
ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director - Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is:
 - (a) To release additional grant funding allocated by the Department for Transport to help in the repair of damage to the local road network caused by severe weather in 2013/14.
 - (b) To retrospectively approve the submission of a bid into the £168 million pothole fund to repair local roads and release funding if successful.

Summary

2. The Government announced in March 2014 that it was making £140 million available to local highway authorities in England to help repair damage to local authority road networks caused by recent severe weather in 2013/14.
3. £36.5 million was used to increase the transport element of the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme to £70 million, to help authorities who have suffered severe flood damage to local road networks due to the extreme wet and windy weather between 29 October 2013 and 28 February 2014. Darlington was not eligible for any of this funding. However, the remaining balance of £103.5 million was made available for local authorities in England, on a formula basis, to help with repairs to the road network caused by general deterioration due to the wet weather.
4. Darlington Borough Council has been allocated £178,442 funding in addition to funding already allocated for local highways maintenance. The funding comprises of £65,483 Capital and £112,959 Revenue.
5. It is proposed that the additional funding released by the Department for Transport will be used for both reactive and preventative treatments on 'C' class and unclassified roads to address the declining trend in condition.

6. On 24 April 2014 the Department for Transport announced a £168 million Pothole fund, with Councils having to complete a bid by 22 May 2014. Delegated Authority is available to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources to approve the submission of bids where there is not sufficient time to seek Cabinet approval. Delegated authority was sought to submit a bid and this report seeks retrospective endorsement from Cabinet for the bid submission.
7. If the bid is successful it is proposed that any additional funding will be used for both reactive and preventative treatments on all roads but targeted treatment on 'C' class and unclassified roads to address the declining trend in condition.
8. The timetable for the decision on the bid is not known. Subject to a successful bid Members are asked to agree to release any funding obtained to spend on highway maintenance improvements identified within and meeting the fund criteria. This is to enable the Council to respond quickly (if successful) and comply with the bid criteria; delivering works in periods of the year that are conducive with the repair techniques and programmes.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members agree to release the Capital grant funding of £65,483 for the severe weather in 2013/14, to supplement the delivery of a programme of maintenance throughout the Borough's road network.
 - (b) Members retrospectively approve the submission of a bid into the Department for Transport pothole fund for additional maintenance funding.
 - (c) Subject to a successful bid Members agree to release the funding obtained and prioritise the funding on reactive and preventative treatments on all roads but with specific targeted treatment on 'C' class and unclassified roads to address the declining trend in condition.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
 - (a) To deliver additional highway maintenance to address the impact of severe weather.
 - (b) To seek additional funding for highway condition improvements.
 - (c) To enable the Council to respond quickly and comply with the bid criteria; delivering works in periods of the year that are conducive with the repair techniques and programmes.

Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

DW : Extension 6618
LC

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | There are no specific impacts. |
| Health and Well Being | A well maintained highway can have positive impacts on those persons using the highway and prevent injuries arising from a poorly maintained network. |
| Carbon Impact | No direct impacts |
| Diversity | A well maintained highway can have positive impacts on those persons using the highway with mobility impairments and can prevent injuries arising from a poorly maintained network. |
| Wards Affected | All wards are affected equally. |
| Groups Affected | All groups are affected equally. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report does not represent a change to the Policy Framework. The additional funding does not impact upon the current MTFP. |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | Good transport is an essential ingredient to Economic Growth as outlined in the Department for Transport's strategic direction "Transport an Engine for Growth". Well maintained highways are essential to make our economy stronger and our lives easier, which aligns with the priorities in One Darlington Perfectly Placed. |
| Efficiency | The additional funding will be targeted at both reactive and preventive solutions. The preventative solutions will provide cost effective techniques to prolong life of the roads and prevent further deterioration, avoiding reactive repairs that can be more expensive and impact on road users. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. The severe weather over recent years has had a detrimental impact on the highway network both locally and nationally, which has been recognised by the Department of Transport. In response they have:-
- (a) released additional highway maintenance funding to all local authorities for 2013/14 damage
 - (b) released a national pothole fund for local authorities to apply in 2014/15.

