

Community Highway Schemes – Cabinet Member and Member Update January 2022

Introduction

The current prioritisation process for Community Highway Schemes (community-led improvement schemes) was established in 2016. This process is a 'prioritised approach' where community requests are considered by assessment against a pre-determined scoring matrix and the resulting scores are prioritised to establish a forward programme for this work stream.

The programme is subject to funding availability (County Council capital funding and developer contributions secured under s106 agreements), as well as other resources.

The way the County Council assesses, prioritises, and delivers Community Highway Schemes is currently being reviewed. Options are being considered that might allow WSCC to respond more quickly to communities and enable faster delivery of smaller scale Community Highway Schemes. The way schemes are assessed is also being reviewed to ensure our prioritisation aligns with both National and Local Highway Policy. Further detail will be presented in an update to the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Community in March 2022. As part of the review, the alignment of the current delivery programme for Community Highway Schemes will be considered. Until the review is concluded, and any recommendations are implemented, the current prioritisation process continues.

Evaluation of Submitted Schemes – 2020/21

Between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021, we received a total of 48 applications. These were all scored and applied against the scheme criteria scoresheet.

It has previously been determined that a minimum score of 40 points is required for a scheme to meet the set criteria appropriate to deliver a sustainable and beneficial highways improvement, that also aligns with the County Council priorities.

It should be noted a score of over 40 points does not guarantee a scheme will be delivered, it is dependent on a number of considerations, such as the available budget, assessment data and other factors that are explained further on in the briefing.

In line with the agreed process a moderation team, comprising of officers from Local Highways Operations (Area Teams) and Planned Delivery (Highway Improvements), met on a number of occasions in Autumn 2021 to moderate application scores.

Results of Evaluation

Following the moderation, 25 schemes are recommended for progression to the next stage of the process, see [Appendix A](#) (PDF, 108KB) for more information.

It should be noted that 1 of the 25 schemes, a request for a new signalised pedestrian crossing, requires further data to be collected before it can be confirmed for future delivery. Due to the consistent pressures on the Highways Revenue Maintenance budgets and the costs associated with maintaining signal-controlled crossing facilities, further site-based data needs to be obtained to ensure that any

future crossing proposal will have enough usage to justify its inclusion. If the 1 application identified does not meet the threshold criteria, then this will not be progressed.

The schemes not achieving the 40-point score, and therefore not recommended for progression, are shown in [Appendix B](#) (PDF, 74KB).

Schemes in [Appendix A](#) (PDF, 108KB) will form part of the proposed Community Highway Schemes programme, which will be included in the WSCC Annual Delivery Programme for design in 2022/23. It is intended to start delivering these schemes as part of the WSCC Annual Delivery Programme from 2023/24 onwards, however the final decision is subject to several factors such as feasibility assessments, detailed design, final budget allocations and programme approval.

The delivery time scales for the signalised crossing application could be lengthier than set out above. The data collection will likely take place in the spring/summer 2022, meaning there may not be enough time to undertake the design to meet the procurement deadlines for 2023/24 financial year.

Some schemes of a more complex nature, and which involve a greater degree of public consultation or legal orders, may need to be constructed in subsequent years.

As part of all scheme design and feasibility assessments, there may be issues identified in more detailed investigations and surveys which demonstrate that a scheme is no longer viable. Any changes to the proposed delivery timescales, or where a scheme is no longer considered feasible for delivery, will be communicated with the Local Member and applicant.

Schemes in [Appendix B](#) (PDF, 74KB) will not be progressed. However, should additional supporting information become available the applicant can make a new application in the future. An example would be if a material change to circumstances has occurred since the original application was made, such as a new external funding opportunity has arisen, or a new consultation exercise has been undertaken which demonstrates a greater wider community benefit and support.

Previous Application Update

Several applications, for new signalised pedestrian crossings, were received during the 2019/20 application window and agreed to be progressed, subject to survey data gathered and threshold criteria being met. Please see [Appendix C](#) (PDF, 82KB).

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the imposed national lockdowns, it was agreed to undertake the relevant surveys once normal vehicular and pedestrian traffic movements resumed.

The surveys for the sites shown in [Appendix C](#) (PDF, 82KB) were undertaken in the summer of 2021 and all have fallen below the required threshold criteria and will therefore not be progressed.

An update will go out separately to the relevant Members and applicants to inform them that their respective schemes have not been successful.

Future Applications

We are currently accepting [online applications](#) for the next round of Community Highway Schemes. Under the current process applications need to be received no later than 31 July 2022.

As mentioned in the introduction, as part of the current review of Community Highway Schemes, officers are exploring the option of delivering smaller scale works more quickly. Any resulting changes to application requirements the subsequent assessments and programming will not come into effect until after April 2022 and as such the existing process and application forms should be used. Members will be kept updated on progress.

If you have any queries on the application process or this update then please contact your Area Highway Manager in the first instance.

Appendices

[Appendix A – Community Highway Schemes Approved – 2020/21](#) (PDF, 108KB)

[Appendix B – Community Highway Schemes Rejected – 2020/21](#) (PDF, 74KB)

[Appendix C – Unsuccessful Signalised Crossing Applications – 2019/20](#) (PDF, 82KB)