

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	10th July 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2582
TITLE:	River Corridor Fund	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Within the Council Budget approved at Full Council 19th February 2013 a capital fund of £100,000 was provisionally allocated for a River Corridor Fund.

1.2 In order to bring forward the River Corridor Fund it is necessary to draw down the allocated £100,000 capital funding.

1.3 Therefore delegated authority is sought for the Strategic Director for Place to draw down the provisional allocation in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Skills and Employment.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the £100,000 provisionally allocated within the 13/14 capital programme. This will be allocated by the Council to ensure the river becomes a key cultural, economic and social asset for Bath and beyond

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Within the Council Budget approved at Full Council 19th February 2013 a capital fund of £100,000 was provisionally allocated for a River Corridor Fund. No additional funding is required.
- 3.2 Officer resources in managing and delivering the work will be covered through existing revenue allocations made through the Council's annual service and resource planning process.
- 3.3 Funding will be provided for Capital purposes only and Officers will ensure that all funding accords with the Local Government Capital Regulations and the Council Constitution including procurement rules.
- 3.4 No Revenue budget provisions exist for this project and therefore the Council will not accept any revenue liabilities arising from any grant funded or supported project.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- **Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live**
- **Building a stronger economy**

- 4.1 The Economic Strategy and the draft Core Strategy both highlight the importance of the river to the economy in Bath
- 4.2 The draft core strategy highlights the need to create nearly 7,000 jobs in Bath, the majority of which will be in the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area and 1,600 in Keynsham
- 4.3 When delivered this jobs growth will generate an additional £400m of GVA per year to the economy
- 4.4 A coherent, integrated plan for the Enterprise Area, including the river as a key asset, is critical to giving developers confidence and maximising the opportunity to attract further investment for infrastructure
- 4.5 The river will therefore play a vital role in the continued delivery of the key development sites in the Enterprise Area, Keynsham and beyond and ultimately delivery of the Core Strategy targets

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 This Council has recognised the importance of the River Avon in its draft Core Strategy and Green Infrastructure Strategy
- 5.2 It has worked closely with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the City will no longer turn its back on the river, instead making the most of its cultural, social and economic value
- 5.3 Part of the engagement was the establishment of a River Corridor Scrutiny Day, which took place in May 2012, building on the work of the River Corridor Group, who produced an initial assessment of Bath's River Economy in July 2011. This panel recommended that:

“Cabinet should lead and implement a strategy which uses the river corridor group’s report as an initial evidence base, and at the heart should be the Council with a wider key stakeholder buy-in. This should be supported by the evidence and questions raised from the Scrutiny Inquiry day and contained within the full report to Cabinet.”

5.4 The PDS Panel Recommendation was accepted by the Cabinet, the rationale being:

“This Administration is keen to ensure that any future developments near or related to the River will not “turn their back” on the river, but see the river as the excellent asset it is, and enhance the river frontage for public access”

5.5 A key partner in delivering the River Strategy and the River Corridor Fund will be The River Regeneration Trust (TRRT) which has been established to supersede the River Corridor Group, whose aim is to “Reconnect Communities to the River Avon”.

5.6 TRRT is an ambassador for the river corridor. It will be a conduit to interpret the Council’s aspirations on development along the river corridor, in line with the draft Core Strategy and emerging Placemaking Plan

5.7 The River Strategy and the River Corridor Fund will form a key part of the overall spatial framework for the Enterprise Area being developed as part of the Placemaking Plan. This will be vital in ensuring we have a policy environment that makes Bath and North East Somerset *the* place to live, work and visit, gives developers confidence to bring forward the right schemes and attracts investment for infrastructure from Government

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6.2 The Regeneration, Skills and Employment division maintains a risk register, updated and reported regularly to Corporate standards, which captures and seeks to mitigate all project and operational risks.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been undertaken at this stage, but as project proposals are developed the necessary EqIA’s will be made. However, at this stage it is clear that the suggested allocation of funding will enable projects which will contribute towards improving the environment and economy of the area and produce social, health and wellbeing benefits for the local community.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The recommendation has been determined via thorough consultation through the Core Strategy process, the work of the River Corridor Group (now The River Regeneration Trust), discussion with key stakeholders and local members particularly via the E&CD PDS Panel review report and associated findings. The recommendations reflect the Council’s corporate Vision and Objectives through

promoting lively and active communities, and unique places with beautiful surroundings.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 The allocated £100,000 funding could have been taken as a saving or reallocated to other projects. However this option was discounted due to two overriding factors:

- It is a corporate priority to promote river regeneration through various policy documents as set out at 4.1 above; and
- Cabinet have approved Recommendation 1 of the River Corridor Scrutiny Inquiry Day as set out at 5.1 and 5.2 above.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Consultation has been carried out through the Core Strategy process, the work of the River Corridor Group (now The River Regeneration Trust), the River Corridor Scrutiny Inquiry Day, the Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel and regular discussions with key stakeholders and local members.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations.

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director – Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Tim Hewitt, Regeneration Team Manager, 01225 477552
Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Ben Stevens
Background papers	Council Budget and Council Tax meeting minutes, February 2012 Bath and North East Somerset Council River Corridor Report (Scrutiny Inquiry Day) - Economic & Community Development Panel report
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	