Project Prioritisation Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and procedure the Council will follow when determining the relative priority of proposed projects with a potential cost of £10,000 and over. It ensures consistency, transparency, and accountability in decision-making and provides a clear audit trail for residents, councillors, and external regulators.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all capital and non-capital projects considered by the Council, its committees, and working groups, including but not limited to community improvements, infrastructure works, maintenance schemes, and service development initiatives.

3. Principles

When assessing projects, the Council will give due regard to:

- Statutory obligations and regulatory requirements.
- Evidence of community need and public benefit.
- Financial stewardship and long-term value for money.
- Practical deliverability, including risk and resourcing.
- Environmental, heritage, and rural character considerations.
- Alignment with approved Council strategies and plans.

These principles reflect established good practice within the local government sector.

4. Decision-Making Framework

To ensure a consistent approach, each proposed project shall be assessed using the Project Prioritisation Matrix, set out in Section 5.

Councillors shall consider each criterion objectively and record a score from 1 (low) to 5 (high) after Council has agreed formally (at a full council meeting) to consider the project.

The final priority level shall be informed by the total score but may also take account of exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly minuted.

5. Project Prioritisation Matrix

Criterion	Description	Notes	Score (0–5)
Statutory or Legal Requirement	Extent to which the project is required to meet statutory duties, regulatory compliance, or health and safety responsibilities.	**5 -** Legally required or linked to compliance / safety duties (e.g., H&S, accessibility, audit requirements). **3 -** Helps meet recommended best practice. **1 -** Purely discretionary.	

Community Benefit and Need	Evidence of demand and the breadth of benefit to residents or groups.	**5 -** Strong, demonstrated need across the parish, widespread community support. **3 -** Medium community interest or benefits a specific group. **1 -** Limited or unclear benefit.	
Deliverability and Practicality	Feasibility of delivering the project, including permissions, risk, timescales, and operational capacity.	**5 -** Straightforward to deliver, clear scope, minimal risk, permissions already in place. **3 -** Achievable but with moderate obstacles (planning, permissions, partners). **1 -** High uncertainty, unclear pathway, or dependency on outside organisations.	
Cost	Initial cost	**5 -** Low cost. **3 -** Moderate cost. **1 -** High cost.	
Maintenance Cost	Ongoing maintenance implications, and value for money over the project's lifespan.	**5 -** Minimal maintenance burden. **3 -** Requires some ongoing maintenance. **1 -** High ongoing maintenance	
Funding Availability	Extent to which the project is funded or fundable through grants, external contributions, or existing budgets.	**5 -** Fully funded or grant-funded, no risk to the precept. **3 -** Part-funded or realistic grant potential. **1 -** Requires full council funding with limited external support. **0** – Requires full funding but funds not available.	
Environmental and Heritage Impact	Impact on the natural environment, local heritage assets, and the character of the parish.	**5 -** Protects or enhances the local environment, heritage assets, or village character. **3 -** Neutral impact. **1 -** Potential negative impact or risk to heritage features.	
Strategic Fit	Alignment with the Council's approved priorities, plans, surveys, and long-term objectives.	**5 -** Strong alignment with published council objectives (e.g., Neighbourhood Plan, parish surveys). **3 -** Some alignment. **1 -** Little connection to agreed priorities.	
Total Score (out of 40)			

6. Procedure

- Initial Proposal: All project proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk, who will prepare supporting documentation where required.
- Assessment: Councillors shall individually score the project against each criterion. Completed forms to be received by the Clerk 14 days after the project proposal has been agreed by full council, in readiness for the following meeting (if not received in time will not be counted).

- Discussion: The Council or relevant committee will review the scores collectively and discuss any points of clarification.
- Recording: The completed matrix and the rationale for the final priority rating shall be entered into the minutes.
- Projects with a score of less than 21 will not be pursued at this time. The scores will be averaged over the number of responses received.
- Review: Projects receiving higher scores should normally be scheduled for progression first, subject to available resources and any statutory constraints.
- Re-assessment: Projects not currently meeting a score of 18 or above may be re-scored if circumstances change, such as the availability of grants or the emergence of new community needs.

7. Transparency and Accountability

All discussions, scoring outcomes, and decisions relating to project prioritisation shall be recorded formally. This ensures openness with the public and provides a defensible basis for decisions during audit or public scrutiny.

8. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to legislative changes or council restructuring. Any amendments must be approved by the Council.

Adopted	13th January 2026
To be reviewed	January 2027