, they also repair non-safety defects that are likely to become an issue at a point in the future, which is a longer-term benefit to the road network.</p>
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Potholes, Carriageway & Footway Maintenance (2)



9	Find and Fix Gangs £375k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 'Find and Fix Gangs' who will proactively undertake repairs to existing areas where potholes are present but also to areas of road and pavements where we are likely to see further deterioration.• Will use existing condition & live asset data and customer intelligence to inform locations to be treated.• Preventative approach will help manage significant spikes in volumes of safety defects on the network and reduce the number of customer enquiries.
10	Additional patching gang £375k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patching areas of carriageway and footway that are too large to deliver through the reactive safety service.• The work will be identified by Area Highway Teams, focusing on structural patching – Asset Management Approach• It is anticipated that this will result in in approx. 4000 sqm of patching

Signs & Road Markings (1)

11	Road Markings £225k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extra £225k additional budget would:• Increase in the amount of road marking maintenance that can be delivered .• Increase road stud (cat's eyes) maintenance where this is required on selected routes.
12	Sign Maintenance £225k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propose to fund an additional sign gang for approximately 6 months of the year, which will include gang costs, traffic management and materials.• Delivers c. 750 signs (1% of overall total) being replaced/maintained• Area Highway Teams have identified more sites for maintenance than the base budget can deliver.• This will include maintenance on larger Advance Direction Signs along key routes that cannot be maintained by a traditional 2 person sign gang.

Signs & Road Markings (2)

13	Sign/Bollards Cleaning £415k	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For 2022/23, there was a £100k budget for sign cleaning and vegetation clearance, the first time for a number of years there was a budget for proactive works of this nature.• Propose to provide two gangs to operate on the network and aim to clean and cut back obscuring vegetation on approximately 4000-5000 assets (i.e., 5%- 6% of all assets).• Focus on key routes across the county, based on a priority of higher speed roads and those routes where road signs are not legible or are obscured by vegetation.
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Vegetation Maintenance (1)



14	Additional Tree work £440,000	<p>With limited budgets, the focus over the past few years has been 'dead, diseased and dying'.</p> <p>Back log of over 1200 medium priority tree maintenance jobs.</p> <p>A programme of preventative maintenance will reduce the need for future, more costly reactive maintenance, and is likely to maintain the trees in a healthy condition for longer.</p> <p>The highest number of customer complaints are about the lack of this type of tree maintenance.</p>
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Vegetation Maintenance (1)

15	Footway siding £150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The width of many footways is becoming restricted by verge encroachment.• This is a particular issue in rural locations where the restricted width can make accessing essential services or public transport links difficult for pedestrians.• Estimate that budget would allow us to side up to 15 to 20 Km of footways.
16	Mapping Improvements – rural grass £100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To undertake more accurate mapping of the areas we cut grass.• Will help inform future cutting regimes; in particular, where we could reduce cutting to allow for increased biodiversity and also projects such as Live Labs 2 where we need to understand total yield of grass from cutting regimes.

Questions



The Committee is asked to consider:

- Whether the focus on drainage maintenance and investigations, proactive pothole repairs, signs and line maintenance, trees, ditches, and vegetation maintenance is justified.
- Whether the balance between reactive and proactive work is appropriate.
- Whether the County Council and its contractors have sufficient staff to deliver the work.