

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Challenge Fund – Adjustment to 2017/18 Public Realm Annual Plan
Date of decision:	8 January 2018
Decision maker:	Assistant Director Environment and Place
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The authority is for the specified officer to take this decision in accordance with the key decision taken by the Cabinet Member Transport and Roads in regard to the Balfour Beatty Living Places Public Realm Annual Plan 2017/18 on 30 March 2017. That decision included for the following:</p> <p>‘ (b) the assistant director environment and place be authorised to agree, through the contract governance arrangements, final adjustments to the programme and budget allocation to each of the annex areas (including, but not limited to, the investment, in accord with the approach set out in this report, of all funds received from the National Productivity Investment Fund, the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund in 2017/18 and the capital programme) and any in year adjustments to the plan.’</p> <p>This officer decision is taken in accord with the authority delegated above regarding an in year adjustment to the Public Realm Annual Plan to include for investment related to the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund in 2017/18 and the capital programme.</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	To reduce the funding allocated to the 2017/18 Public Realm Annual Plan from the council's capital programme by £1.8 million to enable works to be programmed to best meet local needs.
Reasons for decision:	<p>The council bid to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund. Bids were submitted in March 2017. The results of the 2017/18 bidding round were announced on 1 August 2017.</p> <p>The council's bid https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/723/herfordshire_road_investment/2 is for the Major Maintenance of Routes that Connect Herefordshire's Enterprise Zone. This successful bid secured £5 Million of funding from DfT alongside the council's own contribution of £3 million. That £3 million having been included for in the council's capital programme, subject to the bid being successful.</p> <p>These works will enable the council to deliver significant benefits to the local and national economy through returning 38.9 miles of key routes to a good condition throughout.</p>

	<p>It is a condition of the DfT's approval that, the Department will provide a maximum funding contribution of £5 million in 2017-18 towards an estimated total scheme cost of £8 million. The council is solely responsible for meeting any expenditure over and above this maximum amount and any spend in following years, as the Department's grant is only available in that one year.</p> <p>The first phase of these works commenced during August 2017 and were completed during November 2017. The output achieved in this first phase has exceeded that planned. The value of those completed works is c£6.2 million.</p> <p>As the output from phase one has succeeded in exceeding the DfT's financial requirement to deliver a minimum of £5 million of spend in the 2017/18 financial year, the council can now take stock and consider the methodology and timeframe for the delivery of the works required to complete the major maintenance of the routes included in its bid.</p> <p>As such the decision is taken to reduce the funding allocated to the 2017/18 Public Realm Annual Plan from the council's capital programme by £1.8 million. This pending its re-introduction into the 2017/18 or 2018/19 Public Realm Annual Plan in accord with key decisions taken, or to be taken, by the Cabinet Member Transport and Roads.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>The £5m received from DfT needed to be spent during the 2017/18 financial year.</p> <p>The scheme had been planned to deliver c£5 Million of works during 2017, the remainder in 2018. This could only be achieved by the rapid mobilization following bid approval, a sustained and productive programme of works and without substantial interruption due to weather or other unforeseen conditions. If £5 million of spend had not been achieved in the first phase of these works, then phase two would have to achieve be mobilized in February 2018 to secure the minimum spending requirement for the 2017/18 financial year.</p> <p>This second phase would be at risk of disruption from weather and other unforeseen conditions, and would have to accommodate significant events in the County such as the arrival of the Weeping Window poppy sculpture to Herefordshire. This event is expected to attract up to 2,000 visitors a day to Hereford Cathedral and the city and will run from 14 March 2018 until 29 April 2018. As with the period running up to Christmas, efforts are made to avoid major works on key routes during such periods. This due to the significance of these events to the County's economy, health or wellbeing.</p> <p>The full scheme will need to be completed using the funds allocated in the council's capital programme, delivery of this element can extend into the 2018/19 financial year.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>To progress the second phase of works to the value of £1.8 million as part of the 2017/18 Public Realm Annual Plan. This option is rejected as the DfT's requirement for the council to deliver £5 million of spend in 2017/18 been achieved in the first</p>

	phase of these works. Further, the mobilization of the second phase of works in February 2018 would constrain the council's opportunity to take stock and consider the best methodology and timeframe for the delivery of the works required to complete the major maintenance of the routes included in its bid.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None.

Signed

Date: 8 January 2018