

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council - 10 December 2013

### Monkton Heathfield Capacity Funding

#### Report of the Planning and Development Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards)

#### 1. Executive Summary

In July 2013 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) made available up to £500,000 to the Council through the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund. Whilst the money is not ring fenced, the award was made on the basis that it is intended to support the development of the Monkton Heathfield housing development. The initial payment of £300,000 has been received with the additional payment being received at the start of the next financial year on the basis that satisfactory progress has been made. The purpose of this report is to seek Full Council's approval to spend the award in accordance with the key objectives that formed the basis of the Council's bid.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The urban extension at Monkton Heathfield comprises mixed use development including 1000 dwellings identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan with a further 3500 in the period up until 2026 allocated in the Core Strategy. Whilst planning permission has been granted for the first phases and dwellings are now occupied, there remains considerable work and a number of issues that need to be overcome in order to ensure that delivery is provided at a rate that will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing land supply in years to come, as well as bringing forward much needed employment land.
- 2.2 Capacity support has therefore been sought from DCLG to assist in unblocking potential hurdles to delivery. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are monitoring the award and support is also being received from the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS). This funding, as the name suggests, is aimed and providing the authority with additional capacity to tackle issues. It is not intended to deliver hard infrastructure.

#### 3. The Large Scale Programme Capacity Fund Award

- 3.1 The Capacity Fund bid was based upon five work streams:-
  - Specialist valuation advice to support negotiations with landowners and developers to deliver the Western Relief Road;

- Specialist legal and CPO (compulsory purchase) advice to support negotiations with landowners and developers to deliver the Western Relief Road;
- Assessment of options for the design and alignment of the Western Relief Road and submission of a detailed planning application for the preferred option;
- Assessment by the Local Planning Authority of urban design and wider master planning issues (building on the work previously done by Urban Initiatives); and
- To retain specialist consultants to work with the Environment Agency and the developers to ensure that an appropriate and deliverable solution to providing replacement flood storage capacity and mitigating run off back to 'green field' is found.

3.2 Whilst the award is not ring fenced, progress will be monitored against these objectives and receipt of the second tranche will be dependant upon satisfactory progress being made. A sub-group of the Taunton Economic Advisory Board is being set up to oversee this project. It will comprise representatives from Taunton Deane Borough Council (Councillor Mark Edwards and Tim Burton), Somerset County Council, the HCA, the Environment Agency, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the developers

#### **4. Approval to spend based upon objectives**

4.1 As the award is not ring fenced, approval from Taunton Deane Members is required in order to spend this money in accordance with the various work streams identified. It is therefore suggested that Full Council authorises that the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund money be spent on progressing the five work streams identified in paragraph 3.1 above. Briefs for the various pieces of work have been prepared. Any variation would require a further Full Council resolution.

#### **5. Finance Comments**

5.1 The funding of £300,000 has been received following a bid exercise based on the objective set out in 3.1. These objectives support the Quality and Sustainable Growth and Development aim. Should DCLG be happy that we have spent this funding according to the objectives then this will enable us to receive a further £200,000.

5.2 We do have a choice on how to spend this funding. Financially, given that the objectives support one of the Corporate Aims and could release further funding, the proposal to spend this funding on the objectives in 3.1 is sound and the recommendation is supported.

#### **6. Legal Comments**

6.1 No legal implications

#### **7. Links to Corporate Aims**

7.1 The successful delivery of the Monkton Heathfield development is critical to the Council's growth agenda.

## **8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

8.1 None

## **9. Equalities Impact**

9.1 This decision will not disproportionately effect any group or individual

## **10. Risk Management**

10.1 As stated above, failure to deliver the Monkton Heathfield urban extension would have a huge adverse impact the future growth of Taunton. More specifically, if the Council fails to spend the Large Sites Programme Capacity Funding appropriately, it will not have access to the additional £200,000 allocated.

## **11. Partnership Implications**

11.1 Delivery of this development will only be successful with input from other key agencies such as the Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency.

## **12. Recommendation**

Full Council is **recommended** to approve a supplementary estimate of £300,000, funded by the grant received from the Department of Communities and Local Government, for the spending of the Large Sites Capacity Fund award on progressing the five work streams identified in the bid and as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

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