

## Local Highway Improvements 2024-2025 Programme

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 1 October 2024

From: Executive Director of Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2024/081

**Executive Summary:** This paper provides an update to the committee of the outcome of the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) member panels and officer scoring of the Complex and Non-complex LHI applications for the 2024/25 funding round. It seeks approval of the prioritised lists of projects for design and delivery.

**Recommendation:** The committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the projects detailed in the prioritised lists attached at Appendix 1 to this report, to be designed and delivered;
- b) Agree that all unsuccessful complex LHI schemes should be added to the Transport Planning Database for prioritisation through the Council's Delivering Transport Strategy Aims programme, as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report;
- c) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to remove schemes that prove to be undeliverable and add new schemes in their place, as outlined in the report, to enable them to be designed and delivered; and
- d) Note that these schemes will be delivered through existing approved and compliant procurement arrangements.

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# 1. Creating a greener, fairer, and more caring Cambridgeshire

## 1.1 Ambition 1: Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.

All schemes included in the programme have been considered against the objective of meeting the Council's Net Zero ambitions. Specific scoring criteria are related to environmental improvements such as promotion of public transport which contributes to this goal. The default delivery process is to utilise low carbon options like recycled traffic calming products to reduce the carbon impact. Some schemes within the programme provide active travel improvements which could contribute towards a modal shift within communities for local trips.

Ambition 2: Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable.

All schemes included in the programme have been considered against the objective of improving the safety of all road users within the specific projects which make up the programme. Often requests from the local community relate to improvements to road safety for residents and vulnerable users in their parish.

Ambition 3: Health inequalities are reduced.

The projects delivered through this programme contribute to improving people's health and wellbeing which is one of the key scoring / prioritisation areas, as is active travel. Projects include schemes that improve access to key services such as healthcare provision and enables and encourages users to make a switch from private car to active travel for local journeys.

Ambition 4: People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs.

The projects delivered through this programme contribute to improved transport access to key destinations and services that enable people to live more independently and increase their opportunities and quality of life.

Ambition 5: People are helped out of poverty and income inequality.

The projects delivered through this programme contribute to helping people out of poverty and income inequality as often highway improvements are targeted at active travel, or increased access to public transport for the local community through this process.

Ambition 6: Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality services and social justice is prioritised.

The projects delivered through this programme contribute to improved access to services, jobs, and education at a community level.

Ambition 7: Children and young people have opportunities to thrive.

The projects delivered through this programme contribute to improved opportunities for children and young people, often highway improvements are targeted around schools and leisure facilities by the local community through this process.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Highway Improvement (LHI) initiative provides the opportunity for local community groups and parish and town councils to promote local highway improvements that would not normally be prioritised nor funded by the County Council. This is mainly because they do not meet the Council's intervention criteria to automatically qualify for funding via one of the existing programmes. Through the initiative, external groups are invited to apply for funding of up to £25,000 per project, subject to those groups providing at least 10% of the total cost of the scheme. The schemes are community driven, giving local people influence over bringing forward highway improvements.
- 2.2 The County Council contributes £820,000 towards each round of this initiative, with the rest of the funding being provided by the applicant on a scheme-by-scheme basis. This amounts to a total available budget per cycle in the region of £1,100,000.
- 2.3 A new process for scoring and prioritising applications was approved by the Highways and Transport Committee on 5 December 2023. This was based on advice provided by a Member Working Group. Section 2 of this report outlines the processes undertaken to identify the prioritised list of schemes for the allocation of the 2024/25 round.
- 2.4 For the 2204/25 funding round, applications were received countywide. As these figures highlight, the LHI process is popular.

District -	Total number of applications -
Huntingdonshire	38
Cambridge City	47
South Cambridgeshire	41
East Cambridgeshire	19
Fenland	22

Table 1 – Applications by district

An indicative split for the total quantity of Complex and Non-complex applications received prior to starting the officer review and feasibility process is as follows, with further information on complex and non-complex LHI's on the Council's [website](#):

- Complex – 68
- Non-complex - 99

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 As in previous years, feasibility studies were completed with applicants in advance of the panel meetings for those Local Highways Improvements which were classified as being complex under the process, in a bid to provide a more consistent stage of development for applications.
- 3.2 The panel assessment meetings remain a member led process, where applicants are

invited to present their proposal. Member Panels are used to assess the priorities for funding, based on the available budget for each district area. Political Group Leaders appoint Members based on current political proportionality. A member chair is elected from amongst the Panel Members on the day of the meeting. The panel meetings occurred on the following dates:

- Huntingdonshire – 27/06/2024
- Cambridge City – 25/07/2024.
- South Cambridgeshire – 08/05/2024
- East Cambridgeshire – 22/04/2024
- Fenland – 24/04/2024

3.3 Panel members were asked to consider and score applications to determine how the budget should be allocated for each district area using the approved member scoring sheet agreed on by the Highways and Transport Committee in December 2023.

