

Review of Council Priority Projects (CPPs) for 2020/21

1. The Council Priority Projects (see Corporate Plan 2.4, pp4-6) were identified in planning for 2020/21 because they are projects which directly support the Council's priorities and are likely to involve multiple services and stakeholders, and have additional budget needs.
 2. The CPPs have been reviewed as part of the work to revise the Corporate Plan. This review has challenged the need for the work in each case and its continuing priority. It has then considered, in the context of the Council's financial position, the scope of the work, its timing and the required cost/capacity to enable delivery.
 3. This has enabled the following proposals for revisions to CPPs' scope and timetable:
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1. Local Plan Review:

- (i) This work remains a continuing priority for adoption by 2023 in line with commitments in the District Plan and because it is a key enabler of Sustainable Economic Growth.
- (ii) The project team are undertaking an initial evaluation to assess the scope of review required in the light of the Planning for the Future white paper.
- (iii) The project team will take into account changes in government policy and legislation regarding planning.

2. Household Waste Recycling:

- (i) This work remains a continuing priority because of the need to respond to the government Resources & Waste Strategy and required changes in waste recycling, including 55% recycling by 2025.
- (ii) A full service redesign – also including the contracted street cleansing services – will continue as planned. This will be a comprehensive review of the waste collection offer and will draw on the corporate approach to service redesign as outlined in the main report.
- (iii) This work, in partnership with the contractor Serco, will deliver a business case for the future operation of the service addressing legislative requirements and enabling improved value for money. The business case will be brought forward for consideration by Members in the usual way.
- (iv) The planned trial collection of food waste and absorbent hygiene products as part of a 123 collection arrangement will no longer be delivered, but the approach will be included in the service redesign (see (ii) above).

3. The Orchards Shopping Centre:

- (i) This work remains a continuing priority in support of Sustainable Economic Growth and for council income generation. Specific reserve for this project to be retained and expected capital expenditure of up to £5m to be retained in the medium term financial plan.
- (ii) Work will continue to deliver a feasibility study and business plan for the Centre, and to propose physical and commercial development at the site.

- (iii) The outputs of this work will be presented for decision during this financial year, enabling future plans and revenue and capital costs to be confirmed.
- (iv) This work must take account of emerging trends within the retail sector as the impact of the pandemic on it becomes clearer.

4. Enabling Full Fibre Infrastructure:

- (i) This work remains a key priority in support of Sustainable Economic Growth by delivering Full Fibre digital connectivity infrastructure which enables business to flourish.
- (ii) The fibre programme has expanded in scope over time, including a recent successful bid to the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' for the Rural Connectivity Programme of £3.2m. The projects overall now include over 80km of fibre, running through the district, funded through grants of £9.5m. This very significant inward investment has been secured via the Council's successful bidding strategy and its reputation for expertise in this area within Government and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- (iii) The aim is to accelerate fibre and mobile connectivity deployment to towns, villages and rural communities. The work will connect the growth and innovation zones within the area, stimulating innovation and business growth;
- (iv) This work is vital to support businesses in Mid Sussex and the Covid-19 recovery effort.

5. Sustainability Action Plan:

- (i) The existing actions in the Sustainability Strategy for this year will be delivered as planned.
- (ii) In reviewing the Sustainable Economic Growth priority, it is proposed to respond to the Government's economic recovery strategy by revising and merging the Economic Development and Sustainability Strategy to direct an emphasis on support for those sectors most significantly impacted, and on driving a green recovery.
- (iii) Having scoped the project in 2020/21, the detailed work will be delivered in 2021/22.

6. Parks Investment:

- (i) The work planned for 2020/21 will be delivered as planned because of the role parks and open spaces play in the health and wellbeing of local people and in supporting Covid-19 recovery.
- (ii) Improvements are funded from s106 allocations and are not expected to require any additional capital allocation.
- (iii) Project progress is good in spite of the challenges brought by Covid-19; phase 1 park masterplans are moving to implementation and phase 2 commencing; playground improvements in progress at three parks and planned for a further four.
- (iv) The project is scheduled to complete in June 2021.

7. Provision of Sites for Gypsies & Travellers:

- (i) This work remains a continuing priority project because of its importance to maintaining strong and resilient communities and in meeting the Local Plan objective to provide the amount and type of housing that meets the needs of all sectors of the community.
- (ii) Continuing to progress the planning application for Copthorne site and to improve the site at Bedelands.
- (iii) Work at Copthorne and Bedelands will be funded by s106 contributions secured for this purpose and from Homes England grant funding. There will be a limited call on the Council's capital funds.

8. Temporary Accommodation:

- (i) The work will continue as planned. Given the issues highlighted throughout this report, this is vital.
- (ii) Demand has increased as a result of Covid-19 and is likely to increase further once the restrictions on possession orders are lifted.
- (iii) Acquisition of TA provision provides a benefit in mitigating the additional revenue cost of nightly paid temporary accommodation provision.
- (iv) The project has entered a new phase since the agreement by the Council on 24th June 2020 to fund the acquisition of a further five properties – four have since been acquired and to acquire ten units of accommodation for vulnerable single homeless people. A capital bid will be made later in the year to support the acquisition of the ten further units.