

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 30 January 2020
Title of report:	Use of reserve funding to support Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package Review
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

For Cabinet to approve the amendment of £360k from the financial resilience earmarked reserve to fund costs associated with the review of the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package to be completed by 31 July 2020.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) Cabinet approves the amendment of the financial resilience reserve reducing by £360k to fund the costs to complete the review work associated with the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package.**

Alternative options

1. To not approve the recommendation would mean that the cost to complete the work required would require funding from alternative source, this funding source would need to be identified.

Key considerations

2. The cabinet member for infrastructure and transport determined to pause and review the new road elements of Hereford (HTP) and South Wye Transport (SWTP) packages in his decision of 22 October 2019 so that they could be reviewed to determine next steps.
3. The review scope for the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package for completion by 31 July 2020, scheduled for approval on 24 January, will cost £451k in total and will include the following:-
 - Element 1: Peer Assessment of the HTP and SWTP
 - Element 2: Scope of transport strategy assessment and consideration of alternative options
 - Element 3: Stakeholder engagement, key messages, public consultation, seminar
4. Element 1, the independent peer review of the HTP and SWTP will be delivered within a budget of £91,000. This will be funded from the local transport plan and HTP capital budgets.
5. Elements 2 and 3 are transformational activity, the transport strategy review and supporting consultation and engagement will be delivered within a budget of £360k. This cost will be funded from financial resilience reserve established to fund this type of transformational activity.
6. The chief finance officer in discussion with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council has approved the use of £360k from the financial resilience reserve to fund the review.

Community impact

7. The recommendation demonstrates how the council is using its available financial resources to deliver the review of Hereford and South Wye Transport packages.
8. The funding will be used to complete the review work to ensure any future major scheme has a positive impact on the county to address travel issues, such as congestion and air quality, as these schemes have a permanent impact upon the environment which last for generations to come.
9. It is incumbent on the council to ensure that projects are consistent with the council's declaration of a climate emergency and will contribute to reducing the carbon output of the county whilst also addressing the transport problems of the city and supporting economic growth.

Equality duty

10. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
11. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision on available reserve funding utilisation, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

12. The council completed its annual review of earmarked reserves in October 2019 where the financial resilience reserve totalled £10m; using £360k to fund the transport review costs would reduce the remaining balance to £9.64m.
13. This balance is still sufficient and appropriate for the council's needs.

Legal implications

14. The council's reserves policy states that the approval to use reserves is provided by the Chief Finance Officer, as part of the regular budgetary process, in discussion with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The amendment to the reserves are then reported to cabinet for approval.
15. The chief finance officer has approved the use of this reserve.

Risk management

16. To not approve the use of the available reserve funding would put the review at risk of no funding source being identified leading to the inability to complete the review work expected.

Consultees

17. None

Appendices

None

Background papers

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50068934/Hereford%20Transport%20Package%20South%20Wye%20Transport%20Package%20main%20report.pdf>

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50074586/Hereford%20Transport%20South%20Wye%20Transport%20Packages%20review%20main%20report.pdf>