

APPENDIX J (1) – HIGHWAYS CAPITAL ISSUES

1.0 Street Lighting.

1.1 Background

From 1st April 2009 Central Bedfordshire Council will be responsible for the maintenance of over 21,000 lighting columns. Each column has an average design life of 30 years and the cost of replacing life-expired street lighting stock over a 30 year cycle, is approximately £520,000 pa.

For many years, County Council investment in street lighting has been less than a third of the required level and has focussed on replacing the stock of concrete columns which have been identified as a priority for both road safety and structural integrity reasons. Despite this strategy, and because of poor investment over time, a backlog of aging columns exists. Based on sample surveys that have been carried out, it is estimated that up to 25% of columns are life expired.

1.2 Finance

The cost of replacing the aged stock of lighting columns is approximately £2.2m per year over the next 4 years. Thereafter, £520k pa will be needed to keep the stock properly maintained.

1.3 Risk

Section 41 of the Highways Act places highways authorities under a duty to maintain the highway. Failure to maintain an asset which is known to be life expired would place the Authority and its staff at risk of prosecution under Health and Safety legislation in the event that someone is injured as a result of structural failure.

2.0 Bridges

2.1 Background

Since the introduction of 40 tonne lorries on European roads, the Department for Transport has required local highway authorities to assess the load bearing capacity of the existing bridge stock and to take appropriate measures to ensure their safety. Of the 400 structures in Central Beds, 25 structures remain to be assessed and 10 structures need to be reassessed to see if a more detailed analysis will show that they are able to carry the required load. Strengthening measures are planned on 10 structures known to be under capacity.

2.2 Finance

Number of road structures (excluding rights of way)	400
Number of structures which have failed their initial assessment	35
Number of structures in need of reassessment	10
Number of structures which are awaiting their initial assessment	25

Budget requirements	Capital £	Revenue £
Estimated cost to complete the assessment / reassessment of structures.		500,000
Estimated cost to complete the strengthening programme	3,000,000	
Estimated cost of width restrictions proposed	100,000	
Estimated cost of weight restrictions proposed to safeguard weak or bridges not to be assessed this year		33,000
Annual cost of monitoring weak bridges		25,000
Total	3,100,000	558,000

A capital budget of £620k is needed over the next 5 years in order to complete the bridge strengthening and assessment programme

2.3 Risk

Section 41 of the Highways Act places Highways Authorities under a duty to maintain the highway. Regular bridge inspections ensure that any serious maintenance issues are dealt with but potential structural failure under load would not be picked up during an inspection. There have been 3 separate bridge collapses in the United States in the last 10 years but none in this country. Failure to assess a structure which subsequently collapsed under a 40 tonne load would place the Authority and its staff at risk under Health and Safety legislation in the event that someone is injured as a result of structural failure.

3.0 Roads

3.1 Background

In common with other local authorities in England, Bedfordshire County Council's highways maintenance capital allocation from Central Government has been insufficient to allow the Council to maintain the value of its existing highways asset over the long term. In order to respond to this challenge, the County Council injected additional capital funding into roads infrastructure maintenance for the past 3 years to raise the budget to a level that would maintain its roads and footways at target levels.

In order to deal with possible strains on capital budgets, officers have identified a strategy that seeks to meet Member priorities and table 2 sets out the proposed budget to meet targets and proposed reductions in the capital programme if budgets are cut by £1m increments up to £5m.

A £1m cut would mean dropping 26 resurfacing schemes on unclassified roads from the programme (equivalent to 12.7km), and 12 local footway schemes (equivalent to 2.5km). These schemes are necessary to maintain public satisfaction levels but do not contribute significantly to the economy or to the objective of encouraging walking.

In addition to the above, a £2m cut would lead to 4 resurfacing schemes being dropped on B and C class roads (equivalent to 2.5km) as well as abandoning the parish partnership scheme which is used to deliver road and footway improvements in local parishes that do not have sufficient priority to be entered into the main programme. Abandoning the parish partnership scheme would adversely affect public satisfaction levels. The reduction in maintenance on B&C class roads will affect targets vital to the economy and to managing growth.

In addition to the above, a £3m cut would lead to a further 12 resurfacing schemes being dropped on B and C class roads (equivalent to 7.6km) which will again affect targets vital to the economy and to managing growth.

