

By: Paul Carter, Leader of the Council
To: Cabinet – 29 March 2010
Subject: WEATHER DAMAGED ROADS: Major Road Repair Blitz
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Update to Cabinet on the progress and planned approach to delivering repairs to roads with externally tendered contractors.

Background

The extreme winter weather conditions of late 2009/early 2010 have caused high levels of damage to Kent's roads. Potholes and broken road surfaces are clear evidence of the coldest and wettest winter for thirty years.

But we have been preparing for action. At a meeting on 11 January 2010, Cabinet agreed to make an initial additional £1m available to Kent Highway Services to deliver extra, essential road surface repairs. This extra spend will be awarded through competitive tendering using Kent County Council's existing procedures, and as far as possible I hope it will be won competitively by local small and medium-sized contractors.

The objective is to deliver a high volume, rapid repair service for minor carriageway damage. Work will be undertaken on a "find and fix" traditional piece work basis to pre-determined quality standards, with real incentives for hard-working, properly equipped crews during this time of economic downturn.

This substantially enhanced road repair activity is planned to commence on 12 April 2010. I believe we should put additional funding into this project, if needed, to complete the job fully.

Process

There has been widespread media coverage to ensure that local companies were aware of this business opportunity and the specifications and contracts were available on the South East Business Portal. Contractors were invited to apply for a pre-qualification pack and tender documents were sent to contractors on 12 March, for return by 26 March.

Upon receipt of the tender submissions, a formal report will be provided outlining the selection criteria and the assessment results. This report will be used as the basis for the formal decision, as approved and signed off by me as Leader of the County Council.

The contractors for the "find and fix" blitz will be flexibly deployed across all districts. The initial focus will be a concentrated attack on minor roads (including rural and estate roads) which make up 71% of the total (6,100km) and a higher proportion in terms of need. Work will continue in parallel, as appropriate, through the term maintenance contractor, Ringway.

Contractors will be appointed for each District Council area. The aim is to encourage local accountability and teamwork, with a “pride in your patch” quality-focused approach to the localised winter repairs. No contractor will be awarded a contract for more than 2 areas, and successful contractors will be tasked and managed to avoid potential local conflict of road works.

Whilst undertaking the works, gangs will be visited on a daily basis to build positive relationships and to monitor quality and progress. The rate of spend during the contract will be analysed on a daily basis and an audit regime established for checking on validity of claim, size and number of repairs.

Timescales

○ Publish contract notice	12 Feb 10
○ Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) available	16 Feb - 1 Mar 10
○ Assessment of PQQs	2 Mar – 11 Mar 10
○ Issue Tenders to those passing PQQ	12 Mar 10
○ Tenders returned	26 Mar 10
○ Assess tenders	26 Mar – 31 Mar 10
○ Leader signs formal decision to award contracts	1 Apr 10
○ Mobilise contracts	2-11 April
○ Start work	w/c 12 Apr 10

Recommendations

- That Cabinet endorses the progress of the project.
- Following the Leader of the Council taking the formal decision on successful contractors, and subject to him being satisfied as to the detailed terms and conditions, the Executive Director for Environment, Highways and Waste be authorised to sign the contracts on behalf of the County Council.

Background Documents: none

Contact

Mike Austerberry
Executive Director for Environment, Highways & Waste
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone

01622 694130