

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 24 July 2019 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 and 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, Councillor Howard Mordue, the Senior Communities Officer, Diana Houghton and the Grants Officer, Jan Roffe were also in attendance. Apologies were received from Andrew Small, Director.
- 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 £858,000 being available in this round.
- 3.4 Project underspends totalling £22,378 were carried over from project grant funding awarded in previous rounds and added to the budget, making a total of £880,378.
- 3.5 Of this, an allocation of £80,000 for the current year's NHB micro grant scheme was deducted leaving a total of **£800,378** available to allocate in this round. An explanation of the figures can also be found at Appendix A.
- 3.6 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

agreed the detailed criteria and process for the grant scheme, based on the decisions of Cabinet.

3.7 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 support both capital and revenue projects (with a life of less than 6 years).

3.8 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 14 June 2019.

4. Applications for funding

4.1 In total 20 EOI's or enquires were received. 18 parish and town councils applied but one had to withdraw its application. 17 applications were therefore considered by the Panel requests for grant funding totalling £872,565 (towards total project costs of £1,007,748). The total budget available was £800,378. The round was therefore £72,187 oversubscribed.

4.2 In considering the applications the Panel recommended grant funding totalling £794,125, as set out in Appendix A.

4.3 The recommendation of the Panel is that the underspend of £6,253 be allocated to the New Homes Bonus Micro Grant fund, which is oversubscribed.

5. Next steps

5.1 Once the level of funding is agreed, funding agreements with successful applicants will be finalised. These 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 In light of the unitary decision, this is the final New Homes Bonus grant funding round to be administered by AVDC.
- 5.3. NHB micro grant applications will continue to be assessed on a monthly basis as long as there are funds remaining from the budget allocation until the end of the financial year.

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. The standard conditions are 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 2019/20.
- 7.2 If the Panel's recommendations are approved a total of £794,125 will be committed to projects This represents over 99% of the budget available. The underspend of £6,253 would be allocated to the micro grant fund with Cabinet's approval.

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

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Appendix A: Advisory Grants Panel's Funding Recommendations for NHB 2019/20.
Previous Cabinet and Council reports relating to the New Homes Bonus.
Notes of the Informal Panel meeting of 24 July 2019

Advisory Grants Panel's Funding Recommendations - New Homes Bonus 2019/20

Appendix A

Budget 2019/20	£858,000.00
Project underspends/unallocated funds	£22,378.00
Total	£880,378.00
Minus microgrant allocation 2019/20	£80,000.00
Budget available	£800,378.00

