

Report to Cabinet

Monday 24 May 2021

Subject:	Grant Agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority - Traffic Signal Upgrades on the Key Route Network
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jackie Taylor Sustainable Transport
Director:	Tammy Stokes Interim Director Regeneration and Growth
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Robin Weare Service Manager, Highway Services robin_weare@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to enter into a grant agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority for traffic signal infrastructure improvements at the following four highway network locations: -
- Bearwood Road/Waterloo Road, Smethwick.
 - Bearwood Road/Church Road/Grange Road, Smethwick.
 - Black Country New Road/Cliff Drive, Tipton.
 - Dudley Road/High Street/Castle Road, Tipton.
- 1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, the Head of Finance and the Director – Law and Governance be authorised to enter into and sign a grant agreement for £355,164.22 with the West Midlands Combined Authority for traffic signal upgrade work.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 A lifecycle review of all of the Council's traffic signal installations on the Key Route Network has been completed and the four traffic signal-controlled intersections detailed within this report have been identified as a priority for refurbishment.

These traffic signals are located at strategic junctions and are considered pivotal to both the Local and Key Route Network performance.






The new traffic signal equipment proposed at each location will provide the following key benefits: -

- Adaptive traffic control system for efficiency, maximising capacity and reducing delays.
- Improvements in journey times and reliability for all road users including public transport and commercial vehicles.
- Improved business competitiveness.
- Improved traffic signal operational reliability.
- Energy savings (LED equipment and latest technology, including extra low voltage supply (ELV)).
- Reduced maintenance costs.
- Reduction in carbon footprint.
- Remote Monitoring System –will increase awareness and reactivity to operational issues and traffic signal faults.
- Safety benefits generally acknowledged from the type of operational system for all users, including pedestrians.
- Puffin crossing facilities.
- The installation of low level access poles and LED signal equipment will reduce working at height risks for maintenance engineers.
- ELV power supply will provide enhanced safety for all users, including pedestrians.

2.2 Strategic Finance has undertaken an appraisal of the funding application, which has been evaluated against HM Treasury Green Book guidance. The appraisal process confirmed satisfactory assurance was provided regarding the proposed funding, recording a score of 74%.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people: The installation of the latest pedestrian crossing technology will provide children and young people with the safest facilities possible.</p>
	<p>People live well and age well: The proposed traffic signal control systems will provide the safest facilities for all users.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities: Good quality highways infrastructure will make our communities feel safe, more protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods.</p>
	<p>A strong and inclusive economy: Our local highways are the arteries of our communities. They connect our residents to employment, education, local services and indeed the wider world. They enable economic growth, social mobility and are vital in ensuring good health outcomes.</p> <p>The proposed traffic signal control systems will provide improved network performance for all users, including commercial and public transport. This will ultimately promote business performance and competitiveness.</p>
	<p>A connected and accessible Sandwell: The proposed traffic signal control systems will increase network capacity, efficiency and provide operational benefits to all users.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 The statutory duty imposed on highway authorities to maintain the highway at public expense is set out in Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 4.2 The Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes a network management duty on the Council to manage day-to-day operational use of its highways to 'keep traffic moving'.



Consultation

- 4.3 Residents will be notified by letter and advised of the duration of the intended work and the nature of the work before commencing on site.

Sustainability

- 4.4 The proposed traffic signal equipment and systems to be installed will include the use of LED equipment and operate by ELV for the safety of all users and engineers.

Timescales

- 4.5 A robust work programme for the installation process at each location has been agreed with our term traffic signal maintenance contractor and will be closely supervised by Officers to ensure programme deadlines are achieved. The work is targeted for completion in October 2021.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The proposed sites have been carefully reviewed between Sandwell officers and those of the West Midlands Combined Authority and are considered by joint agreement to be the most appropriate for refurbishment. Therefore, no alternative options are recommended.

6 Implications

Resources:	<p>The Funding will be provided by the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p> <p>The schemes will be delivered using specialist engineers from our term traffic signal maintenance contractor, under the supervision of Sandwell's Traffic Signal Engineer.</p> <p>There are no land/building implications associated with the refurbishment of these existing traffic signals.</p>
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<p>Legal and Governance:</p>	<p>The principal legal statutory duties imposed on highway authorities to maintain the highway structures are set out in the Highways Act 1980.</p> <p>Section 41 (1) of the Highways Act, provides that a highway authority is under a duty to maintain those highways in the area for which it is responsible.</p> <p>Section 130 of the Highway Act, provides for protection of public rights. It is the duty of the highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority.</p> <p>The Council also has legal statutory duties to manage day-to-day operational use of its highways to 'keep traffic moving' under The Traffic Management Act 2004.</p>
<p>Risk:</p>	<p>Schemes have been thoroughly reviewed and associated costs are indicative of the work required and therefore any cost implications are minimal.</p> <p>Schemes will be covered by CDM regulations and co-ordinated by the Principal Designer from our term traffic signal maintenance contractor. This function will encompass any mitigating measures, health and safety and insurance implications.</p> <p>The scheme has been subject to appraisal by the Strategic Investment Unit. The risk of overspend has been mitigated through early contractor involvement and development of detail design.</p>
<p>Equality:</p>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) initial screening has been undertaken. The screening identified that there will be no adverse impact on people or groups with protected characteristics. A full EIA is not therefore required.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing:</p>	<p>These implications will be covered under CDM regulations and monitored by the Principal Designer and officers from Sandwell. Any identified issues will be addressed to a satisfactory conclusion.</p>
<p>Social Value</p>	<p>Social Value benefit are derived from important role a well maintained highway environment plays in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from social inclusion and interaction.</p>



7. Appendices

- 7.1 Grant Agreement between Sandwell MBC and the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 7.2 The Strategic Investment Unit Financial Appraisal Report.

8. Background Details

- 8.1 Approval is sought to enter into a grant funding agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority to deliver traffic signal improvements at four locations within Sandwell.
- 8.2 The proposed traffic signal improvements are on the 'Key Route Network'.
- 8.3 Improvements are necessary due to the existing traffic signal equipment at each of these four locations being lifetime expired.
- 8.4 In December 2020, Highway Services submitted an expression of interest to the West Midlands Combined Authority for grant funding from Transport for West Midlands to improve traffic signal operation. Funding was approved in January 2021.
- 8.5 Strategic Finance has carried out an appraisal and confirmed satisfactory assurance.
- 8.6 The total project cost is estimated to be £0.355m and will be fully funded by the grant provided by the West Midlands Combined Authority. Any additional costs will be funded from within Highway Services existing resources.
- 8.7 The traffic signals improvement scheme will be completed by October 2021.
- 8.8 A copy of the Grant Agreement between Sandwell MBC and the West Midlands Combined Authority is attached.

