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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Dear Mr Fox,

Growth Deal 1 – DfT retained scheme: Wokingham Distributor Roads (£24m)

Further to our previous discussions regarding the retained element of Growth Deal 1 funding for roads in Wokingham, Wokingham Borough Council hereby formally request the reallocation of funding currently shared across three separate major highway projects to be reallocated to just one.

As part of the first round of Local Growth Deals in July 2014, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP (TVBLEP) through their Strategic Economic Plan were successful in securing an allocation of £24m towards the delivery of The Wokingham Distributor Roads scheme, namely Arborfield Cross Relief Road (ACRR), North Wokingham Distributor Road (NWDR) and South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR). The money is currently apportioned across each of the three projects thus: ACRR - £13.6m, NWDR - £6.1m, SWDR - £4.3m.

As you know the Department for Transport (DfT) have retained approval oversight of the Wokingham Distributor Roads scheme meaning that DfT approval will be required before the funding for the scheme will be released.

As previously discussed approval will be subject to the satisfactory completion of two Business Cases; currently assumed to be ACRR & NWDR. The two projects were chosen based on the Council initial programme that showed both these projects would be progressed before SWDR. Once the Business Cases for these two projects are approved the entire funding allocation would be released to TVBLEP, thus enabling TVBLEP to release part of the funding to WBC for the two approved projects. There would however still be a requirement for the third project to gain approval from TVBLEP before the final amount is released to WBC. The remaining project will also require a Business Case but will be assessed by TVBLEPs independent advisors.

Because of the complicated delivery of both the NWDR & SWDR, i.e. some parts have already been delivered by the developer, some parts are currently being delivered and the Council are due to deliver other parts, the completion of any Business Case is complex. As ACRR is



solely within the control of WBC to deliver, it is proposed that a simpler and quicker approach would be to take the full £24m as one lump and apply it to just one project, i.e. ACRR.

The Councils Section 151 officer has considered the proposal and has confirmed that the reallocation of the local contributions i.e. CIL and S106, can be redistributed in such a way as to enable the full £24m to be allocated to ACRR and that the remaining two projects can be fully funded from developer contributions and Council Capital Budgets.

The proposal has also been considered by TVBLEP and was given formal approval at the meeting of the Berkshire Local Transport Body on 16 March 2017.

To assist you when considering this request we have prepared a quarterly return on the basis of the entire Growth Deal allocation being used for the Arborfield Cross Relief Road project.

We hope that you will consider our request favourably and recognise that this revision will simplify what would be a very complex process. The change would significantly reduce the resource and time burden from the DfT, TVBLEP and Wokingham Borough Council whilst ensuring that all projects defined under the original growth deal bid known as The Wokingham Distributor Roads scheme are delivered efficiently and to time.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to receiving your reply in due course.

Regards,

Josie Wragg
Interim Director of Environment