

Environment, Development & Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Local Member Highways Budget and Parish Partnership Schemes
Date of meeting:	21 June 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Highways Service contributes directly to supporting the following Council priority: <i>“Good infrastructure – We will make Norfolk a place where businesses can succeed and grow. We will promote improvements to our transport and technology infrastructure to make Norfolk a great place to do business.”</i> The Local Member Highways Budget & Parish Partnership scheme fits in with our locality working approach which champions community engagement and allows the flexibility to make decisions and take actions based upon local needs.	

Executive summary

Following an outline report presented at the 17 March 2017 Committee meeting, this subsequent report confirms the proposal to provide each local Member with an annual budget of £6,000 to be used on highway work within each financial year. This offers flexibility to progress small highway projects at their discretion based upon local need.

It is recognised that communities across the county may have different local priorities and what may be important to one may not be for another.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- 1. The Local Member Highways Budget initiative be formally launched and members are invited to discuss potential schemes that match the criteria in section 1.3 with their local highway officer.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. At the 17 March 2017 Committee meeting, Members agreed the setting up of a Local Member Highways Budget of £6,000 per division in 2017/18 for local highway works. This was for small highway projects considered a priority for local communities.
- 1.2. A range of potential types of scheme were listed in the report and at the meeting Members also agreed that Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) type schemes should also be included. These are schemes such as speed limit changes and waiting restrictions, both of which require formal consultation and need to follow a statutory legal process.

- 1.3. The full list of potential schemes which could be considered and delivered is now:
- Advisory signs i.e. “Unsuitable for HGV’s and advisory speed limits i.e. 20mph signs outside schools would be possible.
 - Small footway extensions and modifications
 - More significant work to public rights of way
 - Minor drainage work
 - New non regulatory signs and replacement of existing signs and road markings. Possibly some new road markings such as “SLOW”.
 - Feasibility work or investigations that cannot be resourced by existing front line budgets.
 - Minor traffic management projects including Traffic Regulation Order related works. However, it should be noted that these works can cost between £3,000 and £5,000 and may be difficult to deliver within a 12 month timescale. The Area teams are reviewing the current process to see if improvements can be made in terms of timescales and cost.
 - Day rates for gangs to carry out additional maintenance to areas of the highways that a local Member would like improved i.e. PRow or verges.
 - Other highway improvements – improved visibility splays, junction improvements, kerbing, work in conservation areas.

Illuminated signs, street lighting or reflective bollards are not included in this initiative. This aligns with NCC energy saving objective of 50% by 2020, based on 2007 baseline.

- 1.4. In 2017/18, the Local Member Highways Budget will run in parallel and in addition to the Parish Partnership Scheme and both are fully funded.
- 1.5. At the previous meeting, Members asked that additional work be carried out to consider more options with regards to continuing with both the Local Member Highways Budget and the successful Parish Partnership Scheme.
- 1.6. A further review of the Highways Capital Programme has identified that both the Local Member Highways Budget and Parish Partnership Scheme initiative can continue in parallel from 2018/19.
- 1.7. As a result of this, there will be fewer larger capital schemes developed and delivered, such as new footway schemes and new pedestrian crossings, but this will be offset by many smaller schemes delivered across the county as part of the Local Member Highways Budget and Parish Partnership Scheme programmes. This larger number of smaller schemes is expected to have a more direct impact on local walking, cycling, congestion and road safety issues.

2. Evidence

2.1. Localism and locality working

Greater emphasis is being placed on localism and more local ways of working in our strategic approach. We recognise that the local priorities in one part of the county can be very different from another. This approach allows for local decision making. A Local Member Highways budget will allow more flexibility in meeting locally identified needs.

2.2. **Parish partnership**

The Parish Partnership scheme is an example of successful collaboration that has delivered projects based upon local priorities. The scheme has proven popular over the last five years it has been running. In 2017/18 there is a full programme to help fund schemes put forward by Town and Parish Councils.

3. **Financial Implications**

- 3.1. A budget allocation of £504,000 (£6,000 for each County Councillor) is required for the Local Member Highways Budget.
- 3.2. In 2017/18 this will be funded from the one-off £1m capital allowance which had been put together to support bids as part of the DfT Challenge Fund match funding.
- 3.3. We anticipate a need to adjust resource in order for the local Area teams to manage this workload but this would not add to our overall costs.

4. **Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1. Members will have a good understanding of what is desired in their local area and local discussions will inform if a hard engineering solution is required or whether a softer, behavioural method may be more appropriate.
- 4.2. To determine how much the work is likely to cost will be an additional activity for the local highway engineer. Technical advice will be provided to the Member.
- 4.3. It is possible that some more significant schemes could not be delivered within the available budget. Match funding will be needed to deliver these more expensive schemes.
- 4.4. Individual Members may have different areas of expertise and focus for their community. As a result they may require additional guidance on how best to utilise the budget available. We would offer Members training for this new aspect of work. Monitoring would be carried out and local staff could assist Members if they identify work that could be financed by their discretionary budget.
- 4.5. The Assistant Director Highways will ultimately have responsibility for arbitration around any technical matters and hold the delegated financial responsibility for approving the project.

5. **Background**

- 5.1. This report was requested at the Environment, Development and Transport Committee on 17 March 2017. Minutes from this committee can be found on the [Norfolk County Council Website](#).

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

Officer name : Nick Tupper

Tel No. : 01603 224290

Email address : nick.tupper@norfolk.gov.uk



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