In addition to the above, a £4m cut would lead to 44 surface dressing schemes on unclassified roads being dropped from the programme (equivalent to 34km). These schemes have already had preparatory work carried out in 2008-09, which would be abortive if cancelled from the programme. They are also necessary to maintain public satisfaction levels but do not contribute significantly to the economy.

In addition to the above, a £5m cut would lead to 4 resurfacing schemes (equivalent to 3km) being dropped on A class roads which will affect targets vital to the economy and to managing growth.

Preparatory work on B&C class roads would need to be cancelled, leading to a reduction in surface dressing schemes the following year and hence a reduction in value for money, and 8 drainage schemes would also need to be dropped, which are regarded by the public as high priority.

3.2 Finance

The ongoing cost of maintaining Central Bedfordshire's roads and footways at target levels is approximately £7.5m per annum as set out in table 1 below and the effect of incremental £1m cuts in the budget up to £5m is set out in Table 2.

Table 1, Central Beds (carriageway length as of 1/4/08)

Class of road	Length (km)	Latest BVPI for % of roads in need of repair	Target % of roads in need of repair	Annual cost to maintain in target condition (£m)
A	151	2.8%	3.5%	1.73
B	73	4.7% cvi	7.5% cvi	0.67
C	392	6.3% cvi	7.5% cvi	2.15
U/C	769	9.38%	7.5%	1.94
ALL	1385			6.49

Table 2, Central Beds (Footway length as of 1/4/08)

Class of footway	Length (km)	Latest BVPI for % of footways in need of repair	Target % of roads in need of repair	Annual cost to maintain in target condition (£000's)
Primary	12	14.88%	12%	27
Secondary	27	14.88%	12%	35
Link	151	Repair every 40 years		107
Local access	1,001	Repair every 50 years		567
ALL	1191			736

Table 3

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE BUDGET ALLOCATION 09-10

	09/10 Budget allocation to meet Targets £1,000's	Effect of £1m reduction in budget	Effect of £2m reduction in budget	Effect of £3m reduction in budget	Effect of £4m reduction in budget	Effect of £5m reduction in budget
CAPITAL FUNDING						
DFT LTP Allocation - Integrated Schemes	2590					
DFT LTP Allocation - Maintenance	3664					
Central Beds Allocation - Maintenance	3979					
Central Beds Parish Partnership	640					
Central Beds Transport Infrastructure Dev	665					
Central Beds Major Schemes	0					
Total Capital Funding	11537					
BEDFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS ALLOCATION						
Integrated Schemes						
Public Transport	182	182	182	182	182	182
Walking, Cycling, Motorcycling	595	595	595	595	595	595
Local Safety Schemes	277	277	277	277	277	277
UTC & Traffic Management	456	456	456	456	456	456
Travel Plans & Safer Routes to Schools	266	266	266	266	266	266
Corporate Advanced Preparation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<u>1,775</u>	<u>1,775</u>	<u>1,775</u>	<u>1,775</u>	<u>1,775</u>	<u>1,775</u>
Structural Maintenance Block						
Bridges & Structures	502	502	502	502	502	502
Street Lighting	320	320	320	320	320	320

Carriageway & Footway Schemes													
A Roads	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	4 schemes dropped equivalent to 3km
B & C Roads	2,820	2,820	2,460	4 resurfacing schemes dropped equivalent to 2.5km	1,460	12 resurfacing schemes dropped equivalent to 7.6km	1,460	1,460	0	44 surface dressing schemes dropped equivalent to 34km	1,160	1,160	prepatching for following year dropped
Local Roads	1,840	936	26 resurfacing schemes dropped equivalent to 12.7km	936	936	936	936	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hierarchy 1 & 2 Footways	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	0	0	0	0	0
Other Local Footways	96	0	12 schemes dropped equivalent to 2.5km	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drainage & Other	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	0 8 drainage schemes dropped
	7,570	6,570	6,211	5,211	5,211	5,211	5,211	4,211	4,211	3,211	3,211	3,211	3,211
Central Beds Parish Partnership	640	640	0 parish partnership scheme abandoned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Beds Transport Infrastructure Dev	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665	665
Central Beds Major Schemes Lump Sums (Contracted Overheads)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Budget Allocation	11,537	10,537	9,537	8,537	8,537	8,537	8,537	7,538	7,538	6,538	6,538	6,538	6,538