

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Drainage Town and Parish Grant Funding
Date of decision:	13 th August 2026
Decision maker:	Major Contracts Programme Director
Authority for delegated decision:	On 13 February 2026, Full Council agreed the content of the 2026/27 Budget Setting report. As part of the report, Full Council agreed that £445,000 would be provided for Drainage. Delivery of the funding is proposed to be through Parish Lengthsman contract variation agreements or purchase orders, which are permissible under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. On 10 March 2026, the Cabinet Member Roads and Regulatory Services and Cabinet Member Local Engagement and Community Resilience confirmed the Public Realm Services Annual Plan for 2026/27 and specified: g) the Major Contracts Programme Director be authorised to spend up to £945,000 from ear marked reserves to support the delivery of the Parish Lengthsman Scheme, Parish Public Rights of Way Scheme and Parish Drainage Scheme
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	Town and Parish Councils were invited to provide submissions for the Drainage Grant funding in March 2026.
Decision made:	To vary the Parish Lengthsman contract with a further 91 Town and Parish Councils, to deliver £601,000 of drainage improvement works, as set out in this report
Reasons for decision:	Working with parishes on locally important maintenance supports the Council's Delivery Plan 2026/27 objective to: 'Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure network in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county.' On 13 February 2026, Full Council approved the 2026/27 Budget Setting report, which included the reallocation of directorate reserves to maintain expenditure for Drainage (£445,000). On 10 March 2026, the Cabinet Member Roads and Regulatory Services and Cabinet Member Local Engagement and Community Resilience confirmed the Public Realm Services Annual Plan for 2026/27 and authorised the Major Contracts Programme Director to spend up to £945,000 from ear marked reserves to support the delivery of the Parish Lengthsman Scheme, Parish Public Rights of Way Scheme and Parish Drainage Scheme.

	In March 2026, Town and Parish Councils were invited to submit proposals for this funding, which is intended to support both the maintenance and improvement of existing drainage assets and features, as well as the creation of new drainage infrastructure. They were asked to provide an outline proposal that included estimated costings, photographs, and what3words locations to support their application. An additional £156,000 was carried over from the 2025/26 Drainage grant, as it was unspent. This brought the total budget to £601,000. The total value of applications received for 2026/27 was £769,861.73, meaning that the available funding was oversubscribed and not all proposals could be supported within the approved budget. Consequently, applications were prioritised, with preference given to minor schemes that would create new drainage assets or features aimed at reducing flood risk on the highway network. This included the installation of culverts, drains, pipes and other drainage infrastructure. Applications were reviewed by the Flood Risk Management team in collaboration with Highway Drainage Technicians to determine whether there was a clearly evidenced need for the proposed works, whether it was likely to provide an effective and proportionate solution to the identified drainage issue, and whether it would deliver sufficient public benefit, including reducing the risk of flooding to properties or alleviating significant flooding on the public highway. Once the minor schemes had been assessed and funding allocated to those approved for delivery, the remaining budget was distributed proportionately across all maintenance projects. These projects included routine activities such as ditch clearance, cutting grips, etc. Submissions from 91 Town and Parish Councils, with a total value of £601,000, have been received and assessed at this stage as meeting the funding criteria, providing a justified need for intervention, and representing good value for money for the Council.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Financial Implications • A total budget of £601,000 has been allocated to this project (comprising £445,000 for this year and £156,000 carried over from last year). • The submissions from the 91 Town and Parish Councils total £769,861.73 of works. • Project codes will be allocated so that the project manager assigned can monitor and review progress to enable reporting to the relevant programme boards. Risk Management • The identified works should reduce the risk to users on the network as a result of improved condition.

	Legal Implications • 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.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	That this additional investment is not made and the Council continues to maintain Herefordshire's drainage 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

Signed

Date: