

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	To approve expenditure up to the value of £65,500 to award professional services contracts and to complete feasibility work to progress the Integrated Wetlands project
Date of decision:	16.12.2020
Decision maker:	Assistant Director for Regulation, Environment & Waste
Authority delegated decision:	<p>The authority for the specified officer to take this decision is set out in the cabinet report approved on the 10th August 2020 https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7049</p> <p>Summary of decision: That:</p> <p>(a) That the approved £2m allocation in the Council's 2020/21 capital programme from the New Homes Bonus is authorised for the land purchase, design, construction and management of the integrated wetlands as set out in this report;</p> <p>(b) Subject to the identification of suitable sites for development as integrated wetlands, the Assistant Director for Regulation, Environment & Waste in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Transport and Section 151 Officer, is authorised to undertake land purchasing and lease negotiations with land owners for acquisition of up to 8 sites;</p> <p>(c) Subject to a successful funding decision, that up to £1m of match funding from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government is accepted;</p> <p>(d) Up to £30,000 of the approved capital programme is made available to commission the development of an interim delivery plan. This plan will include a phosphate calculator and a suite of recommended mitigation measures appropriate to the River Lugg in order to enable developers to calculate, mitigate and/or offset the identified phosphate load from development proposals;</p> <p>(e) Subject to the identification of existing agricultural land suitable for repurposing, the Assistant Director for Regulation, Environment & Waste in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Transport and Section 151 Officer, is authorised to undertake land purchasing and lease negotiations with land owners as a complimentary solution for reducing phosphate pollution in the River Lugg catchment area;</p> <p>(f) The Assistant Director for Regulation, Environment & Waste be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the scheme including the required land acquisitions and leases.</p>
Ward:	All Wards
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with the Strategic Capital Finance Manager, the councils section 151 officer and the assistant director for Regulation, Environment & Waste

Decision made:	<p>1) To delegate authority to the senior project manager to authorise expenditure up to the value of £20,000 to award a contract for the purchase and valuation reports in relation to agricultural land in north Herefordshire to Carter Jonas (1st Place), Bruton Knowles LLP (2nd Place), and Savilles (3rd Place)</p> <p>2) To delegate authority to the senior project manager to authorise</p>
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	<p>expenditure up to the value of £3500 to enable the Wye and Usk Foundation to complete their options paper on Wetlands sites</p> <p>3) To delegate authority to the senior project manager to authorise expenditure up to the value of £40,000 to award a provision of estates professional negotiation Services for the acquisition of agricultural land in north Herefordshire to Atchams.</p> <p>4)To delegate authority to the senior project manager to authorise additional expenditure up to £2000 to update the data sets informing the development of the interim delivery plan as a contract variation with Ricardo-AEA</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>1) To enable the council to receive independent advice on the Redbook valuation for each identified site</p> <p>2) To enable the council to receive a final technical assessment report from the Wye and Usk foundation around each identified site to enable the council to make informed decisions about purchasing/leasing sites</p> <p>3)To enable the council to have an independent negotiator on board to negotiate land acquisitions on behalf of the council</p> <p>4) To improve the data sets and the resilience of the phosphate calculator within the interim delivery plan</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>1) If the council decides not to adopt this request then there is a high chance of adding delay to the project meaning the council will be at risk of not being able to approve planning applications in the identified areas, at risk of not reducing phosphate levels in the river and not addressing the immediate challenges set out in these areas.</p> <p>2) Not proceeding will increase the risk of delays to the project which could result in a loss of match funding from the LEP which is time limited.</p> <p>3) There is a small risk that the tight budget controls may not be realised but this is mitigated by the project being managed through the council's corporate senior project management structure where budget monitoring is happening throughout the life of the project.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>1) Not to continue with the options, therefore not continuing with the project at pace thus putting the funding opportunities at risk</p> <p>2) Not to commission this work - This would result in phosphate levels remaining in exceedance of conservation targets within the River Lugg catchment area and a moratorium upon development within the River Lugg catchment area in the north of the county.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None Recorded

Signed.....
 Marc Willimont

Date: 16.12.2020