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Buckingham	Improvements to the community centre at Cornwalls Meadow	£177,794.00	£177,794.00	£150,000.00	<p>The majority of the Panel supported this application (4:1). The application clearly evidenced the huge amount of growth in Buckingham and the surrounds and the need for a larger space for community hire in the town centre. The Panel appreciated that the current Town Council Chamber, (which is available for community hire seven days a week, other than on Monday evenings when council meetings are held) is compact, and that it is sensible to knock down a wall to make it significantly larger as current usage is quite limited. Carrying out roof repairs at the same time as installing air-conditioning throughout and solar panels for energy conservation would enable related works to be carried out at the same time. The Panel agreed that as Buckingham has recieved the highest total of awards over the life of the NHB fund the town council should make a contribution toward the project from its own sizeable reserves.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Stoke Hammond	Replace and repair the roof to the community centre and redecoration of the interior	£23,230.00	£23,230.00	£23,230.00	The application clearly explained how considerable growth in the village in recent years has increased the demand on this valued community facility. The Panel unanimously supported this application to repair and replace sections of the roof of the community centre to prevent more extensive and costly repairs for the parish further down the line and recommended funding up to the level requested.
Haddenham	Phase 1 or a larger project to refurbish community facilities and the village hall at Banks Park	£222,000.00	£173,000.00	£165,000.00	The Panel recognised that growth in Haddenham has greatly increased the need for fit-for-purpose community facilities and that this first phase of a project to improve facilities for the village would bring back into use the former BCC Day Centre which is currently unused and derelict and for which the lease is in the process of being surrendered to the PC. As the round was oversubscribed the Panel agreed that the parish council should make a contribution to project costs from the Asset Reserves account. Funding to be subject to confirmation that the lease has been surrendered to the parish council.
(1)Stewkley	Upgrade to play area (priority project)	£50,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding up to the full amount requested for improved play facilities for this growing community. The current play equipment is 20 years old and no longer meets RoSPA standards.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
(2) Stewkley	New semi-automatic toilet cubicle at the recreation ground	£65,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	The Panel also unanimously agreed to recommend funding up to the level requested for a new toilet facility at the recreation ground. The current facilities are in an extremely poor and unhygienic condition as evidenced by the photographs submitted with the application. The proposed new semi-automatic cubicle would also provide disabled access and baby change facilities. Funding to be subject to the application to Sport England for the shortfall in funds being successful.
Grendon Underwood	Refurbishment of Village Hall Cloakroom facilities	£18,000.00	£16,000.00	£16,000.00	The panel fully supported this application to improve the current cloakroom facilities at the village hall. From the photographs supplied the cloakrooms are clearly in need of modernisation and currently detract from the viability and desirability of the village hall for this growing community. The Panel recommended funding up to the level requested.
Marsh Gibbon	Renovation of cemetery roads and pathways	£60,445.00	£55,165.00	£55,165.00	The panel was unanimous in recommending the full amount requested to this small burial authority which has an increasing and ageing population. There are also commitments to build a further 49 homes in the village which has already grown by 14% in the last six years. There have been an increasing number of burial requests from neighbouring Charndon Calvert and Poundon, none of which have their own cemeteries.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
(1) Gawcott with Lenborough	Perimeter fencing around all weather pitch	£24,000.00	£21,745.00	£20,000.00	The Panel was unanimous in recommending funding for the installation of a new reinforced steel fence to replace flimsy wire fencing that is now 25 years old and bent and holed. The fence will protect this valued community asset which is considered one of the best in the area. The pitch is available for wider community use when not in use for football fixtures by teams from Winslow, Buckingham and also local businesses. A small village with a small precept but the parish council will contribute the shortfall.
(2) Gawcott with Lenborough	Extension to playing field car park	£36,000.00	£32,000.00	£32,000.00	The Panel appreciated that current parking provision at the playing fields in Gawcott is inadequate for the widely used community playing fields and all-weather pitch and unanimously agreed to recommend ringfencing the funds requested. This would give the parish time to re-cost the project as, unfortunately, an important element of the groundworks, as recommended by the manufacturers of the proposed interlocking paving grid, was not included in the surveyor's estimate submitted with the application. A condition of funding is that the parish must submit a revised application and associated costings within six months and demonstrate where any shortfall would come from now that project costs have risen.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Great Brickhill	Village Hall extension and refurbishment	£158,000.00	£150,000.00	£110,000.00	<p>This is a two phase project to extend and then refurbish the village hall. Growth in Great Brickhill and particularly in neighbouring Stoke Hammond and nearby Newton and Easton Leys has put pressure on the existing facilities. The Panel unanimously agreed that, in an oversubscribed round, is was not in a position to award funding towards the second phase refurbishment element, which has not yet been properly costed. The Panel therefore recommended funding towards the extension element (which has total costs of £120,000) in order for this phase of the project to progress with a contribution from the parish council's Business Savings Account.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Cuddington	Traffic calming measure - build out to slow traffic travelling through village	£48,600.00	£48,600.00	£48,600.00	<p>Although growth in Cuddington itself is minimal a Transport for Bucks feasibility study for the project acknowledges that the volume of traffic travelling in and out of the village from both directions has grown significantly over a two year period. This is most likely because of growth in neighbouring Haddenham and Stone. BCC have agreed to fund new road markings at major junctions from S106 from 8 new homes that are currently going through Planning. The majority of the Panel was therefore minded to fund the project (4:1). The Panel agreed that it should be mindful of pedestrian road safety, particularly that of children crossing the road and that a build out to reduce the speed of traffic would be an appropriate additional safety measure.</p>
Ivinghoe	Improvements to the play areas at Ivinghoe Lawn and Ivinghoe Aston	£54,505.00	£54,505.00	£54,505.00	<p>The Panel fully supported this project to improve two play areas in the village of Ivinghoe and to include a zip wire at Ivinghoe Lawn to appeal to older children who are not catered for at the moment. The improvements will also include a fully accessible gate to make it easier for families with disabled children to access the play area without having to cross an often muddy field. Growth in neighbouring Pitstone has impacted on the numbers using the play facilities.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Ivinghoe (on behalf of Community Hub Trustees)	Replace and repair suspended flooring in hub.	£11,880.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	The Panel also unanimously recommended funding up to the amount requested to provide a long-lasting, good quality floor surface at the community hub, a valued and extremely well used community asset. Part of the existing flooring dates back to 1865, Support bearers and joists are suffering from rot and woodworm. The rest was replaced in the 1930's and has reached the end of its working life.
Stone Bishopstone & Hartwell	Outdoor fitness equipment	£19,563.78	£7,832.00	£8,000.00	The Panel unanimously supported this application to provide residents and visitors to the recreation ground with free to use fitness equipment to encourage fitness and wellbeing amongst the young as well as older people and recommended just above the amount requested to support project costs. The parish council has secured most of the remainder of the funds through a contribution from the LAF and a grant from VAHT.

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Watermead	New flooring in village hall	£4,036.00	£4,000.00	£4,000.00	<p>The majority of the Panel (4:1) appreciated that large amounts of growth in Aylesbury, and most particularly in Berryfields and adjacent Buckingham Park, has significantly impacted on use of the village hall at Watermead. The vinyl flooring is 30 years old and in need of replacement. New flooring will not only benefit the community groups using the hall regularly but also the pre-school that uses the hall on a daily basis.</p>
Ashendon	Protection of footway eroded by traffic	£16,625.00	£12,625.00	£12,625.00	<p>Although growth in the small village of Ashendon is minimal, the application explains that growth in the surrounding areas, in particular Haddenham and Long Crendon, has increased traffic through the village. The majority of the Panel (4:1) recommended funding the project up to the amount requested, mindful that this is a small parish with minimal reserves and also mindful of the safety of school children and pedestrians who use the footway along Main Street to provide safe passage to the bus stop. The footway is being eroded by wide vehicles mounting the kerb to pass each other and unless action is taken the footway will become unusable and pedestrians will have to walk on the road. The new footway kerbing would be double height to protect it from further erosion. Funding to be subject an application to the LAF for the shortfall being successful so that the project can proceed.</p>

Parish/Town Council applying	Project Title	Total project costs	Amount Requested	Grant Panel's funding recommendation	Reasons for the recommendation
Mentmore	New heating system for village hall	£18,069.00	£16,069.00	£15,000.00	The Panel unanimously recommended funding for a new heating system in the village hall. The current overnight storage heaters are inefficient and costly to run for a small parish with a small precept. There was no mention of growth or the impact of it in the application. For this reason the Panel decided not to recommend the full amount requested and that the shortfall is met from the parish council's reserves set aside for village hall repairs and maintenance.
Totals		£1,007,747.78	£872,565.00	£794,125.00	
Budget				£800,378.00	
Remaining balance to be allocated to the NHB Micro Grant Scheme with Cabinet's approval				<u>£6,253.00</u>	
