

Environment Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Highway Parish Partnership Programme-unparished wards
Date of meeting:	8 July 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The Highways and Transport 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 Parish Partnership programme delivers small highway improvements which are considered a priority by local communities and support Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives. It is also covered by a “vital signs” performance indicator. In March 2016, EDT Committee approved a report on bids for 2016/17. The Committee also agreed that the officers should look at the criteria for those qualifying for Parish Partnership Schemes and report back	

Executive summary

This report sets out options and recommendations to extend eligibility for the parish partnership programme. If agreed, this can be implemented in time for the 2017/18 bidding deadline of December 2016

It is recommended that Members:

- 1. Support Options 1 and 3, with an upper limit on any individual Norfolk County Council contribution of £25,000.**
- 2. Invite unparished wards to submit bids (via their elected County Council Member).**
- 3. Instruct Officers to engage with Borough/City Councils to explore potential match funding/ financial support for bids.**

1. Background

- 1.1. The Parish Partnership Programme (PPP) began in September 2011, when Parish and Town Councils were invited to submit bids for local highway improvements, with the County Council initially funding up to 50% of bid costs. Limited funding is therefore targeted to meet needs identified at a local level and helps us to support and promote our role in enabling communities.
- 1.2. The County Council will support 50% of bid costs (with consideration of increased contributions for parish councils with incomes below £2,000) with funding of £380,000. This comprises £300,000 of the highway improvements budget, plus £80,000 from the Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership (SafeCam) towards SAM2 bids.
- 1.3. The number of bids received over the past five years by bidders is mapped in Appendix A. This indicates a reasonable distribution across Norfolk, although many parishes have submitted none.
- 1.4. The number and value of bids submitted over the past five years by District is shown in Appendix B. This indicates a reasonable spread of bids in relation to the size of each District, although the number (13) and value (£59,531) of bids within the Great Yarmouth Borough Council area is comparatively low.
- 1.5. The PPP is currently open only to Town and Parish Councils. Several members have raised concerns that unparished wards within the following Council areas are excluded:
 - King's Lynn Borough Council
 - Norwich City Council
 - Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
- 1.6. In March 2016, EDT Committee approved a report on bids for 2016/17. The Committee also agreed that the officers should look at the criteria for those qualifying for Parish Partnership Schemes and report back.
- 1.7. Parish Partnerships" is one of the County Council's "vital signs" on which progress is reported annually. The PPP represents an important engagement with local communities in promoting and meeting their aspirations. The relevant report card is included in Appendix C for information.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 We have reviewed the most recent census population data for:
 - Town/Parish Councils
 - Unparished wards within King's Lynn Borough Council, Norwich City Council, and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Figures are provided in Appendix D.

This shows that the population ranges for unparished wards all fall within the population ranges for Town/Parish Councils (less than 100 up to 24340 for Thetford Town Council). It is therefore not possible to classify unparished wards

as “rural” based on population results. It is suggested that there are several options under which unparished wards could qualify for the PPP.

- 2.2 **Option 1.** Include any unparished ward that opted to become a parish council. That may be seen as an administrative burden if the only benefit is to be able to bid for PP but remains an option allowing them to generate and direct their own funding.
- 2.3 **Option 2.** Include only these on the outlying “rural” perimeter. However, that could be seen as discriminatory to these just inside the perimeter, without supporting data to justify such a distinction.
- 2.4 **Option 3.** Include all unparished wards, on the basis that they would have to raise the required 50% funding either from their Borough/City Council or another source; Officers could explore whether these Councils would a) support the principle and b) also offer a similar PPP “Pot” to support such bids. Any concerns that bids for schemes in more urban areas could be disproportionately expensive in relation to the available £380,000 budget may be addressed by proposing a notional upper limit on any individual County Council contribution. The maximum supported bid value to date was £40,000 in 2015/16 attracting a maximum County Council contribution of £20,000. A sensible starting threshold may therefore be £25,000.

Any concern that PPP may fund a disproportionately higher number of more expensive bids in denser urban areas, at the expense of rural areas is effectively addressed by our ranking system which takes account of;

- contribution to LTP objectives
- contribution to the local community
- cost

Accordingly, this system tends to favour high impact/low cost schemes should funding have to be rationed.

