

NEW HOMES BONUS GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS
Councillor Mordue
Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Compliance

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To make decisions on the allocation of New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant funding for parish and town council projects, based on the recommendations of the Informal NHB Grants Panel.

2 Recommendation

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| 2.1 | That the recommendations of the Informal NHB Grants Panel be approved, as set out in the schedule attached at Appendix A. |
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3 Background

- 3.1 The Informal NHB Grants Panel met on Wednesday 18 November 2015 to consider applications for funding from parish and town councils under the NHB grant funding scheme. The Panel consisted of Councillors Steven Lambert, Derek Town and Michael Rand and parish council representatives John Gilbey and John Riches (nominated by the Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils - AVALC). Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Strachan and parish representative Nick Heirons. The Director responsible, Community Manager and Grants Officer were also in attendance.
- 3.2 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a national initiative whereby funding from the national revenue grant for local authorities has been top sliced and allocated to local councils in proportion to the number of new homes in their area. For every new home built and occupied in Aylesbury Vale, the Government gives the council a NHB grant each year for six years.
- 3.3 In December 2012 the council agreed to allocate a share of the NHB to parish and town councils, to help alleviate the impacts of housing growth on local communities. 20% of the Government allocation has been set aside for the funding scheme, which equates to £938,000 being available in 2015/16, the third year of funding for town and parish councils. In addition, £192,404 was carried over from the second round of funding making a total of £1,130,404 available in this round.
- 3.4 In January 2013 Cabinet agreed the structure of an Informal Panel, to consider applications from parish and town councils and make recommendations to Cabinet on the allocation of the NHB funding. This Panel subsequently met to agree the detailed criteria and process for the grant scheme, based on the decisions of Cabinet.
- 3.5 The key criteria are:
- a. Applications should include a business case which as a minimum should demonstrate:
 - the impact of growth on their area, applications needn't necessarily be from the area directly taking growth in recognition of the fact that those most affected by growth are not always within the area taking that growth
 - the need or community desire for the investment proposed

- firm costings together with a funding and delivery plan
- b. Awards can be for up to 100% of the scheme cost and can support both capital and revenue projects (with a life of less than 6 years).
- 3.6 Prospective applicants were required to submit a preliminary 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) form to identify whether projects met the criteria, to discuss other possible funding sources (including Section 106), and avoid abortive work for potential applicants. The deadline for applications was 30 September 2015.

4. Applications for funding

- 4.1 In total 13 EOIs or enquires were received and eight parish and town councils subsequently submitted applications for consideration by the Panel, to a total value of £1,264,826.
- 4.2 In considering the applications the Panel members were unanimous in recommending funding for 7 applicants, totalling £1,114,826.
- 4.3 Whilst supportive of two of the three applications submitted by Buckingham Town Council in this round, the Panel considered that the purchase of an industrial unit, to house equipment for the maintenance of open spaces and playing fields, was not in keeping with the original NHB criteria (i.e. to help with the provision of community facilities associated with growth, that have tangible benefits for the communities accepting growth). The Panel agreed that the purchase of an industrial unit would be to the benefit of the town council in order to help fulfil its responsibility to the community, rather than for the benefit of the community.
- 4.4 The level of funding recommended and the reasons for the recommendations are outlined at Appendix A.
- 4.5 The Panel also recommended extending the funding agreements for five parishes that were awarded funding in the 2014/15 round, as completion of the projects has been delayed through no fault of the parishes concerned.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Once the level of funding is agreed, funding agreements with successful applicants will be finalised, which will include timescales for the delivery of the project, to be monitored by the Grants Officer, and against which phased grant payments may be made. Appropriate recognition of the support provided by the NHB funding scheme will also be sought through media publicity and appropriate signage.
- 5.2 The Panel agreed that Expressions of Interest should not be encouraged until NHB funding from the Government is confirmed for 2016/17 and that the next deadline for applications should be agreed by the grants officer with the Panel when funding is confirmed.
- 5.3 At its Annual General Meeting on 23 October 2015, AVALC re-elected Mr John Gilbey and Mr Nick Heirons as the parish representatives on the Informal NHB Grants Panel.

