

TITLE: Growth and Infrastructure Fund Update

Committee: Finance and Assets

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Issue

1. To receive an update on the Growth and Infrastructure Fund grant scheme.

Recommendations

2. Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

Background/Options

3. At the meeting of the Finance and Assets Committee held on 24 November 2022, a funding allocation of up to £105,000 to Bottisham Parish Council – Bottisham New Cemetery project and up to £250,000 to the National Trust - Wicken Fen Burwell Lode Crossing project was approved from the Growth and Infrastructure Fund.
4. At the meeting of the Finance and Assets Committee held on 25 January 2024, an allocation of £423,107.60 to Witchford Parish Council – Ely Road Cycleway project was approved.
5. Each of the organisations has recently confirmed to the Council that they will not be proceeding with their projects for the following reasons:
 - Bottisham Parish Council – cost increase, lack of demand for burials, changes to legislation regarding cemetery reuse
 - National Trust – significant cost increases
 - Witchford Parish Council – not able to proceed under the proposed funding arrangements, i.e. with the parish council taking legal responsibility for funding the project
6. The organisations have been offered the opportunity to apply for CIL funding to enable delivery of the projects.
7. A meeting has been arranged with Witchford Parish Council to discuss their decision not to proceed.

8. The now unallocated funding needs to be spent by May 2027 on projects which meet the Cambridgeshire Horizons objectives to assist, promote, encourage, develop and secure sustainable growth.

Arguments/Conclusions

9. Due to the Cambridgeshire Horizons spending deadline of May 2027, there is insufficient time to reopen the Growth and Infrastructure Fund for a further application round, undertake assessment, and allocate funding. There is also a risk that an adequate number of applications would not be received to fully commit the remaining funds, and that approved projects would not be delivered within the required timeframe to ensure all funding is spent.
10. Officers are currently exploring using the funding to provide a grant to ECTC to increase the level of affordable housing at phase 3 of Arbor Square, Ely and to install PV panels on the car park canopy at the Lake View Bereavement Centre as both projects can be delivered by May 2027.
11. There is also an option to use the Growth and Infrastructure Fund money in place of CIL funding for projects that are already in progress. This would ensure the Growth and Infrastructure Fund money was fully spent before the deadline and would result in the CIL allocations being put back into the pot for future community projects
12. A paper setting out proposals for the spend of the remaining Growth and Infrastructure Fund money will be presented to the September meeting of this committee. The position of Witchford Parish Council and the total amount of funding available will also be known by this time.

Additional Implications Assessment

13. In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications NO	Legal Implications NO	Human Resources (HR) Implications NO
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) NO	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) NO	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) NO

Appendices

None

Background documents

Minutes of the Finance and Assets meeting held on 24 November 2022 and 25 January 2024.