3. Democratic representation

- 3.1 Town/Parish Councils normally submit bids via their appointed clerk, ideally with local member support (but not explicitly required). Bids from unparished wards may be driven by a local pressure/campaign group which would need to a) appoint a named representative and b) consult with and submit any bid via their local NCC member to provide legitimate democratic representation.
- 3.2 Letters inviting bids for 2017/18 were sent out in June 2016 with a closing date of 15 December 2016 (Appendix E), giving bidders 6 months to develop their proposals.
- 3.3 **It is recommended that Members:**
- 1. Support Options 1 and 3, with an upper limit on any individual Norfolk County Council contribution of £25,000.**
 - 2. Invite unparished wards to submit bids (via their elected County Council Member).**
 - 3. Instruct Officers to engage with Borough/City Councils to explore**

potential match funding/ financial support for bids.

If Committee approves these recommendations, this will allow invites to be sent in July 2016 to County Members representing unparished wards, allowing 5 months to develop and submit any bids.

4. Further development

4.1 Given the importance of “Parish partnerships” in supporting community based working going forward, the March 2016 report proposed the following actions to measure and seek improvements in the following aspects of the programme:

1. Assess/determine viable bids each January; report to EDT Committee and gain approval; programme scheme delivery

2. Value of additional (non-highways) funding secured. We have identified information on alternative funding sources to support delivery of the programme, either in replacement of or addition to existing funding. This has been added to our website and will be progressively expanded (see para 4.2 below)

3. Number of bids from parishes who have not previously submitted bids. We have identified and contacted all Parish/Town Councils who have not previously submitted bids, toward determining what obstacles may exist, how we may support overcoming these, and encourage submission of bids where practicable. We have offered several options to progress this;

- a) email or phone call
- b) NCC Officers meeting a representative or attending Parish/Town council meeting
- c) NCC organising a “Forum” (if sufficient interest expressed) which Parish/Town Councils could attend to collectively discuss issues, with the aim of promoting/supporting bids

4.2 To help improve our service to Parish/Town Councils, a section on the NCC website (<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships>) has been created and added to the most recent letter to bidders. This provides supporting information on parish partnerships including:

- How to apply
- Projects covered (ie Information on scheme types)
- Downloads (inc most recent letters to bidders)
- Funding (Information on potential funding sources that bidders could access, to complement or replace their contributions). This to be progressively expanded to reflect further opportunities as identified by Officers including the corporate bidding team

5. Evidence

5.1 The basis for extending the PPP is described in Section 2 of this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The allocation of funding to the Parish Partnerships programme was approved by members as part of setting the Highways capital programme, the bids from parishes recommended to be taken forward are within the available funding.

Officers will engage with Borough/City Councils to explore potential financial support for bids.

7. Issues, risks and innovation

- 7.1 The risk of the PPP being oversubscribed is mitigated by introducing a bid funding cap as outlined in para 2.4.

8. Background

- 8.1 Report to March EDT Committee on “Highways Parish Partnership Schemes” to ETD at: [report](#) (page 21 onwards)

