

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

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 12 September 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, Councillor Peter Strachan, Councillors Steven Lambert and Derek Town and parish council representatives John Gilbey and Nick Hierons (nominated by the Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils - AVALC). The Senior Communities Officer and Grants Officer were also in attendance. Apologies were received from Cllr Howard Mordue, the Cabinet Member responsible.
- 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 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 £936,000 being available in 2018/19.
- 3.4 An underspend of £1,185,893 was carried over from project grant funding and micro grant funding awarded in 2017/18. An allocation of £80,000 for the current year's NHB micro grant scheme was also deducted from the budget leaving a total of **£2,045,679** available to allocate in this round. An explanation of the figures can be found at Appendix B.
- 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 Friday 27 July 2018.

4. Applications for funding

4.1 In total 13 EOI's or enquires were received and 12 parish and town councils subsequently submitted applications for consideration by the Panel with total project costs of £6,428,084 and requests for grant funding totalling £2,485,675.

4.2 The Panel had agreed to consider three revised applications from Aston Clinton, Wing and Haddenham Parish Councils. The previous grant awards had been ring fenced pending the revised applications.

4.3 In considering the applications the Panel recommended grant funding totalling £2,045,009. The total budget available was £2,045,679. If Cabinet agrees the recommendations there would be £607 remaining to be carried over into any future round.

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 No assurances about future NHB project grant funding can be made until the unitary decision has been taken and we are therefore not inviting any further project grant applications for the foreseeable future.

5.3. NHB micro grant applications will continue to be assessed on a monthly basis as long as there are funds remaining from the £80,000 budget allocation.

6. Options considered and reasons for the 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 Planning permission has been granted, 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).

- 6.2 The level of funding recommended and the reasons for the panel's recommendations are outlined 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 2018/19.

- 7.2 If the panel recommendations are approved a total of £2,045,009 will be committed representing 99.96% of the budget available. The underspend of £670 would be carried forward and made available to support future applications in the event of another round, or allocated to the NHB micro grant fund.

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 grant panel's funding recommendations 2018/19					
BUDGET ALLOCATION 2018/19					
Budget available 2017/18	£2,045,679				
Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
Halton Parish Council	New roof - Village Hall	£27,000.00	£27,000.00	£27,000.00	The Panel agreed to the request for funds for the replacement of the very fragile roof on this historic building. There has been considerable growth in Weston Turville and Wendover, both immediately adjacent, and Halton is expected to accommodate up to 1,000 new homes when land is released for the redevelopment of RAF Halton in 2022. Panel members agreed that funding the project would also demonstrate the council's interest in and support for Halton Village in light of this impending closure.
Padbury Parish Council	Extension to and refurbishment of Village Hall cloakroom facilities	£54,724.00	£44,864.00	£44,864.00	The Panel unanimously supported this application to upgrade the existing unisex disabled cloakroom facilities, which currently double as the only ladies toilet and baby changing room. Outline planning has already been approved for 45 new homes in Padbury, increasing the population by 10% and there are very large housing developments in neighbouring Winslow, Steeple Claydon and Buckingham.

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
Stoke Mandeville Parish Council	Construction of new burial grounds on Parish Council owned land	£147,440.00	£147,440.00	£135,000.00	The panel had sympathy for the parish with Planning permission for five housing developments, bringing 580 new homes to the village. It was agreed that with only eight burial plots remaining in the current cemetery the need for a new burial ground for the parish is urgent. It was noted that Stoke Mandeville Parish has some money in reserve for the project and that the project would proceed without the full grant requested.
Pitstone Parish Council	Extension and renovation of Pitstone football pavilion	£1,238,265.00	£380,000.00	£370,000.00	The Panel unanimously supported the project which allows a wider variety and better standard of sporting as well as community facilities for the cluster of villages in the growing parish of Pitstone. The costing allowed a generous contingency and the panel felt that in such an oversubscribed round the parish should try to work within budget and fund the relatively modest shortfall from other funding sources, if necessary.
Great Horwood Parish Council	New roof and fully accessible entrance to the village hall.	£42,264.00	£42,264.00	£35,220.00	The panel unanimously agreed that a new roof on the village hall to preserve the integrity of the building for the benefit of the community and a fully accessible entrance were necessary projects. Potentially, a total of 70 new homes, all to be located around the central village area, are to be built - a planned increase of 28%. The recommended award represents the amount requested minus the VAT element, which is recoverable by the parish council.

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
East Claydon Parish Council	Restoration of village hall	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£48,000.00	The panel unanimously approved this application for the second phase of a project to restore the village hall and was very impressed with the match funding already secured towards the project - the exterior renovaton has been funded by a grant from WREN. Funding is requested from the NHB for the interior renovations. In such an oversubscribed round, the panel felt that the parish has time to community fundraise or investigate other funding sources for the small shortfall.
Edlesborough Parish Council	Demolition of the old and construction of a new sports pavilion	£828,000.00	£400,000.00	£350,000.00	The panel was supportive of this project to provide better sports facilities as well as facilities for the community. 21 new homes have been built in the village in the last 5 years and Planning permission has been granted for a further 100 new homes. The cost estimates submitted allow for generous contingency and inflation costs. The panel agreed that the parish should try to work within the estimated costs and apply to other funding bodies for any projected shortfall. However, should other projects underspend, the Panel would support Edlesborough receiving a higher level of funding up to the amount requested.
Cheddington Parish Council	Extension and refurbishment of sports pavilion	£140,349.00	£120,660.00	£118,000.00	The need to extend and refurbish the sports pavilion arises from future growth of 110 new homes and the growth that has already taken place in neighbouring Pitstone. Photographs submitted evidenced the very poor exterior and interior state of the current building and that it is not fit-for-purpose for the growing community. The panel unanimously agreed to support its extension and refurbishment.

