



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

10TH MAY 2018

HIGHWAYS STRUCTURES

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR A MORGAN.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- Update members of the progress made on the Structures Inspection Programme.
- Update members on the progress of the Structures Capital Works Programme
- Set out proposals to further enhance the inspection and maintenance processes for “non-highway structures”
- Set out a proposal for realigning structural engineering duties related to Planning and Building Control functions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the current investment commitment that supports the substantial programme of structures works underway across the County Borough.
- b) Approve the proposals in relation to highways inspections and the additional proactive intervention works for the minor works programme.
- c) Approve the proposals in relation to the transfer of responsibility for all Parks and Countryside Structures to the Highways Structures Team and the establishment of more robust inspection and maintenance processes.

d) Approve the proposed transfer of responsibility relating to structural engineering duties for Planning and Building Control functions.

e) Approve the allocation of additional funding totalling £320k for 2018/19 to be funded from one off available resources in 2018/19, and for future years for this to be considered further as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To highlight the progress made in respect of both the highway and non-highway inspection and works programme across the County Borough and to strengthen the inspection programme in place to support further investment in key priority areas where and when additional resources become available.

4. HIGHWAY STRUCTURES INSPECTIONS

4.1 At its meeting of 24th November 2016, the Council approved a number of action points / recommendations and the progress made to date is as follows.

4.2 The appointment of a Supervising Engineer and Assistant Engineer has been completed, with the Supervising Engineer in Post since 1st August 2017 and the Assistant Engineer since 9th October 2017.

4.3 A programme to complete the principal inspections of bridges and culverts by the end of March 2019 has been prepared which involves carrying out approximately 8 inspections per month, 2 of which will be outside of normal working hours due to requirements to close roads or install traffic management on very busy roads and avoid unacceptable traffic delays.

4.4 To date, resources have been focussed on planning and preparation of the inspection programme including undertaking the necessary training.

Highways Structures Major Works Programme

4.5 In response to additional resources allocated to highway structures in recent years (over and above the normal annual capital programme allocations), a number of Major Structures Schemes have been developed and delivered through the Council's ongoing Capital Programmes and an update on each of the schemes is given in Appendix 1.

- 4.6 Funding of the ongoing and planned schemes will be assessed and confirmed as schemes are brought forward through the design stages, and will be reported through the Capital Programme and separately should further opportunities arise to invest in our infrastructure assets.
- 4.7 Design and initial feasibility work has been commenced on a number of schemes utilising the capital allocation for “Advance Preparation”

Highway Structures Minor Works Programme

- 4.8 In order to deliver both the programme of inspections and the Capital Works Programme, staff resources have been realigned within the Highways Infrastructure Team. However, there is limited capacity to prioritise and manage the potentially large volumes of safety related or low cost, high benefit preventative works which will be identified as a result of the inspections. Such proactive intervention works will reduce overall maintenance costs by dealing with minor issues at an early stage before structures deteriorate and repairs become more extensive, more costly and more disruptive to highway users. In order to manage this vital element of work to prevent further deterioration in structures, a budget allocation of £100K is required and in addition, it is proposed that a Technician (GR6) be appointed.

5. “NON-HIGHWAYS” STRUCTURES

- 5.1 The Parks and Countryside Service have traditionally had responsibility for a number of structures, some of which could be properly considered to be highway structures, i.e. those associated with Public Rights of Way and community routes, along with some which are not related to the public highway i.e. bridges, retaining walls, and culverts within parks. These structures include:-
- Bridges forming access to or within Council operated parks
 - Retaining structures within parks which either retain land for parks use or provide support to other land which is required due to the construction or ground profile requirements of the park
 - River Walls within parks
 - Man-made reservoirs, ponds, lakes etc.
 - Bridges, culverts, walls and former bridge abutments (some of which may cross or support the highway) associated with former railway lines now used as community routes and cycle trails. These structures would often have been the responsibility of the former rail companies, but would have passed to the Council when the land was purchased for such routes.
- 5.2 In light of the relative expertise held in the two service areas, it is clear that recent appointments to the Highways Structures team means that

it now has significantly more capability to deal with such structures. It is therefore proposed to transfer responsibility for all Parks and Countryside Structures to the Highways Structures Team for future management and maintenance.

