

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR BARROW
Meeting date: 11 May 2022
From: Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

ADDITIONAL POTHOLE FUNDING 2022/23 OPTIONS FOR ALLOCATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** *This report set out to members a number of options for allocating the additional £200,000 pothole funding received by each local committee on top of the original allocation agreed a full council in February of this year.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1** *This report supports the aims and objectives aims of the Council Plan, Corporate Strategy and the Local Transport Plan through the efficient planning and delivery of the Highways and Transport Programme in the Barrow area.*
- 2.2** *In addition, the report supports a number of the Council's defined aims most notably;*
- To protect and enhance Cumbria's world class environment*
 - To provide safe and well maintained roads and an effective transport network*
 - To promote sustainable economic growth, and create jobs.*
- 2.3** *The report complies with the Strategic Equality Assessments for the Highways and Transport Service. Individual schemes will be assessed against equality criteria as appropriate.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1** *That members agree to allocate the additional £200,000 pothole funding to a mixture of both thermal and spray applied patching, small scale patching and resurfacing works with a report to determine locations to be brought to a future meeting of the Barrow Local Committee.*

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In March 2020, the Chancellor announced that a further £2.5billion would be available for the next 5 years commencing 2020/21. i.e. £500m a year for the 5 years (2020/21 - 2024/25). This funding was made available to fix potholes and is available for local authorities to undertake longer-term road resurfacing works to prevent potholes forming in the first place. The Council's allocation of this additional funding in 2021/22 was £15.028m and it is estimated to be the same for 2022/23-2024/25.
- 4.2 At full council in February 2022 members approved the draft budgets for 2022/23. Within this was an allocation received via a grant from the DfT pothole fund. At that time it was anticipated this allocation would be in line with that of previous years, which translates to £728,000 for Barrow Local Committee.
- 4.3 At a meeting of Barrow Local Committee on the 15th March 2022 a number of schemes were presented to members to allocate this £728,000 which following discussion were approved by the local committee. Just prior to this meeting (but after the report had been written) the Council had been informed by the DfT that the allocation for this year was higher than anticipated and each Local Committee had been allocated a further £200,000. Currently therefore Barrow Local Committee have £200,000 of unallocated funding sat within their Devolved Revenue Budget.
- 4.4 It should be noted that this funding is for the fixing of potholes and planned lifecycle maintenance. This can be undertaken in a number of ways; including Thermal and Spray applied patching, pothole repairs, larger resurfacing schemes, drainage improvements and cleansing.
- 4.5 A number of suggestions have been put forward on how to allocate these funds and this report attempts to summarise these so members can make an informed decision.

Pothole Pro Machine

- 4.6 One option put forward is that the Local Committee purchase a JCB Pothole Pro machine. This is a machine that removes the need to manually undertake some of the steps when repairing a pothole. This machine will cut, crop and clean a patch preparing it to be filled with bituminous material then rolled and sealed.
- 4.7 It does have the advantage of automating a number of the processes involved with repairing a pothole and thus reducing staff exposure to manual working and Hand-Arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) as well as the need for men to stand in the highway whilst undertaking repair.
- 4.8 It will not make pothole repairs a one man operation and a gang of generally 3 to 4 delivering the patch repair which includes filling the repair with Tar and Rolling or compressing flat. Additionally appropriate Traffic Management is required to protect both the operational staff and travelling public this is especially important in urban areas due to the machines size. However, it could speed up the operation.

