

LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT (LHI) SCHEMES 2020/21

To: Highways & Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Date: 10th March 2020

From: Steve Cox - Executive Director, Place & Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not Applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To inform Committee of the outcome of the prioritisation of LHI applications for delivery in 2020/21 by the Member Panels in each District area.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Approve the prioritised list of schemes for each District area, included in Appendix A of this report.
- b) Approve the proposal outlined in section 3 of the report to change the application timescales for the next round of LHIs

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following Full Council on 11 February 2020 the approved budget to facilitate a programme of Local Highway Improvements (LHI) for 2020/21 has been increased by £200k to £807k.
- 1.2 The LHI initiative invites community groups to submit an application for funding of up to £15,000, subject to them providing at least 10% of the total cost of the scheme. The schemes are community driven, giving local people a real influence over bringing forward highway improvements in their community that would not normally be prioritised by the Council.
- 1.3 Where applications involve ongoing operational costs such as the cost of power supplies for measures such as zebra crossings, the applicant is expected to meet these costs, or, for some non-standard highway features or equipment, become responsible for the asset itself.
- 1.4 Section 2 of the report outlines the process undertaken to identify the prioritised list of schemes for 2020/21.
- 1.5 Concerns have been raised previously at Highways and Infrastructure Committee relating to the number of schemes that have been carried forward into the following financial year. A proposal to address this is put forward in section 3 of the report.

2. 2020/21 Local Highway Improvement Schemes

- 2.1 As in previous years, officers have completed feasibility studies with applicants in advance of the panel meetings, in a bid to provide a more consistent stage of development for applications. The benefit of this stage in the process has been evident at panel meetings.
- 2.2 The panel assessment meetings remain a member led process, where applicants are invited to present their proposal. Member Panels have been set up to assess the priorities for funding, based on the available budget for each District/City. Political group leaders appoint members based on current political proportionality, with the exception of the City Panel, which is agreed by the Cambridge Joint Area Committee.
- 2.3 Panel members have been asked to consider and score applications which will determine how the budget should be allocated. The panels adopted a scoring system assessing four categories; persistent problem, road safety, community improvement and added value. Each category was scored out of 5 and the average across all panel members was then used to rank applications. Panel members were not permitted to score applications in their own division.
- 2.4 The rationale for proposing which applications are delivered is based upon the scoring system and available budget per District area. The scoring criteria is as follows:

Score 0 Fails to deliver any improvement

Score 1 Delivers negligible improvement/ aims of the LHI Initiative

Score 2 Delivers limited improvement/ aims of the LHI Initiative

Score 3 Delivers some improvement/ aims of the LHI Initiative

Score 4 Delivers substantial improvement/ aims of the LHI Initiative

Score 5 Delivers exceptional improvement/ aims of the LHI Initiative

- 2.5 It is recommended that no application scoring less than 1 should be implemented, as the scoring indicates that the project delivers negligible improvements/aims of the LHI Initiative.
- 2.6 It is then recommended that projects be approved for delivery, working down from the highest score to the lowest, until the budget for the District area is fully allocated.
- 2.7 Should any applications subsequently prove unfeasible, or the actual cost be less than expected, further applications from the priority list may be allocated funding later in the year.
- 2.8 All estimated project costs now also incorporate the estimated cost of time spent by officers designing, managing and delivering it. The actual cost of the new feasibility stage, which has recently been completed, has been top sliced from each district area budget before being allocated to applications.
- 2.9 This recharge of both the feasibility and officer project delivery costs was agreed by Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee in July 2017, to better reflect the actual cost to the authority of delivering the LHI Initiative.
- 2.10 The LHI budget has been allocated to each district area in the same way as in 2019/20 and is therefore as follows:

District	Initial Budget	Feasibility	Remaining Available Budget
East Cambridgeshire	£105,261	£5,780	£99,481
Fenland	£128,652	£5,100	£123,552
Huntingdonshire	£222,219	£11,560	£210,659
South Cambridgeshire	£187,128	£16,660	£170,468
Cambridge City	£163,740	£13,260	£150,480
TOTAL	£807,000	£52,360	£754,640

- 2.11 The prioritised list of schemes for each district area can be found in Appendix A of this report. Each list also highlights the point at which the budget for each district area is fully allocated to schemes, indicated by a red dashed line.

3. Future LHI Applications for 2021/22

- 3.1 Following discussions in relation to the delivery timescales experienced for Local Highway Improvement (LHI) schemes and concerns raised regarding the number of schemes not completed within the financial year for which the funding is allocated, it is proposed that the application window for schemes to be delivered in the 2021/22 financial year is brought forward by two months, opening on 1st April 2020 and closing on Sunday 31st May 2020.
- 3.2 Changing the application period will then result in the following changes to the process timescales:
- May to September 2020 - feasibility studies undertaken
 - October 2020 - panel meetings
 - December 2020 – report to committee including prioritised list for approval

3.3 This will mean the winter period, January to March 2021, can be used to begin designing schemes for delivery from 1st April 2021, making use of the better, summer weather for delivery, rather than design.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Many of the schemes that are brought forward have outcomes that improve road safety, particularly for vulnerable users, such as the young, elderly or particular user types, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Investing in local communities, particularly the issues that are often of greatest local concern, promotes community development and provides benefits to all local residents.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The required resources have been made available to deliver the programme of projects, which will be funded from the Highways capital budget.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The Member-led Panels adopt a consistent scoring system, each prioritising proposals within the district against their district budget (paragraphs 2.3 and 2.10). Many of the schemes will improve road safety for vulnerable users such as the young and elderly. The LHI initiative empowers community groups to bring forward improvements and gives local

people a real influence over bringing forward improvements that benefit their local community.

A completed Equality Impact Assessment for the prioritisation of the LHI schemes can be found in Appendix B.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

Further engagement and consultation will take place on each project as it is developed, in conjunction with the applicant.

Changing the application window, as outlined in section 3 of the report, will have an implication for parishes and other organisations intending to submit a bid. All parishes, towns and county councillors have already been contacted regarding the possibility of this change.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The LHI initiative gives local people a real influence over highway improvements in their community. The Council will work closely with the successful applicants and local community to help deliver the improvements that have been identified. The Local Member will be a key part of this process and will be involved throughout the development and delivery of each scheme.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The majority of schemes aim to improve road safety, which may subsequently contribute to reducing the risk of accident injuries on the network.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes or No Name of Officer:
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Elsa Evans
Have any engagement and	Yes

communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Name of Officer: Eleanor Bell
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Richard Lumley
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Iain Green

Source Documents	Location
Prioritised list of LHI schemes by District area for delivery in 2019/20	Appendix A
Equality Impact Assessment	Appendix B
Individual LHI Panel Member scoresheets	Vantage House Washingley Road Huntingdon PE29 6SR

APPENDIX A

Prioritised list of LHI schemes by District area for delivery in 2020/21