

LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANELS

Objectives

The Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation has identified a block of money within that budget to be devolved to County Members for local prioritisation within refreshed Local Highways Panels (LHP).

Budget lines to be devolved are:

- Traffic Management Improvements
- Tackling Congestion
- Safer Roads (including Casualty Reduction)
- Public Rights of Way Improvement
- Cycling Programme
- Passenger Transport Improvement Programme
- Minor Improvements Schemes

For years 2012/13 and 2013/14, £10 million has been identified to add to the above budget giving spend of £8 million per year for those two years. All capitalised costs pertaining to schemes prioritised by LHP (including feasibility, design, construction, supervision and safety audit) will fall within the budget allocated to each LHP for prioritisation.

In addition, the revenue budget that supports the Highways Ranger Service will be included within the remit of the LHP. This budget is c £130,000 per annum per district/borough and delivers the minor routine maintenance service.

A purpose made formula for allocating the budget for each LHP has been worked out based on road length, population and employment figures. The amount allocated to each district/borough area will have a floor of £400,000 and a ceiling of £1 million.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation will be minded to incorporate further budget lines into the LHP's for prioritisation as appropriate.

Key inter-urban routes will be excluded from the localism process. These routes are: A13, A127, A131, A414, A130 and the routes managed by the Highways Agency: A12, A120, M11, M25.

Terms of Reference

All local County members and an equal number of district/borough members, where they wish to be engaged, will:

- a) Prioritise and make recommendations for projects/schemes to ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation within the allotted budget.
- b) Have regard to the advice from ECC officers on relevant statutory/duty of care requirements.

- c) Oversee and set priorities for schemes funded through the localism process and the work of the Highways Ranger Service.
- d) Monitor the delivery of the agreed programme and raise issues and concerns through agreed procedures.
- e) Consider any other Highways and Transportation matter referred to the panel from time to time by other council constituted bodies, panels or groups.
- f) Make recommendations to ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation to amend targets or discretionary policies and/or amend budget allocations between programmes if necessary to meet local priorities.
- g) Take a lead role in liaison with town/parish councils.

Governance

1. The LHP will be chaired by a County Member.
2. Decision making to be agreed by LHP and clearly minuted to be actioned.
3. Meetings may be in public or private but reports of each meeting must be presented to the Locality Board (or other standing locality arrangement) in that district/borough.
4. ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation will be minded to accept the advice and prioritisation agreed by the LHP subject to the Highways Authority's Statutory Duties/Duty of Care Obligations consistent with current legislative requirements and regulations.
5. ECC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation reserves the right to reject any scheme promoted by the LHP that falls outside of ECC policies and standards.
6. In the event of any disputes within the LHP, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation will arbitrate and resolve conflict.
7. Frequency and location of meetings to be determined by the LHP but should be fit for purpose and encourage partnership working.

Support

ECC Highway Liaison Officers (HLO) will be the key point of contact for the LHP. HLO will be supported by ECC for monitoring/progress reporting and other information required to deliver the work of the LHP. Other specialist technical support officers will be drawn into support/advise where necessary.