

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Public Rights of Way Town and Parish Grant Funding
Date of decision:	29 th July 2024
Decision maker:	Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>On 9th February 2024, Full Council agreed the content of the 2024/25 Budget Setting report. As part of the report, Full Council agreed that £250k of the £945k increase in Rural Services Grant would be provided for improvements to Public Rights of Way. Full details of the decision taken can be seen at the following link:</p> <p>Decision - To approve the 2024/25 budget and associated Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>Delivery of the £250k of funding is proposed to be through a Parish Lengthsman contract variation agreement, which is permissible under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.</p>
Ward:	Countywide.
Consultation:	Town and Parish Councils were invited to provide submissions for improvement works on Public Rights of Way in May 2024.
Decision made:	To enter into Parish Lengthsman contract variation agreements with 34 Town and Parish Councils, as listed in Appendix 1, in order to deliver £83,602.45 of improvement works on the Public Rights of Way network, as set out in this report, and within a total value of £25k per Town and Parish Council in order to be permissible as a direct award under the Contract Procedure Rules.
Reasons for decision:	<p>Working with parishes on locally important maintenance, including Public Rights of Way, forms part of the objective to 'Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure network in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county' in the Council's Delivery Plan 2024/25.</p> <p>On 9th February 2024, Full Council agreed the content of the 2024/25 Budget Setting report. As part of the report, Full Council agreed that £250k of the £945k increase in Rural Services Grant would be provided for improvements to Public Rights of Way.</p> <p>In May 2024, Town and Parish Councils were invited to provide submissions for the £250k of grant funding for works on the Public Rights of Way network. The funding was made available for replacement of minor PROW assets such as stiles, finger posts and gates, but also allowed Town and Parish Councils to identify other bespoke assets and bridges under 6.2m for improvement. Town and Parish Councils themselves would be responsible for purchasing the equipment from the funds provided.</p>

	<p>Submissions were invited by 1st July 2024 and provided details of the location (what3words) of each asset including photographs, a short description of the work required and a cost estimate, using the cost of purchase to the Council.</p> <p>Submissions from 34 Town and Parish Councils have been identified at this stage as being acceptable by Officers, who will respond to each Town and Parish Council and provide a Parish Lengthsman contract variation agreement to deliver the works.</p>
Equality Considerations	None. This decision relates to entering into Parish Lengthsman contract variation agreements.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>A total budget of £250k has been allocated to this project, provided through Rural Services Grant funding.</p> <p>The submissions from 34 Town and Parish Councils total £83,602.45 of works.</p> <p>Project codes will be allocated so that the project manager assigned can monitor and review progress to enable reporting to the relevant programme boards.</p> <p>Risk Management</p> <p>The identified works should reduce the risk to users on the network as a result of improved condition.</p> <p>Legal Implications</p> <p>Direct award of a contract is permissible under the Contract Procedure Rules where the total value is below £25k and can demonstrate best value to the council.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	That this additional investment is not made and the Council continues to maintain Herefordshire’s Public Rights of Way network in accordance with sound asset management practices but wholly within existing maintenance allocations and grant funding made available.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None.