

Report title: Local Highway Improvement Member Working Group Report

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 04 October 2022

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director for Place and Sustainability.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: 2022/098

Forward Plan ref:

Outcome: To inform the committee of the outcome of the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) member working group (MWG) review and to consider the suggested recommendations from the group to improve the existing LHI process in time for the 23/24 application process due to open on 31st October 2022.

Recommendation: That the committee

- a) Review the list of recommendations made by the cross-party member working group.
- b) Approve the list of recommendations in time for implementation prior to the 23/24 round of LHI applications.
- c) Approve the re-formation of the member working group to review the first round of Non-complex scheme scores once the prioritisation by officers has been completed and review the revised LHI process as and when needed once the next round of applications has been approved by committee.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The existing Local Highway Improvement (LHI) initiative provides the opportunity for local groups, including Parish and Town Councils to promote local highway improvements in their community that would not normally be prioritised nor funded by the County Council. Through the initiative external groups are invited to apply for funding of up to £15,000 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.
- 1.2 The County Council contributes around £820,000 towards each round of the LHI 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 LHI cycle in the region of £1,100,000. This results in sufficient funding to deliver around 70 schemes countywide per cycle out of the 170 applications received.
- 1.3 As the above application figures highlight the LHI process is popular and consistently oversubscribed. The existing process is also acknowledged as being both complex and time consuming for all parties, as a result Members of the Highways and Transport Committee requested the opportunity to review and improve the LHI initiative. The key issues the committee were looking to understand and address included; why certain types of projects take longer to be delivered, the time and resources needed from all parties involved in the process to progress an application, and how to improve how applications are scored and assessed. Further information on the current process can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.4 It was agreed by Committee (April 2022) that a cross party Member Working Group would be established to review how LHI's are currently delivered and recommend a new way of working that delivers the aims of the programme more efficiently.
- 1.5 The cross-party working group was politically proportional and consisted of the following members: Cllr Beckett (Chair), Cllr Shailer, Cllr Dupre, Cllr Taylor, Cllr King, Cllr Sharp and Cllr McGuire. The group met virtually for six two-hour sessions throughout July and August to review the current LHI process and agree changes. The group was well attended and worked through the LHI process session by session, arriving at the recommendations below via majority decision. Further information on the TOR can be found in Appendix A.

2023/24 Local Highway Improvement Recommendations and Programme

- 2.1 The following table lists the recommendations which have arisen from the end-to-end member review of the existing LHI:

LHI Member Working Group Recommendations

Proposed change	Further information
<p>Introduction of two process routes, Non-complex and Complex Schemes - Submissions will be divided dependant on the nature and extent of works and will be processed as either Non-complex or Complex applications, (see Appendix B).</p>	<p>Non-complex applications will be assessed using a prioritisation matrix by officers and ranked accordingly. Complex applications will follow the traditional route and be assessed by the relevant area member panel.</p> <p>The Non-complex process is made up of the following types of application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking restrictions such as double or single yellow lining, • street lighting, • speed limits such as 40mph buffer zones • passive traffic calming measures including signs and lining • Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs. <p>The Complex Schemes process encompasses all forms of physical traffic calming or improvement work such as -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raised features, • central islands, • priority chicanes, • pedestrian crossings • foot/cycle paths. <p>It was agreed that the newly introduced processes would be reviewed by a subsequent LHI MWG after the 23/24 LHI programme had been approved for delivery to explore what could be improved further.</p>
<p>Change to risk contingencies for financial estimates will be dependent on the type of application.</p>	<p>This will vary, for Non-complex schemes the risk contingency priced will be set at 10%, for Complex schemes the contingency will be set at 23% which is in line with current government guidance when delivering construction projects with a considerable number of unknowns.</p>
<p>Change to funding amounts depending on type, either Non-complex or Complex Scheme.</p>	<p>Previously the amount was set at £15,000 for every type of application. The County contribution for Non-complex projects will be reduced to a maximum of £10,000, while for Complex projects the maximum contribution will be increased to £25,000. The overall level of funding for the LHI process will remain the same.</p>
<p>Use of an agreed prioritisation matrix to score and rank Non-complex applications, with delegation to officers, (see Appendix C).</p>	<p>The matrix will be used to score and rank the Non-complex applications, with those above the allocated funding amount being progressed. Using this process should allow work to start sooner. A set budget for each district area will be agreed by members and set aside to fund this part of the process. Whilst delegated to officer's members will have oversight and the criteria to be used by officers has been reviewed and approved by the MWG (Member Working Group). Once officer scoring has been completed the MWG will reconvene to review the submitted scores and prioritised list of schemes to ensure consistency before they are submitted to H&T for approval.</p>