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
Berryfields Parish Council	New community centre as part of the larger Roman Park project	£1,400,000.00	£750,000.00	£500,000.00	<p>The panel acknowledged that current provision of a suite of rooms in the primary school building is totally inadequate for the growing community of Berryfields and unanimously supported the application, on condition that the parish council submit detailed plans and costings within 6 months, demonstrating that the project can be delivered on time and on budget. 2,300 new homes are already occupied and there will be 3,250 new homes at completion of the development. Project plans for the Roman Park project are well advanced but the community centre element has yet to have a detailed specification drawn up with accurate costings. In an oversubscribed round, the panel felt justified to recommend an amount lower than that requested and hoped that AVDC's grant support would give leverage to bids to other funding bodies.</p>

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
REVISED application Aston Clinton Parish Council (Ring-fenced award of £500,000)	Demolition of the old and construction of a new community centre at Aston Park	£2,002,020.00	£250,000.00	£150,000.00	<p>The Panel was very supportive of the original £2 million project to demolish the dilapidated community centre at Aston Park and to build a multi-use pavilion to serve the current and rapidly increasing population of the village and the wider community. Unfortunately, the parish council was unable to secure the hoped for funding from Sport England to make the project viable. £500,000 NHB funds awarded were ringfenced pending a revised application. There are a total of 616 committed new homes in the village with the number of residents reaching in excess of 6,000 by 2020 – currently 4,200 residents. Although the footprint of the centre is smaller and the build costs are less expensive, the parish has included internal fixtures and fittings, development costs and a contingency not included in the original application. The level of funding requested has therefore increased. The panel remained very supportive of the project, but agreed that the parish council could apply for a loan from the PWLB for the shortfall, as indicated in the original application. (The recommendation is for an increase in the award from this year's NHB funding allocation of £150,000 - total recommendation £650,000)</p>

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
REVISED application Wing Parish Council (Ring-fenced award of £208,000)	Refurbishment of current football pavilion as part of redevelopment of Wing Recreation Ground	£464,522.00	£256,522.00	£250,000.00	<p>The Panel was supportive of the original application 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, AVDC Conservation and Heritage advised Wing to refurbish and extend the current football pavilion instead. The costs of an extension and refurbishment are higher. The panel remained very supportive of the project and appreciated that it is supported by the majority and that the redevelopment of the recreation ground will benefit the community. The Wing Neighbourhood Plan identifies sports and leisure facilities as falling far short of reasonable expectation for a village with a population in excess of 3,000. 104 new homes have been built in the last two years, with commitments for a further 74 homes. The recommendation is to fund an additional £250,000 from this year's budget allocation - a total of £458,000 towards the project) on condition that Wing Parish Council is able to demonstrate that it is able to manage and deliver the project.</p>

Town/Parish Council applying	Project Title	Total project cost	Grant requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for recommendation
REVISED application from Haddenham Parish Council (awarded £16,575 in the last round)	Refurbishment of Youth and Community Centre kitchen	£33,500.00	£16,925.00	£16,925.00	The parish council found that the project had not been sufficiently scoped when the original application was submitted and has since employed a professional design firm to draw up and cost the project to ensure that the new facilities meet all current Health and Safety and Fire regulations. Project costs have consequently risen and the parish council has come back to the panel to request an increased grant award. Haddenham is a rapidly growing village with approx 200 completions since March 2013 and commitment to build a further 648 homes. The centre has many regular community user groups and the project is critical to the future success of delivering services to the growing community in Haddenham and the surrounding villages. The panel recommended funding up to the increased level requested and this represents total grant support of £33,500)
Totals		£6,428,084.00	<u>£2,485,675.00</u>	<u>£2,045,009.00</u>	
Total budget available			£2,045,679.00	£2,045,679.00	
Total unallocated funds			-£439,996.00	£670.00	

Budgetary figures NHB Project Grants 2018/19		
Underspend on grants awarded in the last round	£1,207,588.00	
Microgrants total awarded Sept' 2017 to end of March 2018	-£21,695.00	(underspend is not carried over, but is topped up each year up to £80,000)
Total underspend 2017/18	£1,185,893.00	
Budget 2018/19	£936,000.00	
plus underspend 2017/18	£1,185,893.00	
Sub-total	£2,121,893.00	
Microgrants allocation 2018/19	-£80,000.00	
Sub-total	£2,041,893.00	
Halton windows project underspend	£3,353.00	
Ivinghoe railings project underspend	£433.00	
Total budget available	£2,045,679.00	
Total ring fenced from last round	£708,000.00	