



Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	27 May 2021
Subject:	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Future High Street Fund
Key Decision:	Yes, as expenditure greater than £500k
Responsible Officer:	Mark Billington – Acting Corporate Director, Community
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Graham Henson Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder Strategy, Regeneration, Partnerships and Devolution; Cllr Varsha Parmar - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change; Cllr Natasha Proctor – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Finance and Resources
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Wealdstone
Enclosures:	Appendix A – MHCLG funding award letter Appendix B – Site Plan & Example Designs

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report seeks Cabinet approval to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government (MHCLG) to secure capital investment into Wealdstone from the Future High Streets Fund.

Recommendations:

To delegate authority to Corporate Director – Community following consultation with the appropriate Portfolio holder(s) to enter into a Grant Agreement with Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government to secure funding to invest in a new pedestrian bridge, public realm improvements and an Intelligent High Street in Wealdstone.

To delegate authority to Corporate Director - Community following consultation with the Director of Finance and appropriate Portfolio holder(s) to undertake procurement and to award contract(s) for the delivery of the Pedestrian Bridge, noting that the operational delivery of the project will be undertaken by the Divisional Director Environment.

Reason: (for recommendations)

To support the regeneration of Wealdstone through enhancing the physical infrastructure and to ensure the appointment of contractors able to deliver the capital programme.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1 The Future High Streets Fund was launched by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) in December 2018 and is a key part of the government's plan to renew and reshape town centres and to make them more attractive places to live, work and visit.
- 2.2 The Council submitted an outline proposal followed by a full Business Case for funding from the Future High Streets Fund for Wealdstone Town Centre. The Business Case detailed the benefits of investing in a new pedestrian footbridge providing a link between Harrow View East housing development and Wealdstone town centre, associated public realm improvements and "Smart City" infrastructure as part of the Intelligent High Street. On 1st April 2021, the council was advised that the Secretary of State had agreed to award Harrow Council £7,448,583. The project will be match funded by £1,760,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- 2.3 The Regeneration of Wealdstone and the town centre is a priority for Harrow Council and is designated as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan, identifying it as an area for significant housing and employment growth.
- 2.4 The proposal for a new fully accessible footbridge from the Harrow View East site over the West Coast Mainline will provide better connectivity across the railway line and complete a key strategic pedestrian route from Headstone Manor Park in the west, through the Kodak development, Wealdstone Town Centre and onto Byron Park in the east. It will also better integrate the new housing with the rest of Wealdstone and to primary and secondary schools to the northeast side of the railway line, creating a short and direct route. A large proportion of the funding awarded would contribute towards the footbridge project.
- 2.5 The Council will need to engage the services of contractors to undertake the design of the bridge, support the preparation of a tender for construction and to undertake project management during the development and implementation phases of the project and to build the bridge. Specialised civil engineering expertise is required to undertake this work which is not available within the Council. A provisional estimate of the total cost for the Bridge is £7,600,000. This includes a sum of c£330,000 for public realm improvements, to improve the pedestrian route between the bridge and Wealdstone Town Centre.
- 2.6 In addition, £260,000 has been secured to support an Intelligent High Street, this will primarily involve the introduction of a lighting system that will improve safety by linking higher illumination to pedestrian movement at night.

Options considered

- 2.7 (A) To reject the funding from MHCLG – this is not recommended given the consultation undertaken to date and the positive impact this investment will have in Wealdstone
- (B) To enter into a Future High Street Grant Agreement with MHCLG and undertake a procurement exercise to select contractors with the necessary specialised skills to implement the proposals in Harrow’s Business Case to MHCLG. This option is recommended.

Background

- 2.8 A feasibility study which is available as a Background Paper has been undertaken on the proposed footbridge which explored various design options using a civil engineering consultant under an existing framework used to support the transportation work programme. This work was initially undertaken to support a liveable neighbourhood bid for Wealdstone in 2019 and was subsequently submitted as a part of the bid to the MHCLG Future High Street Fund when Transport for London experienced funding difficulties during the pandemic.

(i) The MHCLG funding award is based on a three-year funding window (2021/22 – 2023/24) for spending the FHSF capital funding. This time period for the footbridge project is very tight because it is necessary to plan ahead for railway track possession for any lifting operations over the railway as a part of the construction. A fabricated bridge span would need to be lifted into place over a weekend. Booking track space typically requires to be planned with Network Rail about two years in advance and opportunities are usually limited to the Easter or Christmas holiday periods.

