

## **NEW HOMES BONUS GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

### **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 schedules attached at Appendices A and B. |
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### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Informal NHB Grants Panel met on Friday 26 January 2018 to consider applications for funding from parish and town councils under the NHB grant funding scheme. The Panel consisted of the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Peter Strachan, Councillors Steven Lambert, Derek Town and parish council representatives John Gilbey and Nick Hierons (nominated by the Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils - AVALC). The Cabinet Member responsible, the Senior Communities Officer and the 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, and for every long-term unoccupied property that is brought back into use, the Government gives the council a NHB grant each year.
- 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 £1,228,000 being available in 2017/18 round of funding.
- 3.4 A £284,686 underspend was carried over from the last round of funding making a total of £1,512,686. £80,000 was deducted from this total, representing the allocation of funds to the micro grant budget. This left a total of £1,432,686 available to allocate in this round.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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).

3.7 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 15 December 2017.

#### **4. Applications for funding**

4.1 In total 10 EOI's or enquires were received and seven parish and town councils subsequently submitted applications for consideration by the Panel, to a total value of £333,448 (£1,432,686 of funding available).

4.2 The Panel also considered requests from both Wing and Aston Clinton Parish Councils to ring-fence NHB grant funding awarded in previous rounds because of unavoidable project delays.

4.3 In considering the applications the Panel members recommended funding for all seven projects with awards totalling £225,098.

4.4 The Panel also recommended ring-fencing the grants previously awarded to Wing (£208,000) and Aston Clinton (£500,000).

4.5 The level of funding recommended and the reasons for the recommendations are outlined at Appendix A and on the financial spreadsheet at Appendix B.

#### **5. Next steps**

5.1 Once the level of funding is agreed, funding agreements with the successful applicants will be finalised, which will include timescales for the delivery of the various projects, to be monitored by the Grants Officer, and against which phased grant payments may be made.

5.2 Appropriate recognition of the support provided by the NHB funding scheme will also be sought through media publicity and appropriate plaques or signage will be required on the schemes that are funded

#### **6. Options considered and reasons for recommendation**

6.1 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 in a prominent 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).

6.2 The reasons for the Panel's recommendations are included in the schedule attached at 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 2017/18, and the underspend carried forward from the 2016/17 round.
- 7.2 If the Panel's recommendations are approved a total of £225,098 will have been committed in this round of funding, representing just under 16% of the budget available. £1,207,588 would 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 priorities of protecting and improving the living experience in the Vale and improving our interaction with Parish Councils.

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

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Previous Cabinet and Council reports relating to the New Homes Bonus.  
Notes of the Informal Panel meeting 26 January 2018

### New Homes Bonus Project Grant Funding Scheme

#### Recommendations of the Informal Grants Panel made on 26 January 2018

##### 1. New Applications

The Panel considered seven applications requesting a total of **£333,448**.

**£1,432,686** was available to be allocated.

The Panel also considered two requests from Aston Clinton and Wing Parish Councils to ring-fence the awards made in previous rounds due to project delays.

##### i. Halton Parish Council – new windows and radiators for the Village Hall

The Panel unanimously supported this application to fund the replacement of old and drafty windows on the proviso that they are in keeping with the Rothchild owned building and any associated caveats. The funding is also to replace old, rusting and inefficient radiators.

**Link to growth:** Although Halton itself has taken very little growth, there has been considerable growth of 300 new homes on the Princess Mary RAF Halton Hospital Site (Princes mary Gate) immediately adjacent, but which comes under Wendover Ward. Under the VALP Halton is expected to accommodate 1,000 new homes.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel unanimously recommended funding the project up to the amount requested, **£7,393**

**Reasons for recommendation:** The Village Hall is a Victorian building, central to the Halton community and widely used by residents living in Halton, Wendover and Weston Turville. The new windows and radiators would be of significant benefit to those using the hall.

Panel members agreed that funding the project would also help to demonstrate the council's interest in, and support for, Halton Village in light of the impending closure of RAF Halton in 2022.

**Condition of funding:** Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a NHB plaque to be prominently displayed either on the exterior of the building or inside the entrance hall. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

##### ii. Ivinghoe Parish Council – New fencing around Ivinghoe Lawn

The Panel unanimously supported this application to fund the replacement of very old and broken railings and entrance gates at Ivinghoe Lawn, the poor condition of which was evidenced by photographs submitted with the application.

**Link to growth:** Although growth in the village of Ivinghoe itself is minimal, the village has been affected by growth in Pitstone, which is immediately adjacent. Pitstone has taken over 40 new homes with commitments to build another 182.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel unanimously recommended funding the project up to the amount requested, **£21,997**.

