

Record of Officer Decision

Decision title:	To approve a variation to the Green Space Enhancements element of the Hereford Towns Fund to include the installation of three sedum bus shelters in Hereford City and the provision and installation of trees at Aylestone Park and the Hereford Enterprise Zone, as well as a payment to Marlbrook School following the purchase of trees for their site.
Date of decision:	17 March 2020
Decision maker:	Director for Economy & Place
Authority for delegated decision:	<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>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50035605</p>
Ward:	Whitecross, Red Hill,
Consultation:	This decision has been taken in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer, Legal, finance and commercial teams, Head of Economic Development, Assistant Director for Regulatory Environment and Waste Economy and Place and Head of Environment, Climate Emergency & Waste and in light of the Cabinet decision accept the £750,000 Towns Fund grant funding from government:
Decision made:	<p>To approve a variation to the Green Space Enhancements project to include the installation of three sedum bus shelters and the provision and installation of trees at, Aylestone Park and the Hereford Enterprise Zone, as well as a payment to Marlbrook Schools for purchase of trees to be installed at their site;</p> <p>That the total spend on the Green Space Enhancements project is increased to £116,429;</p> <p>To appoint Externiture for the supply and installation of the sedum bus shelters at a total cost of £26,623;</p> <p>To appoint Wyevale nurseries for the supply and delivery of 14 trees to Aylestone Park for a cost of £2,105;</p> <p>To approve for Marlbrook School to purchase trees from a local nursery for planting at their site to a budget of £725. This will be evidenced and a payment voucher arranged.</p>

	<p>To appoint the Aylestone Park Association for the installation of 14 trees at Aylestone Park at a total cost of £1,050; and</p> <p>To appoint Barcham Trees to supply and deliver trees for the Hereford Enterprise Zone at a total cost £28,853.</p>
<p>Reasons for decision:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance. • Whilst the City Trees scheme as part of the Green Space Enhancement project was extremely popular and was fully subscribed, only 519 of the 1,000 trees were available for purchase. This had required an alternative delivery solution for this project. • Through consideration of alternative delivery options to provide green space enhancements in the Hereford City, the following two options were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger Trees in public spaces • Although the availability of smaller residential trees was limited, a number of larger trees are still available. • Whilst this provides an alternative option to deliver the project objectives, due to the increased size these trees are not suited to residential gardens. • Following a review of potential sites, the Hereford Enterprise Zone, Marlbrook School and Aylestone Park were identified as suitable locations. Sedum Bus Shelters • The opportunity to install sedum bus shelters was identified as an alternative solution to improve green infrastructure within the City whilst also improving biodiversity corridors and supporting the County Plan objective to improve and extend active travel options throughout the county. • Following consultation with the public transport team three proposed locations were identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitecross Road Memorial, • St Martins Church, Ross Road, • Victoria Court, Whitecross road. • These sites are proposed as they are key locations with high use and require investment in the current shelter provision.
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All costs outlined in this report will be covered by Towns Fund accelerated projects fund as approved by cabinet. • The additional spend of £16,429 will be funded through the reallocation of the underspend in the St Owen Street Cycle Contraflow element of the Hereford Towns Fund Towns Fund accelerated projects fund. • There has been a non-compliance with CPR's due to the reduced timescales to implement the project variation by 31 March, without impacting funding. To mitigate this risk, an exemption to the CPR's will be obtained; to evidence value for money, 3 competitive quotes were received from Tree suppliers and 3 competitive quotes received from Sedum Bus Shelter providers. • Assurance has been sought that the supply and delivery of the trees as set out above can be completed before 31 March 2021.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing maintenance of the trees will be undertaken by the Hereford Enterprise Zone, Marlbrook School and the Aylestone Park Association. • The ongoing maintenance cost of the sedum bus shelters will be undertaken by the Council within existing budget and resources. • There is a risk that the supply and installation of the sedum bus shelters could take up to 10 to 11 weeks, however this has been considered by the Towns Fund Project Board and Section 151 Officer. • There is a risk that the planting of the larger trees will not be completed before April 2021, however this has been considered by the Towns Fund Project Board and Section 151 Officer.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	The council could decide not to approve this variation to this accelerated project. – This would result in the lost opportunity to further enhance local biodiversity, provide additional investment and improved bus shelter provision for residents and to support the wider economic regeneration in Hereford City. This option is not recommended because of the loss of grant income that will deliver a project within the city that help to deliver the council’s county plan 2020 - 2024.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed:
Andrew Lovegrove, Chief Finance Officer

Date: 18/03/2021