2.9 The consultant that undertook the feasibility study has provided advice on a high level delivery programme and sets out the design and project management activity needing to be undertaken in order to meet a Christmas 2023 track possession in the final year of the funding window. However, it should be noted that project delivery can extend beyond the FHSF three-year funding window. CIL co-funding can be used to fund project delivery after 31 March 2024.

2.10 The key activities and timescales required are summarised as follows:

Activity	Programme
Approval in principle design	August – December 2021
Outline design & Pre-Construction Engagement with Contractor	January – May 2022
Detailed design	May – December 2022
Determine construction price/contract documents	January – April 2023
Construction / project management	April 2023 – February 2024

Staffing/workforce

2.11 The bid included Management and Administration costs to fund Programme Management of all works.

2.12 The procurement of contractors will be undertaken by the Contracts team in conjunction with Procurement, Legal and Finance.

Ward Councillors' comments

2.13 Ward councilors were consulted on the application for funds and this Cabinet Report and wish to be consulted through the programme.

Performance Issues

2.14 Performance will be measured in accordance with Project Plan and KPI's submitted to MHCLG. This will include a strong focus on cost control requiring an on-going assessment of costs and review of any technical issues or variations with cost implications to ensure costs are kept within budget.

Environmental Implications

- 2.15 There are environmental and health benefits from delivering the footbridge scheme by providing a new direct and convenient pedestrian link within Wealdstone. The main benefits are encouraging active travel through more walking trips, reducing car travel and vehicle emissions with improvements in air quality and improving public health through more active lifestyles which can help to reduce levels of diabetes and obesity.
- 2.16 There are no environmental implications from the procurement of a civil engineering provider but the design of the scheme can have an effect on the environment in terms of materials used, construction techniques and sustainability and the impact of the design on the environment will be reviewed as a part of the design and procurement process by the project team.

Data Protection Implications

- 2.17 There are no data protection implications.

Risk Management Implications

- 2.18 Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes**
- 2.19 Separate risk register in place? Yes
- 2.20 The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.
- 2.21 The footbridge project is a major civil engineering undertaking and the main risks from this procurement involve the provider delivering the design and project management activities to the agreed timescales and costs and ensuring a high quality design and construction.
- 2.22 The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk	Mitigations	RAG Status
Costs exceeding budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The overall cost estimate for the bridge includes a risk / uncertainty factor that provides some flexibility to manage final costs.• The procurement of both a design consultant and principal contractor will be subjected to a competitive tender process where costs will be a significant weighting factor.• The project team will undertake regular cost reviews and monitoring of any	Amber

Risk	Mitigations	RAG Status
	issues with cost implications	
Programme over running timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A defined delivery programme will be set out in the project specification • The project team will undertake regular programme monitoring • CIL funding contributes to the overall project budget which is not time limited and allows additional flexibility should any project delays over the MHCLG 3 year funding window occur 	Amber
Network Rail Asset Protection agreement cannot be secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feasibility study has already established an in principle basic asset protection agreement (BAPA) • A desktop study has been commissioned separately that includes developing a basic asset protection agreement (BAPA) in advance of the procurement 	Amber
Quality of design is substandard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of reputable provider with an established reputation and track record of delivering similar projects • The project team will undertake a regular review of designs, design standards and compliance with H&S CDM regulations 	Green
Project management is not effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of reputable provider with an established reputation and track record of delivering similar projects • The project team will undertake a regular review of project management activity and mitigation of key risks 	Green

Procurement Implications

- 2.23 The recommendations within this report will require the identification of suitably experienced and qualified contractors. This will be undertaken in a competitive way that is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Contract Procedure Rules.
- 2.24 The most appropriate procurement route and strategy are being considered and will be finalised with the support of the Corporate Procurement Team.

Legal implications

- 2.25 The procurement process undertaken will be carried out in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 taking into consideration the required thresholds for services and the principles of equal treatment, transparency, mutual recognition and proportionality.
- 2.26 The award of the contract will be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).
- 2.27 The Council must comply with the terms of the MHLG Grant Agreement
- 2.28 The Council has statutory powers to commission the scheme including under the Localism Act and Planning Acts.

Financial Implications

- 2.29 The Council has been successful in the funding application of £7,448,583 for Wealdstone investment from the MHCLG Future High Streets Fund. This is match funded by £1.76m of CIL. The project is included in the approved 2021/22 Capital Programme, with a total funding of £9.209m over 3 years. All costs associated with the project will be met from these external funding.

