

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

REPORT TO THE SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2020

Report Title	Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification
Report Author	Kelvin Turner Interim Head of Resources / Deputy S151 Officer East Northamptonshire Council kturner@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix A – ENC Greenway Report
 Appendix B – ENC economic Recovery Prospectus
 Appendix C – Notifications Process

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Shadow Executive of two funding proposals from East Northamptonshire Council (ENC), namely:-
- (i) Transfer of £300K from Greenway phases 7 and 8 project to the Washbrook Road Rushden project (see ENC report attached as Appendix A); and
 - (ii) A draw down of £195k from its Business Rates Risk Reserve to fund an Economic Recovery Prospectus and associated work streams (see ENC report attached as Appendix B).

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Shadow Executive:

- a) notes the Leader of the Council's decision to endorse the two proposals from East Northamptonshire Council for the transfer of £300k project funding and the draw down of £195k of reserves, as detailed in Appendices A and B of this report.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 East Northamptonshire Greenway

3.1.2 The Greenway involves creating walking and cycle routes through the Nene Valley, all of which create opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing. A budget of £300k was approved to develop phases 7 and 8 of the Greenway which runs from Woodford Lock to Islip.

3.1.3 Part of the scheme involves various amendments to the existing rights of way, part of which would create a new access and exit point on the Kettering Road, Islip for the main Bridle Way. As part of the consultation exercise in respect of these amendments the British Horse Society (BHS) raised significant objection on the perceived grounds of safety and have threatened to make a formal objection if the rights of way amendments proceed to the making of an order.

3.1.4 The BHS objection has been reviewed by LGSS Law who have highlighted that an objection of this kind will almost certainly trigger a public inquiry. The landowner is unlikely to maintain his position for the project to proceed without the changes to the rights of way as proposed.

3.1.5 It is proposed that the £300k set aside for phases 7 and 8 of the Greenway is transferred to the Washbrook Road project which was part of phase 1 where the need has been identified to create a ramp-type facility, utilising the embankments close to the bridge to increase safety and convenience.

3.1.6 Such a facility would require extensive groundworks to take place in order to support such a structure and a recent feasibility study recommended concrete retaining walls as the structured support system with estimated costs of £250-£300k. This would provide the ground structure for constructing the ramp.

3.1.7 Full details are contained in Appendix A attached.

3.2 Economic Recovery Prospectus

3.2.1 The Government has provided a range of financial support packages to local businesses in response to the economic situation resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic.

3.2.2 In addition, ENC's Economic Development Service has been working with local and strategic partners to provide a range of support to help local businesses and residents suffering as a result of economic turmoil.

3.2.3 This work has culminated in the production of an Economic Recovery Prospectus (part of Appendix B attached), which seeks to join up, drive and accelerate a programme of assistance to meet local needs. The next phase of this is to develop and drive forward a comprehensive work programme consisting of the following 5 work streams:

Work Stream 1 – Dynamic Business Support Programme

Work Stream 2 – Fast Track Job Match Initiative
Work Stream 3 - Economic Recovery Hub
Work Stream 4 – Business Charter
Work Stream 5 - Long Term Economic Recovery Strategy

3.2.4 Full details are contained in Appendix B attached.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The Shadow Executive Committee, at its meeting held on 25 June 2020, approved a notification process that any **proposed** purchase, disposal and transfer of assets, new capital schemes with on-going financial commitments and use of reserves **above those already set out in each council's budget**, by any of the existing councils above a set de minimis level of £100,000 must be notified to the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive.

4.1.2 As this meeting of the Shadow Executive is scheduled to take place after East Northamptonshire Council, as the sovereign body, has taken its decisions at its meeting of full Council on 20 July 2020, in accordance with the agreed process (see Appendix C to this report), endorsement was sought from and agreed by the Leader of the Shadow Executive.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 East Northamptonshire Greenway

4.2.2 The £300k already approved for Greenway phases 7 and 8 is currently within ENC's Community Projects Reserve. The proposal is to transfer this funding to phase 1 of the project ie the Washbrook Road Rushden project.

4.2.3 A risk register has been put in place to mitigate and control all identified risks.

4.2.4 Economic Recovery Prospectus

4.2.5 A budget of £250k has been identified as the requirement to deliver the 5 work streams over the next 10 months. This comprises of £25k from within current budgets; £30k from the Government's Reopening the High Street Fund; with the proposal to fund the remaining £195k from ENC's Council's Business Rates Risk Reserve.

4.2.6 The key risks and their mitigations are contained in Section 5 of the report attached as Appendix B.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The notification process referenced in 4.1.1 allow for the Shadow Authority to be notified and consulted on any new significant financial spend or new financial liability being considered by sovereign councils.

4.3.2 Decision making over funding proposals in these circumstances remains with the relevant sovereign council and so endorsement, rather than approval, by the Shadow Authority has been sought in respect of the recommendations within the report.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 East Northamptonshire Greenway

4.4.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is included in the report attached as Appendix A. The key positive impact offered by the Washbrook Road ramp is improved access to the Greenway for people with disabilities.

4.4.3 The Greenway increases opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing. Whilst the proposal is to transfer the funding between separate Greenway projects, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has identified positive health benefits with the provision of a ramp access on phase 1 in Rushden for people with disabilities. A full HIA is attached as part of Appendix A.

4.4.4 Economic Recovery Prospectus

4.4.5 There are only positive equality and diversity impacts of the Economic Recovery Prospectus which are detailed in the Equalities Impact Assessment which forms part of Appendix B attached.

4.4.6 Also attached as part of Appendix B is a detailed Health Impact Assessment which contains only positive impacts.