Additional Highway Maintenance Funding

12. The maintenance of the highway network relies significantly on funding from the Department for Transport via the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Council has refocused priorities for spend, with maintenance as the top priority. The priorities for funding are:-
- (a) Maintenance of existing assets;
 - (b) Improved Management of the network
 - (c) Improvement Schemes
13. The Council is responsible for the management of highways assets which include:
- (a) 574km of carriageway and 616 km of footway, including the highway drainage system.
 - (b) 12560 street lighting columns and 1679 illuminated signs
 - (c) 65 Number Traffic Signal installations.
 - (d) 4483m of safety barrier
 - (e) 92 bridges and 160 retaining walls
 - (f) 303km of public rights of way with associated bridges.
14. The estimated values of the highway assets are in the region of £694 million with all councils required to submit highway condition data to Government. All of these assets require ongoing investment and maintenance. The Council undertakes rigorous asset management planning with a comprehensive survey; testing and inspection regime used to ensure good asset and condition information is in place that provides an evidence based approach to spend prioritisation. It is not possible to address all maintenance requirements therefore spend is prioritised on areas of most need.
15. There is a historic infrastructure maintenance backlog nationally and Darlington's submission to Government shows a maintenance backlog of £74.2M, which includes all assets for example, structures and street lighting. The severe weather conditions over recent years have not helped locally or nationally, with the Department for Transport also releasing additional funding in previous years.
16. The Government announced in March 2014 that it was making £140 million available to local highway authorities in England to help repair damage to local

authority road networks caused by recent severe weather. £36.5 million was used to increase the transport element of the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme to £70 million to help authorities who have suffered severe flood damage to local road networks due to the extreme wet and windy weather between 29 October 2013 and 28 February 2014. Darlington was not eligible for any of this fund.

17. The remaining balance of £103.5 million was made available for local authorities in England, on a formula basis, to help with repairs to the road network caused by general deterioration due to the wet weather. Darlington Borough Council has been awarded £178,442 funding which is in addition to funding already allocated for local highways maintenance. The funding comprises of £65,483 Capital and £112,959 Revenue funding.
18. The recent release of funding following this year's severe weather is after the event and after the Council have had to react to the impact of the weather. It will not solve the highway maintenance backlog that exists nationally nor within Darlington, but any additional funding is welcomed.
19. The Council must react to damage and deterioration as it occurs to keep the travelling public safe and as such has reacted within year and spent additional funding on reactive maintenance to repair potholes and damage immediately. This has been managed in-year through reduction of planned scheme works to cover additional spend on reactive work. In the last year the Council has repaired 9,470 pot holes across the Borough. It is far more effective to spend funding on preventative maintenance rather than reactive but the severe weather has significantly accelerated deterioration of road surfaces and the Council have had to respond.
20. Over recent years the severe weather has impacted on all areas of maintenance, not just road surfaces. Grass verges have been saturated, resulting in any vehicle overrun causing significant damage; drainage systems have required additional cleaning and repair; there have been partial bridge collapses at Brafferton and retaining wall failures. All of these circumstances have had to be addressed.
21. There has been a combination of extreme cold and extremely wet conditions since 2009 with both ice and water having a major impact on road surfaces and structures:
 - (a) Ice:- water freezing in porous surfaces expands and forces the surface to break up.
 - (b) Water:- water being forced into porous surfaces by tyre pressure weakens the surface and causes failure.
22. The road condition data shown at **Appendix 1** shows that until 2009/10, which was the first year of severe cold temperatures; road condition was being significantly improved year on year. Since then the condition of A and B class roads has continued to be improved. However, the condition of C class and unclassified roads has declined.
23. This can be attributed to a combination of factors; severe weather, reductions in Local Transport Plan budgets and the need to prioritise the budgets amongst all

highway assets. For example, in-year damage repairs to structures, programmes of street lighting replacement.

24. It is proposed that the additional funding released by the Department for Transport will be used for both reactive and preventative treatments on 'C' class and unclassified roads to address the declining trend in condition.

Pothole Fund to Repair local Roads

25. On 24 April 2014 the Department for Transport announced a £168 million Pothole fund, with Councils having to complete a bid by 22 May 2014. Delegated Authority is available to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources to approve the submission of bids where there is not sufficient time to seek Cabinet approval. Delegated authority was sought to submit a bid and this report seeks retrospective endorsement from Cabinet for the bid submission.
26. The application is based on an assessment of existing practice and committing to a Pothole Pledge as a condition of the funding. This effectively is a commitment setting out the number of potholes the Council will have repaired by March 2015. As previously, stated in the report the Council must react to damage and deterioration as it occurs to keep the travelling public safe. Therefore, the pothole pledge is something the Council is already committed to.
27. If the bid is successful it is proposed that any additional funding will be used for both reactive and preventative treatments on all roads but targeted treatment on 'C' class and unclassified roads to address the declining trend in condition.
28. The timetable for the decision on the bid is not known. Subject to a successful bid Members are asked to agree to release any funding obtained to spend on highway maintenance improvements identified within and meeting the fund criteria. This is to enable the Council to respond quickly (if successful) and comply with the bid criteria; delivering works in periods of the year that are conducive with the repair techniques and programmes.