- 4.9 The County has recently purchased 2 of these machines for approx. £170,000 each these are ordered but delivery is expected in the Summer this year. One option could be to wait and see how the machines we are already committed to purchasing operate before committing to purchase a further machine. Speaking with Senior Managers a trial can be arranged for members to view the vehicle when it arrives.
- 4.10 It should be pointed out that although there is an upfront capital outlay as detailed there is an ongoing cost that the Local Committee budgets will need to meet. These machines require a trained operator and ongoing maintenance which will all be funded through committee budgets. As an indication, factoring the cost of the machine purchase a trained operator and vehicle for spoil storage for the first year comes in at just over £250,000.
- 4.11 These assumptions do not take into account the effect on the Authority of LGR. Should this option be taken forward and a vehicle purchased by Barrow Local Committee it cannot be confirmed where it would sit following reorganisation, decisions on fleet and allocations to the two new authorities have yet to be made.

Nuphalth thermal and Velocity spray Patching

- 4.12 An alternative option to consider is to buy in a specialist contractor to undertake pothole repair work to a value agreed by the Local Committee. Throughout the County a number of contractors have been used to provide this service. The big advantage of this approach is that it gives additional resource to be deployed and not merely redirecting our own operatives.
- 4.13 Thermal patching is a process which allows repairs creating little waste and no landfill. The existing material and surrounding area is heated to make it workable enriched emulsion is added with additional hot material and following this compacted. This method is quicker than traditional patch repairs estimated to be about half the time and thus allows for more defects to be repaired.
- 4.14 This method is considered a permanent repair and has already been used in the Barrow area on a number of the back streets. The lack of waste and quicker repair times also mean it is a cheaper method of repair by way of an estimate Thermal patching declare 10 to 15 permanent pothole repairs per day. As an indication it costs approx. £5,000 per week for a vehicle the relevant machinery, a gang to operate and material.
- 4.15 Velocity is a spray injection system undertaken by a vehicle and small gang. With this system potholes are cleaned primed filled, sealed and compacted in one operation. This operation is quick and thus a number of potholes can be filled in a short time, traditionally it has been better suited to rural roads and locations than urban streets.
- 4.16 In terms of cost it is similar to the Thermal patching system and is slightly quicker method as there is no heating of material. However, on balance thermal patching is a better option for the Barrow area due to it's largely urban nature. However, this system can achieve 30 to 50 repairs per day and therefore would have a good value in being used to treat those defects outside the urban areas.

Patching and Resurfacing

- 4.17 Traditionally, we have repaired potholes by either patching, hand or machine (depending on size of patch) or resurfacing via an over or inlay (whichever is appropriate). This is still an option with this funding.
- 4.18 Each year we have an ongoing programme of both types of this repair and allocating this additional £200,000 to this would allow us to pull forward some of the work currently programmed for future years for example we are looking at inlays in future work programmes in;

Abbots Vale
Park Drive
Risedale Rd
Skelwith Drive
Bowness Rd
Ramsden Sq (Abbey Rd)
Yarlside Rd

(It should be noted £200,000 will not allow for all the above to be completed)

- 4.19 These methods provide different results. Resurfacing can be seen as expensive as an example to members a 50mm inlay over an area of 800m² is roughly £30,000. Such works are localised but give a permanent new surface to an area with an extended life. Patching is smaller in extents and can therefore target a number of areas. A mixture of both of these would probably be the best solution.
- 4.20 In reality a mixture of thermal patching, and traditional patching and resurfacing will give the greatest spread of the allocation across the Borough. Should members wish to allocate the funding to purchase a Pothole Pro machine then reviewing the efficiencies of the ones currently purchased may be prudent prior to committing the funds.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members may decide to approve the recommendation in paragraph 3.1 of this report.
- 5.2 Alternatively, members may decide not to approve the recommendation listed and agree an alternative recommendation.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As noted, the additional £200,000 revenue funding would complement the existing pothole funding capital scheme already devolved to the Local Committee members. If members approve Para 3.1 there will be no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 If members decide not to approve the recommendations in 3.1, the true running costs of any alternatives should be examined. Considerations to the following should be made:
- Full operational costs of any future projects should be considered (e.g. Staffing (including training), fuel, repairs, maintenance, insurance, materials).

N.B. *If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.*

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
[including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

REPORT AUTHOR

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