




Scrutiny Panel

Item
10

12 March 2024

Report of	Head of Sustainability	Author	Jane Thompson
Title	Local Highways Panel		01206 508642
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Highways Panel (LHP) is an Essex County Council (ECC) function where local Members introduce small scale capital infrastructure projects and prioritise them according to local need. Colchester City Council work alongside ECC to help ensure the City Council initiatives and schemes complement the ECC schemes and add value to the LHP outcomes.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the role of the LHP and acknowledge the work that the City Council carries out, complementing and adding value to the outcomes of the LHP schemes.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Panel wishes to consider the operation of the Colchester Local Highways Panel and to scrutinise how effectively the Council's financial contributions are being used.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 Local Highway Panels (LHPs) have been set up in all 12 Borough, City or District areas in Essex. These panels are responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highway schemes in their areas. The scope of the Local Highways Panel funding is set out in the [Terms of Reference](#).
- 4.2 The Panel is made up of ECC Councillors and City and there is also a representative of the Colchester's Parish Councils. The LHP Chairman is appointed by the ECC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Local Highway Panels.

In Colchester the membership is –

ECC Members

Cllr Sue Lissimore (Chair)
Cllr Lewis Barber
Cllr Mark Cory
Cllr Simon Crow
Cllr Dave Harris
Cllr John Jowers
Cllr David King
Cllr Lee Scordis

Colchester City Council Members

Cllr Jeremy Hagon
Cllr Richard Kirby Taylor
Cllr Andrea Luxford-Vaughan
Cllr Tim Young

Parish Council representatives

Cllr Sue Allen-Shepherd (CALC)
Cllr Robert Johnstone

4.3 Purpose

- 4.3.1 The Purpose of the LHP is to deliver the:

- Locally requested measures that are not able to be prioritised for funding through other dedicated highways budgets but meet the desires of the local community.
- Road safety casualty reduction schemes as identified through the collision analysis. The casualty reduction schemes are identified and prioritised by ECC Road Safety Team and potential engineering solutions developed. These will be presented to the LHP for inclusion in their annual prioritised programme.

4.4 **Decision making process**

4.4.1 The local community may request schemes via their ECC Councillor, who will forward them to the LHP for their consideration.

4.4.2 The LHP prioritise the schemes and may include, but are not limited to:

- Traffic management improvements
- Tackling congestion
- Public Rights of Way improvements
- Cycling schemes
- Passenger transport improvements
- Minor improvement schemes

4.4.3 Major schemes are considered separately by ECC.

4.4.4 Information on the LHP is available on the ECC website, and this includes a Schemes Awaiting Funding List which is updated with outcomes and decisions in line with the quarterly meetings.

4.5 **Funding**

4.5.1 The budget for each district is set using a formular which considers % of total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length (from 2010) in each district from the total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length in county. This formular means that Colchester, jointly with Chelmsford and Basildon, get the highest proportion of funding at 12.5% of the annual budget.

4.5.2 This means that for year 2023/24 a capital budget of £500,000 was available. However, funding for this year has been supplemented with an additional funding of £250,000 for Footway schemes and £250,000 for additional footways minor works.

4.5.3 It has been confirmed that the Essex wide budget of £4,000,000 will be reduced to £2,000,000 for 2024/25. This will mean Colchester LHP will receive a £250,000 budget for LHP capital schemes in 2024/25. However, the LHP will also have the opportunity to bid for funding for larger scale schemes at the Chairmans' Panel, with budget yet to be confirmed.

4.5.4 The district councils can provide additional funding to the LHP, and for the year 2018/19 the City Council contributed £100,000 towards LHP schemes. No further funding contribution from the City Council has been allocated.

4.5.5 LHP also has a limited revenue budget which is used to fund traffic surveys that are required to support the scheme requests.

4.6 **Example of recent schemes funded by LHP which help promote sustainable transport**

- 20mph Zone – Rowhedge Village
- School Advisory 20mph with wig-wags - Outside Fordham C of E Primary School, Mill Road, Fordham
- Speed indicator Device (x2) and poles - B1508 Colchester Road, West Bergholt
- Footway improvements - Monkwick Schools

4.7 **How the City Council adds value to the work of the LHP**

- 4.7.1 City Council officers observe the work of the LHP to help ensure consistency with the LHP decisions and policies and projects being carried out by the City Council.
- 4.7.2 The infrastructure that the LHP funds, which enable more journeys to be made on foot, wheeling, by bike or busses goes towards a quality network encouraging sustainable travel choices. This could be by just installing dropped kerbs or speed reduction measures – sometimes it is the small interventions which can make a sustainable journey possible.
- 4.7.3 The LHP work within the policies adopted by ECC for example the [Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#). These policy documents tie in well with the City Council's Strategic Plan and [Sustainable Travel Our Approach](#).
- 4.7.4 The City Council carry out projects which help people to choose to travel sustainably, for example:
- Fixing the Link – wayfinding and improvements encouraging more people to walk the route between the rail station and city centre.
 - Walk with Words – arts and digital content wayfinding encouraging better walking links with city centre to the University and city centre.
 - Opening the first in region Colchester Car Club where users can use a pay as you go car instead of having to own a car (or a second car).
 - E-cargo bike Library – enabling those needing to transport goods to access an e-cargo bike for occasional services.
 - Opening the first in region Secure Cycle Park for those working or visiting the city centre to be confident that their bikes will be safe and secure
 - Improvements to Wivenhoe Trail to better link the Wivenhoe to Colchester and University.
 - Hosting the Colchester Travel Plan Club to help local employers to embrace sustainable travel reaching over 20,000 employees and 20,000 students.
 - Planning for active and sustainable environments making sure new developments encourage sustainable travel and link up with existing walking and cycling networks.
- 4.7.5 And working with ECC on major schemes for example:
- Town Deal Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP4) city centre to University and Greenstead
 - Levelling up Fund (LUF) St Botolph's roundabout scheme to improve access by sustainable modes as part of the area's urban regeneration
 - Active Travel routes giving better access to and through the city centre

As well as policy documents to help target investment in Colchester's infrastructure.

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 The work of the LHP is in line with the vision, themes and objectives of the [Three-Year Plan 2023-26: A City fit for the Future - Colchester City Council](#)
- [Respond to the climate emergency](#)
 - [Improve health, wellbeing and happiness](#)
 - [Grow our economy so everyone benefits](#)

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There are no consultation considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function. Any schemes which come forward as part of the LHP prioritisation will be subjected to any consultation which may be required by ECC.

7. Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 There are no publicity considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function. Any schemes which come forward as part of the LHP prioritisation will be subjected to any publicity which may be required by ECC.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function and the City Council does not contribute towards its schemes.

9. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a benefit to health, wellbeing and community Safety.

10. Health and Safety Implications

- 10.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a health and safety benefit to those living, working or visiting the city.

11. Risk Management Implications

- 11.1 There are no specific risk management implications contained in this report.

12. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 12.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a positive outcome for the environment and sustainability of Colchester.

Background papers

[Colchester LHP | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](https://www.essexhighways.org/colchester-lhp)

[terms of reference final.pdf \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

[ECC Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#)

[CCC Sustainable Travel – Our Approach](#)