

September 2024

Enhanced Highway Maintenance (EHM) Pilot and Volunteer Training

Introduction

The following Frequently Asked Questions(FAQs) information is designed to give guidance to questions raised about the EHM Pilot and Volunteer Training scheme, which we hope you will find helpful.

The EHM Pilot is being coordinated by Somerset Council working with our contractor, Kier. Any queries should be directed to the dedicated email and hotline.

Email: somersetehm@kier.co.uk

Call: **07526 508023**

For the avoidance of doubt, the term *Parish Councils* referenced throughout these FAQs is shorthand for *City, Town and Parish Councils* within Somerset.

The FAQs will be updated as further queries come in from our Parish Councils – this is a live document - so please revisit and use these resources frequently.

Thank you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should we contact for advice about any potential work that we may wish to undertake as part of this pilot?

*The initial point of contact will be the Kier Community Engagement Manager – via email somersetehm@kier.co.uk or by calling **07526 508023**.*

However, it will also be helpful for Parish Councils wishing to participate to raise their interest at the relevant LCN for your area, via the LCN Link Officers or through the LCN Highways and Traffic Working Group. This might lead to further economies of scale.

Can Parish Councils carry out work themselves instead of commissioning the work via this pilot proposal?

Yes, this pilot is a proposal to offer options to Parishes to enable work to be done within their area, but it is entirely up to the Parish whether they wish to engage or not.

Can Parish Councils carry out work via a contractor appointed by them instead of commissioning the work via this pilot proposal?

Yes, absolutely. Parish Councils are not compelled to take part in the pilot offer from Somerset Council and Kier.

Does a Parish Council need to register their interest in accessing this pilot?

*Yes, Parish Councils should register their desire to be a part of the pilot via the Kier Community Engagement Manager. The email for all communications is somersetehm@kier.co.uk and the dedicated telephone line is **07526 508023**.*

Can a Parish Council engage with Kier for a half day if required?

Yes they can, however it is not particularly economic or arguably the best use of time. Small parishes who are considering this may wish to buddy up with a neighbouring parish to “purchase” a whole day?

What does a daily rate constitute timewise?

A full day will be eight hours, including travel.

Is this pilot a permanent arrangement?

The initial project will run as a pilot for one year until September 2025 to gauge interest and assess levels of uptake for viability. It is hoped that with sufficient interest this project will become a permanent arrangement.

At what level will volunteers be trained and what will it cost?

Volunteers will be trained to undertake low risk activities only; it is not a replacement for traffic management training.

*All training will be undertaken **free of charge**.*

How will I know if the work my Parish requires is not a statutory workstream?

The Community Engagement Manager at Kier will be able to inform Parishes if the work they are requesting is going to be undertaken by Kier as a part of their statutory responsibilities so that the Parish does not pay for unnecessary work.

What do I do if my Parish does not currently have the monies available to partner with Kier for any work?

It is accepted that for 2024/25 some parishes may not have sufficient spare in their budgets or reserves to engage during this financial year. We would suggest, should a parish wish to engage, that it allows in its precept request for 2025/26 to carry out whatever work it wishes to undertake post March 2025.

However, we should stress the essence of the scheme is that it's an enhanced service for our communities if they wish to proceed with it. It's entirely within the gift of local communities as to whether they take this up or not.

What are the statutory responsibilities placed upon the Highways Authority?

Information is available via Somerset Council's Highways webpages: [HERE](#)

What should I do if the Highways Authority are not discharging their statutory responsibilities as required?

Any statutory responsibilities falling short should be reported to Somerset Council Highways.

How do we find out when the Council will be doing statutory work, so we don't duplicate work that is already scheduled

The Community Engagement Manager at Kier will liaise with the Somerset Council Highways team to ensure there are no duplications of work and advise accordingly.

How often can my parish request additional work?

*A Parish Council can request work **at any time**, there are no deadlines in place nor restrictions on the number of occasions that it can be requested.*

Will a Parish Council be re-imbursed for work after it has been requested and completed?

No, this is a scheme for an enhanced level of service over and above the statutory minimum and entirely based around how a parish wishes to enhance its area.

Will Parish Council staff and/or volunteers be able to work alongside Kier operatives in undertaking some of the work required?

Yes, as long as this is organised in advance, and it is clear and agreed re the work each party will undertake.

How much is each day going to cost my Parish and will there be a reduction per day if a number of consecutive days are required?

You should speak with the Engagement Manager about multi-day engagements. Contact them via email or by phone.

*The email for all communications is somersetehm@kier.co.uk and the dedicated telephone line is **07526 508023**.*

What will the costs buy?

The quoted costs will “buy” 2x operatives, a suitable vehicle, hand tools and basic highways machinery – whacker plate, drills etc.