- 5.3 A programme of review of such structures should be commenced and a policy on their inspection and maintenance be developed.
- 5.4 While there are no statutory requirements, and little or no guidance, relating to the maintenance and inspection of non-highway structures, the Council has a duty of care to users of the structures. While these structures often serve low levels of vehicle or pedestrian use compared to highway structures and their loss or restriction would not have the impact upon the transportation network that a highway structure could have, they still need to be maintained in a condition safe for their users.
- 5.5 It is considered that in order to keep a structure in a safe condition, or indeed to determine if it's use needs to be stopped or limited on safety grounds, that a more robust system of regular inspections and maintenance is required. The required frequency of such inspections and the level of maintenance necessary will vary widely from structure to structure, and in most cases will be less onerous than that required for a highway structure.
- 5.6 It is proposed that a desktop exercise of mapping non-highway structures and an initial brief inspection of them in order to identify any urgent safety issues and enable prioritisation of the future combined programme of highway and non-highway structures is undertaken.
- 5.7 This exercise would identify any urgent works that may be required and it is proposed that a one off budget of £100k will be required. In addition, it is proposed that a suitably qualified Assistant Engineer (GR10) be appointed to manage this process.
- 5.8 Following the desktop exercise, it is proposed that a programme of Principal and General Inspections be formulated for the non-highway structures and subsequently implemented. This will include an assessment of future capital and revenue funding needs and a further report will be prepared for Members consideration if this is required.

6. STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING DUTIES RELATING TO PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL FUNCTIONS

- 6.1 There are a number of statutory duties which need to be discharged by both Planning and Building Control in respect of Structural Calculations, Dangerous Structures, Safety at Sports Grounds and various sections of the Building Act 1984.

- 6.2 These duties are currently undertaken by staff within Building Control. However, it is considered appropriate that some of the duties of this role should be carried out under the auspices of the Authority's Chartered Structural Engineer.
- 6.3 In rationalising these duties the proposal brings matters relevant to structures under the Highways Technical Services Section, within Corporate and Frontline Services. These matters will comprise checking a proportion of building control structural calculations, checking a proportion of retaining wall calculations and Ground Investigation reports associated with planning consultations and giving structural advice associated with Notices under Sections 77 & 78 of the Building Act.
- 6.4 It is proposed that a suitably qualified Assistant Engineer (GR10) be appointed to assist the Chartered Structural Engineer in undertaking the duties associated with Planning and Building Control responsibilities

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There is no public consultation requirement identified at this time.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 Ongoing revenue and capital allocations will be required to inspect and maintain the Council's stock of highway and non-highway structures going forward.
- 9.2 The revenue staffing budget requirement for implementing the proposed way forward is an additional £120k (GR10x2 and GR6x1).
- 9.3 In addition:
- A budget of £100k is required for safety related or low cost high benefit preventative works for highways structures (Section 4).

- A one off budget of £100k will be required to carry out any urgent works required to non-highway structures (Section 5).

- 9.4 Therefore the total additional budget requirement for 2018/19 is £320k and it is proposed that this is funded via year end available resources identified as part of the closure process for the 2017/18 accounts.
- 9.5 For 2019/20 onwards, consideration of base budget requirements in this area will be built into annual budget setting requirements and the commitments will be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan updates.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The main legal duty with regards to maintenance of the highway which the Council has as highway authority is imposed by Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. It is a duty to maintain highways which are highways maintained at public expense as defined by S36 of the same act. Structures which carry the highway are generally considered to be part of the highway, unless ownership of, and maintenance liability for the structure lies with another individual or body. In the case of road bridges, the ownership is usually clear cut, but in the case of retaining walls, which can either support the highway, or support land above the highway, there is often no clearly defined ownership, especially in cases where roads and properties have been developed at the same time.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The regular inspection and effective maintenance of highway structures can be seen to contribute the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities with respect to the theme of "place": creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work by making Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment clean and attractive.
- 11.2 This report has considered the potential long term impact of inspecting and maintaining highways structures to help ensure that such structures are in a fit proper state of repair so as to maintain traffic flows and the general functions of the highway network across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 11.3 With the aim of balancing the needs of all users of the highway, whilst aiming to reduce any risks associated with highways structures, the Council can be seen to be collaborating with others to consider the impact of a practicable highways structures maintenance regime.

