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**REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 10 DECEMBER 2008****PORTFOLIO: PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION****REPORT FROM: HEAD OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION****SUBJECT: PROPOSED LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That views on the creation of a Local Highways Panel (LHP) as proposed by Essex County Council under their 'localism' agenda, be determined.

**2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Essex County Council has concluded that the creation of Local Highway Panels in each district under their 'localism' agenda will enable priorities, funding and programmes for highway works to be delivered in a way that best reflects local requirements. The County Council has been running pilots in several districts and now wants to see panels created in the remaining districts. A copy of the County Highways Localism Manual has been sent to the Executive and a copy has been placed in the Members' Library (see Appendix).

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 The recommendation simply seeks Member views on the County Council's proposals. In broad terms there are three options the Executive might consider. First, it would be possible to continue with current arrangements, whereby the main decisions about the priority for highway works in the District remain with the County Highways Authority. Second, it would be possible to agree in principle to set-up a Highways Panel. Third, the proposed Highways Panel could be integrated with the Council's Area Committees. Issues arising from each option are considered in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.2 The County Council has organised a Member level meeting on the 23 January 2009 to discuss the arrangements for an LHP in Rochford.

**4 OTHER SALIENT INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The County Council explains that the principal aim of the 'localism' proposals is to engage with the local community, however geographically defined, such that they are sufficiently empowered to shape and influence policy, to set priorities, to agree funding and programmes and ultimately to oversee performance against these objectives.
- 4.2 In effect it is proposed that a Local Highways Panel be set up in each district with responsibility for dealing with a substantial chunk of the highways budget. The intention is that decisions taken by the Panel will be recommended to the

Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and will be approved unless there is a strategic reason for not doing so. The aim is for decisions on many highways matters to be taken locally based on a detailed understanding of priorities and requirements for an area.

### **Membership of Panel**

- 4.3 The County Council proposes that an LHP will comprise a mix of Local District Members, Parish Councils, Residents' Associations or other democratically elected groups, and have at least 10 members, with at least 25% coming from groups other than Local District Council Members.
- 4.4 A pilot LHP has been formed in Castle Point Borough Council and this comprises 15 members as follows: 7 Borough Council Members; members of the public – one from each of the Borough's neighbourhood panels; 2 business representatives; and one Town Council representative.
- 4.5 If Members considered that an LHP is appropriate for Rochford, it is suggested that a smaller panel would be most appropriate, with the membership being as follows: Leader of the Council; Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation; Chairmen of the three Area Committees; Member from the opposition group; three representatives from the Town/Parish Councils; representative from the Chambers of Trade; representative from the business community.
- 4.6 This would mean a Highways Panel comprising 11 members, with the inclusion of the Area Committee Chairmen as members of the Panel ensuring there is a link and continuity between highway matters raised at area level and the work of the Panel.
- 4.7 A key point to consider is the implication of a separate Highways Panel and the continued presence of a highways officer at meetings of each Area Committee. At present, Highways cannot provide an officer to attend each Area Committee meeting, and the creation of a Highways Panel is likely to mean that attendance is more problematic given the demands of servicing the new Panel.
- 4.8 If Members considered that the Area Committees are best placed to undertake the work intended for the LHP, it is suggested that the current membership of the committees is appropriate and suitable to deal fully with highway issues.

### **Objectives of the LHP**

- 4.9 The main objectives of the LHP are proposed as follows:-
  - (a) to consider proposals for funding (including any joint funding) submitted by constituted bodies such as District/Borough Councils, Parish Councils, Residents Associations, Parish Meetings or similar elected

bodies that represent the local community. These proposals will be set out in a schedule prepared by the Area Highways Manager;

- (b) to consult the public on its proposals and priorities using existing or new networks;
- (c) to oversee and set priorities in terms of localism funded projects and the work of the Highway Rangers;
- (d) to make recommendations for project approval to the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation;
- (e) to consider progress on the processing and delivery of approved projects through reports received from the County Council's Area Highway Manager or their representative;
- (f) to consider issues that arise through the Highway Surgeries and as reported by the County Council's Area Highway Manager or their representative;
- (g) to liaise with the County Council at the relevant Area Highway Office as the point of contact between the Panel and the County Council.

4.10 It is considered that the delivery of these objectives could equally well be achieved through the Area Committee structure as through the creation of a separate Local Highways Panel, though careful consideration would need to be given to the arrangements for splitting the work between the committees. In reality these objectives are already met in full or in part, at least, by the deliberations of the Area Committees.

4.11 It is also important to bear in mind that decisions about priorities will still effectively be taken by the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation rather than a process allowing for real delegation of decision making.

#### **Meeting Arrangements**

4.12 It is intended by the County Council that the LHP will meet at least every 3 months and, where possible or required, every 2 months; the meetings to be in public with the agenda being set and reports prepared by the Area Highways Manager. There will be no public speaking at the meeting.

4.13 The frequency of LHP meetings will certainly clash with the Council's Area Committee meetings and there is little doubt this will cause organisational problems within the annual calendar of meetings. Furthermore, the lack of options for public speaking is a limitation given the very real interest the public have in highway issues.

4.14 The County also intends that the District Council will organise the meetings of the Panel, minute the proceedings, etc. Servicing the LHP would be in

addition to the work carried out by the Committee Section to prepare for Area Committees (leaving aside other substantial commitments) and since the Area Committees already meet every six weeks or so, the addition of a further committee within an already crowded calendar would put a strain on the resourcing levels in the Committee Section.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.15 Whilst in principle the creation of a Local Highways Panel merits investigation, the fact that Rochford has three Area Committees facilitating localised engagement that already deal with a broad range of highway issues suggests that a better solution could be found by developing these rather than adding a new structure.

