

**Report to:** Lead Member for Transport and Environment

**Date of meeting:** 8 September 2025

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - Funding Request Assessment Process

**Purpose:** To seek approval of a revised process to assess and prioritise requests for transport schemes included in the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements, that is in alignment with the East Sussex LTP4.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) agree the revisions to the current scheme request assessment process, to ensure alignment with the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4);
- (2) note that the approach will be subject to ongoing review to establish whether any further changes are required to inform future Capital Programmes for Local Transport Improvements and any further revisions will be reported to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for approval; and
- (3) note that consideration will be required regarding the anticipated changes coming forward as part of the provision of a longer-term funding settlement for transport in association with proposed establishment of the Sussex Mayoral Combined County Authority from May 2026.

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**1. Background Information**

1.1. The East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was adopted by East Sussex County Council at the Full Council meeting in October 2024. This strategy embraces a planning for people and places approach focusing on enabling and encouraging integrated journeys and reducing the need to travel through land-use and planning policies that support sustainable travel. It aims to encourage and enable inclusive and sustainable travel modes (walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport), adopting vehicles with cleaner fuels alongside the utilisation of emerging transport technologies that will help to achieve net-zero ambitions.

1.2. With the change in policy direction for the authority as set out in the East Sussex LTP4, there is a need to review the assessment process for the prioritisation of small transport schemes received via requests from either local councillors or the public. This process enables measures to be prioritised for inclusion in the County Council's annual capital programme for local transport improvements from 2026/27, that align to the priorities set out within the new East Sussex LTP4, since the current assessment process reflects the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).

1.3. An extensive review has been undertaken with officers from the Infrastructure Planning & Place and the Road Safety teams to develop an approach that will provide a balanced capital programme for local transport improvements for 2026/27. This work has included assessing the length of time and knowledge needed to complete an assessment, the length of time a high-level assessment requires to be undertaken and whether to assess the LTP4 objectives or outcomes. It also recognises that this is a tool that needs to retain an element of professional officer judgement in developing the final balanced programme of schemes. The new approach and tool have been subject to testing as outlined in paragraphs 2.8 – 2.9.

1.4. This report only applies to those schemes prioritised for inclusion in the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements using ring fenced integrated transport government grant funding received annually and will not have any impact on shortlisting or funding of other schemes including road safety improvements delivered through the Speed Management Programme.

## **2. Supporting Information**

### LTP3 Sifting approach

2.1. The LTP3 scheme prioritisation approach, previously developed and approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in 2011, has been used as the basis for the review. This has been used to assess and prioritise requests for schemes for inclusion in the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements between 2012/13 and 2025/26. The LTP3 approach consists of 2 key assessment stages:

- (1) **A high-level sifting approach.** This stage assesses requests against LTP3 priority investment areas (coastal towns), the scale of impact and policies, which include the LTP3 objectives.
- (2) **Detailed Appraisal of schemes that progressed from stage 1.** This stage reviews the policy impact and priority area. It also considered potential risks, a finance assessment and an indication of value for money.

### Overview of proposed East Sussex LTP4 – High Level Sift approach

2.2. The revised LTP4 request assessment process has been developed to retain the initial high level sift and it is proposed to include three key topic areas:

- **Request and location information** – this section identifies the focus of the request and where it is located.
- **Policy Impact (LTP4)** – this section assesses how the request aligns with the East Sussex LTP4's objective outcomes (all 26 objective outcomes are outlined in Appendix 1). This is alongside an assessment of road safety crash data.
- **Other – alignment with other policies** – this section enables consideration of other policies within the department (i.e. specific road safety policies) and whether the request links with other existing or pipeline schemes that have allocated funding. This is alongside provision for any other comments that may be relevant for consideration at this early stage.

2.3. Similar to the LTP3, the policy impacts of each scheme request will be scored to support the decision-making process to inform which schemes progress to detailed appraisal. Appendix 2 outlines the topic areas that are considered as part of the assessment for LTP3 and LTP4 approaches.

