

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 14 July 2010

Allocation of Growth Points Funding

Report of Project Taunton Director (Ian Franklin) and Strategic Director (Joy Wishlade)

(This is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Background

Growth Point Funding is partnership funding between Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council which has funded the capital elements of the work of Project Taunton. We received indicative funding announcement last year for 2010/2011 of £2,243,000 capital and £300,698 revenue. Towards the end of March we received the revenue amount for the coming year but still wait to hear if the capital funding will be forthcoming. With recent announcements from the new coalition government we believe that it is extremely unlikely that it will be forthcoming – and almost certainly not in its entirety. We last reported to members on a re-profile of the Growth Points spend in October 2009. Now we are fairly certain of reduced income we would like to update this.

2. Proposal

2.1 Revenue:

It is suggested that the revenue continues to support the Delivery Team for Project Taunton – the delivery mechanism for which this funding is given. If no further funding is found the Delivery Team is funded through until approximately December 2011.

2.2 Capital:

If we assume that further funding will be very difficult to find and that the delivery team potentially has a finite existence, we feel very strongly that in these circumstances we must plan to do the maximum we possibly can to ensure that the basic ingredients for the growth of Taunton are put in place during this period. By this we mean the links around the town and associated public realm, the basis for a retail scheme, a deliverable Firepool as far as possible and other smaller projects, as well as masterplanning the growth of Taunton which is already in our programme.

Attached is a spreadsheet showing expected and suggested expenditure of the remainder of the New Growth Points capital funding allocation for Taunton (App

A). Also attached is the table showing the use of Growth Points funding that was agreed by the Executive in October last year (App B) so that you can see the changes that are suggested. The latter shows an income in 2010/ 2011 that we are now discounting. Some spend in line with this approved plan has been made and is identified in the commentary below. Below the line is the suggested budget/plan for the 2010/2011 allocation if this is received.

A commentary of each item using the numbering follows:

1. This is the capital amount received to date – some of which is already committed to projects which are identified below.
2. This is income from the Department for Transport to Somerset County Council for flood relief works for the Third Way. The work had already been carried out by Project Taunton, so this was the financial contribution.
3. We are committed to finishing this project which will provide a unique country park facility on the edge of the town centre. It will also provide safe walking and cycling routes (with 2 new bridges) from French Weir Park to Somerset College and Silk Mills.
4. We are currently negotiating the final fee account with LDA and hope that this amount will be reduced.
5. Although without the 2010/2011 funding it will be impossible to undertake the whole of the Castle Green project, we feel that we must do something in Castle Green to provide a better landscape for the Museum and provide the link with Goodland Gardens and the riverside paths. Indeed it was one of the stipulations of the Heritage Lottery Grant to SCC that the surrounding area was improved. This is an allocation of funds and we will now be investigating what bits of the approved plan can be undertaken.
6. This is a contingency for future work. We would not be expecting to use it but having provided key public space it would be prudent to have some contingency available.
7. This work is underway and the funding committed. It is key to enabling growth to occur in the best way possible for Taunton and will enable a sound Core Strategy to be prepared.
8. These points are not yet installed but should continue to be a priority to back up our sustainability agenda.
9. This funding is committed and the work is underway.
10. This is a sum of £150,000 for planning and development advice and also £125,000 which is the maximum sum TDBC would be contractually obliged to repay to the developer if the project was halted by TDBC. The work on this is ongoing and the funding committed.
11. This is a fee budget for the design and marketing of phase one at Coal Orchard. We are advised that there is a market for A3 units in this location by the riverside, and would like to pursue a project (subject to approval by Taunton Deane) to support the retail offer at this end of the town.
12. This is committed and costs have been incurred and relates to public realm, master planning and phase one.

13. This is committed and has been spent.
14. This is committed and has been spent. It was the top up amount for the purchase of this unit – the main bulk of funding being provided by the HCA and agreed by Executive.
15. This figure includes £80,000 for the demolition of the engine sheds (already agreed and spent) and £500,000 towards purchase of third party properties in Priory Bridge Road to enable the first phase of development to take place, plus the public realm that is required for the first phase. St Modwen estimate that £700,000 will be the actual amount required however we wish to see what savings / investment they can find. Should we need to put more money in then we will try to find it from savings from other items rather than compromise our contingency.
16. This is the link across Bridge Street to connect Coal Orchard with Goodland Gardens. The sum includes our estimate of building a cantilevered footway from Goodland Gardens to the bridge to enhance what is now a very sub standard and narrow footpath and possible the removal of some bridge panels to allow direct access to the bridge from the gardens.. This is a very important link which could be left out for ever if we do not carry out the work.
17. This is our very important contingency and before we make savings on other items is all we will have left for unidentified projects.
18. This is the £2.23m which is the GP allocation we are assuming we will not receive. If it is received however then we would like the flexibility to look at purchasing the “Coal Yard” in Canal Road to allow the pedestrian/cycle link between the station and the river and/or complete Castle Green to the original or altered specification

3. **Financial Comments**

The Growth Point funding is a partnership fund between SCC and ourselves. Funding is provided for regeneration (including public realm) and the delivery of housing. It cannot be used for other purposes.

4. **Legal comments**

Only to reiterate the above point that this funding is legally only available for the purposes that it was given.

5. **Links to Corporate Aims**

The uses describe above link to Aim 1 Regeneration

6. **Equalities Impact**

All works carried out will be DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant.

7. Conclusion

The above allocations essentially prioritise the first phase of Firepool, the creation of key linkages within the town, the planning for a new retail scheme and some public realm works. This plan has been discussed with and approved by both the Project Taunton Steering Group and the Project Taunton Board

Given the uncertain nature of Government funding we have concluded that even if Growth Points allocation for 2010/2011 is received, we should follow this new suggested programme as a matter of urgency. If we can't demonstrate positive use of the capital funds in our possession soon then we risk criticism for non delivery and in the worse situation an attempt by central government to recover funds already received. In addition and on a practical front, if the Delivery Team has a limited life then it is important that rapid progress is made and early approval to this new budget/plan is given.

If we do receive the 2010/2011 allocation then we suggest that further approvals should be sought from the Leader and the Leader of the Opposition with delegated powers.

8. Recommendation

The Executive is recommended to approve the Growth Points capital spending plan and the use of the revenue amount to support the Project Taunton Delivery team.

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Appendix A

Capital

Ref.	Item	2009/10		2010/11	
		Income £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000
1	Growth Points allocation	5,619			
2	Misc. Income			524	
3	Longrun Farm/Meadows		0		360
4	Castle Green design		455		100
5	Castle Green construction		0		1,000
6	Somerset Square		289		20
7	Urban extension planning		115		815
8	10 charging points for zero carbon emission vehicles		0		30
9	NIDR		0		825
10	Retail (EPF + £200K)		10		275
11	Coal Orchard architecture and marketing		0		40
12	Firepool planning application		0		250
13	Unit 4 Canal Road (top up)		250		0
14	Unit 5 Canal Road (top up and fees)		45		0
15	Firepool		0		580
16	Bridge Street link		0		300
	Total	5,619	1,164		4,595
17	Balance		4,455		384

18	Purchase of Coal Yard at Firepool/Completion of Castle Green			2.243	2.243
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1 2008/09 c/fwd = £2,281K + 2009/10 allocation = £3,338K

2 £100K remaining from Somerset Square + £424K flood storage capacity from SCC. Further receipt anticipated from sale of 64 PBRoad circa £175,000 (not included).

3 Landscaping including bridge installment, green cathedral and oak barn

4 & 5 Sum adjusted to allow bridge link and landscaping around its landing in Castle Green

6 Additional to S106 (£23K for play and outdoor recreation)

Appendix A

15 Third party properties and public realm + £80K demolition

16 Removal of bridge panels with improved access to Goodland Gardens and cantilevered walkway to Coal Orchard

18 Unexpected receipt of Growth Points Allocation 2.243 for 2010/2011

Appendix B

APP B Growth Points

Ref.	Item	2009/10		2010/11	
		Income £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000
1.	c/fwd, annual allocation and anticipated allocation	5,619		2,248	
2.	Longrun Farm/Meadows		0		150
3.	Castle Green design		412		100
4.	Castle Green construction		0		3,268
5.	Somerset Square		400		0
6.	Firepool demolition		200		0
7.	Firepool enabling works		400		850
8.	Urban extension planning		300		700
9.	10 charging points for zero carbon emission vehicles		30		0
10.	NIDR		0		1,000
11.	Retail (EPF + £200K)		0		325
12.	Coal Orchard master plan		0		75
13.	Unit 4 Canal Road (top up)		100		0
14.	Total		1,842		6,468
15.	Balance (nil receipt 2010/11)		3,777		-2,691
16.	Balance (proposed receipt 2010/11)		3,777		-443

1. 2009/10 income consists of £2,281,000 carried forward from 2008/09 and the allocation for 2009/10 of £3,338,000. A July 09 letter from CLG, previously circulated, proposed a cut in GP capital funding from £3,972,516 to £2,248,263 for 2010/11.
2. Part payment for Longrun Meadows has been provided via RIF. A sum has been allocated, towards landscaping - a planning condition, for the balance.
4. No Castle Green construction costs will now be incurred in 2009/10 and this project will be reviewed dependent on 2010/11 allocation.
8. Although an allocation of £1million has been agreed for this project, it is unlikely that tenders will come back in excess of £700,000.
10. The completion of the NIDR is fundamental to the delivery of Firepool. As a result of planning and S106 problems, there is a £1million shortfall. This allocation plugs the funding gap, ensuring D of T funding and access to the northern sector of the Firepool site.
11. This sum is made up of up to £125,000 detailed in the exclusivity contract as payment to EPF if TDBC withdraws from the agreement. £200,000 has been allocated for legal and property advice towards signing the agreement.
15. These totals assume no capital funding receipt in 2010/11.
16. These totals assume the proposed capital funding receipt for 2010/11 (see item 1. above)