

Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation and Cabinet Member for Resources

Decision to be taken on or after 26 March 2020

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. T09.20

Title:	Progression of a funding agreement for the Haddenham and Thame Greenway
Date:	18 March 2020
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Local members affected:	Cllr Clive Harriss (Bernwood)

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

There is a confidential appendix to this report, which is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Please note that this Cabinet Member decision is being requested under the general exception rules. This is to meet contractual obligations, to prevent services having undue delay in notification.

Summary

The Haddenham and Thame Greenway is an aspirational walking and cycling scheme between Haddenham and Thame Parkway Rail Station and Thame.

This Key Decision Report makes a Recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Cabinet Member for Resources to agree to the progression of a funding agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to enable the transfer of scheme funding to Buckinghamshire County Council.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member(s) are recommended to agree to the progression of a funding agreement with Oxfordshire County Council for an aspirational walking and cycling scheme between Haddenham and Thame Parkway Rail Station and Thame. Signing of the funding agreement will enable the transfer of the scheme funding to Buckinghamshire County Council, who will progress and then potentially deliver the Haddenham and Thame Greenway.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The Haddenham and Thame Greenway is an aspirational 4km walking and cycling scheme between Haddenham and Thame Parkway Rail Station and Thame. The scheme spans the Buckinghamshire-Oxfordshire border and has been a long-held aspiration for local communities and authorities. Buckinghamshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Sustrans have been working in partnership on the project over the last decade.

The project is featured in Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 3 (Thame Area Strategy), Haddenham Neighbourhood Plan, Thame Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Thame Green Living Plan. A recent online survey on the scheme received a total of 2012 responses, with 94% of respondents stating that they would use a walking and cycling route if one was introduced between Haddenham and Thame Parkway Rail Station and Thame. Achieving delivery of a walking and cycling route would substantially increase the potential for sustainable travel between these locations, and given the considerable local support, is likely to be well used.

Through ongoing discussion between the two authorities, and due to resource constraints and deliverability risks within Oxfordshire County Council, Officers are looking to progress a funding agreement whereby Buckinghamshire County Council would receive the funding allocated to the scheme through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and Oxfordshire County Council's Section 106 (S106) contributions. This funding is in addition to the Section 106 (S106) contributions that Buckinghamshire County Council has secured towards the scheme. Signing of a funding agreement would secure the scheme funding and enable background scheme work to progress further.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal offers an excellent opportunity to secure funding for a beneficial and long-standing aspiration, demonstrating partnership working.

The alternative option available is to not progress with or sign a funding agreement. This would jeopardise the progression and deliverability of the scheme and would be locally unpopular.

C. Resource implications

Staff time required for project management will be covered by the funding allocation.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

Value for money will be benchmarked against similar walking and cycling schemes to ensure best value.

E. Legal implications

A legal agreement will be drawn up between Buckinghamshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council. This will contain relevant terms and conditions, including set gateway points to assess progress at critical stages and take decisions on whether to proceed. If a decision is taken not to proceed beyond a gateway point, the appropriate remaining funding will be returned to Oxfordshire County Council.

F. Property implications

There are no specific property implications to this decision, however it is likely that delivery of the Haddenham and Thame Greenway would require acquisition of land from a third party or parties. The exact requirements will be dependent upon the route alignment.

G. Unitary Council

The project will report through the appropriate processes in the new Buckinghamshire Council.

H. Other implications/issues

Not applicable.

I. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

The local Member, the Cabinet Member for Transportation, and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transportation are engaged with the aspirational Haddenham and Thame Greenway and are fully supportive of the scheme and the proposal to progress a funding agreement.

Cllr Clive Harriss, the local Member for the Bernwood Division, has been briefed on scheme progress on an ongoing basis. In his role as Cycling Champion for Aylesbury Garden Town, Cllr Clive Harriss feels that the Haddenham and Thame Greenway, if delivered, would be of real benefit to walkers and cyclists, helping to improve connectivity between local towns and villages.

A historic public engagement exercise took place in 2009/2010 and an online survey was conducted in 2019. Both exercises demonstrated strong levels of local support for the scheme. A formal consultation would be required as part of the progression of the project.

J. Communication issues

The local Member, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transportation will continue to be briefed on the project and progress. Structured updates will continue to be provided to relevant local stakeholders and members of the public.

K. Progress Monitoring

Project progress will be monitored by senior Officers through established project boards. The relevant Cabinet Members will be kept updated with any scheme developments on a regular basis through their Portfolio Board.

L. Review

The terms of the funding agreement will be reviewed by Buckinghamshire County Council. If the agreement is signed, the budget and progress against the agreed programme will be reviewed at key gateway points.

Background Papers

Further information on the scheme, including a summary of the results from the recent online survey exercise, has been published on the Buckinghamshire County Council website:

- <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/cycling-and-walking/new-walking-and-cycling-routes/haddenham-and-thame-greenway/>

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 25 March 2020. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk