

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	14 November 2019
Title:	Investing in Hampshire
Report From:	Director of Corporate Resources Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services, Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to consider two bids against the Investing in Hampshire Fund, both of which are internal to the County Council. The report also recommends some minor amendments to the Investing in Hampshire criteria to extend it to cover grants that invest in the economy of Hampshire.
2. The first bid requests £600,000 for investment in the facilities at Royal Victoria Country Park to ensure that the overall visitor offer is in line with what was envisaged as part of the Country Parks Transformation Programme.
3. The second item (also for £600,000) seeks to build on the work of the Hampshire 2050 Commission by putting in new dedicated resources for just over two years to take forward and pump prime key areas highlighted by the Commission, most notably relating to climate change.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources is recommended to:

4. Approve an award of £600,000 towards capital works at Royal Victoria Country Park.
5. Approve a total award of £600,000 as a one-off increase in the cash limit to the Economy, Transport and Environment Department phased over this and the next two financial years.

6. Approve the updated criteria for Investing in Hampshire awards as detailed in Appendix 1.

Executive Summary

7. This report considers two requests for funding from the Investing in Hampshire Fund, both of which have originated from within the County Council.
8. Whilst the original purpose of the Fund was to invest in the cultural and heritage assets within the County or to provide funding to projects that would benefit the wider population of Hampshire, there is no restriction on using the funding for County Council purposes.
9. The Country Parks Transformation Programme (CPTP) has been in operation for some time and seeks to improve visitor experiences whilst at the same time generating income to make the parks self financing.
10. Capital funding to support the CPTP is included within the current capital programme but there is only sufficient funding to improve the catering offer at Royal Victoria Country Park (RVCP) despite the fact that improvements to other facilities are also badly needed. The request for £600,000 from the Investing in Hampshire Fund will enable a greater scope of works to be undertaken and will improve the overall quality of assets on offer to the public.
11. The Hampshire 2050 Commission was supported by the County Council to look at a number of strategic themes in order to consider what the longer term issues for the region are and what early actions could be put in place to address these going forward.
12. The report of the Commissioners' was presented to the County Council in September this year and whilst the potential actions are a matter for a wide range of partners and other organisations across the County and wider region, the County Council is committed to supporting the overall programme, not least in the area of climate change. The County Council also agreed to take on a leadership role in introducing the Commission's report to potential delivery partners, advocating the commissioner's conclusions, and preparing a County Council Plan of direct actions to be taken to deliver relevant aspects of the Report.
13. Given the potential longer term benefits for the residents of Hampshire, a one off sum of £600,000 is being requested from the Investing in Hampshire Fund to provide resources to develop, monitor and help implement the Commission's recommendations.

14. The report also recommends some minor amendments to the Investing in Hampshire criteria to extend it to cover grants that invest in the economy of Hampshire.

Royal Victoria Country Park

15. The Country Parks Transformation Programme (CPTP) has been in place for some time and has made significant improvements across our country parks aimed at improving facilities and the overall visitor offer at the same time as increasing revenues through catering and parking charges with a view to making the parks self financing over time.
16. Whilst there has already been some significant investment at Royal Victoria Country Park (RVCP) which saw the Chapel at the old hospital opened to the public in 2018, there are further works planned to improve and extend the restaurant and catering facilities estimated to be around £900,000 (the remaining funding from the CPTP).
17. Whilst the improvements to the catering offer are key to further income generation, there are other backlog liabilities that cannot be addressed due to lack of remaining funding, this includes refurbishing the Empire Rooms and the external toilets to ensure they are of a similar standard to the other new facilities that are already planned.
18. Since the Investing in Hampshire Fund was set up to support culture and heritage assets across the County, it is considered appropriate to make a contribution of £600,000 towards this overall project that will see the maintenance and improvement of County Council owned assets.
19. The additional sum will need to be formally added to the capital programme when it is reported in the new year, but planning for the works at the site can continue in the meantime.

Hampshire 2050 Commission

20. Following the publication of the Commissioners' report and recommendations, the County Council has committed to provide some initial resources to help progress some of the key actions contained in the report. A team of 6 people together with appropriate support will be put in place for just over 2 years (to April 2022), costing £600,000 to be funded from the Investing in Hampshire Fund.

21. The team will be responsible for the development, monitoring, implementation and review of the Climate Change and the 2050 Commission strategies and action plans to ensure delivery against the Corporate climate change targets and Commission recommendations. The team will be responsible for establishing the necessary baseline data needed to enable measurement and reporting against these targets and recommendations e.g. carbon budgets and measures of climate resilience.
22. The team will also develop and maintain a network of internal and external stakeholders to support the delivery of actions across Hampshire for both the climate change and commission action plans. This will include working with all Hampshire District, Borough, Unitary and Parish Councils.
23. Another key action will be to set up and service suitable governance and reporting arrangements for both strategies and action plans which will include member engagement and scrutiny and the Hampshire Partnership Board. The team will establish specific stakeholder forums e.g. experts, community groups and youth engagement panels; organise and attend events and workshops to support delivery of the action plans and will represent the County Council at a local, regional and national level.
24. This will foster & maintain expert knowledge and contacts across the wide range of issues to support policy development and action plan delivery. The team will also work with Corporate Communications and Marketing Teams to develop and deliver targeted, behavioural insights led, communications to a range of audiences including residents.

Investing in Hampshire Criteria

25. The original intention of the Investing in Hampshire Fund was to invest in the cultural and heritage assets within the County or to provide funding to projects that would benefit the wider population of Hampshire.
26. However, given that the local and regional economy plays such a pivotal role in providing jobs, business rates income and contributes economic growth to the national economy, it is perhaps as an important benefit to the residents of Hampshire as maintaining it as a good place to live and work.
27. This report therefore recommends that slight changes be made to the Investing in Hampshire criteria to allow awards that have an economic or business growth benefit. The revised wording is contained at Appendix 1 and also suggests a few other minor amendments to tidy up the criteria.

Consultation and Equalities

28. No specific consultation has been carried out around the capital investment at RVCP, but the proposed works have been guided by customer feedback that has been received in the past.

29. The Hampshire 2050 Commission was by its very nature the collation of views from a wide range of stakeholders and experts in particular fields and the report and recommendations reflect the feedback, data, evidence and information collected by the Commissioners.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes/æ
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes/æ
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes/æ
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes/æ

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Extraordinary County Council - Hampshire 2050 Commission of Inquiry	<u>Date</u> 23 September 2019
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

No negative impact has been identified.

FUNDING CRITERIA FOR INVESTING IN HAMPSHIRE

The following criteria should be taken into account when considering a request for funding.

1. Assistance will be considered only in response to direct applications from properly constituted organisations seeking assistance for one-off funding only. The application must show that the organisation is properly and legally organised and has its own bank account. Funding would only be awarded if the proposal was to support activity within agreed County Council priorities.
2. Applications will be considered for the items listed below, where these are within agreed priorities and generally only where other substantial funding exists:
 - Specific capital projects for the improvement or maintenance of significant assets or facilities within Hampshire
 - Projects that will support economic development and business growth within Hampshire.
3. Other applications will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Leader where he considers that the award will make a contribution for the wider benefit of Hampshire and its residents.
4. The wider economic and other benefits to the residents of Hampshire should be considered together with any complementary benefits for Hampshire County Council.
5. Awards will not usually be made in respect of applications from the following:-
 - Government Institutions
 - Schools
 - Overseas and out of County organisations which have no direct Hampshire involvement
 - Bodies requesting funds for onward distribution to other charities e.g. mayoral appeals, carnivals, fetes, or for their own fundraising events.
6. Apart from exceptional circumstances, the requesting body would be expected to provide their own funding towards the project.
7. As a general rule, grants in excess of £250,000 will not be awarded unless significant benefits and funding are available. In exceptional cases, where the benefits are significant and directly relate to services and functions close to the County Council's key objectives, then an award greater than the level above would be considered.

8. Given the longer term nature of capital projects, requests can be considered well in advance, but funding will only be released once evidence of capital expenditure has been provided to the County Council or other arrangements made, consistent with the agreement of the Director of Corporate Resources.