

BERKSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY (BLTB)

REPORT TO: BLTB

DATE: 11 March 2021

CONTACT OFFICER: Josie Wragg, Chief Executive, Slough Borough Council, lead officer to the BLTB

Item 5: Allocation of the unallocated Getting Building Fund monies

Purpose of Report

1. To present the case for allocating the remaining £450,000 of Getting Building Fund (GBF) monies to a Bracknell transport project. This proposes an increment to an already approved Local Growth Fund (LGF) Bracknell project, scheme 2.37: Bracknell A322 A329 Corridor Improvements.

Recommendation

2. You are asked to support the recommendation that the remaining £450,000 of GBF money is allocated to a transport project that will contribute to the implementation of the Recovery and Renewal Plan (RRP) and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).
3. You are asked to approve that scheme 2.37 Bracknell: A322 A329 Corridor Improvements receives an additional allocation of £450,000 GBF, to take the total funding allocated for this scheme to £850,000. A full business case, reviewed by the LEPs independent assessor, Hatch Regeneris, will be presented for financial approval at the July 2021 BLTB.

Other Implications

Financial

4. In July 2020 Thames Valley Berkshire LEP secured £7.5m [Getting Building Fund](#) money from central government. £7,050k has been allocated to other Berkshire projects, including Langley High Street Improvements phase 3 (£1.643m) which was approved by BLTB in [November 2020](#). The remaining funds have been allocated to skills and business projects, approved by the LEP Board.

Risk Management

5. The risk management arrangements already put in place by the Local Transport Body are as follows:
 - The [Assurance Framework](#)ⁱ has been drafted following DfT guidance and has been approved by the DfT for use in allocating capital funds for transport schemes.
 - Hatch Regeneris have been appointed to act as Independent Assessors for all LEP-funded schemes.

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

6. Slough Borough Council will provide legal support for the BLTB should any questions arise.

Supporting Information

7. £450,000 Getting Building Fund has been returned to the LEP for re-allocation following re-assessment of an earlier agreed GBF skills project. The GBF programme requires that any projects selected must be delivered by 31 March 2022 at the latest. Funding therefore needs to be allocated now to ensure delivery within HMG timescales.
8. The approved pipeline of schemes, agreed at the [November 2020 BLTB](#) meeting, was reviewed and discussions held with owners of the prioritised project list to identify suitable schemes to fit the tight delivery timescales and the funding available. The Bracknell A322 Smart Corridor project was ranked 4 of 16 projects and was deemed by the LEP to be the top project that could meet the requirements. This project is scalable and builds upon the current LGF project 2.37 Bracknell: A322 A329 Corridor Improvements that is already on site. It is therefore proposed that the additional funds are issued as a project extension rather than issuing programme entry to a new scheme.

Transport Project

9. The Bracknell A322/A329 Corridor Improvements project will continue to deliver significant improvements to one of the key highway corridors in Thames Valley Berkshire, between the M4 (J8/9/10) and M3 (J4), i.e. from Maidenhead, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell to Camberley, the Blackwater Valley and beyond. These junction improvements along the A322/A329 corridor are required to facilitate the Council's current adopted growth plans for around 11,000 dwellings.
10. In [January 2019](#), programme entry status was awarded to scheme 2.37 Bracknell A322/A329 Corridor Improvements and allocated £1,200,000. A further £800,000 was allocated at the [July 2019](#) BLTB meeting, bringing the total funds allocated to the scheme to £2,000,000.
11. Notification was provided at the March 2020 BLTB meeting that scheme 2.39 Wokingham Coppid Beech Northbound On-Slip Widening was being withdrawn. Due to the linked nature of schemes 2.39 and 2.37, Bracknell Forest Council decided to reduce the scope of scheme 2.37 Bracknell A322 A329 Corridor Improvements. The reconfigured scheme requested £400,000 of its original allocation of £2,000,000 to deliver part of the scheme and this was approved at the [June 2020 BLTB](#) meeting. The current project works are on site and due to complete in July 2021.
12. Further enhancement of the scheme could provide additional capacity improvements in the peak hours through wider use of adaptive signal-controlled systems. Applying adaptive technologies is proven in delivering benefits across many junctions in the UK and has undoubtedly improved the efficiency of junction operation in Bracknell Forest. The DfT (Department for Transport) have conducted a number of trials around this technology that show an improvement in delay of around 12% - 27% (over good fixed time plans). Further application of this technology to the A322/A329 M3-M4 corridor will release more traffic and ease movement for vehicles travelling to and from the A329 and J10 M4, which is the predominant flow.

Conclusion

13. Of the current approved schemes, the most appropriate project to successfully utilize the unallocated Getting Building Fund monies within timescale is the 2.37 Bracknell A322 A329 Corridor Improvements project.

Background Papers

14. Background papers on the 2.37 Bracknell A322 A329 Corridor Improvements project are available from stuart.jefferies@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

<http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/berkshire-strategic-transport-forum>