

1. **Towns Fund Accelerated Funding - Public Realm Scheme** (Pages 1 - 6)

CABINET MEMBERS DELEGATED DECISION

Open		Would any decisions proposed:		
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO
Lead Member: Cllr Graham Middleton E-mail: cllr.graham.middleton@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Jemma Curtis E-mail: jemma.curtis@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Officers consulted:		
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s)				
Date meeting advertised: 26 th March 2021			Date of meeting decision to be taken: 6 th April 2021	
Deadline for Call-In: 13 th April 2021				

TOWNS FUND ACCELERATED FUNDING – PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

Summary

The Council received £750,000 in September 2020 from the Towns Fund Accelerated Fund to provide immediate support to towns who have been earmarked for a Town Deal. The requirements of the funding specified that projects must be aligned with the Towns Fund intervention framework and be spent by 31 March 2021. The Town Deal Board and Cabinet agreed that the funding should be spent on the School of Nursing (£597,000) and town centre public realm (£153,000) which was subsequently approved by Government. Work has progressed at pace to progress the detailed design and procurement for the public realm enhancements to the High Street. This report updates the scheme costs and financial arrangements to enable the scheme specification to be delivered to a higher quality than originally proposed.

Recommendation

1. Approve the amended scheme and updated budget to enhance the High Street as detailed in section 2
2. Delegated authority to Assistant Director, Regeneration, Housing & Place to progress delivery of the scheme and complete necessary procurement and legal arrangements.

Reason for Decision

To support the enhancement and attractiveness of the town centre in line with the priorities set out in the Town Investment Plan and ensure project delivery within the timeframes set out in the Towns Fund Accelerated Funding.

1. Background

On 1st July the Council received a letter from MHCLG offering those locations, which had been identified for Town Deals, a grant to fund capital projects that can be delivered by 31st March 2021. King's Lynn was offered £750,000 to support capital spend within the Towns Fund Intervention Framework. This is in addition to the £25m already allocated for Town Deals.

The schemes submitted from the agreed long list of priority projects and approved by ministers were the School of Nursing and Town Centre Public Realm. The accelerated funding for these projects was confirmed by government on 25th September under Section 31 (Power to pay grant) of the Local Government Act 2003.

A Public Realm Action Plan has been completed to inform the development of a new spatial strategy for the historic town centre in King's Lynn to coordinate immediate and future investment and provide design guidance for public realm interventions to support the repurposing and economic recovery of the town centre. The Action Plan is a key component of the spatial plan for the King's Lynn Town Investment Plan (TIP). In parallel with this work, options and consideration to immediate public realm improvements were identified to utilise the accelerated funding.

Following the preparation of the Town Centre Public Realm Action Plan, the scheme identified for delivery with the immediate funding available is focused on the High Street to include new surfacing, seating, planting, streetlighting and power supplied for pop up stalls. The cost estimate prior to tendering for a contractor was circa £150,000 within the available Towns Fund accelerated funding available. It was identified in the December 2020 delegated report that if the tendered scheme cost is higher than estimated this may require additional funding from the tourism support package grant or an option to scale the project back to within the funds available.

2. Options Considered

A tender exercise to Highway approved contractors for the resurfacing element of the scheme was completed in February 2021 which resulted in only one tender return due to the tight timeframes for delivery and market conditions for schemes of this nature at present. The tendered cost for the resurfacing was £40,000 higher than the initial estimate.

In addition to this, as the detailed design has evolved, the opportunity for a higher specification of certain elements has arisen which will provide wider benefits to the scheme including;

1. Enhanced foundation to sections susceptible to vehicular traffic – to minimise on going maintenance in the future

2. Higher specification street lighting to incorporate additional features including CCTV, banner fixings and structural capability for festoon Christmas lighting.
3. Improved power supply facility.

As a result the total scheme cost has increased from £150,000 to £235,000 including 5% contingency due to the higher contractor costs, enhanced specification and design fees associated with commissioning the enhanced lighting detailed design.

The option to pause the scheme, re tender, or consider a new scheme within the available funds is not possible due to the constraints of the funding timescale.

3. Policy Implications

The proposal for the submission is in line with the Corporate Business Plan objective to protect, promote and enhance the borough's natural and built environment and maintain accessible, clean, pleasant and safe public places and communities.

The proposal is also in line with the Town Investment Plan endorsed by the Council in October 2020 and the priority to support repurposing and renewal of the town centre.

4. Financial Implications

The increased costs can be met from other external funding already secured from the Norfolk Business Rates Pool and Norfolk Strategic Fund.

5. Personnel Implications

None

6. Statutory Considerations

None

7. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

8. Risk Management Implications

Specification – The foundation for the scheme was designed to NCC's highway approved standard. Following the procurement exercise, the preferred contractor recommended a higher specification of foundation in order to minimise any risk of cracking on the York stone. While the designer's consider a low risk eventuality from an engineering perspective, the view of Officers is that investment in the higher specification foundation will minimise future maintenance work/costs.

PR/Reputation – the council is mindful of the detrimental impact the pandemic has had on the town centre. The programme submitted by the contractor means is expected to take 5-6 weeks to complete and will entail a phased approach to works to minimise disruption to adjacent businesses. A comprehensive communications and engagement plan with businesses will be undertaken by the appointed contractor to minimise any impact on their business. The works are due to be completed prior to

later phases of the government roadmap meaning while there will be disruption when non-essential shops are due to reopen on 12th April, it will be of a lower impact than later in the year when it is hoped all restrictions will be lifted and events may be taking place i.e. GEAR etc.

Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

Background Papers

Towns Fund Accelerated Funding Cabinet Report, 19th August 2020
Towns Fund Accelerated Funding – Public Realm Scheme, Cabinet member decision, December 2020

Signed:.....

Cabinet Member for:.....

Date:.....

Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Name of policy/service/function					
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?		New / Existing (delete as appropriate)			
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations					
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age				
	Disability				
	Gender				
	Gender Re-assignment				
	Marriage/civil partnership				
	Pregnancy & maternity				
	Race				
	Religion or belief				
	Sexual orientation				
Other (e.g low income)					
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	Yes / No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes / No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes / No				
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	Yes / No	Actions:			
		Actions agreed by EWG member			

Assessment completed by: Name	
Job title	Date

Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.