

## **Local Member Fund Budget**

### **Background**

A new fund was introduced in April 2017 to provide each Local Member with an annual budget of £6,000 to be used on small highway works within each financial year in their Division.

At the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2021, it was agreed to increase the annual budget by £4,000 to £10,000 per year for each Member, to come into effect after the May 2021 elections. The scope of the scheme was also extended to include measures to support the Council's Environmental Policy to help address two key climate change challenges: reversing biodiversity loss and reducing carbon emissions. Works that would help address these challenges include electric vehicle charging points, tree planting, repairs to local footpaths and capital measures for encouraging active travel.

The Local Member Fund continues to offer flexibility to progress small highway and environmental projects at Members discretion based upon local need.

The increase to £10,000 per year gives Local Members more flexibility in how this funding can be used. For instance, the full amount could be spent on electric vehicles charging points or a new section of footway, or the funds could be used for numerous smaller tree planting grants or small signing improvement schemes.

### **What can the money be spent on?**

The funding can be spent on a wide variety of highway and environmental related aspects, up to a total combined value of £10,000 each year. The funding is capital so there needs to be an asset as a result of the funding.

Typical uses could include:

- Advisory signs such as 'Unsuitable for HGV's' and advisory speed limits i.e. 20mph signs outside schools, would be possible;
- Capital measures to encourage more active travel (walking and cycling), such as small footway extensions and modifications;
- More significant work to public rights of way to encourage increased levels of use;
- Minor drainage work;
- New non-regulatory signs and replacement of existing signs and road markings. This includes new road markings such as "SLOW" markings;
- Minor traffic management projects including Traffic Regulation Order related works. However, it should be noted that these works can cost between £3,000 and £5,000 each and may be difficult to deliver within a 12-month timescale;

- Day rates for gangs to carry out additional maintenance to areas of the highways that a Local Member would like improved i.e. public footpaths or verges;
- Other highway improvements – improved visibility splays, junction improvements, kerbing, work in conservation areas;
- Capital grants to Town or Parish Councils for highway maintenance related equipment such as grass cutting or footway gritting equipment;
- A grant towards Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. The Local Member Fund can be used to pay for purchase and installation costs only, so is best suited to community facilities such as village or town halls etc. The applicant (typically a Town or Parish Council) would need to lead on procurement, supply & installation. The Local Member Fund can then be used to offset these costs. In addition, the County Council would not be responsible for future maintenance costs. At the current time, EV charging points cannot be installed on the Highway, although this will change over time as the Council's EV strategy is finalised and trials are conducted;
- A grant towards community tree planting to support Norfolk's Environmental Policy. In a similar way to the EV charging points, the Local Member Fund can be used to pay for purchase and installation costs only, so is best suited to community facilities that can be planted off highway land. The applicant (typically a Town or Parish Council) would need to lead on procurement, supply & installation. Where trees are proposed on Highway land, these would need to be agreed with the local Highways team to prevent future maintenance issues;
- Wildlife friendly measures for amenity and biodiversity gain, including greenspace improvements. Particularly for priority habitats and species like bats and newts. Funding is for implementation costs only, and ongoing maintenance costs would need to be agreed by third parties;
- Repairs to local footpaths on the Public Right of Way network particularly, where appropriate to provide barrier free, all abilities access.

### **What is excluded from the fund?**

The funding is capital funding only, so ongoing maintenance (revenue) costs are excluded from this scheme.

Illuminated signs, street lighting or reflective bollards are not included in this initiative.

In addition, the budget of £10,000 is not to be exceeded. Any schemes which are likely to exceed this amount will not be taken forward, unless other funding streams are confirmed.

### **Who can help provide advice on what can be delivered and how?**

Your local Highways Area team can provide the necessary help and advice on what the engineering solutions to any given problem may be. The Environment team can provide advice on biodiversity, tree planting and other greenspace enhancements. These options will be location specific and will usually involve a site visit to fully understand the issues and identify the optimum solution.

### **Who records and monitors spend?**

Your local Highways Area team will provide an initial cost estimate and if delivery is agreed, will then monitor construction / installation costs. Given the nature of construction, there may be unexpected or unforeseen costs which will need to be managed within the £10,000 allocation. The Highways team will also manage the grants available to fund other agreed works if delivered by communities themselves.

### **Who can deliver the proposals?**

It is expected that the majority of works on the highway would be undertaken by Norfolk County Council and its approved supply chain. Grants made to direct to Town and Parish Councils, i.e. for the EV charging point and tree planting works, would follow those Town and Parish Council's procurement rules.