

Local Highway Panels Terms of Reference



Background

Local Highways Panels (LHPs) have been set up in all 12 Boroughs, Cities and Districts. These panels are responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highway schemes in their areas.

Panels meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and mutually consider Local Highway Panel schemes in their district.



Local Highway Panels Terms of Reference

The LHP is accountable for:

Recommending the annual LHP programme for submission to the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.

Documenting highways issues raised by residents and the community in its area, so that their concerns can be investigated and the possibility of addressing these with engineering solutions can be validated.

Ensuring that when making recommendations the LHP:

That the County's prioritised Road Safety Schemes are included in the annual LHP programme in order to enable the County Council to fulfil its statutory duty.

That as far as possible that recommended schemes meet ECC policies, strategies and standards and have due regard to the advice from officers.

That any schemes submitted to the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport for approval which do not meet ECC policies, strategies and standards are clearly identified as such and are made on the basis of a decision of all LHP members present and voting at a meeting having considered all alternative measures.

That LHP schemes do not conflict with other known programmes of work including those funded by third parties.

Providing local knowledge to the annual Casualty reduction programme.

Monitors the delivery of the annual LHP programme. Considers and responds to any requests referred to the LHP by other council constituted bodies, panels or groups.

Schemes included within the LHP delivery programme may not be deliverable within one financial year.

If the scheme requires land that is not within the highway boundary or within ECC ownership then the scheme cannot be included in the delivery programme until the land negotiations have been completed.

- Initial design work will be required in order to commence land negotiations.
- The LHP cannot allocate funding to the scheme delivery until the land negotiation phase has been completed.

Membership

An LHP has been established for each Borough, City and District in Essex.

All County Councillors with exception of the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport and the Leader of the Council will be voting members of the respective Local Highway Panel.

Four Borough/City/District Councillors (three in the case of Maldon) to be nominated by the Borough/City/District Council.

The LHP Chairman will be appointed by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport and will usually be a County Member.

The LHP Chairman will appoint another member of the LHP to be Vice Chairman. The Vice Chairman can be either a County or a Borough/City/District Member.

LHP Members can nominate another Councillor from their authority to substitute for them and attend meetings on their behalf if they are unable to attend. The LHP member who is appointing a substitute for a particular meeting must notify this to the person organising the meeting no later than the start of the meeting. Any substitute will have voting rights.

The composition of the Local Highway Panels are not required to reflect the political balance of Essex County Council.

The ECC Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport with responsibility for LHPs and their deputies are entitled to attend LHP meetings.

The LHP Chairman may invite additional Borough, City, District and Parish representatives to attend the LHP but will not have voting rights.

All Local Highway Panels (except Harlow which is unparished) will have one Parish Representative who will be nominated by the Essex Association of Local Council (EALC), and who will have full voting rights.

It is proposed that the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport may increase the number of parish representatives in a particular case.

If a LHP wishes to operate different arrangements to those listed, approval from the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport must be obtained, written permission is not enough.



Meetings

LHP meetings should be held quarterly. Meetings may be held in person, or via a remote or hybrid system.

The LHP meeting will be quorate if three Members of the panel and either the Chairman or Vice Chairman are present.

Where a Member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she can submit a written representation on a particular

The LHP meetings are not open to attendance by the public or the press other than by specific invitation of the Chairman. Meetings are not broadcast.

The Chairman can invite non-Members to attend LHPs to provide specialist advice or information.

Essex Highways will provide officer support to the LHPs.

The secretariat and meeting room will normally be provided by the Borough, City or District Council but this may be changed by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.

The public may submit written questions regarding the LHP to the Panel. These questions will either be answered in writing or the Chairman may invite the questioner to attend the meeting to receive the answer orally.

A programme of meeting dates for the full financial year will be agreed and published in advance to ensure that preparations can be made for reporting.

Any request for an LHP to operate outside these rules will require a formal decision by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.

Recommendations agreed by LHP Members must be clearly minuted.

Actions must clearly identify the responsible person including the Highways Liaison Officer.

Information Sharing and Resources

- Agendas will be posted on the ECC LHP webpage at least 28 days before the meeting. Late items may be added to the agenda with the agreement of the LHP Chairman.
- Minutes will be updated on the ECC LHP webpage within one month of the LHP meeting.
- The Schemes Awaiting Funding List will be updated onto the website in line with the quarterly meetings.
- The Funded Schemes List will be updated on the website on the 1st of each month.
- Briefing notes and agendas must be prepared in line with the ECC communications policy. Written material should be in arial font at a minimum 12 point size.
- Decisions on recommended schemes taken by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport will be published on the ECC website under the standard governance rules via the CMA (Cabinet Member Action) process.
- LHPs will use the standard templates for agenda, minutes, scheme lists and work programmes so that there is consistency across all LHPs.



LHP Funding

LHP Formula = % of total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length (from 2010) in district from total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length in county (subject to dampening rational).

Dampening = No individual district to receive more than £X or less than £Y, with the figure being set each year

Remaining money is then distributed as per original percentage between the remaining districts that have not had a dampening effect applied

Employment and Population Source:

East of England Forecasting Model (autumn 2010 forecasts) & the Office of National Statistics Mid 2010 population estimates

Road Length Source: Hi Net (official record of Highways, used by ECC to report road lengths to DfT) in 2010

The percentage allocation per LHP is set out below.

LHP	Percentage (%)
Basildon	12.50%
Braintree	10.19%
Brentwood	5.62%
Castle Point	5.72%
Chelmsford	12.50%
Colchester	12.50%
Epping Forest	8.74%
Harlow	6.09%
Maldon	5.00%
Rochford	5.35%
Tendring	9.88%
Uttlesford	5.90%
Total	100%

The City/ Borough/District Councils and Essex County Council may provide further funding to the LHP.

Parishes, Districts, Boroughs and the City have the opportunity to pay for schemes identified via the Local Highway Panels in their entirety, applications for schemes are made in the same way however payment will be via the third party process.

If Parish Councils, District, Borough or City Councils would like to fund or part fund any schemes, applications should be made via the Local Highway Panel.

LHP Funding continued

The annual prioritised capital funded schemes are agreed by the LHP. They 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
- Aesthetic improvements to the Local Community

All scheme requests will be submitted by the County Member for that division. Any appeal to a panel recommendation should be done so with the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport.

Casualty Reduction Schemes

Casualty reduction schemes are prioritised annually by Essex Highways and presented to the relevant Local Highway Panel at the December/January meeting. Collisions are analysed over the previous 3 years (January to December).

Before analysis can commence, the most recent annual collision data (Jan to Dec) must be signed off by the Department for Transport.

The collision analysis is undertaken across the County and sites are prioritised on the basis of those that can be effectively treated with engineering measures to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

The Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport will receive recommendations for the Casualty Reduction before the end of the calendar year. Once approved these will be included in the next annual LHP programme or funded from other funding allocations as set out as follows:

- Schemes up to the value of funding agreed by the Cabinet Member for on an annual basis will be included in the LHP's annual programme of work.
- Schemes above the individual LHP budget allocation up to £500k will need to be considered by the Cabinet Member for and funding source determined.
- Schemes over £500k will be considered for alternative capital funding based on their business cases and forecast reduction in casualties.

Prioritisation and delivery of Casualty Reduction Schemes must conform to the County's Statutory Duty.



LHP Funding continued

LHP to Major Schemes

Where schemes are identified whose predicted costs are above the LHP budget, a decision will need to be made by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport regarding funding allocation. If the predicted scheme costs exceed £500,000 the scheme will be classed as a major intervention and will be removed from the LHP priorities list as it will need to adhere to the major schemes development process.

It is assumed that for major LHP derived projects the necessary studies and investigations will have been carried out utilising the LHP's capital allocation. For example, that the scheme has up to date traffic surveys, has gone through necessary option reviews, and if necessary public consultation. For Road Safety derived projects the necessary studies and investigations will have been carried out using separate resources.

The scheme can only proceed and be eligible for capital funding once it has completed the necessary studies and investigations. The scheme if eligible for capital funding will then be passed to the Major Projects Team for consideration for advanced scheme design.

There is no guarantee that any particular scheme will be prioritised for advanced design as this is only undertaken on schemes where there are strong economic benefits and a robust business case outlining the need for the scheme. In some instances schemes may be included in a package of measures for a funding bid.

If the project is eligible for advanced scheme design there is still no guarantee that the scheme will be delivered as an appropriate source of funding will need to be identified for example the Local Enterprise Partnership.

LHP Revenue Budget

LHP's also oversee a limited revenue budget. This budget is to pay for the Highway Rangers Service and to fund any ongoing revenue maintenance of VAS/SID and LHP installed Advisory 20mph equipment. It is also required to carry out surveys prior to a scheme being commissioned.

Highway Rangers undertake works across the County that are too small to give to a contractor but make a huge difference to the appearance of the area. These will include small scale maintenance works such as repainting or straightening a signpost, cutting back vegetation that is obscuring a road sign, strimming an overgrown highway verge or cleaning the road signs in an area.



Glossary of Terms

CMA	Cabinet Member Action
CRS	Casualty Reduction Schemes
ECC	Essex County Council
LHP	Local Highway Panels
SID	Speed Indicator Device
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign

This information is issued by:

Essex County Council, Design Services Team

Find out more:

www.essexhighways.org/local-highway-panels

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www.essex.gov.uk/enquiries

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