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 : Paul Donnachie

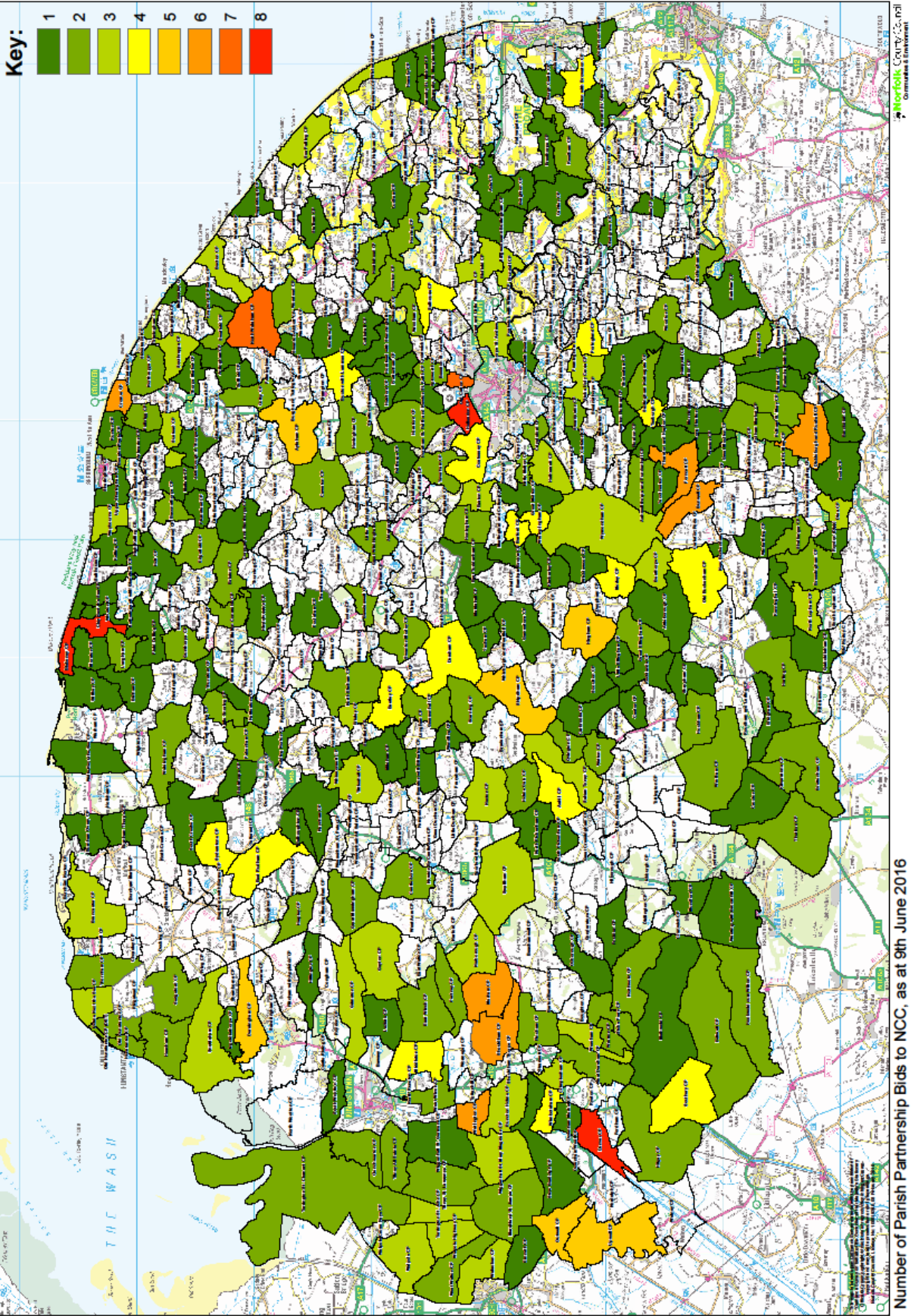
Tel No. : 01603 223097

Email address : paul.donnachie@norfolk.gov.uk

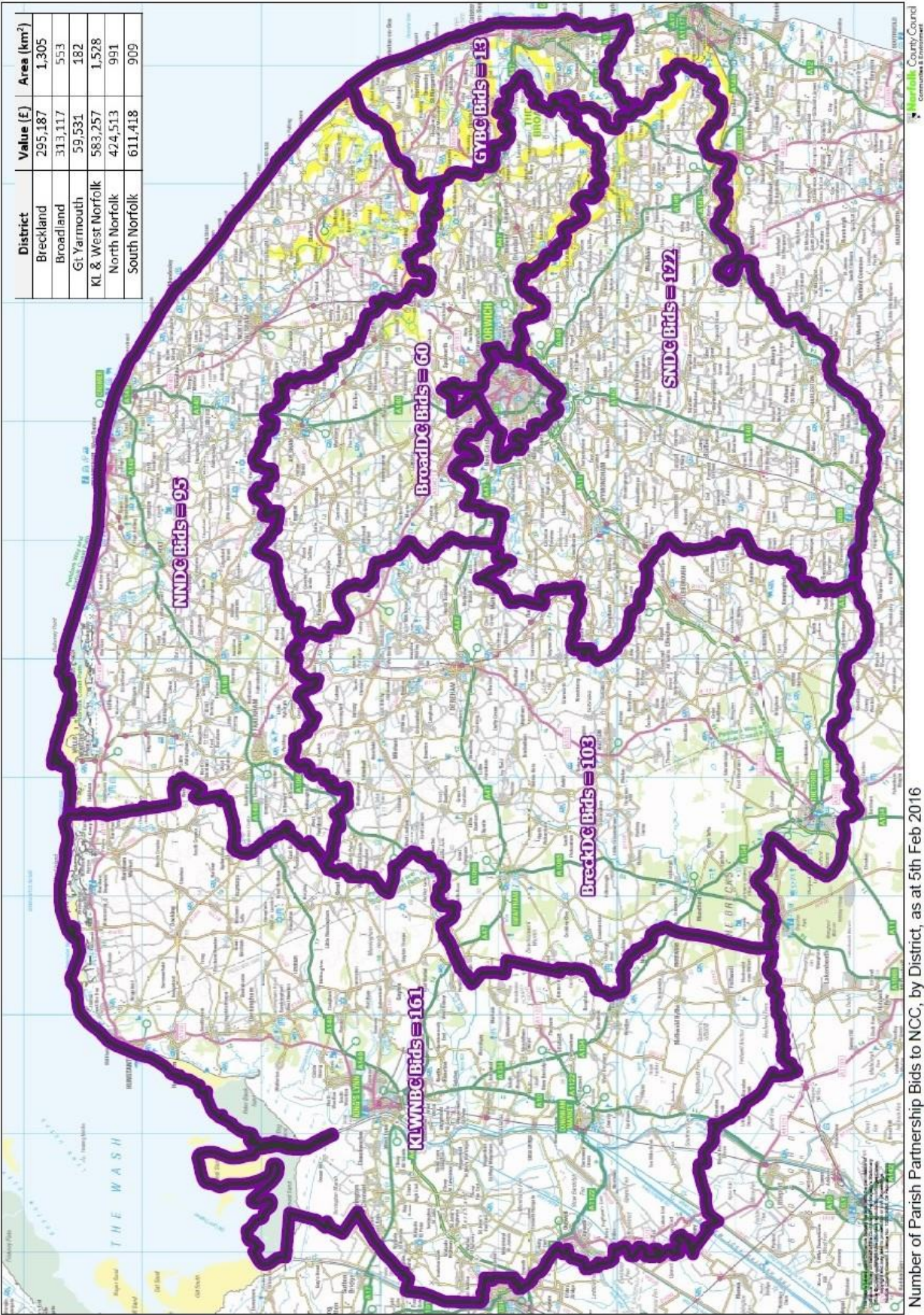


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APPENDIX A: Cumulative bids by Parish (June 2016)



APPENDIX B: Cumulative bids and bid value by District (5th February 2016)



APPENDIX C: “Vital signs” report card

Highway improvements for local communities – parish partnerships

Why is this important?

This delivers highway improvements that are a priority for local communities and which contribute to Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives.

Performance

What is the background to current performance?



Current performance. Parish/Town Councils submit bids each year for schemes. £300,000 of the highway improvements budget supports 50% funding for bids, which are assessed, and approved by EDT Committee. The most popular bids types are Trods (simplified lower cost alternative to footways) and SAM2 (mobile VAS units which flash vehicle speed as a reminder to the driver).

Benchmarking. Previous bid numbers/value (scheme is unique to Norfolk)

Projected performance. Increased bid coverage

Threats to performance improvement. Few bids received from lower income parishes (NCC have offered to consider extra support for such parishes on a case-by-case basis). Availability of Parish funding may limit bidding.

Opportunities. Securing extra funding to incentivise further and larger bids (The Norfolk Safety Partnership provide extra funding for mobile flashing speed signs (SAM2) promoting road safety).

What will success look like?

1. Delivering all viable bids each year
2. Increased funding from alternative sources (eg CIL; Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership) where practicable
3. Increased bid coverage across Norfolk (increased “cumulative bids from new parishes”).

Action required