**Reasons for recommendation:** The Lawn is a feature of the village, located in the centre within a designated Conservation Area. The company chosen to supply the railings will supply traditional quality ironwork in keeping with the area. The Panel agreed that the new railings will make a visible difference highlighting the difference that NHB funding has made to the area.

**Conditions of funding:** Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a NHB plaque to be prominently displayed on the railings at one of the entrance gates to the Lawn. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

### iii. Drayton Parslow Parish Council – Comprehensive Traffic Calming Measures

The Panel discussed the NHB scheme criteria and appreciated that the criteria include the clause; “The scheme would not **normally** fund initiatives that are the responsibility of another statutory body”. However, the Panel agreed that the New Homes Bonus is designed to assist communities where there is demonstrable need in parishes affected by growth, and that where there is no other funding available the only people that suffer are the people living in those parishes. The Panel also noted that a traffic calming scheme in Turweston had previously been awarded partial funding.

**Link to growth:** When considering the application the Panel acknowledged that although growth in Drayton Parslow itself is minimal, the application was made on the basis of housing growth in neighbouring Newton Leys, Wing, Milton Keynes, Winslow and Aylesbury as well as the growing town of Bletchley less than two miles to the north. This growth has contributed to an increase in the volume of traffic and HGVs using the village as a cut through, endangering the safety of residents and particularly of school children in the vicinity of the school.

The proposed traffic calming scheme includes a full range of traffic management measures designed for pedestrian safety, to control traffic, and to protect the character and structural integrity of the village from continued damage to stone kerbing and grass verges when HGVs mount the kerbs to pass each other. The Panel considered that partial funding for the implementation of some of the main measures proposed.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel unanimously agreed to recommend funding the project up to the level of **£80,000** (requested amount - £188,350)

**Reasons for the recommendation:** The Panel agreed to recommend funding only those elements of the scheme which would be the most immediately effective and go some way to alleviating the traffic problems, as highlighted by the feasibility study compiled by Ringway Jacobs. These measures are designed to change driver awareness and reduce traffic speed upon entering the village. In addition, there would be safety measures around the area of the school, including flashing amber warning signs and a footway.

In recommending funding, the Panel highlighted that every application is considered on its own merit and within the budget available and that no grant award sets a precedent for future applications.

**Conditions of funding:** Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a NHB plaque to be prominently displayed on the new village gates at each end of Main Road. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

#### iv. Buckingham Town Council – Fully accessible ramp at Cotton End

Cllr Mordue gave the Panel a brief overview of the background to the project to install a fully accessible slope at Cotton End, explaining that steps were installed instead of a slope as the gradient of the slope would have been too steep to meet the disability criteria for wheelchairs.

The application was first considered outside the prescribed timescales of the NHB grant funding process in September 2016 at the request of Buckingham Town Council. Under the original Principles and Process for the scheme, this is permitted under exceptional circumstances or where a community and its residents may be disadvantaged if a decision has to wait until the prescribed timescales.

At that time, the Panel recommended funding the project up to the requested amount. AVDC Cabinet declined to approve funding pending the following information, in order for the application to be considered again in the January 2018 round of funding:

- (i) The appropriate consents in writing from the Landowner(s) and assurances that there are no restrictive covenants on the strip of land concerned. (Received from Matthew Ogley, Technical Coordinator, Barratts and Diana Davis, Chandler Ray Solicitors)
- (ii) Written confirmation from BCC that the Highway Authority would adopt the land and be responsible for its future maintenance. (Received from Graham Smith, BCC Highways Development Manager).
- (iii) Assurances that the residents of Cotton End immediately affected by the installation of a slope have been fully informed about the schematics and the loss of hedgerow, which currently acts as a visual barrier to the A413. (All residents were written to in December 2017 and responses included in the information to the Panel).
- (iv) That the appropriate AVDC Planning approval is in place. (An application for a non-material amendment has recently been submitted to AVDC Planning).

**Link to growth:** Buckingham has taken 886 housing completions in Buckingham since March 2013 with housing commitments of a further 984 dwellings – 578 identified in the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel voted four in favour and one against funding the project. The recommendation is therefore to fund the project up to the full amount requested **£25,946**.

**Reasons for the recommendation:** From the supplementary paperwork submitted, the Panel was satisfied that Cabinet's concerns, i) to iv) listed above, had been addressed.

