



Highway Major Maintenance Allocation Processes

**RUNNYMEDE LOCAL COMMITTEE
10th SEPTEMBER 2004**

KEY ISSUE

The programmes of large scale repairs to the structure of roads in the County are called Major Maintenance. This report describes the processes used to develop the programmes and the systems used for the allocation of capital funds for Major Maintenance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Transportation Select Committee on 8 July, one of the points that emerged was the need for better understanding on how the Major Maintenance programmes are decided.

Major Maintenance schemes on the highway have been funded in recent years from the Local Transport Plan settlement for maintenance. This year, the Prudential Code has provided an additional source of funding. Both these capital budgets are distributed according to needs based assessments. The system used for the allocation of Prudential maintenance funds is similar and complementary to the system used for the allocation of Local Transport Plan funds. The resulting programmes of Major Maintenance schemes provide treatments for the most deserving County roads.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Committee provide any comments they wish to be considered by the Transportation Select Committee.

INTRODUCTION

1. There has been an annual programme of Major Maintenance schemes on County highways for many years. The programme is determined centrally and implemented by Surrey's partner Constructors in liaison with the Local Transportation Services (LTS). However, there has been concern that the systems for the allocation of funds are not necessarily understood. This report attempts to give a simple guide to the funding allocation systems for Major Maintenance.

BACKGROUND

Scope

2. Major Maintenance complements revenue funded minor maintenance, routine and cyclic maintenance to repair and protect Surrey's highways. Major maintenance is invariably applied to carriageways and a range of treatments is used to extend the serviceable life of the roads. The minimum treatments can comprise a veneer or dressing to seal cracks in a road and improve the running surface, whereas reconstruction involves excavation down through the layers of the road. Improving technology has prompted an increase in the use of "thin surfacings", which serve to add to the structure of the road as well as reducing tyre noise. Processes to re-use excavated material are frequently used to reduce use of new materials and transport implications. Innovation to increase efficiency and reduce costs is facilitated through the County's partner Constructors.

Funding

3. Major Maintenance schemes can range in cost from less than £5,000 to £500,000. Funding for highway Major Maintenance has been provided in recent years from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) settlement for maintenance and this year the capital budget is £7.276 million. However, this year is also the first year of the Prudential Code funding for Major Maintenance, which is providing an additional £5 million capital budget.
4. The LTP and Prudential programmes of schemes are determined centrally in the County to ensure that the funds are utilized for the most deserving schemes. Schemes are determined from road condition data and assessment of need.

Road Condition Data

5. Every road in the County is regularly surveyed to give condition data. The data is used to identify those roads, which are most likely to need Major Maintenance. The data is also used to calculate Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) results.
6. The principal road network (A roads) is surveyed with a Deflectograph machine, which measures the structural condition through all the layers of a road. However, BVPI requirements are changing and it is intended that all County roads will be surveyed with the new "TRACS" machine, which measures the structural condition based upon defects identified in the road surface. Data from the TRACS survey is not yet being used for the BVPIs and only the principal road network was subject to a TRACS survey this year. The non-principal road network (B & C roads) continues to be surveyed each year by Coarse Visual Inspection (CVI), which is assessment of the defects on the

carriageway from a moving vehicle. The unclassified road network (D roads) is also surveyed by CVI, but over a four year cycle.

7. There are three BVPIs used to measure the condition of the road network, BV96 for Principal (A) roads, BV97a for non-principal (B and C) roads, and BV97b for unclassified (D) roads. The current data for BV96 appears to show an increase in the proportion of principal roads that have negative residual life and need maintenance, but there is confidence that Surrey's own targets for maintenance will be met. In line with the County Council's emphasis on improving the non-principal network it is pleasing to note BV97a shows a significant reduction in the proportion of non-principal roads that are in need of maintenance so this indicator is judged to be on track for the 2006 target. The calculation procedure for BV97b for unclassified roads has changed since last year so results are not directly comparable but early trends suggest that this too is on track.
8. Potential Major Maintenance schemes are derived from the condition data, from suggestions by the Local Transportation Services (LTS) and from recommendations from the Constructors. All potential schemes are assessed for defects such as rutting, cracking, carriageway disturbance and edge deterioration. The assessment produces a rating value and a code value, which give an indication of how many defects are present on the scheme and its urgency. All potential schemes are included on the Major Maintenance rolling programme, which is used to derive a list of schemes for construction in the following financial year. The list has traditionally been prepared in provisional form in advance of the budget announcement in February, and will be ready in November this year. However, it is intended that the provisional list will be prepared even earlier next year for better coordination with the Integrated Transport provisional programmes, which are normally considered in early autumn. Local Transport Services will then have better information for advising Local Committees on the planning of all highway schemes, including opportunities to include improvement initiatives within the construction programme for Major Maintenance.

Major Maintenance funding allocation systems

9. The LTP and Prudential funded Major Maintenance programmes are progressed concurrently. Both programmes are determined centrally for the County to ensure the most deserving schemes are progressed. Agreement to progress each scheme is discussed with the appropriate LTS. Processes have developed in recent years and additional consultations were carried out this year for the Prudential programme. A report is being prepared for the Transportation Select Committee recommending the adoption of the following systems for the allocation of the Major Maintenance funds.
10. It is proposed the LTP Major Maintenance funds will be allocated as in previous years, on the basis of technical need using the code and rating of schemes, taking into account anticipated gain toward the relevant performance indicator. This ensures that the available funding is directed to those schemes that score highest in terms of condition need.
11. It is proposed that Prudential Major Maintenance funds will be divided between the districts on the basis of technical need determined by BV97a and BV97b. Priority for schemes within a district would be based on their code and rating, together with local views.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

12. Both the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the County Council and the Community Survey have indicated that more could and should be done to improve the basic condition of our highway network. As an integral part of the CPA, the Audit Commission undertook a Best Value Review of the whole of the transportation service and whilst giving it a rating of “good with excellent prospects for improvements”, nevertheless drew attention to the relatively poor condition of our highway network as measured by the two national indicators, BV 96 (for principal roads) and BV 97 (for non-principal roads). The Executive’s Mid Term Review has responded to that challenge through the development of the “Upping the Street” agenda.
13. It is important that the decision mechanisms for Major Maintenance schemes are clear and transparent. It is also important that schemes contribute to the BVPI criteria as well as address community concerns. The proposed processes, including central decision making, will ensure that the programmes are derived from needs based criteria so that the most deserving schemes are progressed. LTSs and Local Committees will continue to be involved in the processes, and it is proposed that provisional programmes will be prepared earlier for the benefit of local coordination of highway activities.
14. Although this report is presented for information, any comments from the Local Committee will be carefully considered in relation to the proposed report to be prepared for the Transportation Select Committee’s meeting on 11 November 2004.

CONCLUSION

15. This report provides information on the processes used for the preparation of the Major Maintenance programmes. It explains proposed systems for the allocation of funds for Major Maintenance and invites the Local Committee to comment in advance of a proposed report to the Transportation Select Committee.