6. Options considered and reasons for recommendation

The options considered by the Panel for each application were whether to fund, the level of funding and whether any conditions should be attached to the funding, (above those included in the standard funding agreement: that a plaque or equivalent acknowledgment of AVDC's New Homes Bonus is displayed at an appropriate location, that there is recognition of New Homes Bonus support in all publicity and that funding will be released upon the production of invoices for work completed).

- 6.1 The reasons for the Panel's recommendations are included in the schedule attached as Appendix A.

7. Resource implications

- 7.1 All funding for parish and town councils under the NHB grant funding scheme will be drawn from the 20% of the Government allocation set aside and ring fenced for the scheme in 2015/16, and the underspend carried forward from 2014/15.
- 7.2 If the Panel recommendations are approved a total of £1,114,826 will be committed, representing 99% of the budget available. £15,578 will be carried forward and made available to support future applications.

8. Response to Key Aims and Objectives

- 8.1 The allocation of New Homes Bonus funding to parish and town councils helps support the council's corporate plan priorities of protecting and improving the living experience in the Vale and improving our interaction with parish councils.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

Jan Roffe, 01296 585186
Previous Cabinet and Council reports relating to the New Homes Bonus.
Notes of the Informal Panel meeting

New Homes Bonus budget 2015/16 Uncommitted budget 2014/15 Total budget available 2015/16		938,000 192,404 1,130,404			
Name of Town/ Parish Council applying	Project description	Total cost of project	Amount requested	Grant Panel's Recommendation	Reasons for recommendation and conditions of funding not covered by standard funding agreement
Buckingham Town Council	Town Centre toilets and Shopmobility	229,222	229,222	229,222	The Panel deferred a decision on funding the new toilet block in the last round because of the uncertainties surrounding its location and therefore the estimated cost of the scheme. Buckingham Town Council and AVDC have now mutually agreed the location of the toilet block in a safer and more accessible area of the car park to serve the needs of Buckingham's fast growing population. The revised application and project specification, to include a permanent and much improved base for Shopmobility, alleviated the previous concerns of the Panel and also demonstrated the need for a fit-for-purpose permanent base for Shopmobility. The Panel recommended funding up to the amount requested.
Aylesbury Town Council	2nd Paralympic Heritage Flame Lighting Ceremony ahead of Paralympic Games in Rio 2016	430,000	50,000	50,000	In the 2013/14 funding round, the Panel recommended funding for the first Paralympic Heritage Flame Lighting event, held in 2014 ahead of the Sochi winter Games. A decision on funding the 2016 Heritage Flame Lighting event was deferred pending an updated application. The Panel was supportive of the updated application for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Heritage Flame Lighting event, based on the success of the previous events, the international recognition that these events brought to the town, and the increased community involvement planned for 2016. It was recognised that the scale of the event would depend upon the success of other grant applications. The Panel recommended funding up to the amount requested.

Name of Town/ Parish Council applying	Project description	Total cost of project	Amount requested	Grant Panel's Recommendation	Reasons for recommendation and conditions of funding not covered by standard funding agreement
Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell Parish Council	Eythrope Road Cemetery driveway renovation	26,008	26,008	26,008	The Panel appreciated that the resurfacing of the cemetery driveway is the second phase of an overall strategic project to improve the cemetery – the first phase for a new Garden of Remembrance and area for the interment of ashes has recently been completed and paid for by the parish council. The panel recommended funding up to the amount requested, and to encourage the parish council to raise their precept to cover ongoing maintenance.
Wendover Parish Council	Remodelling of the Manor Waste	250,000	213,500	213,500	The Panel was supportive of this application and recognised the need to improve the surface of the Manor Waste to be fit for purpose, now and in the future, for the growing population of Wendover. The Panel also acknowledged the parish council's financial contribution to the project and recommended funding up to the amount requested.
Buckingham Town Council	Storage "depot" (industrial unit)	190,000	150,000	0	In considering this application, the Panel discussed whether the project was in keeping with the original NHB criteria to award funding to help with the provision of community facilities associated with growth that have tangible benefits for the communities accepting growth. The Panel agreed that the purchase of an industrial unit was to the benefit of the town council in order to help fulfil its responsibility to the community, rather than to the direct benefit of the community. The Panel were therefore unable to recommend funding.

Name of Town/ Parish Council applying	Project description	Total cost of project	Amount requested	Grant Panel's Recommendation	Reasons for recommendation and conditions of funding not covered by standard funding agreement
Aston Clinton Parish Council	Aston Clinton Park Pavilion - new community hub	2,014,675	500,000	500,000	<p>The Panel was supportive of the overall scheme for a new and fit for purpose community centre to replace the present dilapidated and outdated building which no longer meets the needs of the current and rapidly increasing population of the village. However, concern was expressed about the level of borrowing required for this £2 million scheme and whether the parish council would be able to manage such a high level of borrowing. The Panel recommended funding up to the requested amount subject to the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that planning permission is granted (ii) all funding is in place before commencement of the project (iii) further information about running costs and project income (iv) agreement with the grants officer about project milestones so that funding can be phased (v) Reassurances about project management arrangements, because of the huge scale of the project (vi) The Panel reserves the right to withdraw the grant offer if the project proves to be unviable.
Buckingham Town Council	Refurbishment and extension to Embleton Way Pavilion	164,380	46,096	46,096	<p>The Panel was supportive of this application to bring an unused facility back into use as a viable Scouts HQ and as a community facility and resource for Buckingham's growing population. The Panel recommended funding up to the amount requested. Funding to be subject to the application to WREN for match-funding being successful.</p>

Name of Town/ Parish Council applying	Project description	Total cost of project	Amount requested	Grant Panel's Recommendation	Reasons for recommendation and conditions of funding not covered by standard funding agreement
Stewkley Parish Council	Refurbishment of Stewkley Community and Sports Pavilion	135,000	50,000	50,000	The Panel supported the application to refurbish the current sports pavilion, which is in a poor state of repair, to be fit for purpose for the community. The Panel was mindful that the NHB scheme is designed to be accessible to all town and parish councils that have taken growth and not just the larger towns and villages. 19 new homes have been built in Stewkley in recent years with another 10 committed this year on land that can eventually accommodate 20 houses. The Panel considered this a well planned project and recommended funding up to the requested amount subject to planning permission for the rear spectators' "verandah" being granted.
Total amount requested		3,439,285	1,264,826	1,114,826	
Total budget available		1,130,404	1,130,404	1,130,404	
Uncommitted budget				15,578	

Town/Parish Council	Project description	Total cost of project	Amount requested	Amount awarded	Current status	Panel's recommendation
Westbury Parish Council	New Village Hall	£850,000	£50,000	£50,000	New build started in July. Progress can be followed on the PC's website: http://www.westburyvillage.org/ and will be complete by the end of March 2016.	To extend the funding agreement for a further 6 months.
Weston Turville Parish Council	Move and upgrade play area and turn existing play area into additional parking.	£132,863	£122,863	£122,863	Phase 1 to relocate and upgrade the play area is now complete and £42,000 of the grant has been claimed. Phase 2 to extend the car park will begin shortly. Project should complete by March 2016.	To extend the funding agreement for a further 6 months.
Turweston Parish Council	Traffic mitigation project - sympathetic to Turweston's status as a Conservation Area	£100,000	£100,000	£60,000	Implementation is expected to be by the end of March 2016.	To extend the funding agreement for a further 6 months.
Haddenham Parish Council	Zebra crossing on Woodways	£86,000	£86,000	£86,000	Timescales for installation are still uncertain as the specifications have been revised by Transport for Bucks	To extend the funding agreement for a further 6 months.
Calvert Green Parish Council	Extend and refurbish community hall	£496,091.00	£200,000	£200,000	Project start has been delayed because of changes in the design of the building and consequent delays in the application for match funding.	To extend the funding agreement for a further year
		£1,664,954	£558,863	£518,863		
Total already claimed				£42,000		
Total to carry over into 2016/17 financial year				£476,863		