Financial Implications

29. The funding received and the funding obtained from the bid (if successful) will provide additional resources to supplement existing programmes to manage asset condition within the Borough.

Legal Implications

30. The programmes of reactive and preventative treatments will be delivered through existing delivery mechanisms and frameworks.

The highway network is consists of:-

| Road Classification | Length (km) | % of total Network length |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| A Roads | 57.2 | 11 |
| B Roads | 29.3 | 5 |
| C Roads | 109 | 20 |
| Unclassified Roads | 350.4 | 64 |

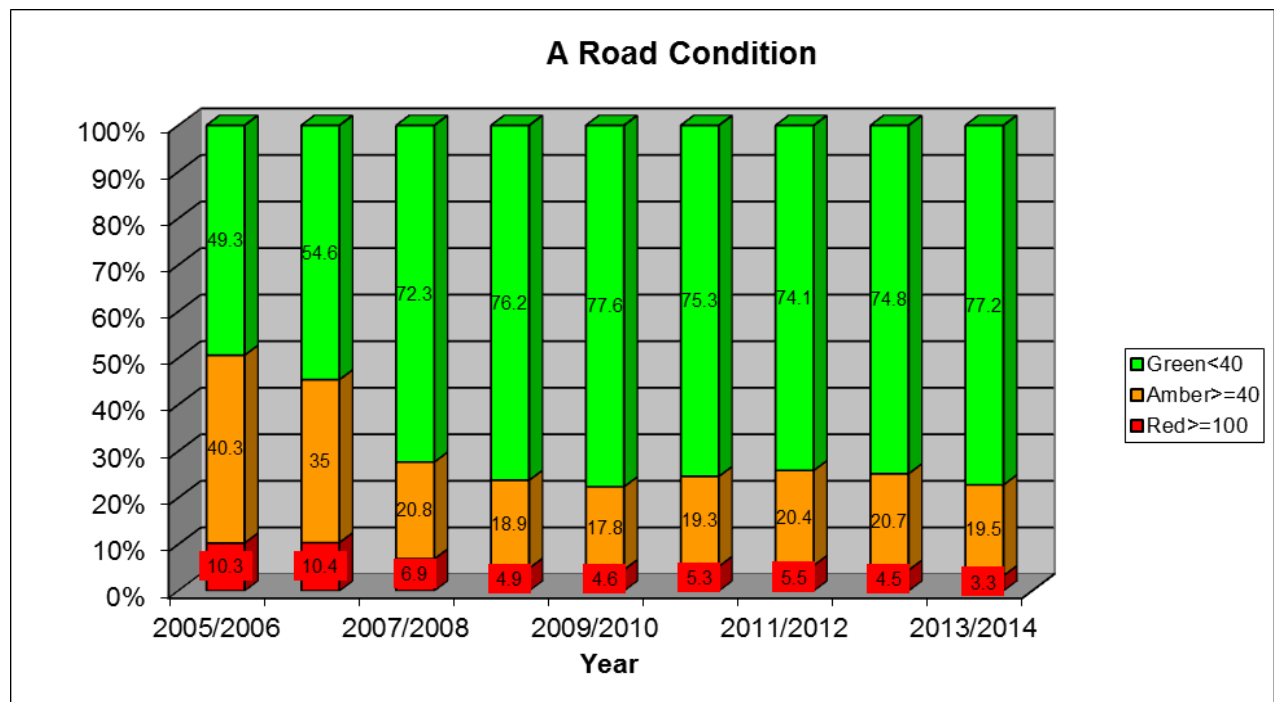
Roads are categorised into three broad condition categories. These are based on national standards:-