LHI Member Working Group Recommendations

Proposed change	Further information
Percentage funding amount per District to be set aside for Non-complex / Complex Scheme LHI's.	Looking at the previous year's applications (2022/23) a 50% split was agreed to be appropriate. Half the funding allocated for each district will therefore be ringfenced for Non-complex, and the other half for Complex Schemes for 23/24. It is recommended that this is reviewed annually and adjusted as appropriate. Depending on the breakdown of scheme applications received it will be possible for different funding splits for each of the 5 districts. This will be agreed with Chair and Vice Chair of Highways & Transport.
Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)	<p><u>Introduce two Key Performance Indicators</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a cyclic qualitative survey distributed to applicants upon completion of the programme for that intake. This will be sent out six months after work has been completed on site. 2. measure delivery performance of the overall LHI programme against a baseline programme for that intake as follows - <i>'Where a financial and programme baseline is set, the cumulative percentage of projects that are on time and within budget.'</i>
Member Panel Scoring	Scoring at panel days is to be more open and collaborative going forward with time set aside for members to discuss the merits of the applications presented and their own individual scores / views towards that application. Scoring itself will be done subjectively and individually by each member.
Member Panel – Cambridge City	It has been agreed that two Cambridge City Cllrs will sit on the member panel (one from each of the two main political groups forming the City Council) to assess / score Complex applications in addition to the elected County members.
Member Training	Training on the scoring process is to be delivered by officers for those members sitting on the area panels in advance of the panel days. This will deliver a consistent scoring approach.
Member panel scoring sheets / criteria to mirror the prioritisation matrix where feasible, (see Appendix C).	This is to make sure that applications are being scored consistently by members and officers, whichever part of the process the application is assessed under (Non-complex or Complex Scheme).
Applications to be presented virtually and online.	Applicants will be required to present their bids virtually and submit their applications via an online form. The virtual meetings allow applicants added flexibility as they do not have to travel to present their bid in person and it is hoped this will encourage applicants to present themselves, rather than officers presenting on the applicant's behalf. There is the option of getting members / officers in a room physically at New Shire Hall or in the relevant district area where possible. This will be at the discretion of each area panel. Officers will present applications where it is not possible for the applicants to present themselves, but this will be by exception.

LHI Member Working Group Recommendations

Proposed change	Further information
Amendments to Application process	<p>As well as being changed to an online form for the applicant to populate applicants will also be required to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide confirmation that in instances where applications cross parish or ward boundaries both parishes and local members are in support of the applications. b) Confirm that they have discussed the scheme with the local member and that they understand and are in support of the application. c) Provide confirmation upfront with their submitted application for how they are funding their proportion of the project. For example, this could be a written statement confirming they have the funding available to spend via available S106 funding or by raising their precept. This is to prevent applications where the applicant does not have any funding in place and needs to apply to a third party to secure funding, such as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bidding, which causes delays to the delivery of the LHI programme. d) The applicant will be asked to confirm that they have informally consulted with local stakeholders who would be affected by the proposed scheme and have their support for the application, as well as detailing exactly what level of consultation has taken place to date.
Scheme withdrawal	<p>If once approved for funding officers identify that a scheme needs to be materially different to the one submitted by the applicant, as a direct result of an issue which the applicant had control over, then the scheme will be withdrawn in consultation with Chair & Vice Chair of H&T. The applicant will be encouraged to reapply in the next LHI round. This prevents schemes that do not have the support of the local community, and which would need to be materially different to progress, as they weren't what the was funding was originally allocated for.</p>
Community groups and other parties	<p>The current LHI Initiative allows for one scheme application per year per Parish or one application per County Cllr in Town or City areas and five schemes per County Cllr for Cambridge City (no Parish Councils). This recommendation would adjust the process to allow for a community group to make one additional funding application only, per respective parish, town, or city, (<i>this does not apply to Cambridge City</i>).</p>
Proof of funding and payment	<p>It was felt this needed to be considered earlier in the process, rather than once the project is completed in certain instances. It is suggested that where the applicant funding contribution is being provided by a third party; other than a parish, town, or city council, that the agreed funding amount is invoiced once the design has been approved, a cost for the work has been agreed and a delivery date provided to the applicant, this will be before work starts on site.</p>

