

## Record of Officer Decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>To approve expenditure of the next stage of Hereford Towns Fund - Green Space Enhancements.</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	<b>21 December 2020</b>
<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Director for Economy and Place</b>
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<p>On 26 November 2020 Cabinet approved recommendations</p> <p>That:</p> <p>(a) The £750,000 funding from government for the Towns Fund accelerated projects be accepted by the council;</p> <p>(b) The spending of the £750,000 funding from government on the Towns Fund accelerated projects as detailed within this report is approved</p> <p>(c) The Director of Economy and Place be authorised to take all operational decisions to implement recommendation (b) including, but not limited to, the procurement and commissioning of new projects, and, following consultation with the S151 officer, the movement of budgets between projects to ensure the full expenditure of funding.</p> <p>The projects identified by Cabinet as accelerated projects and approved for funding included:</p> <p>Project 3: Green Space enhancements</p>
<b>Ward:</b>	Kings Acre, Whitecross, Bobblestock, Holmer, Widemarsh, College, Aylestone Hill, Central, Eign Hill, Greyfriars, Tupsley, Dinedor Hill, Saxon Gate, Newton Farm, Belmont Rural, Red Hill, Hinton and Hunderton, Stoney Street, Credenhill, Queenswood, Wormside
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>This decision has been taken in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer and in light of the Cabinet decision accept the £750,000 Towns Fund grant funding from government:</p> <p><a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=50035605">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=50035605</a></p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	<p>To approve expenditure of up to £100,000 for the Green Space enhancements project and delegate authority to the Senior Project Manager to authorise spend and manage the budget.</p> <p>This expenditure is included within the £750,000 funding from government for the Towns Fund accelerated projects as recommended in the Cabinet report of 26 November 2020.</p> <p>The project will be commissioned in two parts. The City Centre Landmark Trees element will be delivered through the Council's current public realm contract and the Residential Trees and Trees on Public Open Space project will be procured together through a formal tender process with support from the Commercial Service team.</p>
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	In July 2020 government announced that under the Towns Fund programme they were offering Hereford a grant of £750,000 to fund capital projects that can be delivered this financial year. This grant will

	<p>be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance.</p> <p>This project was split in to two specific schemes:</p> <p>Scheme 1: City Centre Landmark Trees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planting opportunities directly into the ground in the city centre are limited due to the organic growth of Hereford City leading to significant recorded and unrecorded underground services across many suitable areas.</li> <li>The solution as utilised in many other cities and towns is to plant specially selected species and forms of trees in large planters that involve little or no site preparation and no excavation. Planters also provide the opportunity to minimise ongoing revenue costs through incorporation of watering and ‘feeding’ systems.</li> <li>The planters provide their own visual amenity and can brighten up the local cityscape. They can also offer additional features benefiting visitors to the city such as seating, shade and shelter from wind funnels created by enclosed streets. Planters also offer a safe and secure opportunity for trees to be present in busy street setting by raising potential hazards well above reach of the public.</li> </ul> <p>Scheme 2: Residential Trees and Trees on Public Open Space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recognised constraint on increasing tree (and canopy cover) in historic urban areas such Hereford City is finding suitable planting sites, including limited suitable sites within the control of the council. It is recognised that private gardens and spaces owned and managed by businesses and other organisations and groups create the necessary opportunity.</li> <li>Lack of support and encouragement plus cost of ‘garden trees’ is a constraint. A scheme is proposed to facilitate the provision of a selected range of trees suitable for smaller spaces and ‘garden’ situations.</li> <li>The selection would include a range of fruit trees so providing even greater biodiversity potential and a direct benefit on health of the residents.</li> <li>Maintenance would be secured by a City Tree ‘Magna Carta’ that recipients would sign up to so as to engender ownership and care and ensure they manage and maintain their tree. A clear guidance leaflet about planting, caring and any interesting facts about ‘their tree’ and promoting the wider benefits of trees will be supplied with each tree.</li> <li>The records kept would support any future monitoring and evaluation of the scheme that might help inform similar schemes nationwide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p>	<p>A risk assessment is included in the business case.</p> <p>An identified key risk as this project is looking to progress at the end of the current tree planting and supply season is that required trees may not be available within the local or UK market.</p> <p>The project will be carefully monitored to ensure any potential</p>

	underspend is mitigated. Equalities impact assessments will be carried out, when appropriate, as part of the delivery of the project.
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	The council could decide not to approve expenditure on this accelerated project. The council would not be exposed to potential financial risk of the projects but would miss out on securing the government investment to assist in economic regeneration, with associated reputational consequences. This option is not recommended because of the loss of grant income that will deliver this project within the city that help to deliver the council's county plan 2020- 2024.
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

Signed..... Date: 21 December 2020