

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	11 June 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2668
TITLE:	Ecological Mitigation, Compensation & Management Plan, Radstock	
WARD:	Radstock	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The proposed development of the former GWR lands in Radstock provides 190 new homes including 47 Affordable Housing units. In addition it provides essential infrastructure for the Radstock community including a town centre car park, a new footbridge to St Nicholas Primary School and an integrated walking and cycling route which will form part of the Sustrans route.
- 1.2 The Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management (EMCM) Plan is essential to the delivery of the new highway, homes and jobs on the former GWR lands in Radstock.
- 1.3 The EMCM Plan covers the period before and the period up to 20 years after construction has completed within each development area of the former GWR lands. Due to the length of time required within the Plan, the Council is the appropriate organisation to work in partnership with Norton Radstock Regeneration Company and Linden Homes to support the delivery of the actions within it.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For B&NES to work in partnership with Norton Radstock Regeneration Company and its development partner Linden Homes Ltd to undertake the responsibility to deliver the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan for the former GWR lands to support the delivery of new highway, homes and jobs in Radstock.
- 2.2 Up to £400k of the existing capital budget allocated for the capital costs of the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan with future revenue costs met from associated savings in corporate borrowing costs.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 In January 2011, the Cabinet approved £1.2m capital budget (including £800k from HCA) to deliver the Radstock Regeneration Highway Scheme to support the regeneration of the town by providing highway capacity to support housing and economic growth. Following public consultation on the road layout, changes to the scheme resulted in the need for a new planning consent to deliver the road.
- 3.2 The 2012/13 budget, approved by Council in February 2012, included an additional £375k for the project to cover the increased costs associated with the new planning application and revised highway scheme.
- 3.3 In summer 2013, the Council successfully secured £1089k grant from the DfT's Pinchpoint programme.
- 3.4 Therefore the current approved budget for the Norton Radstock Infrastructure works is £2,729k funded as follows:
- £800k HCA
 - £1,089k DfT Pinchpoint Grant
 - £400k Council
 - £375k Council Capital Contingency
 - £65k Highways maintenance block
- 3.5 The current forecast for the project is £2,116k giving a forecast underspend of £613k.
- 3.6 It is proposed that up to £400k of the underspend finances part of the delivery of the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan that will facilitate new housing and economic growth for Radstock.
- 3.7 It is proposed to reduce the Council capital funding by £100k; the savings on borrowing costs will then be available to fund the post project ongoing revenue costs relating to delivery of the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan.
- 3.8 The Section 106 associated with the development secures £147k contribution to a new footbridge.
- 3.9 The new housing will generate an estimated £1.4m New Homes Bonus.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The development of the former railway lands in Radstock is included within the Council's Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy. The regeneration of Radstock town centre also forms part of the B&NES Economic Strategy.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council supports the regeneration of the former railway lands in Radstock and has secured funding to deliver a new road scheme for the town centre.

- 5.2 The scheme has recently secured Outline Planning Consent (subject to Section 106) for a maximum of 190 homes and 695sqm retail space. In addition, Linden Homes has secured a detailed Full Planning Consent (subject to Section 106) for the first phase of works on Area 2, which will supersede the Outline Consent, if the consent is implemented within 3 years.
- 5.3 The Council proposes to work with NRR and its development partner Linden Homes Ltd to deliver the actions set out in the Ecological Mitigation & Compensation Management Plan, using funds from the existing approved capital budget.
- 5.4 The Council will work with NRR & Linden Homes to guarantee the delivery of the EMCM Plan and will ensure that necessary protection, mitigation and compensation measures will be implemented and that their value to local wildlife will be maintained.
- 5.5 The objectives to be achieved through the actions set out in the ECMP Plan are:
- (1) Protect and enhance key and important habitats within the Site
 - (2) Create new ecological habitat within the Site to support key and important species assemblages
 - (3) Manage habitats along the railway lines to the south and the east of the development Site
 - (4) Protect and enhance key, protected and important species
 - (5) Implement good working practises which will avoid or minimise impacts on ecological features during construction
 - (6) Ensure ongoing management that protects biodiversity on Site and along the compensation rail lands in line with the objective above.
- 5.6 The plan covers the period before and during construction and the period up to 20 years after construction has completed within each development area.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The Council is committed to delivering the regeneration of the former railway land at Radstock and the preservation of the ecological value of the site.
- 6.2 There is funding available within the approved capital programme.
- 6.3 The Council is in a position to ensure the delivery of the 20 year mitigation plan.
- 6.4 The scheme will deliver 190 new homes for Radstock which will generate £1.4m of New Homes Bonus which will be used to protect front line services.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Linden Homes to set up management company deliver the EMCM Plan. There is a risk that a company such as this would not have the expertise or longevity to deliver the actions set out in the plan.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with Finance and Section 151 Officer.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	
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