

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE FULL COUNCIL – 12TH AUGUST 2010

MASTERPLAN FUNDING FOR ATTLEBOROUGH

1. Purpose of Report

To request approval to accept funding from the Homes and Communities Agency for the Masterplan Project for the Attleborough growth. The project will enable the appointment of a consultant to work with the Council and the Community to meet their needs through the expansion of the area.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1 Accepts the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency for the Masterplan Project
- 2.2 Approve the consultant from the Homes and Communities Agency panel to undertake the work

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 This item has been brought before Members to approve a grant the Council has been awarded.
- 3.1.2 The grant is for the sum of £50,000 which was as a result of a bid for Rural Masterplan funding aimed at assisting Councils with large rural areas, tackle issues that growth and expansion may have in a particular area. The bid was made to assist the planning of the growth of Attleborough to enable the rural aspects and issues in that locality to be managed in way that fully involves the community and the Council.
- 3.1.3 As part of the process the Homes and Communities Agency have also set up a panel of expert consultants through a government procurement process to provide the a route for appointment of appropriate expertise for the process.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The funding was first awarded to the Council in February 2010 and subsequently put on hold with the change in Government and the review of funding to different projects. The funding was confirmed on the 23rd July 2010, with a request to sign up to the grant conditions and the procurement of the Consultant through the Homes and Communities Agency panel.
- 3.2.2 The award of funding has a short timeframe for expenditure, March 2011 and the project will take 6 months to complete. This means that acceptance of the funding

and the approval of the consultant needs to be approved urgently, otherwise we would be unable to meet the obligations of the grant.

3.2.3 Whilst awaiting the Governments deliberations on the funding, a procurement process was undertaken with the Homes and Communities Agency for a consultant. Consultants from the Homes and Communities Agency's approved list, which had been through a tender process under EU regulations, were asked to submit expressions of interest in the project. These submissions were then asked to submit further tenders and resulted in the interview of three consultants and the selection of Scott Wilson to undertake the work.

3.2.4 The project as a whole will contribute to the capacity of the Planning team in delivering the Local Development Framework for the Attleborough area and the Area Action Plan currently set out in draft. As a neutral party to the process Scott Wilson will work with all the key stakeholders in Attleborough such as the Town Council, the Attleborough Taskforce, Breckland Council and the Community.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 Members are requested to consider the options that are available with regard to the funding :

- (a) Accept the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency and make provision in the Budget book for the allocation of funds to this project and approve Scott Wilson as the consultant for the project.
- (b) Accept the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency but request that they appoint the consultant directly.
- (c) Not accept the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 It is recommended that the Council accepts the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency and appoints Scott Wilson to undertake the work as this will enable the timeframe to be met within the project and allow greater involvement of the community within that timeframe. If the Homes and Communities Agency appoints the Contractor directly further approval will need to be sought from the Department of Communities and Local Government as the expenditure is over £20,000. Whilst they are likely to approve the expenditure there is likely to be a delay in the process which would reduce the timeframe the project could be delivered within and not enable as much community involvement as envisaged.

3.4.2 The proforma B sets out the financial implications and the requirements for the cashflow arrangements for drawing on the funds which are within the Councils budgetary facility.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

There are reputational risks in not taking the resources from the Homes and Communities Agency with the Community as a whole, as well as the Government department which has allocated the resources.

The additional capacity this project offers to the parish of Attleborough would have to be met through the contract with Capita Symonds and is unlikely to offer the same level of resources.

4.2 Financial

A proforma B is attached

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Constitution allows for funding received during the year to be incorporated into the Council's Budget if approved by Council.

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: there are no Equalities issues relating to this report
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: There are no crime and disorder issues relating to this report
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: The project will be addressing issues relating to the environment as part of the masterplan exercise and do not need to be highlighted separately
- d) Human Resources: There are no human resources issues related to this report
- e) Human Rights: There are no human rights issues related to this report
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004]

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 Building safer and stronger communities, prosperous communities, Your Council your services.

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 Attleborough.

Background Papers

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

Appendices attached to this report:

Proforma B