

# Lengthsman/P3 Update

## Proposed changes to the Lengthsman and P3 scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017

### **Cabinet Member: Transport and Roads – Decision dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

The role played by the parish councils in relation to maintaining the public realm and PROW network is valuable and it is considered important to support the commitment of the work the parishes undertake. The take up of the new scheme has been high and this success has led to an increased pressure on Herefordshire Council's overall revenue budgets which cannot be sustained.

In order to effectively manage this pressure and to allow parish councils additional time to plan for funding for their lengthsman and P3 activities in future years the decision was taken to maintain grant levels for 2016/17, for those individual parishes currently in the scheme.

During budget consultation last year the scheme was not seen as a strategic priority for Herefordshire and indication was given that parishes should be encouraged to take on more responsibility for delivery of the services.

Following a review of options the following decision has been made:

- 1. The Lengthsman and P3 schemes will require contributions from all parish councils as a condition of receiving funding from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017**
- 2. The council financial contributions be phased out over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20**

## Funding arrangements

- **Eligibility** – The schemes will be open to **any parish** that would like to join including those not previously in either of the lengthsman or P3 schemes
- **Mandatory contribution** - A **contribution from the parish will be required** in order to access any grant funding. Minimum £60/km for lengthsman and £15/km for P3 in those years when grants are available. Pro rata depending on level of grant applied for.
- **Lengthsman grant** –the grant will be **reduced to £30/km for 2017/18** (25% of today's level) and then reducing to **£0 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018**
- **P3 grant** – grant will be **£50/km for both 2017/18 and 2018/19** (100% of today's level) and then reducing to **£0 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019**.

These grants are the maximum that a parish can apply for. If a parish requires less grant amount then this should be applied for on the basis of £30 for every £60 the parish will contribute for Lengthsman activity and £50 for every £15 the parish will contribute for P3 activity.

	Lengthsman grant		P3 grant	
	HC contribution	PC contribution	HC contribution	PC contribution
<b>17/18</b>	£30/km	£60/km	£50/km	£15/km
<b>18/19</b>	£0	100%	£50/km	£15/km
<b>19/20</b>	£0	100%	£0	100%

Table 1 : Summary of grant allocations

## Questions & Answers

- Q. Why is there a focus on maintaining P3 grant funding and not Lengthsman funding.
- A. The PROW maintenance budget is limited and the P3 grant effectively tops this up by a further 100%. Reducing the P3 grant would have significant impact on money spent overall on PROW maintenance in the county. The equivalent % of lengthsman to highway maintenance budget is small so would have little impact if removed.

There has been for many years a significant backlog in repairs to PROW defects with only hazards and published routes being maintained. P3 grant has allowed an alternative means of getting some of this backlog reduced.

Due to the requirement to have a volunteer Parish Paths Officer this means the grant has the added benefit in leveraging in significant volunteer support.

- Q. What level of funding will I get next year?
- A. This will be based on the length of the C, UC and PROW network within the parish and based on the grant levels set out in Table 1 above. Your parish does not have to take up the full grant but any grant applied for will need to be on a pro rata basis to include the parish contributions. I.e. for every £60 the parish contributes for Lengthsman can apply for £30 and for every £15 the parish contributes for P3 can apply for £15. Some examples have been provided below.
- Q. Will the schemes be closed once funding is no longer provided?
- A. No, the schemes will remain open although grant funding will not be available from 1st April 2018 for Lengthsman and 1st April 2019 for both schemes. Parishes will be encouraged to continue funding their lengthsman from their own precepts. The budgets parishes allocate to lengthsman/P3 activity would be up to the discretion of the parishes concerned based on their own assessment of need.