GREEN: Generally good condition

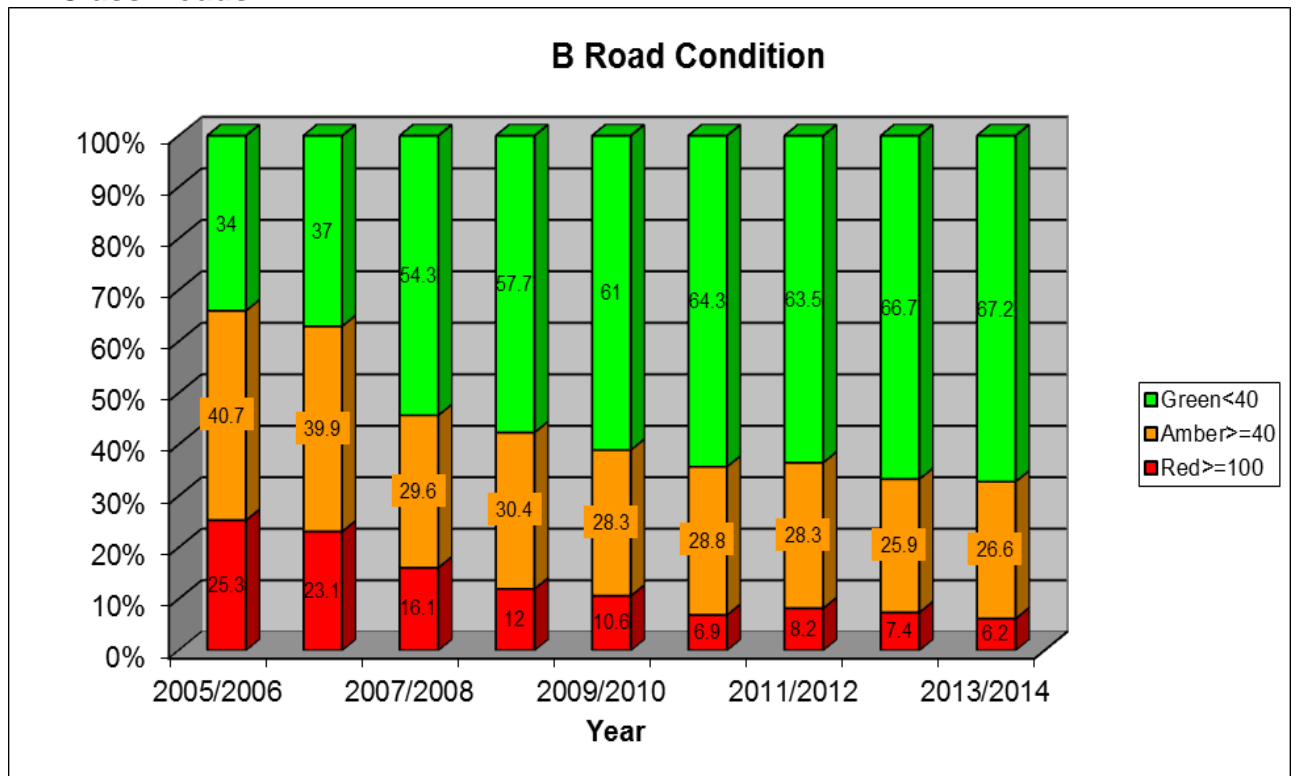
AMBER: Plan investigation soon

RED: Plan maintenance soon

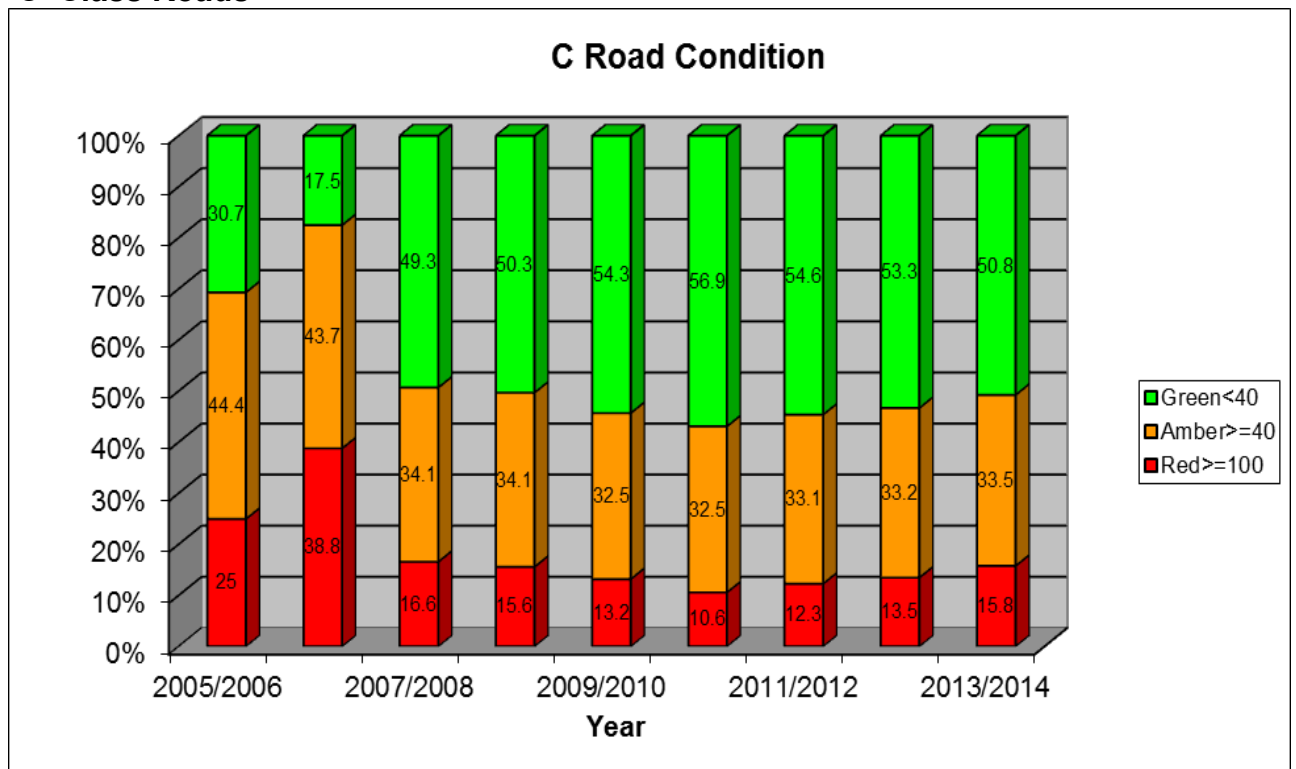
'A' Class Roads



