

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 21 February 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Reallocation of Community Match underspend to Road Safety schemes

Purpose: To consider the allocation of a proportion of the current Community Match underspend to deliver community focused road safety interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the allocation of £0.750m from the current Community Match underspend to provide community focused road safety interventions;**
 - (2) Approve that any future in-year underspend within the allocated Community Match budget be reallocated to fund additional community focused road safety interventions; and**
 - (3) Approve the proposed two stage appraisal process and criteria, and delegate authority to the Director Communities, Economy and Transport to approve any future amendments to the appraisal process;**
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1 Background Information

1.1. The Community Match initiative has been operating since 2014 and has delivered fifteen schemes of importance to local communities, such as new footways or revised parking restrictions, which otherwise would not have been implemented through our capital programme of local transport improvements.

1.2 The current budget for Community Match is £0.250m per annum. However, due to fewer Community Match schemes than anticipated being taken forward to construction, has led to an underspend of £0.990m accruing within the allocated Community Match budget. Three Community Match schemes have been allocated funding in 2021/22 financial year, £25,000 to Burwash for a traffic calming scheme, £12,500 to Rotherfield for a speed limit scheme and £17,500 to the Spatham Lane speed limit scheme. Other feasibility appraisals are ongoing, and it is likely there will be a small number of further schemes granted funding during 2022/23 financial year for implementation. It is therefore prudent to estimate the underspend at approximately £0.750m.

1.3 If the current trend in community match applications does not change it is forecast that in future financial years there will also be an underspend at year end.

2 Supporting Information

2.1. It is recognised that for Members, road safety issues feature highly in constituents' concerns for their communities. However, the level of funding available for road safety has seen significant reductions since the removal of the dedicated central government annual £0.800m Road Safety Grant in 2010. This has resulted in interventions being prioritised on their potential contribution to

casualty reduction and sites/routes that can demonstrate that they have a significant and sustained history of crashes.

2.2. We receive many requests for small scale road safety improvements to be made which we are unable to consider due to the level of funding that is available and the need to currently prioritise our work to sites that contribute significantly to casualty reduction or fulfil the priorities identified by our Local Transport Plan (LTP). It is therefore proposed that the £0.750m of Community Match underspend be allocated to deliver Local Safety Infrastructure schemes at sites where there is not necessarily a significant and/or sustained history of crashes, but where concerns have been raised by the local community and a member of the Road Safety Team has assessed that there is an identified road safety issue.

2.3 This approach would demonstrate our commitment to addressing identified road safety concerns, allow for a more flexible approach and ensure a more efficient use of the limited available budget.

2.4 Sites would be prioritised through a two-stage appraisal process, with criteria which would enable the delivery of interventions and improvements that would address a greater number of the concerns raised by our local communities. Selected schemes would address identified road safety concerns, cost no more than £40,000, and would be identified by considering a range of issues and specific site characteristics, weighted to define their relative priority. The proposed two stage appraisal process is shown at Appendix 1. The criteria are more community focused and offers a more localised balance to our current criteria for road safety interventions which is focused on casualty reduction.

2.5 To ensure that delivery of these schemes does not impact the current work undertaken by the Road Safety Team, the initial proposed allocation of £0.750m would fund a three-year programme with approximately 7 to 10 schemes implemented each year. Any future in-year underspends from the Community Match Budget would be added to this programme which would enable it to be extended beyond the initial period.

2.6 An indication of the type of Local Safety Infrastructure improvements that could be implemented include centre islands, village gateways, school safety schemes and extensions/new speed limits/zones. Costs for these types of schemes are site dependent but can typically range between:

- Centre island £10,000 to £30,000
- Village gateways £2,000 to £5,000 per site
- School safety schemes £10,000 to £50,000, which could include enhanced signing/road markings, a 20 mph speed limit, an advisory 20mph speed limit (when lights are flashing) or traffic calming
- New speed limit - £10,000 to £30,000
- Extension to an existing speed limit £5,000 to £10,000

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. Fewer Community Match schemes than anticipated being taken forward to construction has led to an underspend accruing. With the level of suppressed demand relating to road safety interventions this funding could be re-allocated to address a range of road safety and community concerns. It is therefore recommended that £0.750m of the historic Community Match underspend be reallocated to enable the County Council to deliver a range of community focused road safety interventions.

3.2. To ensure a clear and efficient allocation of the available funding it is also recommended that the proposed two stage appraisal process and criteria be approved, and that authority is

delegated to the Director Communities, Economy and Transport to approve any future amendments to the appraisal process.

3.3. Existing Community Match schemes that are currently going through the design and ultimately delivery process would still be funded from the annual Community Match allocation and the remaining underspend of £0.240m.

3.4 To ensure an efficient use of any future Community Match allocation, it is recommended that any in-year underspend is also allocated, on an annual basis, to deliver further road safety interventions that would provide benefit to local communities.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All Members.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.