

Cherwell District Council

Executive

7 June 2021

Notification of Decision taken by the Corporate Director - Environment and Place under Urgency Powers – Garden Town Government Grant Programme

Report of Corporate Director - Environment and Place

This report is public

Purpose of report

To inform the Executive of a decision taken under urgency powers by the Corporate Director - Environment and Place regarding the Garden Town Government grant programme.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the urgent decision taken by the Corporate Director - Environment and Place presented at Appendix 1.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Constitution states that the Chief Executive may take an urgent decision in relation to an Executive function (in consultation with the Leader of the Council) if it is in the best interests of the Council and/or residents.

3.0 Report Details

The Council has entered into a Garden Town agreement with the Government. As part of this, the Council has received £2.9m funding for phase 1 of three capital schemes:

- 2.1.1 Ploughley Road Junction;
- 2.1.2 Banbury Road Roundabout; and
- 2.1.3 Pioneer Roundabout.

Phase 1 of the Garden Town programme is included within the 2020/21 capital programme.

- 3.2 The total programme costs for phases 1 and 2 are shown in the table below. Access to phase 2 funding is dependent on completing specific milestones for each project.

Table One: Garden Town Programme Costs

Project	Phase 1 £m	Milestone	Phase 2 £m	Total £m
Ploughley Road Junction	0.981	Feasibility Report – Done	2.819	3.800
Banbury Road Roundabout	0.950	Feasibility Work AND Planning Consent – expected Sept 2021	4.550	5.500
Pioneer Road Roundabout	1.015	Procurement of a contractor – GHVDC will appoint when legal agreement is signed with CDC.	4.044	5.059
Total	2.946		11.413	14.359

- 3.3 The Government has determined that the Council has achieved the milestones for Ploughley Road Junction and Pioneer Road Roundabout and so have released the associated phase 2 funds on condition that they are spent by 31 March 2021. It was only very recently that the Government has indicated that the phase 2 funding must be spent within this financial year and hence the reason for urgency in this report.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Constitution, this report is being submitted to the 7 June 2021 Executive advising of the urgent action taken.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Due to the urgency of the Government wanting the funding to be provided and spent in 2020/21 it was not possible to wait for the next Executive meeting for a decision to progress these proposals. The schemes already had tacit approval as phase 1 is included in the 2020/21 capital programme. Including the schemes in the 2020/21 capital programme provided the necessary authority to spend the funding by 31 March 2021.

5.0 Consultation

The Chief Executive was consulted and agreed that the Corporate Director was to take appropriate urgent action.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood, and relevant Lead Member, Cllr Lynn Pratt, were both consulted and were in agreement with the need to take the prescribed urgent decision.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also been consulted and agreed that the urgency decision was to be taken and agreed to waive call-in to enable the decision to be implemented with immediate effect.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options had been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To wait until the next meeting of Executive to seek an express delegation to consider and agree the request. The timing precluded that approach as the Government had requested that the money be accepted and spent no later than 31 March 2021.

Option 2: Not to accept the grant. This would mean that the schemes would not be able to progress as there was no alternative funding currently available.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 All of the additional capital costs associated with this scheme were to be funded by Government grant. Therefore, the Council will not face any additional borrowing costs or ongoing revenue costs through these changes to the capital programme.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7.2 Grant agreements were in place with Oxfordshire County Council (delivering Ploughley Road Junction and Banbury Roundabout) and Graven Hill Village Development Company Limited (delivering Pioneer Road Roundabout) to pass the Garden Town funding down to those providers before 31 March 2021 so they were able to begin to deliver on the three infrastructure objectives.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-contentious, 01295 221695,
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Risk Implications

7.3 Without an urgent decision being taken there is a key risk that the funding for phase 2 of these capital schemes would not be received and they would not then be able to proceed.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

Bicester North and Caversfield
Bicester East
Bicester West
Bicester South and Ambrosden

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 – Urgent decision notice

Background Papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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