

Universal Services

Name of SP25 proposal:	SP25 Proposal Reference:
Highways Maintenance	EIA – US01 Universal Services

EIA writer(s) and authoriser

No.		Name	Department	Position	Email address	Phone number	Date	Issue
1	Report Writer(s)	Peter Rooney	Universal Services	Highway Manager			30/04/2024	2
2	EIA authoriser	Patrick Blogg	Universal Services	Director of Universal Services			15/04/2024	2
3	EIA Coordinator	Patrick Poyntz-Wright	Universal Services	Capital and Democratic Services			14/04/2024	2

Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Highways Maintenance
Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase	<p>The Highways Service delivers the County Council’s statutory functions as the Highway Authority for Hampshire. The Council has a defined duty under the Highways Act 1980 to take reasonable steps to maintain its 5200-mile network of roads, footways and cycleways.</p> <p>Maintenance activity across our road, footway, and cycleway network is currently spread across three main activity areas. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine/reactive maintenance: This involves day-to-day repairs, e.g. dealing with potholes, replacing road markings, repairs to signs, drainage cleansing, and also emergency response, e.g. emergency road repairs;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> planned maintenance: This involves larger-scale structural repairs, surface treatments on roads, and drainage improvements (as opposed to repairs), the majority of which is undertaken through our annual Operation Resilience programme¹; environmental maintenance such as grass cutting, weed control and arboriculture.
<p>Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project</p>	<p>It is proposed to reduce the annual highway maintenance budget for planned maintenance activities by £7.5 million from April 2025.</p> <p>It is worth noting that in November 2023 the Government announced that additional funding would be allocated to local highway authorities for highway maintenance and Hampshire’s ‘minimum uplift’ would be £132.3 million of funding through to 2033/34. Whilst full details of how the uplift funding would be applied remain unknown, the County Council’s assumption is that the DfT base funding for 2025/26 would remain at a similar level to 2024/25, and that the additional uplift would be spread equally over the remaining 9-year funding period. This would mean the impact of the proposed reduction of £7.5m would be offset by increased Government funding.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that since July 2023 the County Council has funded an additional £22.5 million specifically for reactive structural maintenance purposes as part of its Stronger Roads Today campaign. This funding runs to April 2025.</p>

Engagement and consultation

The County Council’s *Making the Most of your money budget* consultation (2024-2026) sought residents’ and stakeholders’ views on strategic options for funding the Authority’s budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings were subject to further, more detailed ‘stage two’ consultation (detailed below).

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

¹ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/plannedmaintenance>

No

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

A stage 2 public consultation took place in early 2024 and closed on 31st March 2024. A total of 6,435 responses were received and analysed in relation to this proposal, and feedback has identified that 88% of respondents disagree with this proposal, with 8% in agreement and 4% neutral. Comments regarding the impacts of the proposal include negative financial implications for the public in terms of increased vehicle repairs, and increased costs for the County Council in legal and administrative costs due to vehicle damage and potential safety issues. Three quarters (75%) of the comments relate to the general condition of the road network and the need to continue with pothole repairs. Alternatives to the proposals suggested by respondents include improving how repairs are undertaken and increasing the budgets for highway maintenance.

In terms of perceived impacts on protected characteristics relating to this proposal, 20% related to age and 20% to disability when considering a base of 1,980 responses.

Section two: Assessment

Carefully and consciously consider the impacts of the proposed change.

Consider at this point whether the assessment is of impacts on staff or service users. If it is both the impacts may be contradictory for each group (negative for staff but positive for customers, or vice versa). Consider completing two assessment tables (one for staff and one for customers) and providing one equality statement for both groups.

If the proposed change is expected to have a positive, neutral (no impact) or negative (low, medium or high) impact on people in protected characteristics groups or those who may be impacted by poverty or rurality. Indicate the impact by entering the risk score in the relevant column in the table below.

If an overview assessment of due regard is appropriate, please go to box 2.

Table 1 Impact Assessment [add ✓ to relevant boxes)

Protected characteristic	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age			✓			Public
Disability			✓			Public
Gender reassignment		✓				Public
Pregnancy and maternity		✓				Public
Race		✓				Public
Religion or belief		✓				Public
Sex		✓				Public
Sexual orientation		✓				Public
Marriage & civil partnership		✓				Public
Poverty		✓				Public
Rurality		✓				Public

Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area? Consider the [demographic data](#) of the locations.

Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	✓
Basingstoke and Deane	
East Hampshire	
Eastleigh	
Fareham	
Gosport	
Hart	
Havant	
New Forest	
Rushmoor	
Test Valley	
Winchester	

Section three: Equality Statement

For all characteristics marked as either having a neutral or low negative impact, challenge your assessment - carefully consider the protected characteristics, if necessary, review the Inclusion and Diversity eLearning, discuss with an EIA co-ordinator.

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
Age and Disability	<p>The EIA has identified two protected characteristic groups, Age and Disability and both have been assessed as having a low negative impact.</p> <p>LOW NEGATIVE: Deteriorating highways, footways, signage, and other infrastructure could disadvantage road users, including non-motorised users seeking to access the highways infrastructure on foot, cycle, or other means. Older and younger people, and people with disabilities falling into this category could experience a disproportionate increase in difficulty/inconvenience when travelling by these means.</p> <p>To mitigate these impacts structural repairs, road surface treatment programmes and drainage improvements would be focused on safety interventions or situations when major, or widespread defects are identified, and a more comprehensive solution is justified.</p>
Other	NEUTRAL: It is not anticipated that the impacts of this change would disproportionately affect other protected characteristics.

For all characteristics marked as either having a 'medium negative' or 'high negative', please complete table 4:

Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain - use list above to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions

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If you have specified mitigations as part of the assessment, now consider reviewing the impact severity/risk assessment.

For all characteristics marked as either having a positive impact please explain why in table 5.

Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact

Further actions and recommendations to consider:

- If neutral or low negative impacts have been carefully considered and identified correctly, the activity is likely to proceed.
- If medium negative or high negative have been identified:
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice may be paused or stopped
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice can be changed to remove, reduce or mitigate against the negative impacts.
 - Consider undertaking consultation/re-consulting².
 - If all options have been considered carefully and there are no other proportionate ways to remove, reduce, or mitigate - explain and justify reasons why in the assessment.
 - Carry out a subsequent impact severity assessment following mitigating actions.

Box 1

Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

Structural repairs, road surface treatment programmes, and drainage improvements would be focused on safety interventions, or situations when major, or widespread, defects are identified, and a more comprehensive solution is justified. This approach should benefit all residents.

Wherever possible, revised operational working practices and the use of smart, innovative technology would be explored to minimise the impact of budget reductions.

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA: