

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

**DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2015**



**LEAD OFFICER: JOHN HILDER (Area Highways Manager) / HELEN TREASURE (Project Consultant)**

**SUBJECT: GUILDFORD LOCAL COMMITTEE PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK**

**DIVISION: ALL GUILDFORD DIVISIONS**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

This report presents a framework for prioritising local road safety improvements in Guildford Borough. The framework will be used by the Transportation Task Group and aims to ensure that limited committee funds are spent in the most effective way.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to agree that:**

- (i) The framework presented in the annex to this report is adopted to support Members and officers in deciding which schemes to prioritise, and used by the Transportation Task Group for this purpose.
- (ii) It is used alongside Member and officer judgement with scope for committee discretion in finalising decisions regarding the funding of schemes.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The framework provides a methodology for identifying the extent to which requests for road safety improvements align with current policy, as well as taking into account value for money, public support and technical feasibility. It therefore helps ensure that limited committee funds are directed towards schemes that are consistent with these aims.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 Guildford Local Committee has annual funding devolved to it by Surrey County Council for minor works in the locality. Currently the committee receives a lot of requests and petitions for safety improvements (e.g. requests for 20 mph speed limits) and there hasn't been a recognised process for prioritising these. The committee chairman raised concerns regarding the number of these requests received and asked for a framework to be developed to help prioritise them.

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- 1.2 A draft prioritisation process, including a proforma to assess schemes against various criteria, was developed and presented to the committee on 24 September 2014, with a further update on 26 November 2014. The framework has since been further developed and revised, following further discussions with the Transportation Task Group and relevant Surrey County Council departments including Local Highways, Transport Policy and Public Health.
- 1.3 A finalised version of the framework is presented as an annex to this document, for a committee decision as to its adoption.

### **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 The prioritisation framework has been developed taking account of Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council policies and strategic objectives. This includes the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) objectives (informed by the Guildford Core Strategy Spatial Vision and the vision and objectives of the Surrey Transport Plan).
- 2.2 The framework is consistent with other policies and strategies including Surrey County Council's Speed Limit and Road Safety Outside Schools policies, and recommendations from the Guildford Transport and Movement Study (GTAMS).
- 2.3 The framework has been designed to take into account a number of factors in determining the extent to which a scheme should be prioritised. These include impact on modal shift, congestion, public transport access, walking, cycling, public realm and impact on vulnerable groups of road users. The framework also takes into account location, with priority given to strategic walking/cycling routes, routes to schools or areas with higher levels of road casualties.
- 2.4 The framework takes into account best practice guidance produced for the Department for Transport (DfT) on the prioritisation of smaller transport schemes.
- 2.5 It is recommended that the framework is used to support the committee in making a judgement regarding prioritisation of schemes, with scope for committee discretion in making the final decision regarding the funding of schemes (as recommended in DfT guidance).

### **3. OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 The main options considered were whether to develop a process based on numerical scoring against various criteria, or whether to adopt an approach based on categories such as red/amber/green or high/medium/low.
- 3.2 The main benefits of scoring are that it can provide order to and help distinguish between a long list of potential schemes. It also means that schemes that are more closely aligned to the criteria set out in the framework are more likely to be selected. The drawbacks of scoring are that results can be sensitive to the way the process is designed (e.g. the number of criteria, the importance / weight assigned to each criteria, overlap between related criteria etc). Best practice guidance suggests that either approach can be

effective, as long as it is flexible, transparent, evidence based and open to discussion and challenge.

- 3.3 There has been a mixture of views on this question but on balance discussions with officers and the committee indicated a preference for using categories rather than scoring.
- 3.4 There has also been discussion in relation to the extent to which the process should achieve a geographical spread of investment. A geographical spread ensures that more areas benefit from investment, however can have less impact than focusing funding on the highest performing schemes, or focusing investment in a specific area (which tends to be far more effective in achieving modal shift, e.g. creating a linked network of cycle paths). It is recommended that the committee makes an appropriate judgement to this question depending on the committee priorities and funding available at the time.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 The proposals were developed with input from the Transportation Task Group, and colleagues in road safety, strategy and public health. Feedback from consultation has been considered in the development of the framework, with amendments as appropriate.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 There are no direct costs to implementing the prioritisation framework, apart from the time required to carry out assessment of the proposed schemes. The process design aims to minimise the administrative effort required. Overall, use of the prioritisation framework should significantly improve how limited committee funds are spent, increasing value for money.

#### **6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 The proposals aim to ensure that committee spend on road safety and other highways improvements is prioritised in accordance with strategic objectives. This should have a positive impact on all residents including those in protected groups. Proposals to encourage modal shift to sustainable modes of transport will create improved travel choice, particularly for those without access to a car.
- 6.2 The framework also includes a policy category labelled "target population" which considers areas of deprivation, low car ownership, childhood obesity and accessibility for disabled people. Schemes which align with objectives in these areas will be considered as a higher priority.

#### **7. LOCALISM:**

- 7.1 The proposals will help ensure that limited committee funds are spent effectively in accordance with locally agreed criteria. Within the framework, the degree of local support for a scheme is factored into the prioritisation process.

**8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below.

**8.1 Sustainability implications**

The criteria for prioritising schemes includes those that encourage modal shift from the car to sustainable modes of transport. Schemes that meet these criteria are more likely to be selected, with positive implications for sustainability.

**8.2 Public Health implications**

The criteria for prioritising schemes includes those that encourage active travel such as walking and cycling. Following consultation with public health, a further criteria has been introduced which relates to deprivation, childhood obesity, low car ownership and accessibility for disabled people. The rationale for this is that people living in deprived areas tend to suffer more from road/traffic related health effects, and neighbourhoods with higher levels of childhood obesity and low car ownership experience greater benefits from walking and cycling interventions.

**9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 9.1 This report recommends that Guildford Local Committee adopts the prioritisation framework set out in the annex to this report to help ensure that limited committee funds are directed towards initiatives that align most closely with Surrey County Council and Guildford Local Committee priorities.

**10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 10.1 If adopted, the framework will be used to help prioritise requests for road safety improvements during autumn 2015 and for subsequent years.

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**Consulted:**

Guildford Local Committee Transportation Task Group

Surrey County Council departments including Public Health, Road Safety, Transport Policy, Local Highways

**Annexes:**

Annex 1: Proposed Guildford Local Committee Prioritisation Process

Annex 2: Proposed proforma to assess schemes

Annex 3: Scheme assessment table (illustrated with 5 examples from previous years)

Annex 4: Scheme cost/performance matrix (illustrated with 5 examples from previous years)

**Sources/background papers:**

- Guildford Local Committee Prioritisation Framework (paper to Guildford Local Committee on 26 November 2014)
  - Guildford Local Committee Prioritisation Framework (paper to Guildford Local Committee on 24 September 2014)
  - Guildford Local Transport Strategy
  - Surrey County Council Setting Local Speed Limits Policy
  - Surrey County Council Road Safety Outside Schools Policy
  - Guildford Transport and Movement Study
  - Advice on the Prioritisation of Smaller Transport Schemes (Atkins / DfT, 2008)
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