Equalities Implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.30 The programme will bring benefits to all members of the public, particularly people living and working in Wealdstone, within the protected characteristics groups. Additionally, there are specific benefits for those for those with mobility issues or more vulnerable road users such as the elderly and children in the Age and Disability groups which will improve access to the transport network and their quality of life. The proposed footbridge will have positive benefits for the groups in the table below:

Protected characteristic	Benefit
Age	Young children and elderly people generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking because improved walking links and public realm provide improved safety, security and convenience and improved access to the town centre and facilities.
Disability	People with physical and visual impairment generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking because improved walking links and public realm provide ease of access with fewer obstructions, improved safety, security and convenience to access the town centre and facilities. The footbridge includes lifts to ensure

	<p>there is full accessibility for all users.</p> <p>The wider benefits of active travel and more healthy lifestyles can reduce or prevent the effects of health conditions that affect mobility such as diabetes or heart disease and these proposals could in the long term reduce people developing disabilities.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Parents with young children will generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking because improved walking links and public realm provide improved safety, security and convenience and improved access to the town centre and facilities. Mothers are more likely to have full time care of young children and take children to school and are therefore more likely to be positively impacted by these proposals.</p>

Council Priorities

2.31 The proposed programme detailed in the report supports the Harrow Ambition Plan and will contribute to achieving the administration's priorities:

Corporate priority	Impact
Improving the environment and addressing climate change	Measures to control the level of traffic will reduce pollution from vehicle emissions and encourage a greater uptake of walking and cycling with wider public health benefits.
Building homes and infrastructure	Measures to control the level of traffic will also benefit more vulnerable residents in residential estates by reducing air pollution and improving road safety and accessibility.
Tackling poverty and inequality	An improvement in public health will reduce pressure on health services particularly during the current health crisis.
Addressing health and social care inequality	Measures to support social distancing will help to reduce fear of the risk of infection and encourage more people to shop locally and thereby support the local economy.
Thriving economy	

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jessie Mann

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 23rd April 2021

Statutory Officer: Stephen Dorrian

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 21/04/21

Chief Officer: Mark Billington

Signed off by the Acting Corporate Director - Community

Date: 22nd April 2021

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 22nd April 2021

Head of Internal Audit: Susan Dixon

Signed by the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 6th May 2021

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: YES

EqIA carried out: YES

EqIA cleared by: Alison Pegg - Community Directorate

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

David Eaglesham – Head of Traffic, Highways & Asset Management

E- mail David.Eaglesham@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

TfL Healthy Streets for London - <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-for-london.pdf>

Transport Local Implementation Plan 3 –

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/26428/harrow-transport-local-implementation-plan>

Walking, Cycling & Sustainable Transport Strategy -

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/26432/harrow-walking-cycling-and-sustainable-transport-strategy>

Wealdstone Footbridge and Cycleway Feasibility Report

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO

Appendix A – MHCLG funding award letter



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

*Ministry of Housing,
Communities & Local
Government*
2 Marsham Street
SW1P 4DF

1 April 2021

(By email)

Dear Sean Harriss,

Following your submission of a revised proposal, I am pleased to say that the Secretary of State has agreed to award Harrow Council £7,448,583 from the Future High Streets Fund.

Due to the proximity to local government elections, the Department will not be publicising the confirmation of provisional offers until after the elections. However, my team will be in touch with your staff to set up an inception meeting for after Easter. This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss our grant offer letter and memorandum of understanding and explain our expectations around comms, monitoring and evaluation, and our emerging thinking on capacity support. We will also need to review your spend profile and undertake a brief output baselining exercise.

I am aware that this competition has taken some time to conclude, and I would like to thank you for all the work that has gone in and your patience. The team and I look forward to working with you and seeing the progress made by Harrow Council in transforming your high street and town centre into a vibrant place to live, work and shop. We will be in touch with your officers to arrange an inception meeting very soon. I am also copying this letter to your Section 151 Officer.

Best wishes,

Steven Greenwood
Deputy Director
Cities and Local Growth Unit

Appendix B – Site Plan & Example Designs

3C New pedestrian bridge (Kodak)

In line with the Heart of Harrow Area Action Plan, which identifies the need to provide additional active travel links to reduce the severance caused by the railway, the liveable neighbourhoods vision for Wealdstone sees the implementation of a new pedestrian bridge between the Kodak development site and Tudor Road. The new bridge will link new homes and jobs to existing residential areas and the northern half of Wealdstone High Street. It will also provide a new strategic link to the green spaces at Headstone Manor.



An example of a pedestrian bridge in La Roche-Sur-Yon, France, providing safety for both users and trains passing below, whilst also encouraging more walking.



A new pedestrian bridge between the Kodak development and Tudor Road has the potential to unlock access to local jobs and green spaces for Wealdstone's residents