- Q. Can we undertake any work we want to on the highway if we are funding ourselves?
- A. No, appropriate permissions need to be in place to allow for work to be undertaken on the highway. We would still request that parishes provide a forward plan of their work through the submission of their annual maintenance plan. This should be discussed and agreed with your locality steward and will form the basis of permission for works and identification of appropriate roads and locations.
- Q. Will we still be able to access materials?
- A. Yes, we will continue to support those parishes who wish to purchase materials through ourselves. However parishes can make their own arrangements to purchase appropriate materials direct with suppliers if they prefer.
- Q. We did not receive any Lengthsman/P3 grant this year. Can I apply for next year?
- A. Yes, it is planned to open up the scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to any parish that is interested in apply for grant for Lengthsman, P3 or both.
- Q. If grant funding is no longer available and we choose not to fund from our precept does that mean **no** highways work will take place in the parish?
- A. No, BBLP acting on behalf of Herefordshire Council as the highways authority still has a duty to maintaining the highway, and will deal with safety issues. However the level of work usually undertaken by the lengthsman would generally not be considered as high risk or a priority and given reducing budgets, it is unlikely that this level of activity would be maintained so the work done by the lengthsman would be unlikely to be completed by BBLP unless becomes a safety concern. We would encourage that parishes consider raising their precept to maintain their lengthsman to allow these works to continue in the parish.
- Q. Do you not have a duty to provide this grant funding to parishes?
- A. No The council has power to allocate such work under a Lengthsman and or P3 scheme but it has no duty to do so and therefore, may cancel or suspend a scheme at any time.

The Lengthsman coordinator can be contacted at Balfour Beatty Living Places on:

Tel: 01432 261800

Email: [herefordshireparishes@bblivingplaces.com](mailto:herefordshireparishes@bblivingplaces.com)

## Worked examples for 2017/18

Grant funding for the Lengthsmen and P3 activities against works, material and equipment identified in the parish council's annual maintenance plan would be made up of a number of separately funded elements:

1. A lengthsmen grant of £30 per kilometre (**funded by Herefordshire Council**) up to a maximum based on the lengths of C and Unclassified roads in the parish.
2. A mandatory contribution of minimum £60 per kilometre (**funded by Parish Council**), up to a maximum based on the lengths of C and Unclassified roads in the parish.
3. A P3 grant of £50 per kilometre (**funded by Herefordshire Council**) up to a maximum based on the lengths of Public Rights of Way paths in the parish, subject to a Parish Paths Officer in post.
4. A mandatory contribution of minimum £15 per kilometre (**funded by Parish Council**) up to a maximum based on the lengths of Public Rights of Way paths in parish

### Example A:

Parish Council 'A' has 10 km of C and U roads and is eligible for Lengthsman grant [10 km @ £30 per km = £300]; In addition has 12 km of paths and is eligible for P3 grant [12 km @ £50 per km = £600]. To access both grants the parish has to contribute [Lengthsman 10km @ £60 per km = £600, 12km @ £15 per km = £180]

Parish Council	Allocated P3 grant	Allocated Lengthsman grant	Total Grant from HC	Mandatory P3 fund from parish	Mandatory Lengthsman fund from parish	Total budget available to parish
A	£600	£300	£900	£180	£600	£1680

### Example B:

Parish Council 'B' has 10 km of C and U roads and is eligible for Lengthsman grant [10 km @ £30 per km = £300]; To access lengthsman grant parish has to contribute [Lengthsman 10km @ £60 per km = £600] Parish only requires £650 for PROW works so applies for £500 [650/65 \*50 = 500] and has to contribute £150 [650/65 \*15]

Parish Council	Allocated P3 grant	Allocated Lengthsman grant	Total Grant from HC	Mandatory P3 fund from parish	Mandatory Lengthsman fund from parish	Total budget available to parish
B	£500	£300	£800	£150	£600	£1550

### Example C:

As Example A above but the Parish identifies a need for additional work in the parish and decides to allocate an additional £1,000 from its precept

Parish Council	Allocated P3 grant	Allocated Lengthsman grant	Total Grant from HC	Mandatory P3 fund from parish	Mandatory Lengthsman fund from parish	Additional contribution from parish to meet need	Total budget available to parish
C	£600	£300	£900	£180	£600	£1,000	£2680