11.4 The regular inspection and effective maintenance of highway structures will help support the delivery of a Wales of cohesive communities, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The further enhancement of the highway structures risk based inspection process ensures that the Council has complied with its statutory duties.

12.2 The risk based inspection and monitoring strategy will be extended to non-highway structures related to Parks and Countryside assets.

12.3 The proactive approach to undertaking structures maintenance will help to contain costs and extend the potential lifespan of our structures.

12.4 The rationalisation of duties related to Planning and Building Control functions brings all matters relevant to structures under the Highways Technical Services Section and strengthens arrangements in this area.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Services Delivery, Communities and Prosperity

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item: **HIGHWAYS STRUCTURES**

Background Papers

[Cabinet – 24th November, 2016](#)

Appendix 1 Complete and Ongoing Capital Schemes

Scheme	Status	Final or Projected Cost	Comments
Fiddlers Elbow Bridge	Complete	£1200k	Works managed by MTCBC due to the cross border nature of the bridge (Scheme funded jointly by MTBC & RCT)
Rhiwsaeson Bridge	Complete	£243k	Part funded by Dwr Cymru
Aberaman Bridge	Ongoing	£1076k	Phase 1 complete. Phase 2 start week commencing 8 th May 2018
Upper Boat Bridge	Complete	£489k	Remedial works required to be undertaken.
Royal Oak Bridge	Complete	£410k	
A470 Cilfynydd Wall	Ongoing	£244k	Phases 1 & 2 complete. Phase 3 programmed for completion 18/19
Llantrisant Road Bridge and Underpass	Complete	£250k	
Gyfeillion Bridge, Hopkinstown	Complete	£238k	
Structures - Advance Preparation	Ongoing	£250k per year	Ongoing initial and detailed design work to inform and prepare for future funding bids.
Tyntyla Footbridges	Ongoing	£355k (outline design and site clearance only)	Consideration of design options ongoing.
William Edwards Bridge	Ongoing	£71k	Phase 1 complete, Phase 2 programmed for 18/19. Liaison with Cadw ongoing
Sardis Road & Mill Street Viaduct	Ongoing	£955k	Phase 1 complete, Phase 2 programmed for 18/19

Scheme	Status	Final or Projected Cost	Comments
Ynyswen Road Bridge	Complete	£246k	
Cwmaman Footbridge	Complete	£108k	
Maerdy Mountain Road Landslip	Complete	£1685k	
Pontypridd Road River Wall	Contract Awarded	£682k	Works programmed to follow on from completion of Dwr Cymru main renewals in May/June 18
Heol Gwrangron, Rhigos	Design Stage	£230k	Works programmed for 19/20
Pontyclun River Bridge	Designed	£92k	Works Programmed for 18/19
Hopkinstown Footbridge	Complete	£243k	
Brook St Footbridge	Design Stage	£3000k	Design work ongoing, Anticipated implementation 2019/20
Ynysangharad Rd Retaining wall	Complete	£87k	Funded through Section 106 Funding
Pontcynon River Bridge	Design ongoing	£55k	Works programmed for 19/20
Pontygwaith River Wall		£350k	Works Programmed for 18/19
Heol Miskin Retaining Wall	Design Ongoing	£150k	Works programmed for 18/19
Hopkinstown River Wall Ph 1	Design Stage	£150k	Works programmed for 18/19
Pontrhondda Bridge	Contract awarded	£1,200k	Works start week commencing 8 th May 2018.
Penrhys Road retaining Wall	Out to tender	£587k	Works Programmed for 18/19
St. Albans Bridge Blaenrhondda/Blaencwm	Design Stage	£2170k	Design and Build contract awarded. Works commencing in 2018/19
Total		£16,566k	(excludes advanced preparation costs)