## **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The creation of a Local Highways Panel will have the effect of blurring the distinction between the responsibilities of the County Council and the District Council and certainly where decisions are taken in the future about priorities for highway works, some of the accountability for such decisions will be seen as being identified with the District Council.
- 5.2 The integration of the LHP responsibilities into the existing Area Committees would have the advantage of ensuring the public have an opportunity to have their say on highway matters and also to provide more of a distinction between the accountability of the Essex County Council as the Highways Authority and Rochford as a District Authority.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The County Council will agree annually a budget for highway works in Rochford District and it is then intended that it will be the responsibility of the LHP to determine spending priorities. Alternatively, agreement could be reached that spending priorities are considered and recommended to the County Council by each of the Council's Area Committees; this option would need to be carefully managed as spending on highway works will not necessarily relate to the Area Committee boundaries. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation could be involved in considering the initial disaggregation of the annual budget to the three Area Committees. Ultimately though, the final decisions on budgets will remain within the County Council.
- 6.2 The County Council proposes that the administration of the LHP will be carried out by Rochford Council. This arrangement would have implications for the resources in the Committee Section. Alternatively, the inclusion of a broader remit on highway matters for each Area Committees would have minimal impact on the arrangements already in place to organise and service these meetings.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Head of Planning & Transportation**

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#### **Background Papers:-**

Essex County Council, Environment, Sustainability and Highways – Localism Manual

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.



**Essex County Council  
Environment, Sustainability and Highways**

## **Localism Manual**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This document sets out to show how the County Councils Localism Agenda can be delivered in a specific area of work through the Highways and Transportation Service. It shows the systems, processes and service delivery areas that are being used during the early period of the pilot schemes. There are three pilot Districts involved in the early stages, Castle Point, Colchester and Brentwood, and once the processes and other associated issues have been finalised Localism will be promoted and introduced into all other districts in Essex.

This document is written in preparation for the remaining Districts outside of the pilot to be able to understand the processes and to carry out their duties as quickly as possible. There will be an opportunity after approximately 6 months (i.e October 2008) for the whole Localism issue relating to Highways and Transportation to be reviewed and for any changes to the overall procedures to be made. The pilot is to be used as the main tool for seeing what works well and what does not and this document will be reviewed and changed as necessary.

It should be noted that there is not a one size fits all solution for every Service or even parts of the service. The individual characteristics surrounding service delivery, operation and procurement of our Service must be understood in order to appreciate the range of implications associated with operating at a community level. Notwithstanding this it is felt that the Highways and Transportation Service can deliver the agenda and build on the good working relationships it already has within the many different communities in Essex.

### 1.1 Definition of Localism

To Highways and Transportation (H&T) Localism means engaging with the local community, however geographically defined, such that they are sufficiently empowered to shape and influence policy, to set priorities, to agree funding and programmes and ultimately to oversee performance against these objectives. It is stressed that this should not apply solely within a Service, but also between Services, such that the community can genuinely make choices in terms of what they need and want.



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## 2.0 Governance

The “governance” of a Localism model is the central issue rather than how work is procured or delivered. The central procurement and delivery for work on the ground will continue to be the responsibility of the County Council.

### 2.1 Local Highway Panels

District and Borough Councils will lead local governance arrangements on behalf of the County Council who would arrange delivery of on their behalf. District and Borough Councils are to establish new stakeholder groups involving, for example parish councils and other community leaders, or make use of existing networks that are able to provide the necessary governance for Localism.

The County Council through the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways and Transportation needs to be satisfied that the new governance structure is fit for purpose and therefore will monitor their operation and process throughout the life of the pilot before giving final approval. If changes are required then this will be subject to discussion and direction at that time. However, there are already good examples of District led local area committees that could be delegated enhanced responsibilities for setting priorities and developing programmes of work in conjunction with the respective Area Managers. These local area committees, or similar local stakeholder structural arrangements, would have the responsibility of overseeing performance and the effectiveness of any locally determined programme of work, which in itself would encourage ownership and accountability.

The Highway Authority, Essex County Council, will still have all its incumbent duties and statutory obligations and there will be no delegations of this responsibility to the Districts and Boroughs.

### 2.2 Local Highway Panels - Governance Protocol

#### Composition

- a) Membership shall be made from nominations of Local Members representing Borough or District Councils, Parish Councils, Residents Associations or any other democratically elected group that represent a local community.
- b) The Local Highway Panel will have at least 10 members with at least 25% of the full membership being made up from the above groups not including the District / Borough in which the Local Highway Panel is situated.

#### Chair

The Chair of the Local Highways Panel will be a District / Borough Council Member for the District / Borough in which the Local Highways Panel is situated.

#### Membership

- a) Membership of the Local Highways Panel will be approved by the District / Borough Council.
- b) Membership of the Local Highways Panel will normally be for a minimum of three years.
- c) Meetings of the Local Highways Panel will not take place or continue unless at least 50% of the Local Highways Panel's membership is present.

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### Objectives

- a) To consider proposals for funding (including any joint funding) submitted by constituted bodies such as District / Borough Councils, Parish Councils, Residents Associations, Parish Meetings or similar elected bodies that represent the local community. These proposals will be set out in a schedule prepared by the Area Highway Manager.
- b) To consult the public on its proposals and priorities using existing or new networks.
- c) To oversee and set priorities in terms of localism funded projects and the work of the Highway Rangers.
- d) To make recommendations for project approval to the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.
- e) To consider progress on the processing and delivery of approved projects through reports received from the County Council's Area Highway Manager or their representative.
- f) To consider issues that arise through the Highway Surgeries and as reported by the County Council's Area Highway Manager or their representative.
- g) To liaise with the County Council at the relevant Area Highway Office as the point of contact between the panel and the County Council.

### Legislation and Policy

All recommendations proposed to the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation will be considered only if the proposal is in line with existing County Council Policy, is within the scope of any Highway legislation and is audited as safe.

### Meetings

- a) The Local Highways Panel will meet at least every 3 months and where possible or required every 2 months.
- b) The Local Highways Panel will meet in public.
- c) Formal notice of the time, date and location of the meeting will be given. This will be published locally in accordance with normal practice.
- d) The Area Highway Manager will assist in the setting of each meetings agenda in consultation with the Chairman of the panel.
- e) The Area Highway Manager will prepare reports for the panel and approve any other reports being put before the panel not prepared by the Area Manager.
- f) The District / Borough Council will arrange for a record of all proceedings at each meeting. Minutes will be circulated to all members of the panel within seven days of the meeting, and presented with the agenda at the next meeting of the panel.
- g) The Panel can liaise with other such Panels and invite members of appropriate bodies to attend and speak as should be deemed appropriate.

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## 2.3 Strategic Discussions and Decisions

There is still be a need to establish an appropriate mechanism to tackle more strategic initiatives such as area wide strategies, bypasses, new bus and rail infrastructure and major development. It is proposed that a Strategic Highway Panel is set up to discuss these issues. This will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and be constituted with County members only. The Terms of reference for this more strategic panel will be prepared outside of the localism agenda.

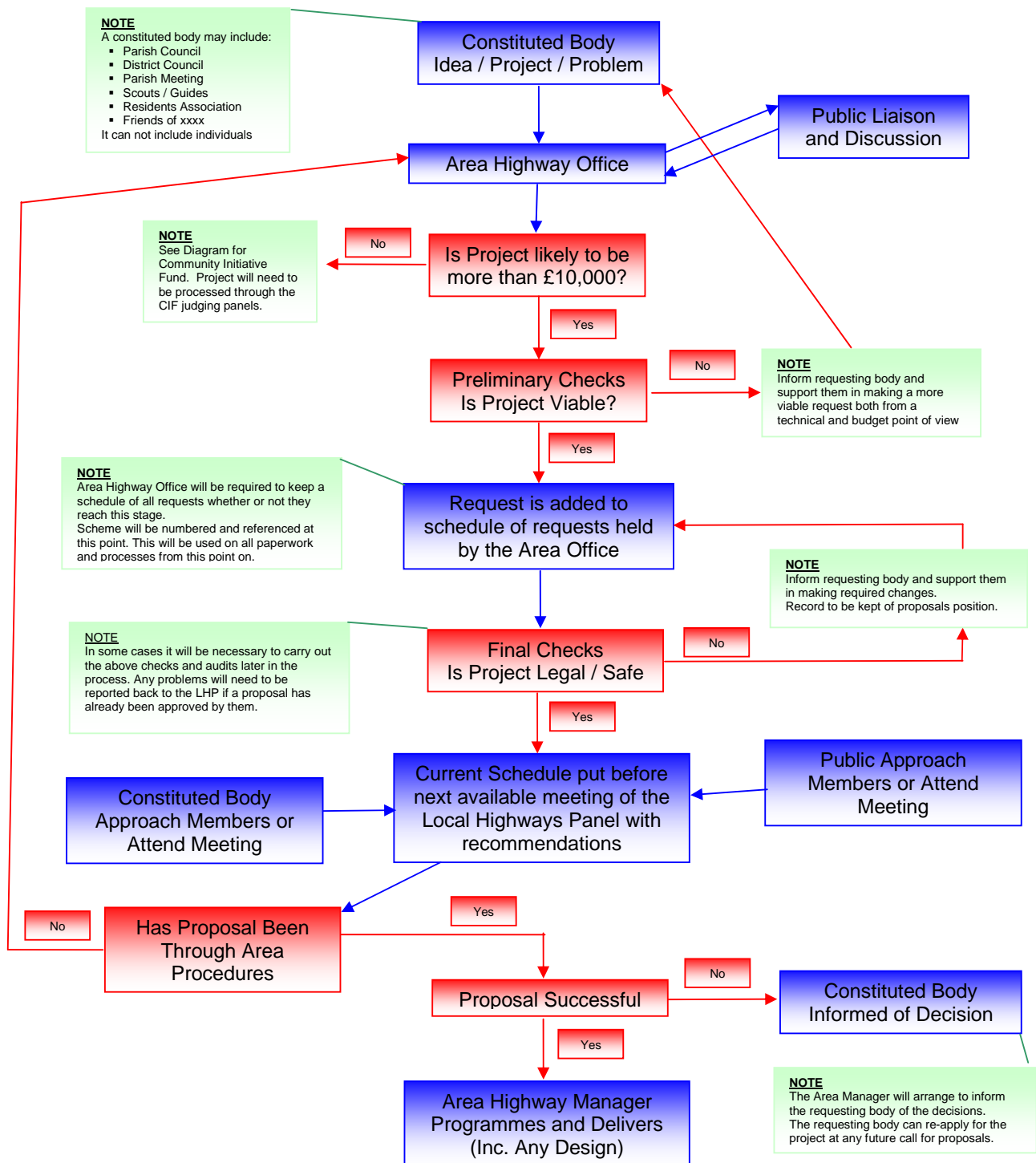
However, it would also seem appropriate to enhance and develop the role of the current Joint Area Highway Panels covering the four designated forum areas of the County. These panels would continue to comprise of Members from both the County Council and District and Boroughs, be politically balanced and enable discussions on both local and strategic issues as the agenda permits. This will also allow the members of all Authorities to be aware of what schemes are being programmed.

The approach above would give the District and Borough Councils a truly meaningful role in not just influencing County Council policy and direction but also in determining priorities at the local level.

### 3.0 Scheme Selection Process

#### 3.1 Localism Budget Scheme Selection Process – Diagram

The diagram below sets out how a project or Issue resolution request will be managed through the Localism process from its inception as an idea through to its delivery. A worded description of the process is also shown which gives additional explanation.



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### 3.2 Localism Budget Scheme Selection Process – Description

- a) The body wishing to make a request formulate their ideas within their normal meeting process. The Area Highway Manager may be approached to give technical advice as necessary at a preliminary stage.
- b) Some requests may not come through constituted bodies such as service issues direct from members of the public. Any clarification required will be resolved by the Area Highway Office (AHO). It will be explained to the requester that their issue, once it has been through the checks, will be put before the panel and they will hear the results in due course.
- c) The preliminary request form is completed and sent with any preliminary ideas to the relevant AHO.
- d) A decision on likely costs (very broad) will be made at the AHO.
- e) If the cost is likely to be less than £10,000 (including any design costs) then the scheme will be added to the list of proposals to be taken through the Community Initiative Fund Scheme Selection Process (see separate section of this document (3.4)).
- f) If the cost is likely to be more than £10,000 (including any design costs) and meets the criteria for a Capital Scheme then the Localism Budget process (see below) will be followed.
- g) The Area Manager will arrange to have the issue / request checked, at a preliminary level, for viability, legality, and safety together with any requirements of County Council policy.
- h) If the request does not meet any of one these tests then the request will be returned to the requesting body / person by the AHO with an indication that technical support is available at any new discussion they may have. Until such time as a new request is received no further action will be taken by the County Council other than any requested technical support.
- i) If the request is deemed satisfactory then it will be added to the schedule of requests to be taken to future meetings of the relevant Local Highways Panel (LHP).
- j) The relevant Area Manager will prepare a report and schedule with recommendations for the next available LHP meeting.
- k) If possible the AHO will arrange for further checks and audits to be made on any preliminary designs. It is expected that this will take no longer than 1 month to complete.
- l) In some cases it will be necessary to carry out the above checks and audits later in the process. Any problems will need to be reported back to the LHP if a proposal has already been approved by them.
- m) If the proposal is still deemed satisfactory then it continues to form part of the schedule to be put before the LHP.
- n) If the proposal does not now meet the tests then the proposal is sent back to the requesting body with an offer of support in making the necessary changes.

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- o) If the LHP approves the scheme then it is passed to the relevant Area Office for implementation during the rolling three year programmes.
  - p) At the meeting of the LHP it is possible that a new proposal / request / problem will be tabled by a member of the public or a constituted body. Unless the issue is very simple then the panel should request that the Area Highway Manager take the issue and pass it through the process above and report back to a later panel. If the issue is very simple they may ask the Area Highway Manager to deliver as part of the programme or decide to take it no further.
  - q) If the panel do not approve the scheme then the requesting body are informed by the Area Manager. The requesting body can re-request the proposal at any future call for projects although a record will be kept that it was unsuccessful at an earlier date.

### 3.3 Typical Schemes – Indicative Values

The schedule below shows a number of typical schemes that the Local Highways Panels or HCIF Judgement Panels could be asked to discuss. The prices shown are only indicative as local conditions will dictate the final costs but they do indicate the values and enable the panels to be aware of the amount required and how much budget remains following their decisions.

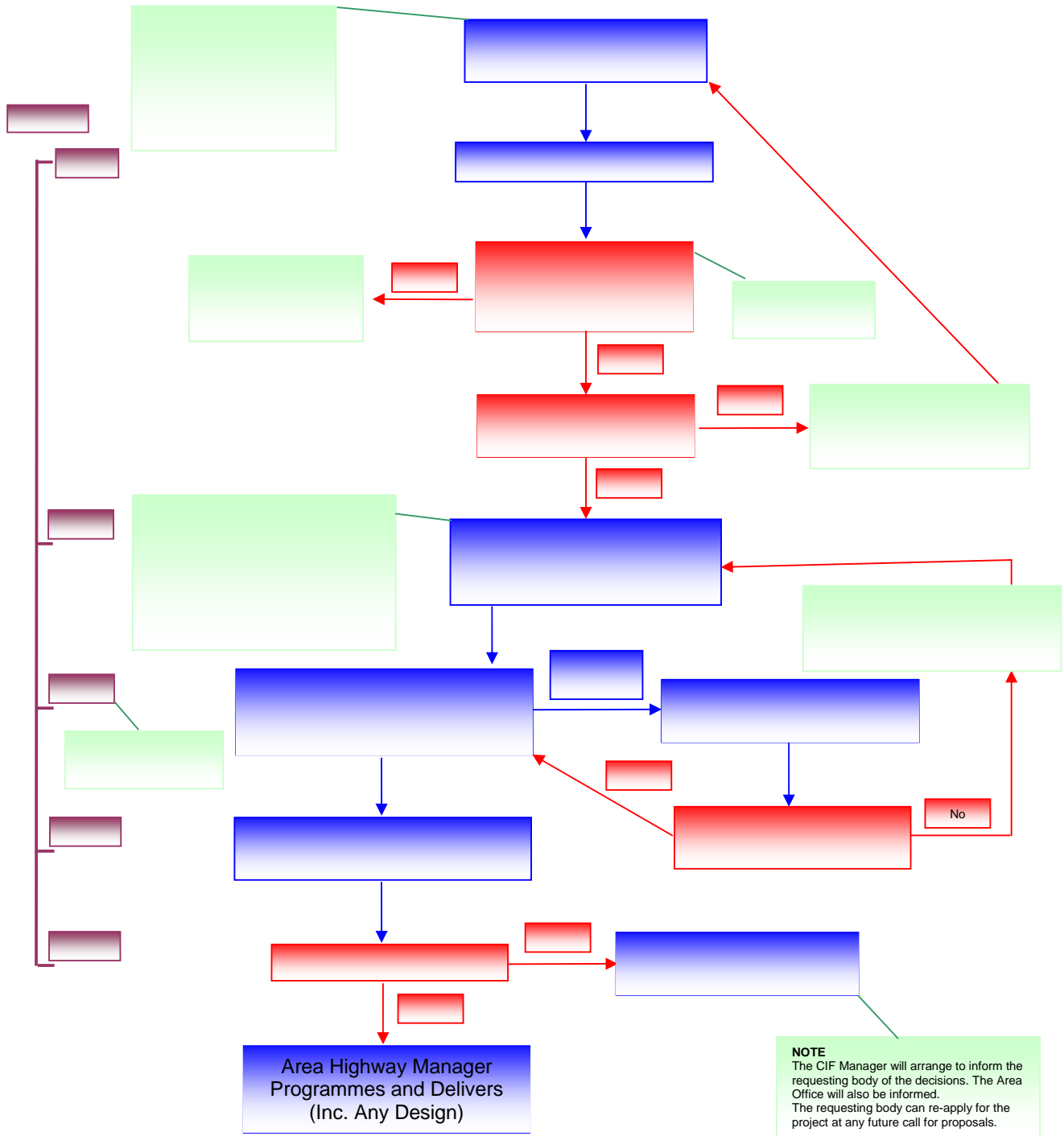
These costs will include elements such as advertising costs associated with Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) which are sometimes forgotten and not considered as part of the overall costs when schemes are being programmed.

Also shown is an indication of the time it is expected to take following a decision before the scheme will be completed. Schemes involving TRO's will often take a significant amount of time depending on any objections received during the legal process.

Scheme Type	Approx Construction Cost	Approx Design Cost	Approx Time To Deliver (Months)
100m c/w resurfacing	£9,500	£475	3 to 4
100m c/w dressing / slurry seal	£6,000	£300	3 to 4
100m f/w resurfacing	£11,000	£550	3 to 4
100m f/w dressing / slurry seal	£1,500	£75	2 to 3
10m pedestrian guardrail	£1,200	£75	3 to 4
Mini roundabout	£30,000	£1,500	9 to 12
Controlled crossing	£135,000	£5,000	12 to 15
Zebra crossing	£18,000	£1,000	9 to 12
Speed humps (each)	£500	£500	12 to 15
Junction table	£5,000	£500	12 to 15
Yellow line junction protection	£500	£100	6 to 9
Village gateway	£5,000	£500	6 to 9
1km remote cycleway	£170,000	£10,000	6 to 9
1km segregated cycleway	£250,000	£15,000	6 to 9
Pedestrian dropped kerb	£2,000	£100	3 to 4
Parking bay for 5 cars	£10,000	£500	3 to 4
Speed Limit	£2,000	£200	9 to 12
Variable message signs (Speed)	£5,000	£150	6 to 9
Pedestrian refuge	£8,000	£500	6 to 9
New lamp column (inc: connection)	£750	£100	3 to 6 (EDF)
On street parking zone (100m)	£1,500	£250	9 to 12
Waiting restrictions (100m)	£800	£100	6 to 9

### 3.4 Community Initiative Fund Scheme Selection Process – Diagram

The diagram below sets out how a project or Issue resolution request will be managed through the Highway Community Initiative Fund process from its inception as an idea through to its delivery. A worded description of the process is also shown which gives additional explanation.





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### 3.5 Community Initiative Fund Scheme Selection Process – Description

- a) The body wishing to make a request formulate their ideas within their normal meeting process. The Area Highway Manager may be approached to give technical advice.
- b) The preliminary request form is completed and sent with any preliminary ideas to the relevant Area Highway Office (AHO) where a decision on likely costs will be made.
- c) If the scheme type is not on the HCIF scheme schedule or is valued at more than £10,000 then the scheme will be added to the list of proposals to be taken through the Localism Budget Scheme Selection Process (see separate section of this document (3.1)).
- d) If the cost is likely to be less than £10,000 (including any design costs) and appears on the HCIF scheme schedule then the Highway Community Initiative Fund (HCIF) process (see below) will be followed.
- e) The Area Highway Manager will arrange to have the issue checked for viability, legality, and safety together with any requirements of County Council policy.
- f) If the request does not meet any of one these tests then the request will be returned to the requesting body by the AHO with an indication that technical support is available at any new discussion they may have. It is expected that this should be no more than 4 weeks following receipt of the original request. Until such time as a new request is received no further action will be taken by the County Council other than providing any requested technical support.
- g) If the request is deemed satisfactory then the HCIF application forms will be passed back to the requesting body by the AHO with a view to them formally requesting funding from the HCIF budget. Support in completing the forms will be offered. It is expected that this should be no more than 4 weeks following receipt of the original request. The County Council HCIF manager should be informed that the forms have been sent and to whom including the reference numbers.
- h) The completed HCIF forms should be passed to the County Councils CIF Manager. This could be direct from the requesting body or via the AHO.
- i) If technical advice is required (it is expected that this will be in most cases) then the request is sent by the HCIF Manager to the relevant Area Highway Manager who will arrange for the checks and audits to be made. It is expected that this will take no longer than 4 weeks to complete.
- j) If the proposal is still deemed satisfactory then it is sent back to the HCIF Manager who will arrange for the proposal to be put before a judging panel. It is expected that this will take place within the next 8 weeks.
- k) If the proposal does not now meet the tests then the proposal is sent back to the requesting body with an offer of support in making the necessary changes. The HCIF Manager must be informed that this has occurred.
- l) If the judging panel approves the scheme then it is passed to the relevant AHO for implementation during the relevant year of the HCIF project.
- m) If the judging panel do not approve the scheme then the requesting body are informed by the HCIF Manager. The AHO is to be informed of the decision. The requesting body can re-request the proposal at a future call for projects although a record will be kept that it was unsuccessful at an earlier date.

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### 3.6 Highways Community Initiative Fund Scheme Schedule

The following schedule shows those schemes that could be funded from the Highway Community Initiative Fund so long as the value of the scheme does not exceed a maximum value of £10,000 at the preliminary estimate stage.

This also allows an element of discretion for the Area Highway Manager to decide what budget from those available and what process shown above would best suit the project and the funds available at the time.

