

26 April 2022

For immediate release

Communities to have more say on the highways issues that matter most to them

Wiltshire Council Cabinet has today (Tuesday 26 April) approved plans to change Community Area Transport Groups (CATGs) into Local Highway and Footway Improvement Groups (LHFIGs) – and increase funding for community highways projects.

The 18 new LHFIGs – one for each community area in Wiltshire – will be made up of local Wiltshire Council members, town and parish council representatives, and stakeholders from the local community. They will be tasked with identifying small-scale local highways projects in their area to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling.

The key difference between the new LHFIGs and the former CATGs is that the new groups will be able to improve or repair existing infrastructure such as highways and footways, while still investing in new infrastructure, as the previous CATGs could.

The new bodies will also be able to access more funding – £400,000 in total, with the exact allocation for each area based on geographical size and population. This funding comprises £250,000 and £150,000 for officer resource to administer, realise and advise on the projects. There is also a central £250,000 substantive fund that LHFIGs can apply to annually to help fund larger highways projects.

Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: “These new LHFIGs will build on the success of CATGs and enable communities to focus on the highways priorities that matter most to them. The new groups meet two key areas of our business plan – ensuring that communities are well connected and that services meet local needs.

“LHFIGs report into the local area board, so if anyone has any highways issues in their area that they’d like to improve, they should contact their local area board in the first instance for support and advice.

“This is far from just a name change, and what we’ve agreed will see significantly more investment into local highways.

“We look forward to the new LHFIGs beginning in the coming months, and for the first highways community priorities to be realised across the county.”

Once the LHFIG groups are operational, the groups remit will be reviewed after six months to ensure effectiveness and capacity.

To read the full Cabinet report, people can go to:

<https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=14349>

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