

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER, TRANSPORT AND STREETSCENE**

**SUBJECT:** **PRIORITISATION OF HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES AND TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER VARIATIONS**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To inform the Committee of the proposal to introduce a matrix which will be used in future to assess and prioritise highway improvement schemes to provide County wide consistency and ensure maximum benefit is derived from any available funding source.

1.02 To inform the Committee of the proposal to introduce a matrix which will be used in future to assess and prioritise Traffic Regulation Order related requests to ensure that the revisions and variations are carried out on a defined priority basis.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Authority is able to bid for funds from the Welsh Government (WG) to undertake improvements to the road network. Up to April 2014, this was mainly organised through the Taith Partnership with bids for the Safer Routes in the Community funding (SRIC) made directly sent to WG.

2.02 Since April 2014, all bids are made directly to WG from each Local Authority, and currently include the following areas:

- Local Transport Fund (LTF) – to provide sustainable travel initiatives, including walking and cycling
- Road Safety Capital – to undertake improvements on the road network linked to casualty reduction
- Road Safety Revenue – to provide education, training and publicity measures to reduce casualties in identified high risk groups
- SRIC – measures aimed at walking/cycling links to schools, which may also have general community benefits.

- 2.03 During the last few years, the WG have introduced an increasing number of recommendations, and conditions which need to be met by any bid which are generally linked to improvement in travel opportunities, eg cycle routes, casualty reduction for the road safety bids, and school/community safety initiatives for the SRIC bid.
- 2.04 Currently, the conditions are different for each of the different bids, to reflect the varying nature of the identified problem, and the relevant remedial measures that could be applied.
- 2.05 The Authority also has a list of highway locations which have been the subject of requests for various highway improvements and compiled over many years. These have been logged but not currently subject to any prioritisation and there is currently no internal funding to carry out the work.
- 2.06 In order to be able to assess the benefit that may be gained from undertaking any particular scheme, it is proposed to introduce a matrix to quantify both the scale of the current problem, and to calculate the benefits of the improvement. The matrix would produce a numerical assessment or value for the schemes allowing a true comparison and subsequent prioritisation of the various projects across the County to be produced.
- 2.07 The proposed matrix is a combination of measurable factors, ie casualty and traffic data, together with an engineered assessment of the present conditions and a prediction of the benefits of the scheme to the various road user groups.
- 2.08 It is not possible to devise a meaningful matrix that relies solely on directly measurable factors and the professionally engineered input allows for consideration of what may be unique local conditions which can be appropriately scored within the listed parameters. The matrix would be applicable to all schemes forwarded for a WG bid and to those general improvements which could be completed from internal Capital funds as and when they become available.
- 2.09 A copy of the matrix is included in Appendix A of this report.
- 2.10 Following adoption of CPE powers by the Council in 2013, there are constant demands from local members, T&CC's and residents to review, relax or provide new Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) to control parking on various streets and roads across the County.
- 2.11 Currently there is no mechanism to prioritise these requests for TRO amendments and this has resulted in frustration for the individual or organisation requesting the change. No indication of the likely date for considering the request can currently be provided and the scheme is added to a long list of similar requests.

2.12 The proposal is to introduce a matrix to evaluate each enquiry in order to produce a defined list of priority schemes for TRO variations. As with the matrix for minor improvements the matrix will produce a numeric score for each of the proposals to allow a true comparison and priority list to be produced.

2.13 A copy of the matrix is included in Appendix B of this report.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 There are currently many different types of highway and safety improvement schemes being promoted, and requested, such as casualty reduction schemes, school/community based safety schemes, and various requests to improve the network for road users.

3.02 For schemes which can be supported by appropriate funding from WG, increasing conditions have been linked to bids, generally data led, to ensure that approved schemes provide a positive return in terms of casualty reduction and school/community benefits.

3.03 The matrix proposed will provide a single assessment method for all types of improvements and will be utilised to identify schemes which provide the greatest benefits and those which are most likely to be successful in achieving external funding.

3.04 The matrix will also provide an assessment method for all other highway/safety schemes which may be requested and which could be financed internally, or from other source.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That members of the Committee note the benefits of introducing a Highway Improvement Matrix, and recommend the introduction of the matrix to evaluate future Highway Improvements and to form the basis for prioritising future funding bids to WG and the Councils own capital works programme.

4.02 That Members note the benefits of introducing a TRO Assessment Matrix, and recommend the introduction of the proposed matrix for evaluating and prioritising TRO amendments, variations or the provision of new TRO's.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 The Highway Improvement Matrix will help identify qualifying schemes, and will strongly support the justification for any bids forwarded for funding.

5.02 The TRO Improvement Matrix will improve budget monitoring arrangements allowing a specific number of requests to be taken forward each year.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 No identifiable impact.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 Environmental impact will form part of both of the matrix. The highway/safety schemes progressed will be those possessing the greatest benefits to the local communities and road users and those delivering improvements to the Environmental impact of the network.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 No identifiable impact.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None at this time.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 With Cabinet Member.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix A – Improvement matrix for Highway Improvements.  
Appendix B – Matrix for prioritising TRO requests

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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