

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING UPDATES

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Wards affected: High Wycombe Unparished Wards

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION TO HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

- i. To note progress and spend on schemes previously supported by the HWTC through CIL funding.
- ii. That the funding programme outlined in Appendix B is put forward to Cabinet for approval.

Reason for Decision

To enable projects supported by the High Wycombe Town Committee to be delivered through CIL funding.

Corporate Implications

1. The Wycombe Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into effect on 1 November 2012. The District Council is the charging and collecting authority for CIL.
2. A total of 15% of CIL collected is passed to the relevant town or parish council. Cabinet have agreed that the High Wycombe Town Committee will make a recommendation to Cabinet annually on the use of the local allocation in the unparished wards.
3. March 2016 Cabinet approved a three year programme of HWTC CIL funding priorities after deliberations by a HWTC CIL working group.

Executive Summary

4. This report sets out progress to date in the implementation of projects previously supported by the Committee to be implemented with the local allocation of CIL funding collected from developments in the unparished area. It also sets out a proposed funding programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19 based on the CIL funding strategy previously agreed and discussion with the CIL working group.

Sustainable Community Strategy / Council Priorities – Implications

5. An ambition in the new 2015 to 2019 Corporate Plan is to work on projects and schemes which benefit our local communities. A key workstream is to use CIL funding to invest in the area and improve infrastructure to reflect local needs.

Background and Issues

6. The CIL Regulations impose a duty on the Council to pass 15% of CIL funds directly to the relevant parish or town council raised from developments in their areas. This is known as the 'local allocation'. Cabinet have previously resolved that the Town Committee is the appropriate forum in the unparished areas to make recommendations annually on the use of the 15% of funds collected from developments in the unparished area.
7. A CIL working group of HWTC Members was formed to work with officers to draft the CIL funding priorities of the HWTC. Subsequently a list of priority projects to be funded or part funded by the HWTC 15% over the next three years was agreed by the Committee and then approved by Cabinet at their March 2016 meeting.
8. Given the uncertainty over the levels of funding that would be received, the priority list of projects submitted with the Cabinet report were split into a primary and secondary list, with projects on the secondary being considered if it clear that sufficient funding is available for the primary projects identified and that they continued to be identified as priorities.

Funding received and projections

9. As at 31 January 2017 the Council has received £750,000 in CIL 15% in the unparished area. Of this there is a projected outturn of £350,000 for projects previously approved. Appendix A provides an update on the progress and projected outturn of projects that have been funded previously through the local allocation of CIL.
10. Over the next two financial years it is likely that there will be another £500,000 to £700,000 received meaning that there will be approx. £900k to £1.1m available to spend on priority and other projects.

Recommendations on way forward

11. The HWTC CIL Working met on two occasions in December 2016 to receive updates from officers on scheme progress and to discuss the future potential schemes.
12. A number of the priority projects will be funded from a range of funding and not just the CIL, for example from HWTC reserves, existing S106 funding and other CIL funding. The CIL Working Group has recommended the programme at Appendix B for the next two years which takes account of income projections. A summary of the projects recommended for funding is as follows:

New Cemetery at Queensway – This project will be led by Community Services and would be part funded by HWTC reserves and other Council funding. The proposed CIL contribution will likely be approximately 25% of the whole scheme costs. Further decision will be made by the Committee and Cabinet before the final scheme moves towards implementation.

Tree planting and environmental improvements in district centres – Officers will be liaising with Members to identify tree planting and other environmental enhancements particularly in shopping parades areas in district centres such as at Micklefield and Totteridge.

Return of the river – The working group has recommended an allocation of up to £300,000 as a contribution towards re-making the river in the town centre. Initial estimates are that the costs for the river could range between £1.2m and £2.2m depending whether the work were done in stages or as a single exercise. There may also be scope for significant economies if the works were to be done alongside other highway works that are planned as part of the masterplan. Other funding sources such as s106 contributions and a potential bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund are being explored to make up the difference. Before this scheme could proceed it would be the subject of a separate decision by Cabinet.

Little Market House undercroft – This project involves creating a retail space to make better use of the facility. Officers will be working with conservation officers and Heritage England on specific designs which will be shared with the Committee in due course.

Realignment of roundabout on Hatters Lane – A feasibility study has been completed that sets out safety measures that can be implemented on Hatters Lane which will involve realigning the mini roundabout to slow traffic and installing some other pedestrian safety measures.

High Wycombe town centre maintenance and access – since Transport for Bucks funding has largely been reduced to essential safety-only repairs in the town centre there has been concern that the fabric of the town centre may deteriorate with ad hoc tarmac patch repairs instead of planned maintenance. Discussions have been ongoing between WDC, BCC, TfB and BIDCo, including a meeting in October 2015 between Members of the Town Committee and the County Council Cabinet Member for Transport to identify an ongoing funding regime that reflects the historic and economic function of the town centre, and which may involve several parties. A related issue is access to the High St which is controlled by rising bollards when these are operational. An outstanding package of maintenance works is expected to be implemented shortly from previously agreed budgets, and the rising bollards are due to be repaired by TfB. Going forward discussions are continuing to establish what additional budgets may be required to maintain the historic fabric of the town centre in materials to match and to ensure that some controls are in place concerning access to the High Street.

Options

13. The HWTC have the option of not accepting the recommended draft programme put forward by the CIL Working Group and not putting forward these recommendations to Cabinet for approval. Or they may recommend that the programme is put forward with amendments.

Conclusions

14. The High Wycombe Town Committee has previously recommended a priority list of projects to be funded or part funded through the CIL. Progress has been made on some of the projects including clearer detail on costs. It is recommended that Committee approved the draft two year programme at Appendix B to go forward to Cabinet.

Next Steps

15. A report will be brought to Cabinet seeking the agreement of the proposed allocation as set out in Appendix B. Further updates will be provided to the Committee on the progress of these projects over the next year including specific meetings with the Working Group where necessary.

Background Papers