- Assess/determine viable bids each January; report to EDT Committee and gain approval, followed by scheme delivery
- Publicise known additional funding sources to parishes and seek additional funding sources where practicable
- Promote parish partnership scheme to parishes that have not participated, seeking to remove any obstacles.

Responsible Officers

Lead: Nick Tupper (Head of Highways) Data: Paul Donachie (Capital Programme Manager)

APPENDIX D: Parish populations

Unparished ward populations (2012 census)

King's Lynn

North Lynn	6072
Gaywood north bank	7681
Old gaywood	1907
Springwood	2027
Fairstead	6479
Gaywood Chase	5115
St margarets with St Nicholas	4861
South and West Lynn	4971
Total	39113

Great yarmouth

Yarmouth north	4646
Central and North gate	8298
Nelson	8681
South Town and Cobholm	5657
Claydon	7689
St Andrews	5131
Gorlston	5548
Magdalen	7256
Total	52906

Norwich

University	10279
Bowthorpe	11683
Eaton	8781
lakenham	9326
Thorpe Hamlet	10557
Crome	9855
Catton grove	10596
Mile Cross	10655
Wensum	11504
Sewell	9934
Mancroft	9641
Town Close	10404
Nelson	9297
Total	132512

APPENDIX E: Letter to Parish/Town Councils inviting bids (June 2016)



Environment, Transport, Development
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2SG

NCC contact number: 0344 800 8020
Textphone: 0344 800 8011

Your Ref:
Date: 13 June 2016

My Ref: HI/12/GEN/MW/PD
Tel No.: 0344 800 8020
Email: martin.wilby@norfolk.gov.uk

From the Chairman of the County Council's Environment, Development & Transport Committee

Dear Sir/Madam

Delivering local highway improvements in partnership with Town and Parish Councils

I am delighted to inform you that due to the success of working in partnership with Parish/Town Councils for the last five years the Parish Partnership Scheme Initiative will again be repeated in the financial year 2017/18. Further, supporting information can also now be accessed online (click here: <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships>). If you have difficulty accessing the internet, please call 01603 223097 and we can supply copies.

The County Council has again allocated £300,000 on a 50/50 basis to fund schemes put forward by Town and Parish Councils to deliver projects that are priorities for local communities.

To encourage bids from Town and Parish Councils with annual incomes below £2,000, we will again consider providing additional County Council funding (on a scheme by scheme basis). This will depend on the number and value of bids received, and evidence of income. We are also particularly keen to encourage and support first-time bids.

This letter provides more information on the process, invites you to submit bids, and explains how the County Council can support you in developing your ideas. The closing date will be 16 December 2016. If you need any advice in developing your ideas, especially around the practicalities and cost estimates, please consult your local Highway Engineers based at your local Area Office.

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Once all bids have been received we will assess them and inform you of our decision in March 2017.

What sort of schemes would be acceptable?

- Small lengths of formal footway
- Trods (a simplified and low cost footway),
- Improved crossing facilities
- Street furniture (eg cycle racks/benches at bus stops)
- Improvements to Public Rights of Way.
- Flashing signs to tackle speeding. We would encourage you to consider Speed Awareness Mobile Signs (SAM2-which flash up the driver's actual speed) rather than fixed signs (VAS- which flash up the speed limit). The number of VAS in Norfolk has grown, and checks show that speed reduction benefits can be minimal. Whilst we will still consider bids for fixed VAS, we will need to be satisfied that they will be effective in reducing speed. We consider that SAM2 mobile signs, which are moved around on an agreed rota, are better at reducing speed ; **SAM2 can be jointly purchased with neighbouring Parishes, and would be owned and maintained by the Parish/Town Council**
- Part-time 20mph signs with flashing warning lights, outside schools. The County Council trialled these in 2008/9, and generally had a favourable community response, with some moderate reductions in average speeds during peak times. Whilst the County Council supports the aspiration to have part-time, 20mph speed limits outside each school in Norfolk, to do this would cost in the region of £3.75 million
- School Keep Clear carriageway markings outside schools. **This type of improvement is being included within the Parish Partnership Initiative for the first time.** Applications will be considered for either new school keep clear carriageway markings (which must be supported by the local school) or making existing school keep clear markings enforceable. However, in both cases and depending on the location, it may not always be practicable for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Officers to undertake enforcement and this may happen only where it is operationally convenient to do so (i.e. when officers are in the area engaged on other enforcement work). To be enforceable, school keep clear markings need to comply with specific regulations and this could mean that existing school keep clear markings may need amending (your Highway Engineer can advise)

Schemes can be on or off the highway provided they are linked to the highway. If they are off highway the future responsibility for the maintenance will fall to the Parish or Town Council.

Schemes should be self-contained and not require other schemes or works to make them effective.

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Schemes that support the Local Transport Plan objectives will have a higher priority for funding. The LTP can be found online by clicking here: [LTP](#)

With the County Council's agreement Parishes can employ private contractors to deliver schemes. Any works on the highway would be subject to an agreed programme, inspection on completion, and the contractor having £10m public liability insurance.

What schemes will not be considered?

- Bids for minor traffic management changes such as speed limits or waiting restrictions will not qualify.
- Bids for installation of low-energy LED lighting in streetlights to help cut energy bills and maintenance.
- Last September we wrote to bidders, offering to also allow bids for carrying out additional pothole repairs on minor roads. That option did not prove to be popular and is now withdrawn.

What information should you include in your bid?

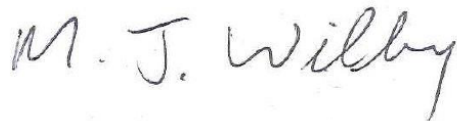
- Details of the scheme, its cost and your contribution.
- Who, and how many people will benefit.
- How it supports the objectives of the Local Transport Plan.
- Local support, particularly from your local Member, frontagers and land owners.
- For 'off highway' schemes, your proposals for future maintenance.

Please find a simple bid application form attached to this letter. When assessing your bid we will consider the points above, but also look at:

- The potential for casualty reduction.
- Any ongoing maintenance costs for the County Council.

Your bids should be emailed to the Capital Programme Manager, Paul Donnachie (email: paul.donnachie@norfolk.gov.uk) or posted for his attention to the above address. If you need further information on the bid process please contact Paul, by email or by phoning 01603 223097. For advice on the scheme practicalities and/or likely costs, please contact your local Highway Engineer.

Yours sincerely



Martin Wilby
Chairman of Environment, Development and Transport Committee