

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE**24 MARCH 2015****HIGHWAYS – PRIORITISATION OF WORKS- RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR LEGG (CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC REALM)****Bidding for External Funding**

The Highways team have a strong track record when bidding for additional government grants having secured some £2.26million over the last 3 years. The team has a certain capacity to respond to these bids but on occasion needs additional support. When this is the case, and rather than employing additional staff, the team utilises the services of consultants with relevant expertise. The costs over the period were approximately £6,000. The ratio of additional cost to return is therefore 1:377.

The current Department for Transport Challenge Fund bid (for which we seeking £5M) is being produced and will be submitted in early February 2015. We have used the existing Highways team and Ringway resources (at no additional cost) as well as the services of an external consultancy. The charge for the consultants will be in the region of £5,000. If we are successful, the ratio of additional cost to return will be 1:1000.

Communications Plan

The Highways Team provide a wider range of communications relating to programmed works, network conditions, road works, winter maintenance and capital projects. These are provided via email, twitter, the web and face to face at community events and meetings.

The Team are very keen to improve on this, however. As part of the forthcoming draft Public Realm Strategy we will be asking the Milton Keynes community how they would like to hear from us in the future about a range of issues. In addition, all councillors will have been contacted by a member of the Public Realm Team who will provide councillors with any information they require at the frequency of their choice and via their preferred channel(s). When we have collated information directly from councillors and the consultation we will develop a targeted communications plan.