

## REPORT TO CABINET

<b>Open/Exempt</b>		Would any decisions proposed :		
<b>Any especially affected Wards:</b> West Winch	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 Richard Blunt E-mail: <i>Richard.Blunt@West-Norfolk.gov.uk</i>		Other Cabinet Members consulted: All		
		Other Members consulted: None		
Lead Officer: Alan Gomm E-mail: <i>alan.gomm@west-norfolk.gov.uk</i> Direct Dial:01553616237		Other Officers consulted: Management Team		
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

Date of meeting: 27 June 2017

### **WEST WINCH / NORTH RUNCTON STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA – DESIGN OF / PROVISION OF A RELIEF ROAD TO OPEN UP THE AREA**

#### **Summary**

The Report outlines the need for, and mechanisms to procure, a design for a West Winch relief road which would enable access to the wider Growth Area and mitigate adverse impacts. It goes on to request funding of £125K which is matched to money allocated from the Business Rates Pool, and an anticipated similar contribution from Norfolk County Council.

#### **Recommendation**

That Cabinet agrees to make up to £125K available from Reserves towards initial design work for the West Winch relief road.

#### **Reason for Decision**

To support the development of 3 – 3500 houses provided for in the Local Plan allocation.

## **1. Background**

1.1 The Core Strategy adopted in 2011 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adopted in 2016 make allocations for a large housing area at West Winch / North Runcton of some 3-3500 houses. There is a considerable amount of associated infrastructure which is needed to ensure the development takes place in a way that it mitigates the impacts locally and those in the wider catchment.

1.2 The two plans above contain very detailed explanations of what is required to give an acceptable development, but this is not specific enough to ensure a fully deliverable Section 106 agreement (or set of agreements). The Borough Council has commissioned work on an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to ensure the most effective way of providing that infrastructure.

1.3 The results of the IDP work will not be fully available until July, but we do know that the landowners and potential developers previously expressed reservations about the infrastructure bill at the Local Plan Examination in 2015 / 16. The Borough Council made amendments to the allocation and included additional developable land to support viability and deliverability. The strategic site is also zero rated for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the light of a high level viability assessment. Taking this all into account we consider that whilst the site is viable, careful attention needs to be paid to the infrastructure needed and the phasing of it. Hence we commissioned the IDP work to ensure this. Whilst the work is led by the Borough Council it actively seeks the involvement of the landowners and developers.

1.4 One of the key elements of the Local Plan allocation is the provision of a West Winch relief road to serve the Growth Area and ensure traffic from the new development has a minimal impact on the existing A10 as it passes through the village of West Winch. Specific access points will draw traffic away from the A10. This road will also have the effect of diverting existing traffic away from the village. This aspect of the Growth Area proposal is widely supported, and the local communities have a view that the relief road should be provided before any residential development takes place.

1.5 Norfolk County Council as the strategic Highway Authority has a genuine involvement in the provision of an effective road network capable of accommodating the proposed growth. They also have the expertise to provide a design, and have been involved in the plan making process since the Growth Area was first proposed.

1.6 The Growth Area is in a number of ownerships. Whilst a very large part of the northern area is in single control other parts are not. Applications are likely to come forward at different times. This makes a comprehensive approach to design and provision of the relief road a more difficult proposition. It is clearly possible to require a comprehensive design for the relief road, but applicants cannot be forced to present applications at convenient times. The more effective solution is for a public body to assume the role and design the road to enable it to be procured and built at the earliest opportunity. The resultant payments from relevant landowners can be secured through legal agreements as applications come forward.

1.7 As part of the Business Rates Pool funding stream the Borough Council secured £200K (or 24% of the project, whichever is the lower) towards the design of the road. However this needs to be matched with other funding.

1.8 Discussions have been held with officers from the County Council about the desirability of proactively designing the road, and going on to seek funding to provide it. It is not possible to bid for funds until we have carried out work that robustly demonstrates the need for and form of the road. Appendix 1 shows the stages needed to get to the planning application stage. County

Council estimate total cost of a design to £1- £2M. The initial work envisaged in the Business Rates Pool bid will get some way to that in year 1, with up to £450K.

1.9 Some background work has already been undertaken in the development of the Local Plan allocations and examining the different potential solutions. Without the design process starting and the scope being more precisely defined it is difficult to estimate what elements still need to be addressed or strengthened, thus affecting the total project cost. However we should be clear that the Borough Council is supporting the project, and the subsequent stages into Years 2 and 3, although no financial commitment is given beyond that sought above, at this point.

