

TITLE: Growth and Infrastructure Fund

Committee: Finance and Assets

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Issue

1. To approve the expenditure of the remaining Growth and Infrastructure Fund money.

Recommendations

2. Members are requested to approve a grant of £405,000 to East Cambs Trading Company as a contribution towards a housing development scheme delivering 100% affordable housing at Phase 3 Arbour Square, Ely
3. Approve the allocation of £373,107.60 to install PV panels on the car park canopy and/or a battery solution at Lake View Bereavement Centre, Mepal
4. Approve the tendering of the solar PV panels and/or battery solution and installation through a specialist framework.
5. Delegate authority to the Director Legal, in consultation with the Director Operations and Director Finance, to enter into the necessary contractual and/or legal arrangements to implement the above recommendations.

Background/Options

6. An update regarding the Growth and Infrastructure Fund was presented at the June meeting of this committee. Officers met with Witchford Parish Council in July, who confirmed their decision not to progress their Ely Road Cycleway Project.
7. The total amount of unallocated funding is £778,107.60. Due to the Cambridgeshire Horizons spending deadline of May 2027, there was insufficient time to reopen the Growth and Infrastructure Fund for a further application round, undertake assessment, and allocate funding. So, as set out in the report presented in June 2026, officers have identified two projects that can be delivered within the required timeframe, ensuring all the funding is spent.
8. In July 2025, ECTC applied for planning permission for development at the site known as Phase 3 Arbour Square, Ely. In March 2026, the Planning Committee approved, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement, a 13-unit scheme which secured 31% affordable housing, i.e. policy compliant. The Section 106 Agreement was completed on 28 August 2026.

9. A grant of £405,000 would increase the amount of affordable housing delivered at the site by enabling the nine open market houses to be delivered as social rent houses.
10. Once the evidence that the site will be delivered as a wholly affordable housing scheme is received, the Director Community will enter into a funding agreement with ECTC to ensure the grant is used to deliver the site as 100% affordable.
11. The allocation of £373,107.60 to Lake View Bereavement Centre would enable the installation of solar panels on canopies over the car park, which will generate green electricity and further enhance the sustainability features of the site.
12. The electric cremator has a running load of 264kWh/day to maintain the 'at rest' temperature, although this does not take into account the fluctuations in energy requirements to reach operating temperatures (figures provided by DfW, electric cremator producer). From initial market testing, it is envisaged that an 81kWp system, with 180 panels, could be achieved within the budget, and further investigation is required around a supporting battery solution. This could produce between 77,000 – 85,000kWh annually. Although the precise savings, both financially and emissions, are subject to greater analysis and detailed specifications.
13. All preparatory groundworks, including ducting, have been completed as part of the CIL capital build project, with a view to minimise operational disruption when the opportunity arrived to install solar on site and to minimise reliance on the grid, in turn saving on energy costs and reducing the carbon footprint of the asset.

Arguments/Conclusions

14. Members are recommended to approve the grant of £405,000 to ECTC for the delivery of additional affordable housing at Phase 3 Arbour Square, Ely and £373,107.60 to install PV panels on the car park canopy at Lake View Bereavement Centre, Mepal to deliver the benefits set out above and to ensure that the money is spent before the Cambridgeshire Horizons May 2027 deadline.

Additional Implications Assessment

15.

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

- (a) **Legal implications** - requirement to enter into a funding agreement with ECTC to ensure the grant is used to deliver the site as 100% affordable. To progress a procurement for PV canopies through a dedicated renewable energy procurement framework.

- (b) **Carbon Impact** – provision of PVs and/or battery system as detailed above is estimated to provide up to 77,000 – 85,000kWh per annum. As a minimum, and when combined with careful choice of energy tariffs, the proposal is targeted to save at least a third of the energy bills for the site, potentially significantly more. Correspondingly, the ongoing carbon footprint for the operation of the building will be similarly reduced.

Appendices

None

Background documents

Minutes of the Finance and Assets meeting held on 24 November 2022, 25 January 2024 and 25 June 2026.