- Zebra Crossing
- Mini RAB
- Parking Area
- Dropped Kerbs at crossing points / junctions
- Speed Limits
- Speed Management Devices
- VMS (Speed related)
- Hard Standings at Bus Stops
- Other requests at the Area Managers Discretion

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## 4.0 Funding and Budgets

The overall budget for Localism will be approved and allocated to the Area Highway Managers as part of the normal budget procedure. The budget allocations have been made on an equitable basis and therefore each District does not receive an equal amount. A formula has been prepared and used to split the available funds in such a way that takes account of a number of influences. Each area of the Localism budget (Localism / HCIF / Rangers) has been calculated separately and the weighting described below can be used on these areas individually.

A description and comments on each element of the formula is given below:

**Road length:** The total road length has been calculated in each district and a weighting can be allocated depending on how important this element is considered to be for any specific part of the localism agenda.

**Population Density:** The area of each district has been calculated as has the population. When one is divided by the other a population density is the result. These have been used to provide an indication of those districts with higher density and therefore a higher allocated amount for this element. A weighting can be allocated depending on how important this element is considered to be for any specific part of the localism agenda.

**Road Type Split:** The different types of road (classified, other classified, non classified) have been calculated in each district. A weighting for each different type can be allocated depending on how important this element is considered to be for any specific part of the localism agenda.

**Large Towns:** It is clear that certain large towns around the County are detrimentally affected when problems occur on the trunk road and motorway network. The County Council has no responsibility for this network but the traffic that diverts away from it uses the county councils network. The formula takes account of this issue.

A number of towns (Basildon / Braintree / Brentwood / Chelmsford / Colchester / Harlow), have been included in the formula and the affected road length through them calculated. This is then used as a ratio within the formula to allocate an element of budget. A weighting to this overall issue can be allocated depending on how important this element is considered to be for any specific part of the localism agenda.

In addition the amount available through the overall weighting for this issue can then be split further by giving a weighting to road length and population density within the large towns themselves.

**Pilot Districts:** The fact that certain districts are being given “pilot” status is taken into account. The length of the pilot in months can be input into the formula and this then allows the formula to take into account the need for increased funds in these areas for the period. In other words during say a 6 month pilot half (i.e. 6/12 months) the available budget will be allocated using the formula to the pilot districts and then the remaining budget is allocated to all the districts, including the pilots.

The budgets associated with Localism are still to be held by the County Council at an Area Management level and this will ensure proper management and control, in accordance with Local Government Procedures. The new Local Highway Panels, led by the District and Borough Councils, will be given an annual indication of the funds available against which they can make

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their decisions on priority. They can allocate this funding to any projects and initiatives within its agreed term of reference.

It may well be that a local community would want to promote their own schemes and with this in mind it is proposed that a specific fund is established for this purpose. This will be included in the annual indication of funds available. This fund like all the other budgets will be administered at an Area management level by the County Council.

The Local Highways Panel can supplement County Council funding with its own in order to accelerate work programmes, provide added value to individual schemes or to pursue completely separate initiatives. In addition other community groups, such as Parish Councils, can add their own funds to an overall "pot" to enable specific schemes to be taken forward.

In addition to the Localism budgets a Highways Community Initiative Fund has been established. This will enable Parish and Town Councils, including other community groups or individuals, to bid for small-scale improvements that would not otherwise be an immediate priority for either the County Council or the Local Highways Panels.

The simple non-bureaucratic application process associated with the normal CIF funds has been further developed and evaluation criteria put in place.

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## 5.0 Highway Surgeries

The establishment of a local community “surgery” for each district is part of the Localism agenda. An engineer from the appropriate Area Office will attend the surgery to enable the general public to discuss any Highway related queries they may have.

The timetable for these surgeries will be agreed at the local level but every 2 weeks is suggested. An appropriate area / desk for the Area office representatives will be found at the council office which is accessible to the public without the need to go through the normal signing in security processes.

The area representative (or selections of representatives) is the first point of contact on any Highways matter. He or she would attend the surgeries and facilitate any actions arising with the wider department and the other County Council Services.

A dedicated “Liaison Engineer” will be employed at each Area Office at the appropriate level depending on the needs considered by the Area Highway Manager. As well as being support for those carrying out the “surgery” duties they are the first point of contact on all local stakeholder group enquiries as well as District and Borough Council issues. This officer will also help set the agenda for the panel meetings in consultation with the districts and County officers, and also coordinate the preparation of reports.

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## 6.0 Highway Rangers

### 6.1 Outline

All works will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, CDM legislation, Chapter 8, NRSWA and the developing requirements of the Traffic Management Act as it comes into force. Health and safety of the travelling public, workforce and any representatives of the local community must be paramount. To this end on commencement of work the location will become a “site” as defined in the guidance notes / appendices and relevant health and safety rules will become applicable. At this time all non qualified and / or unsuitably equipped persons will be asked to leave by the contractor.

All works will be recorded in an approved format for inclusion in the Confirm asset management system to ensure that the street history is properly maintained. Works scheduled through the relevant ECC Area Highways Office (ECC AO) will be entered onto Confirm for delivery using the amended Confirm procedures described in the guidance notes / appendices. Works identified by the gang on site will be recorded using the site works identification procedures described in the guidance notes / appendices.

### 6.2 Work Included In Highway Rangers Duties

#### Minor Bituminous Repairs / Potholes

It is not feasible for ranger gang to carry hot material therefore they will need to carry temporary material to make safe the defect pending permanent repair.

Works must be in accordance with appropriate traffic management requirements and must not include excavation in excess of 75mm in footways or 100mm in carriageways which would require the location of statutory undertaker's apparatus to be identified prior to commencement of works.

#### Cleaning / Minor Repairs to Non Electrical Road Signs and Street Furniture Including Reinstatement of Posts / Bollards Where no Excavation is Required

Rules governing excavation depth and traffic management as defined in 1 above also apply.

Rangers will not deal with issues involving private property or that which is the responsibility of the statutory undertakers. If the ownership of the item is in any doubt clarification will be sought from the local ECC AO prior to undertaking any work.

Issues identified with electrical equipment including day burning will be referred immediately to the ECC AO for action. Dangerous situations may be protected in a manner achievable by non qualified operatives until such time as a proper repair can be undertaken.

Cleaning / minor repairs will be limited to that achievable with the use of hand tools. Significant damage deemed detrimental to the function of the sign must be referred to the local ECC AO for proper repair or replacement.

The ranger gang will require the provision of cleaning products suitable for such cleaning / removal of graffiti and meeting any health and safety requirements.

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### **Repairs to Concrete Products / Surfaces**

These repairs must be achieved using pre mixed bagged concrete repair products of an epoxy or similar nature that do not require extensive preparation of surfaces or long setting times and subsequent traffic management protection.

Rules governing excavation depth and traffic management as defined in 1 above also apply.

### **Trimming of Vegetation and Subsequent Removal of Arisings**

Highway based vegetation may be trimmed for safety purposes. In the case of highway trees this must be limited to minor trimming achievable with the use of non powered hand tools such that the health of the specimen is not adversely affected. Any major work identified including surgery and disease treatment should be noted and referred to the council's arboriculture service via the ECC AO.

Trimming of private vegetation may be carried out for safety purposes only so as not to jeopardise any local enforcement actions which may transpire. Large-scale trimming of overgrowth from privately owned vegetation is to be avoided. If there is any doubt over the scale of the work involved clarification will be sought from the local ECC AO prior to undertaking any work.

### **Adhoc Grass Cutting / Strimming**

Highway grass may be trimmed for safety purposes in accordance with the guidance contained in the appendices.

Trimming of private vegetation may be carried out for safety purposes only so as not to jeopardise any local enforcement actions which may transpire. Large-scale trimming of privately owned grass is to be avoided.

### **Repairs to Roadside Verges**

The rangers may carry out minor repairs to rutting and the like in highway verges using recovered nearby material not imported unless pre arranged.

Privately owned verges will not be repaired. If the ownership of the verge is in any doubt clarification will be sought from the local ECC AO prior to undertaking any work.

### **Cleaning and Minor Excavation of Roadside Grips**

Clearing of existing grips may be carried out where the excavation element does not exceed 75mm and any arisings may be spread on the adjacent verge so as to avoid disposal costs.

### **Adhoc Cleaning / Emptying of Gullies and Associated Pipe Work**

This will be limited to work that can be achieved using hand tools and drain rods. Any arisings will be properly disposed of in accordance with current regulations in particular where the material constitutes contaminated and or hazardous waste.

### **Removal of Graffiti**

Rangers may deal with all elements of "municipal" street furniture including such items as litter bins street name plates and seats etc which may not actually be a highway function but contribute towards the "street scene"

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Rangers will not deal with issues involving private property or that which is the responsibility of the statutory undertakers.

Graffiti will not be removed from bituminous or other surfaces with products likely to be detrimental to the integrity of the surface.

#### **Painting of Street Furniture**

Rangers may deal with any element of “municipal” street furniture including such items as litter bins street name plates and seats etc which may not actually be a highway function but contribute towards the “street scene”

Depending upon the circumstances this activity may be pre arranged to allow for acquisition of suitable materials (paint colours etc) and access equipment as may be required.

#### **Removal of Weeds From Pavements**

Adhoc removal and proper disposal of weeds or vegetation growing on the highway

Adhoc spraying of weeds as appropriate and with materials in accordance with current health and safety and contract requirements.

#### **Scavenging and Removal of Deposits and Small Fly Tips from Highway Land**

This will be limited to what can be achieved with tools and equipment available at the time and availability of suitable disposal facilities.

Larger scale issues should be referred to the ECC AO or local District / Borough Council as appropriate.

#### **Minor Repairs to Existing White Lining**

This activity will be limited to that which can be achieved using proprietary cold applied products in small quantities. Care must be exercised to ensure that the regulatory quality of any existing lining is not compromised by the repair, in any case the approval of the ECC AO should be sought prior to undertaking work.

Yellow lining will not form part of the responsibilities of the Highway Rangers.

#### **Road Studs**

This activity will be limited to that which can be achieved using proprietary cold applied products in small quantities and not requiring excavation.

#### **Removal of Illegal Signs / Fly Posting**

Obvious illegal signs (boot sale and similar advertisements) and fly posters on the highway may be removed and suitably disposed of. In the event of advertisements for charitable events advice should be sought from the local ECC AO in case informal approval has been given.

More substantial “A” frame type signs in urban areas may be present under licence. In this case events advice should be sought from the local ECC AO.

Ranger gangs will be supplied with a stock of suitably worded standard letters to be given out to persons responsible for illegal signs in the event of their removal being



challenged. If such challenge becomes aggressive or violent in any way then the gang will immediately stand down and refer the incident to their supervisor / ECC AO and / or the police if deemed appropriate.

#### **Random Inspection of Street Works**

If whilst travelling around a given area in pursuit of their duties the ranger gang come across statutory undertakers activities they may carry out a random inspection of the undertaker's works in accordance with the NRSWA and / or TMA as appropriate.

The results of this inspection will be returned to the ECC AO for inclusion in the street works system.

### **6.3 Work NOT included in Highway Rangers Duties**

- Works requiring statutory undertakers clearance.
- Work with CDM /HSE implications over and above what can be achieved using equipment carried with the gang. The contractor will make use of generic risk assessments for any work undertaken.
- Works involving excavation in excess of 75mm in the footway or 100mm in the carriageway.
- Works requiring traffic management over and above what can be achieved safely using the equipment carried by the gang.
- Handling of hazardous substances beyond the abilities of the gang or disposal facilities available.
- Works not on the highway or in private streets. If the status of the land or equipment in question is in any doubt then the advice of the ECC AO should be sought.
- Repairs to or removal of lighting columns or other electrical apparatus.
- Ditchwork
- Hot applied joint sealing
- Work on statutory undertakers apparatus
- Work of a value in excess of £10,000

### **6.4 Highway Ranger Gang Requirements**

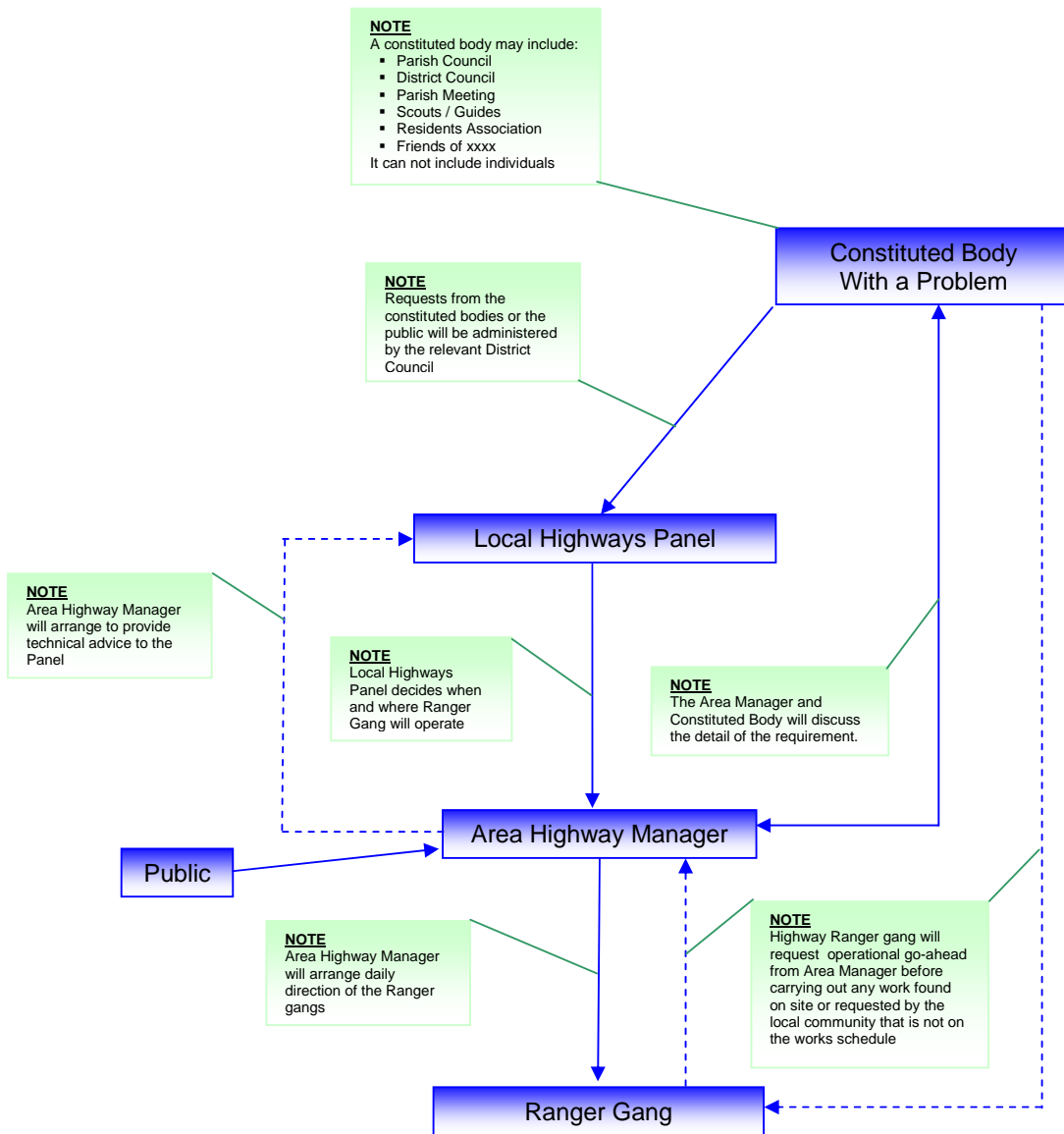
The contractor will be required to provide one gang per district with appropriate tools and materials available to carry out any of the works described as in scope on a daily basis. Frequently used items should be carried on the vehicle at all times.

### **6.5 Guidance on Amended Internal CONFIRM Procedures**

The procedures relating to the County Councils CONFIRM system have been discussed and distributed separate from this document. These procedures will be reviewed along with the overall Localism Project at an appropriate time.

## 6.6 Ranger Gang Works Request – Lifecycle

The diagram below sets out how a project or Issue resolution request will be managed through the Highway Ranger operation process from its inception as an idea through to its delivery.



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## 7.0 Local Highway Panels - Member Training

The new Local Highway Panels have members that have not had any experience of Highway matters, and in some cases never been part of such a panel, and therefore training will be given to enable all members to be proficient in making their decisions.

The main thrust of the training is to provide members with information about the Highway Service, the legislation and policies that are associated with it and some of the technical decisions that have to be made during the life of a proposed scheme.

The training will be about what they are making decisions about rather than how to make a decision.

The proposal is for members of the Panels to be asked to attend meeting an hour before the official start. This hour will be used to provide information to members on topics to be agreed at the previous meeting. This will allow discussion outside of the normal meeting procedures and atmosphere.

Typical subjects for the discussions and training will be:

- Pedestrian Crossings
- Traffic Regulation Orders including Parking Issues
- Maintenance and Materials
- Street Lighting
- New Footways

The training will be led by officers of both the local district / borough council and officers from the Area Highway office.

In addition the County Councils Cabinet member responsible for the Highway Service will also attend some of these sessions to give an overview of the Localism project and what he is trying to achieve.