## Conclusion

1.10 Whatever the detailed outcomes of the IDP we need to address a significant infrastructure provision blockage to bring forward one of the more significant areas of future housing growth in the Borough. Currently large areas of housing land are dependent on the decisions of landowners who can frustrate the process by bringing forward only parcels which they believe can be accessed in simpler, cheaper ways without the need to engage about, and contribute to the wider more comprehensive solution.

1.11 The proposal is to:

- Spend £125K from the Borough Council, to be matched by Norfolk County Council, and using £200K from the Business Rates Pool to commence initial design work for the West Winch relief road.
- This (together with the detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan) will enable bids to be prepared and submitted to the Government Infrastructure Fund announced recently, to bring forward delivery of the road, and accelerate the housing development.
- Ensure we provide a clear message as to the need for a comprehensive or set of co-ordinated development schemes for the Growth Area, and that piecemeal schemes for parts only, not linked to wider infrastructure provision will be resisted.

## 2. Options Considered

2.1 The main alternative option would be to continue to seek to only secure funds from landowners and developers to enable the design work to be undertaken. However this is a high risk strategy in that would be unlikely to provide the full level of funding needed to develop the relief road in advance of them making their own planning applications. We already know some landowners are developing schemes which are restricted and having the effect of avoiding large financial contributions to the distributor road.

## 3. Policy Implications

3.1 The Borough Council has made a significant allocation at West Winch / North Runcton, and it needs to be accompanied by significant infrastructure provision. The relief road is a key element of a comprehensive scheme for the

3-3500houses, and potentially an accelerated rate of development. The danger of piecemeal development must be avoided. The Growth Area needs to be treated as a whole, and therefore we may need to refuse piecemeal applications where they would undermine the funding or delivery of the road.

3.2 The County Council as Highway Authority is well aware of the need to have a comprehensive development solution. They support the approach to resist piecemeal development. In respect of constructing a relief road there may well be a need to use compulsory purchase powers to achieve implementation.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 The £125K is the commitment sought to this project. The Borough Council Reserves would be the source for this money.

#### **5. Personnel Implications**

5.1 None arising

#### **6. Statutory Considerations**

6.1 We are seeking to implement the provisions in a statutory development plan, but there are none specifically beyond that.

#### **7. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(Pre screening report template attached)

7.1 Attached

#### **8. Risk Management Implications**

8.1 There is a serious risk of non-development on the allocation:

- If viability is compromised by developers forward funding, development could slow or cease. (not sure what this point is – Developers inability to forward fund? - IP)
- We assume that 1600 units will complete by 2026.
- Non delivery of the relief road affects the ability of current planning applications to be consented.
- The local community sees an unsatisfactory piecemeal development not delivering local benefit.

#### **9. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted**

9.1 None

#### **10. Background Papers**

10.1 None.



**Pre-Screening Equality Impact  
Assessment**

Name of policy/service/function	Request for funds to put to the design of a relief road at West Winch / North Runcton Growth Area				
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	The road will be used to give access to the strategic growth area at West Winch / North Runcton. The road is required as part of an allocation in a statutory development plan.				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<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 <b>according to their different protected characteristic</b>, 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			x	
	Disability			x	
	Gender			x	
	Gender Re-assignment			x	
	Marriage/civil partnership			x	
	Pregnancy & maternity			x	
	Race			x	
	Religion or belief			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
	Other (eg low income)			x	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comments</b>			
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				
5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	Yes/ No	<b>Actions:</b> None			
		<b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> Claire Dorgan			
<b>Assessment completed by: Name</b>	<b>Alan Gomm</b>				
<b>Job title: Planning Policy Manager</b>	<b>Date: 15 June 2017</b>				

**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.**

APPENDIX 1

	Milestone	Date	Cost
a)	Ensure robust viability outcomes from the Borough Council Infrastructure Development Plan	By 31 March 2017	
b)	Agree cost sharing with developers	By 30 June 2017	
c)	Feasibility and environmental screening (including any time critical surveys) Commission and undertake feasibility work and any required environmental surveys (12 months)	July 2017 to June 2018	£250-500k
d)	Design Development, Assessment and Consultation Prepare a preliminary design incorporating the findings of consultation and prepare a report summarising the environmental risks and outcomes of the public consultation (12 months)	July 2018 to June 2019	£250-750k
e)	Planning To undertake relevant work and prepare the full set of documentation required for a Planning Application including detailed design (15 months)	April 2019 June 2020	£500-750k