### Key differences between the LTP3 and LTP4 sifting approach

2.4. To ensure that the approach reflects the East Sussex LTP4, there are 2 key differences between the existing LTP3 approach and the proposed LTP4 related to sifting and detailed appraisal approaches.

2.5. Firstly, there is no weighting applied to road safety, economic growth or the geographic extent (with a weighting previously applied to schemes within the coastal towns). The East Sussex LTP4 objectives have an equal weighting.

2.6. Secondly, the focus is on assessing requests received against the 26 East Sussex LTP4 outcomes rather than the 6 objectives. Due to the comprehensive nature of the outcomes, it provides officers a more nuanced and robust approach by considering each outcome individually, rather than an overarching strategic objective.

## Overview of proposed East Sussex LTP4 detailed appraisal approach

2.7. Similar to the LTP3 assessment approach, the detailed appraisal approach will consider:

- **Scheme details and location** – this includes the location details and considers factors such as levels of deprivation.
- **Policy assessment (LTP4)** – this reviews and updates the policy assessment undertaken as part of the high level sift assessment.
- **Risk assessment** – this assesses the likelihood and scale for any early identified potential risks.
- **Financial assessment** – this provides an early estimated assessment of scheme costs.
- **Economic assessment** – this helps to identify which requests are likely to provide value for money if delivered.

## Testing

2.8. Early testing of the proposed approach has been undertaken with officers from the Infrastructure Planning and Place and Road Safety Teams. Testing has indicated that the location of schemes prioritised changes (because of the removal of the weighting to the geographic location of a scheme that was previously applied to the coastal towns as part of the LTP3 scheme prioritisation process). As outlined in paragraph 2.5 the East Sussex LTP4 objectives have an equal weighting. However, the testing indicated that the top 10 prioritised schemes retain a distribution across both urban and rural geographies.

2.9. Intervention types that are requested more frequently by the public (e.g. Active travel schemes, road safety related schemes), are reflected more often in the top 10 schemes prioritised, and schemes that are route based are more likely to score well.

## Ongoing review of LTP4 detailed appraisal approach

2.10. The approach will be subject to ongoing review, following the development of the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements for 2026/27, to establish whether any further changes are required to inform future transport capital programmes to ensure that it is relevant and robust. The review will include any feedback from the briefing session with the LTP4 Scrutiny Member Reference Group held on 3 September 2025 and any subsequent engagement. Any further revisions will be reported to the Lead Member ahead of the decision-making meeting.

2.11. It is also important to note that changes to funding are anticipated from the UK Government. This is likely to include the provision of a longer-term funding settlement for transport. This is in association with devolution and the proposed establishment of a Sussex Mayoral Combined County Authority across East Sussex, Brighton and Hove and West Sussex in May 2026 and proposed local government reorganisation which includes the proposed development of a unitary authority in East Sussex.

2.12. Therefore, the transport priorities for the wider Sussex geography will be set by the new Mayor eventually through the development of a joint LTP across the Sussex geography. We anticipate more information becoming available in late 2025 and into 2026, which we will need to consider in the context of this transport scheme assessment process.

## **3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1. With the change in policy direction for the authority as set out in the East Sussex LTP4, the request assessment process, which includes both the high level sift and the detailed appraisal assessment, have been updated to reflect these changes. The proposed assessment process will ensure that a balanced Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements is developed in 2026/27 which includes schemes that align with the East Sussex LTP4.

3.2. To ensure that the approach remains relevant and robust, a further review will be undertaken following the development of the 2026/27 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements. This will be timely as the Council will also consider the anticipated changes coming forward as part of the provision of a longer-term funding settlement for transport in association with the proposed development of the Sussex Mayoral Combined County Authority, which would come into effect in May 2026. If any further changes are required to the request assessment process, this will then be reported to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment to seek approval.

3.3. Therefore, it is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approves the revised assessment process to enable the development of the Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements for 2026/27 which aligns with the objectives and outcomes of the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All Members

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Local Transport Plan 4 (<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/transport-planning/local-transport-plan/local-transport-plan-4>)