3.4 For those applications classed as non-complex, instead of going through the member panel, these were scored and prioritised by officers. Scoring was undertaken initially individually, and then as a group using the prioritisation matrix approved by the Highways and Transport Committee in December 2023. Moderation sessions were then undertaken before a final score for each application was given.

3.5 Prior to this committee meeting, the LHI Member Working Group was convened to review the moderated officer scoring for those applications in the Non-complex process. These sessions were undertaken on 24 July 2024 and 8 August 2024.

3.6 The outcome of this was that the member working group recommended that the committee approve the current projects identified and ranked above the red line in Appendix 1. This will ensure the programme can commence as soon as possible. The red line on the table indicates the separation between the ranked projects that are allocated funding, and those below the red line which will not receive funding, and therefore not being progressed further in the programme. For those unsuccessful complex projects, we will also be adding these to our strategic transport project database long list for prioritisation. Whilst this is also a process with a limited amount of funding which is competitively prioritised, this provides an opportunity for these projects to be progressed alongside other similar schemes. Table 2 summarises those which have been successful in each district area:

<b>District</b>	<b>Total number of applications</b>	<b>Total number successful applications</b>	<b>% of successful compared to total number received</b>
Huntingdonshire	38	22	58%
Cambridge City	47	16	34%
South Cambridgeshire	41	20	49%
East Cambridgeshire	19	9	47%
Fenland	22	9	41%

Table 2: Successful applications by district

The total number of successful applications across the whole LHI programme for 2024/25 is

76, whilst the 2023/24 programme numbered 77 individual projects. This is compared to 74 individual projects for the 2022/23 year, which was the last year of the old LHI process. This demonstrates that more funded projects have been progressed each year for the last two of the new process, for the same amount of County Council funding (£820,000), as under the previous process.

- 3.7 Should any applications subsequently prove unfeasible, or the actual cost be less than expected, further applications from the priority list may be allocated with the available funding later in the year if these are identified before the end of January 2025. This deadline is imposed to ensure current projects do not overrun into the next programme. If schemes are discontinued after this date, then the funding will roll into the next programme round.
- 3.8 The indicated scheme cost for each individual project incorporates the estimated cost of designing, managing, and delivering each project, as well as a proportion set aside for risk. The actual cost of the new feasibility stage, which has recently been completed, has been top sliced from the total budget before the remainder is allocated proportionally by population to fund the indicated prioritised applications and is identified in paragraph 3.11 of this report.
- 3.9 The recharge of both the feasibility and officer project delivery costs was agreed by the Highways and Infrastructure Committee in July 2017, to better reflect the actual cost to the authority of delivering the LHI Initiative.
- 3.10 The funding split for Complex and Non-complex applications was agreed to be 50% of the remaining available budget apportioned to each category, in each district area. Previously, in areas where the total value of the complex projects applied for did not reach this, the remainder of the budget was reassigned to fund further non-complex applications in the same district; but that was not required this year. Instead, the member working group agreed that Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire's complex projects were allocated an increased amount of funding, over and above their standard allocation. This was taken from underspends in the other district areas to enable delivery of an additional project in both districts. This reallocation still falls within the overall programme budget and is a similar approach to that taken for the 2023/24 programme.
- 3.11 The LHI budget has remained at the same level as for 2023/24 at £820,000 and has been allocated proportionally for each district area within Cambridgeshire. The population data to enable this has been drawn from the 2021 census. This allocation was approved in the Integrated Transport Block paper which was presented to the Committee on 5 March 2024, Item 8 [Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com). The allocations for each district area are as follows:

District	Initial Budget	Feasibility	Remaining budget	Complex	Non - complex	Unassigned budget
East Cambridgeshire	£105,958.45	£7,417.09	£98,541.36	£57,000.00	£41,500.00	£41.36
Fenland	£123,839.69	£8,668.78	£115,170.91	£57,652.81	£55,000.00	£2518.10
Huntingdonshire	£218,441.14	£15,290.88	£203,150.26	£108,232.28	£94,235.00	£682.98

<b>South Cambridgeshire</b>	£195,727.13	£13,700.90	£182,026.23	£87,817.00	£90,150.00	£4,059.23
<b>Cambridge City*</b>	£176,033.59	£12,322.35	£163,711.24	£80,010.18	£83,800.00	-£98.94
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£820,000.00</b>	<b>£57,400.00</b>	<b>£762,600.00</b>	<b>£390,712.27</b>	<b>£364,685.00</b>	<b>£7,202.73</b>

Table 3: Allocations by district [\*Specific to Cambridge City, the prioritised list of projects for both the Complex and Non-complex schemes have been reviewed and noted by an LHI member panel which comprised solely of CJAC members, or their appointed substitutes]

- 3.12 The prioritised list of schemes for each district area can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. There is a separate list of Complex and Non-Complex schemes for each District. Each list also highlights the point at which the budget for each district area is fully allocated to schemes, this is indicated by a red dashed line. The ranked projects above the red line are allocated funding, and those below the red line shall not receive funding, and therefore not be progressed further in the programme.
- 3.13 The spend of the £471,000 allocated to the delivery of the carryover projects and the 2023/24 LHI programme is ongoing and progressing well, with interested parties being able to review progress on the Council's [dedicated LHI webpage](#). A high-level summary can also be found below:

<b>District</b>	<b>Original 23/24 projects, (including carryovers)</b>	<b>Remaining 23/24 projects, (including carry overs)</b>
East Cambridgeshire	8 (+6)	4 (+2)
Fenland	9 (+8)	5
Huntingdonshire	24 (+15)	8
South Cambridgeshire	19 (+4)	10
Cambridge City	17 (+8)	8 (+1)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>38*</b>

Table 4 – High level summary [\*This figure was 42 when the 77 new projects from 2023/24 entered the programme last October]

- 3.14 The application window for the next LHI application round will be as follows: -
- Application window opens: Friday 1 November 2024
  - Application window closes: Friday 10 January 2025
  - Feasibility studies undertaken: February – May 2025
  - Panel meetings: June – July 2025
  - Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: October 2025

## 4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The recommendations outlined in this report have been formulated following the agreed process for the identification of LHI projects for delivery. The individual schemes will be delivered via the Council's Term Services Contract, which is an existing approved procurement route. Where applicable, three quotations will be expected to prove best value prior to delivery. Alternatives to this process, and changes to the programme were previously explored in 2022 and the approach as outlined in the report is the preferred option, approved at a previous meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee, following a cross-party member review.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The committee is recommended to approve the lists of prioritised schemes as identified in the appendices for design and delivery through to scheme completion. Approval as requested will allow officers to proceed with the design and delivery of the 2024/25 LHI programme following the approved sifting and prioritisation processes reported to committee in this document. The work will be delivered via an existing procurement route available to the authority.

## 6. Significant Implications

### 6.1 Finance Implications

The required resources and budget are available to deliver the programme as identified.

### 6.2 Legal Implications

There are no significant implications within this category, some projects will have Traffic Regulation Orders associated with them which will be managed in the usual way. All work will be delivered via an existing contract already procured by the authority and available for use.

### 6.3 Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The Member led Panels adopt a consistent scoring system, as will the prioritisation matrix with each approach prioritising proposals within the district against their district budget. Many of the schemes will improve road safety for vulnerable users such as the young, elderly and disability groups. 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. The new approach to prioritisation and delivery has already been reviewed through the councils Equality Impact Assessment process, as set out in Appendix 2.

### 6.5 Climate Change and Environment Implications (Key decisions only)

Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: neutral.

Explanation: No positive or negative impacts identified for works listed in the report.

Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: neutral.

Explanation: No positive or negative impacts identified for works listed in the report, although some of the suggested improvements may contribute positively to increased use of non-motorised transport for local trips.

Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: neutral.

Explanation: No positive or negative impacts identified for works listed in the report.

Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: negative.

Explanation: Some projects will generate waste from shallow excavations to construct new highway features, although comparative to other programmes this is minimal due to the types of schemes being installed. Where possible bolt down / surface level features will be utilised instead of conventional across the programme to mitigate this.

Implication 5: Water use, availability, and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: neutral.

Explanation: No positive or negative impacts identified for works listed in the report.

Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: negative.

Explanation: Potential increases in air pollution because of some of the schemes listed in the report, for example those utilising vertical or horizontal calming measures such as speed cushions or build outs, could result in increased incidences of acceleration and deceleration in the vicinity of the new features.

Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: neutral.

Explanation: No positive or negative impacts identified for works listed in the report.

## 7. Source Documents

- 7.1 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 funding paper: Item 8 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\) Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- 7.2 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Process update paper: Item 5 [Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- 7.3 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 LHI Process paper: Item 5 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\) \(Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)\)](#)