

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)

DATE: 4 MARCH 2019

LEAD OFFICER: ZENA CURRY, AREA HIGHWAY MANAGER

SUBJECT: HIGHWAY FORWARD PROGRAMME 2019/20
– REVENUE UPDATE

AREA(S) AFFECTED: ALL

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To provide an update on the local committee's revenue budget for 2019/20 and seek agreement on the funding of a revenue maintenance gang in Reigate & Banstead.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Reigate & Banstead) is asked to agree:

- i. That each member allocate £6,000 from their Highway Member Fund towards the cost of procuring a Reigate & Banstead Revenue Maintenance Gang, giving a budget of £60,000 which would cover the cost of the gang for approximately 40 weeks; and
- ii. Subject to approval of recommendation (i), the Revenue Maintenance Gang is managed by the Reigate & Banstead Maintenance Engineer on members' behalf.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To enable a revenue maintenance gang for 2019/20 to be procured through formal tendering.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 3 December 2018, a report was presented to the Reigate & Banstead Local Committee setting out the Local Committee's delegated capital and revenue budgets for 2019/20 and a programme of works. The Local Committee were advised that, subject to final approval of Full Council in February 2019, there would be no Local Committee revenue budget in 2019/20. A large proportion of the Local Committee revenue budget in 2018/19 was used to fund the Reigate & Banstead Revenue Maintenance Gang. The works carried out by the Revenue Maintenance Gang during the 2018/19 financial year is shown in **Annex 1**.

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- 1.2 Members were further advised that in the 2019/20 financial year they would continue to receive a Member Highways Fund allocation of £7,500 per divisional member. It was agreed that the Member Highways Fund would be managed by the Maintenance Engineer on their behalf. The Cabinet Member for Highways has subsequently issued guidance to members on how the allocation can be used, including putting in place a number of constraints to avoid creating longer term problems.
- 1.3 This report sets out a proposal for how the Local Committee can continue to fund a revenue maintenance gang in Reigate & Banstead.

2. REVENUE MAINTENANCE GANG

- 2.1 The Revenue Maintenance Gang provides a valuable resource to the local area team that is managed by the Maintenance Engineer on members' behalf to carry out minor maintenance and safety works across the Borough. These works are not covered under the Highway Safety Inspection matrix and would not be resolved through any other centrally funded workstream.
- 2.2 The gang is used to respond to requests for work raised by residents both directly to members and also to the local area team through the customer reporting facility on Surrey's website, via the contact centre and by e-mail to Surrey Highways. The ability to respond to these enquiries provides a service to residents that in turn reduces the volume of follow-up correspondence, number of complaints and number of enquiries escalated to divisional members. The gang is also used to proactively react to issues identified by members and the local area team. It should be noted that priority is given to safety issues.

2018/19

- 2.3 Over the 8 month period from April to November 2018, the Reigate & Banstead team responded to 2,345 enquiries of which 520 involved issues of overgrown vegetation or verge damage. In the same period, the maintenance gang completed 240 jobs, many of which addressed multiple locations. The majority of these jobs involved the cutting back and removal of overgrown highway vegetation (including trees) which obscure sightlines or obstruct footways. Other types of work carried out by the gang included drainage, sign maintenance, posts/fences and siding up of footways.
- 2.4 In addition to carrying out works in response to customer enquiries, the gang has also attended site or completed works that would otherwise have required the attendance of an A&E crew. Furthermore, the gang is utilised during snow events to assist in clearing footways at priority locations such as town centres, and near schools and hospitals.
- 2.5 In 2018/19, the Reigate & Banstead Local Committee approved funding of the revenue maintenance gang from the revenue budget. Following a formal tendering process, Burleys were appointed for 12 months at a cost of £100,000, which included an allowance for materials.

2019/20

- 2.6 The Local Committee cannot fund the revenue maintenance gang in 2019/20 from the revenue budget as this budget is no longer available. The borough will

lose an invaluable resource which could address local maintenance issues borough wide unless an alternative funding source can be identified and agreed.

- 2.7 It has been announced by the Cabinet Member for Highways that divisional members will each continue to receive £7,500 Member Highway Funding to use on the highway or local authority owned land to provide a benefit to the local community. In 2018/19, 42 revenue works were funded by the ten Reigate & Banstead divisional members from their Member Highway Funding. This included the servicing of grit bins, provision/maintenance of fencing and bollards, minor footway maintenance and allocating funding to Residents' Associations and Town/Parish Councils which enabled match funding to be unlocked.
- 2.8 Members have been advised by the Cabinet Member on constraints on how this funding can be spent in 2019/20, including the following:
- new items can be put on the highway, but it will not be permitted for them to become a future financial liability to the county. If they are damaged or become life expired, they will not be replaced unless additional money is provided either by the member of the local committee.
 - funding is aimed at delivery and not for investigating, planning and design, unless design is part of the overall cost.
 - each project must not cost more than £2,500
 - funding can be pooled to finance a revenue maintenance gang. There is no limit to the amount of the allocation that each member can pool to fund such a gang.
- 2.9 Following discussions with the Local Committee Chairman, it is proposed that each member could allocate £6,000 of their Member Highway Fund towards procuring a revenue maintenance gang. This would not be sufficient to fund the gang for the full year, but at this year's prices would provide a resource for around 40 weeks, including a minimal allowance for materials. This would leave members a further £1,500 each to spend on other local priorities.
- 2.10 Should a divisional member chose not to allocate £6,000 of their Member Highway Fund towards procuring a revenue maintenance gang for the 2019/20 financial year. There will be no funding to carry out works within their division, similar to those carried out during the 2018/19 financial year and shown in **Annex 1**.
- 2.11 If members agree to fund a revenue maintenance gang for their division, it is proposed that the gang would be managed by the Reigate & Banstead Maintenance Engineer on members' behalf and a report on the work carried out by the gang would be included in the Highway Update Report presented to every formal Local Committee meeting.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Local Committee has previously funded a Revenue Maintenance Gang from the revenue budget. This will not be an option in 2019/20 as there will be no Local Committee revenue allocation. This will have a significant impact on the ability of the local area team to respond to member and resident requests

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for minor maintenance works, such as those carried out in the 2018/19 financial year and as shown in **Annex 1**, including those works that are safety related.

- 3.2 It is recommended that each divisional Member allocate £6,000 of their £7,500 Member Highway Fund to procure a Reigate & Banstead revenue maintenance gang for around 40 weeks. The gang would be managed by the Maintenance Engineer on members' behalf. The Area Highway Manager will seek to identify additional funding to enable the gang to be procured for the full year.

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