**Conditions of funding:** AVDC Planning approval of the non-material amendment. Recognition of the NHB in all publicity and that a plaque acknowledging NHB funding is displayed in a prominent position at the top of the new ramp on the A413. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

### **v. Wingrave with Rowsham Parish Council – New netball court (open to the community)**

Funding is requested towards a new dedicated netball court (as part of a wider project to improve existing facilities in the parish). The netball club currently has to practice at the Cottesloe School in Wing. A new court would bring the club back into Wingrave.

For the past 7 years the netball club has also been using a “temporary” court on Wingrave car park on Saturdays to accommodate demand in the junior section. When wet, the surface is not suitable for play and a new court would release the section of the car park used.

The court would not be locked and would be open 24/7 to the community outside of any bookings. The club already runs “pay and play” netball initiatives open to members the community, including Back to Netball for those aged 35 and over and Walking Netball for the over 50’s.

The Panel noted that Wingrave is a village known to have expertise in netball. Sport England have announced that netball is the fastest growing sport. The game is also contributing to the increase in the number of women participating in sport.

**Link to growth:** Wingrave with Rowsham parish has taken minimal growth, but has 108 housing commitments. The parish is bordered by Wing, Bierton and Oakfield, which have taken considerable growth. This has contributed to the increase in membership of the club, which now has over 100 members drawn from Wingrave and the surrounding areas and the club runs 5 league teams in the Aylesbury Netball League.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding the project up to the level requested **£45,718**

**Reasons for the recommendation:** The Panel was confident that the new facilities would be available to the community outside of private bookings and that supporting the project would be a good use of funds. The Panel also noted that providing opportunities to participate in sporting activities contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents.

**Conditions of funding:** Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a NHB plaque to be prominently displayed at the entrance to the court. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

### **vi Haddenham Parish Council - Youth and Community Centre kitchen refurbishment**

The Panel was supportive of this application to extensively refurbish the existing kitchen area of the Haddenham Youth and Community Centre. The current facilities have been in place since the 1970’s and are no longer fit for purpose and do not meet current disability access regulations.

The building is leased from BCC on a 25 year full repairing lease with 20 years still to run – HYCC is therefore responsible for all maintenance and for keeping the building in a good state of repair.

**Link to growth:** Haddenham has had 192 completions since March 2013 and there is a commitment to build 648 further dwellings. The centre serves the growing community of Haddenham and other surrounding villages.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding the project up to the level requested, **£16,575**.

**Reasons for the recommendation:** The Panel was advised by Cllr Lambert that BCC does not have an asset disposal strategy for this kind of asset and that the responsibility for youth and community centres has been devolved to towns and parish councils to manage.

The centre has many regular community user groups, including the Youth Club and Youth Café, as well as ad hoc users. All users would benefit from the improved facilities.

**Conditions of funding:** Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a NHB plaque to be prominently displayed at the entrance to the kitchen. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

### **vii. Buckingham Town Council – New roof Slade Recreation Club (home of Slade Bowls Club)**

Buckingham is served by the open-air West End Bowls Club and in the winter those wishing to play bowls migrate to the indoor Slade Recreation Club, which is home to Slade Bowls Club and Buckingham Snooker Club.

When considering this application the Panel was particularly mindful of the criteria that an application from a sports club has to demonstrate that the facilities and opportunities to play are open to the community.

The Panel acknowledged that in the interests of security there have to be constraints around keeping the building unlocked, but the club is open to the community every morning for roll-up practise between 10am and 12pm. The Bowls Club has a resident coach, so even if you have never played before you can get some coaching. The only times that the green is not available is when league matches are being played. The Snooker Club also operates a “pay and play” policy.

The building is leased by AVE on a full repairing lease. The new lease was granted in 2015 and has 19 years left to run.

The Panel questioned that, given the applicant’s status as a Ltd Company, it operates on a not-for-profit and not a commercial basis. The Grants Officer has since re-visited the Memorandum and Articles of Association and can confirm that the Bowls Club is a non profit entity and a “Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital”. The Memorandum also states that the liability of its Members in the event of closure is limited to a maximum of £1.00.

**Link to growth:** Buckingham has taken 886 housing completions in Buckingham since March 2013 with housing commitments of a further 984 dwellings – 578 identified in the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel voted three in favour, one against and one abstention due to Declaration of Interest. The recommendation is to fund the project up to the level requested, **£27,469**.

**Reasons for the recommendation:** The Panel was divided but agreed that the Recreation Club is a valuable community asset and that without funding it would most likely have to close whilst other funding is sought and the refurbishment work already undertaken would be in danger of further damage.

NHB funding would enable essential repairs to the roof to avoid further damage to the building and the possible loss of the leisure facilities the Recreation Club provides for Buckingham and the North of Aylesbury Vale as this is the only provision of this nature for 20 miles.



The roofing panels are now exposed to the elements and water seepage has penetrated into the building creating damage in the main hall and to the suspended ceiling in the snooker room. New heating and lighting systems and a new bowling carpet have been installed during the past 12 months. The total cost of the refurbishment was £64,000, £42,400 of which was funded by members and from club reserves, leaving insufficient funds for the roof repairs.

**Conditions of funding:** Recognition of the NHB in all publicity and that a plaque acknowledging NHB funding is displayed in a prominent position on the exterior of the building or inside the entrance. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

## **2. Request by Wing and Aston Clinton Parish Council's to ringfence funds already awarded**

### **(i) Wing Parish Council – Redevelopment of Wing Recreation Ground**

The Panel was very supportive of the original application submitted in the last round for the installation of a Portakabin pavilion with changing rooms and the re-surfacing of the football pitch, as part of a larger project to redevelop Wing Recreation Ground. Following objections from residents about the installation of a Portakabin, an AVDC Conservation and Heritage Officer has visited the site and has told the parish that a Portakabin “neither retains nor enhances the setting of the Conservation Area”. Wing has therefore been advised to refurbish and extend the current football pavilion instead.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel unanimously recommended ring-fencing the £208,000 awarded pending a revised application in the next round. Any request to increase the level of funding to be considered alongside all other applications competing for funds, within the budget available.

**Reasons for the recommendation:** The original application gave a clear demonstration of growth in Wing. The Panel recognised that the pavilion and resurfacing of the football pitch were key elements of a wider project to redevelop Wing Recreation Ground. Supporting the project would provide pump priming funding which is in line with the intentions of the NHB scheme. The pavilion would be used by a large number of local sports and leisure groups, benefitting the whole community.

#### **Conditions of funding:**

- Accurate plans and associated costings with the revised plans
- Approval of the new plans by the AVDC Conservation and Heritage Officer responsible
- Proof of community support for the revised plans.
- The project to commence within one year of any new decision.

Recognition of NHB support in all publicity and a plaque to be prominently displayed on the exterior or inside the entrance to the building. Funding to be released upon the production of invoices for work completed.

### **(ii) Aston Clinton Parish Council – New community hub/pavilion at Aston Park**

The Panel was very supportive of the original £2 million project to demolish the dilapidated and outdated community centre at Aston Park in order to build a multi-use pavilion to serve the current and rapidly increasing population of the village and the wider community to meet social, health, fitness and leisure needs.

Unfortunately, the plans have proved too ambitious and Aston Clinton Parish Council has been unable to secure the hoped for funding from Sport England to make the project viable. The project is therefore being downscaled and plans and costings revised.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** The Panel unanimously recommended ring-fencing the £500,000 grant funding previously awarded for a maximum of one year from any new decision.. Any request for an increase in the level of the funding to be considered alongside all other applications competing for funds within the budget available in the next round.

The Panel also agreed that as funds have already been ring-fenced for two years, that there would be no guarantee of any funding if the project has not commenced within one year.

<b>New Homes Bonus grant allocations 2017/18</b>				
<b>BUDGET ALLOCATION 2017/18</b>				
Budget available 2017/18	£1,228,000			
Underspend 2016/17	£284,686			
Total	£1,512,686			
Microgrant allocation 2016/17	-£80,000			
<b>TOTAL BUDGET AVAILABLE 2017/18</b>	<b><u>£1,432,686</u></b>			
Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grants Panel's funding recommendation
Halton Parish Council	New windows - Village Hall	£7,393.33	£7,393.00	£7,393.00
Ivinghoe Parish Council	New perimeter fencing - village lawn	£21,997.20	£21,997.20	£21,997.00
Drayton Parslow Parish Council	Traffic calming measures	£194,112.00	£188,350.00	£80,000.00
Buckingham Town Council	Cotton End Steps	£25,946.00	£25,946.00	£25,946.00
Wingrave with Rowsham	Community netball court	£135,718.00	£45,718.00	£45,718.00
Haddenham Parish Council (on behalf of the Youth and Community Centre)	Refurbishment of kitchen in Youth/Community Centre	£16,825.00	£16,575.00	£16,575.00
Buckingham Town Council (on behalf of Slade Bowls Club)	New roof	£30,210.00	£27,469.00	£27,469.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>£432,201.53</b>	<b><u>£333,448.20</u></b>	<b><u>£225,098.00</u></b>
<b>Total budget available</b>			<b>£1,432,686.00</b>	<b>£1,432,686.00</b>
<b>Total unallocated funds</b>			<b>£1,099,237.80</b>	<b>£1,207,588.00</b>