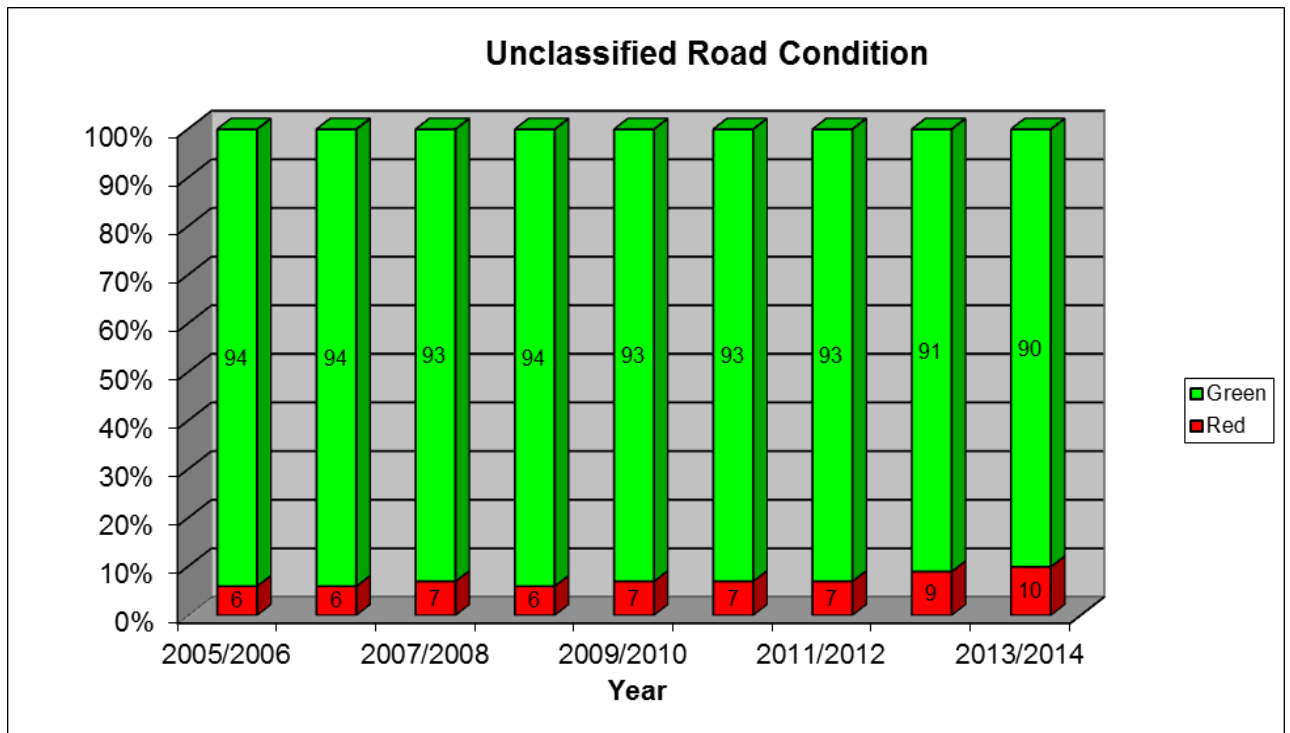
'B' Class Roads



'C' Class Roads



Unclassified Roads



Note: Roads in the unclassified category are classified as Green or Red with no Amber category