- 2.11 The delivery of the carryover 21/22 projects and the new 22/23 LHI programme is ongoing and progressing well, with members being updated by officers monthly. Of the 72 carryover LHI's, 34 of these have now been completed on site. This leaves 38 remaining, 21 of these are programmed to be complete by the end of December 2022, a further 10 are programmed to be complete by the end of March 2023, 5 are to be carried over into the new financial year due to scheme specific issues, and 2 have been withdrawn. From the 22/23 LHI programme 19 schemes are projected to carry over into the 23/24 financial year out of 69.
- 2.12 The now superseded application window which was previously proposed for LHI applications at April 2022 committee for the 2023/24 programme, was as follows:
- Application window opens – Monday 3rd October 2022
 - Application window closes - Friday 18th November 2022 at midnight
 - Feasibility studies undertaken – December 2022 to March 2023
 - Panel meetings – March to April 2023
 - Report to committee including prioritised list for approval - June 2023
 - Programming, design, and consultation with applicants - July 2023 to February 2024
 - Pricing and construction – March 2024 to July 2024.
- 2.13 It was agreed that the indicative programme detailed above for 2023/24 may be adjusted, dependent on the proposed changes to the process brought forward as part the Member Working Group review and approved by H&T committee in Autumn 2022.
- 2.14 Due to the time needed to conduct a thorough end-to-end review of the previous LHI process the application window and ensuing timeline for 23/24 applications has been revised as follows:
- Application window opens – Monday 31st October 2022
 - Application window closes - Friday 6th January 2023 at 1700hrs
 - Feasibility studies undertaken – February to April 2023
 - Panel meetings – May 2023
 - Report to committee including prioritised list for approval - June 2023
 - Programming, design, and consultation with applicants - July 2023 to March 2024
 - Pricing and construction – March 2024 to August 2024

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

LHI schemes improve connectivity and safety on the network and introduce green features where possible, using recycled products such as rubberized traffic calming products.

3.2 Health and Care

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

3.3 Places and Communities

Investing in local communities, particularly the issues that are often of greatest local concern, promotes community development and provides benefits to residents, at a localised level.

3.4 Children and Young People

Investing in local communities, particularly the issues that are often of greatest local concern, promotes community development and provides benefits to residents, (of all demographics), at a localised level.

3.5 Transport

Investing more in road, footway and cycleway maintenance enables safer and sustainable travel around the county, benefiting and assisting local communities with developing their highway infrastructure.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The required resources have been made available and funded from allocated budgets to deliver the LHI programme, which will be funded from the Highways capital budget. The review will seek efficiencies.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Delivered from existing resources and the Term Service Framework with Milestone, no issues to report.

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, 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. Further information can be found in Appendix D.

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.

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

Most schemes aim to improve road safety, which may subsequently contribute to reducing the risk of accident injuries on the network. Some schemes promote Active Travel.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

4.8.1 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.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: **neutral**

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

4.8.3 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.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: **neutral**

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

4.8.5 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.

4.8.6 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 physical vertical or horizontal features such as speed cushions or kerbed build outs.

4.8.7 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.

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

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

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 communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sue Procter

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

5. Source documents

5.1 Location

[Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Committees > Highways and Transport Committee \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

APPENDIX A

LHI Member Working Group TOR.

APPENDIX B

LHI Application Processes.

APPENDIX C

Prioritisation Matrix & Member Scoring Sheet.

APPENDIX D

EQIA (Equality Impact Assessment).