

Title: Local Growth Fund programme update.

Purpose: Supplementary to previous report to Board on 10th May, to provide board members with a summary update on the Local Growth Fund (LGF) Capital programme and to invite Buckinghamshire County Council to present an update for the LGF funded Transport priorities.

Recommendation: That members note the content of this report, County Council presentation and acknowledge summary update and risks to programme delivery.

1 Summary

The LGF Capital position mid Q1 2019/20 reported a total defrayal of 78% expenditure of all LGF grant committed to contract, approximately £44m of £56m, (excluding £13.4m LGF for the South East Aylesbury Link Road DfT retained scheme). The LGF data return for the 4th Quarter of 2018/19 financial year was submitted to MHCLG and Cities & Local Growth Unit on 24th May and the dashboard summary page of the report is available on request.

Offer letters and grant agreements have now been completed and signed for the Business & Skills Capital Projects awarded programme entry earlier this year, which has committed the total remaining LGF grant of £4million. This brings the total LGF capital programme commitment to approximately £60 million. Expectation is that all schemes will be completed by March 2021.

A majority of the schemes in the LGF programme are now complete or nearing completion. The Bucks Life Science and Innovation Centres (BLIC) at Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville, are expected to be completed in July and September 2019 respectively.

The UCAV Innovation Hub is now substantially complete awaiting final fit and furniture installation, prior to occupation. Following a tender process earlier this year, Buckinghamshire New University has appointed Oxford Innovation as hub management provider for the Wycombe University, UCAV and Bucks Creates @ Pinewood innovation hubs. Planned promotion and marketing of these facilities is priority to ensure their occupation and future success.

The delivery of the Satellite Application Innovation Centre at Westcott Enterprise Zone has been delayed pending implementation of the proposed roundabout access from the A41 Bicester Road. Planning permission for the new roundabout has been approved and works are being planned to start later this year subject to funding and agreement with third party land owners. The planning application for the Innovation Centre has been submitted and construction is being planned to start Nov/Dec this year.

GWR are making progress on the Marlow to Maidenhead Rail Improvement scheme in ongoing dialogue with Network Rail. However, the departure from design standards to contain the scheme with Network Rail operational land has resulted in further delays to the project. GWR have therefore been working through a series of HazOP (Hazard and Operability Study) meetings with Network Rail and GWR's operations team, to understand the implications of the proposed infrastructure in different scenarios, including infrastructure failure, train faults etc. Following a critical meeting with Network Rail on Wednesday 3rd July, final outstanding technical queries were resolved and GWR are now progressing the design to Approval in Principle (AIP) by the end of October. The scheme is programmed to be on site to deliver in the 2020/21 financial year. This delay causes a potential issue for Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, who has allocated approximately £1.5m of their own LGF grant for expenditure in 2019/20. Berks LEP have expressed concerns that delayed expenditure may impact on their performance review. Discussions are ongoing with Berkshire LEP to see how this situation can be managed across programmes. Great Western Railway will be invited to attend the next Board meeting in September to provide an update on the Marlow to Maidenhead Rail scheme.

Buckinghamshire County Council has made good progress with the Wycombe Town Centre, A355 Beaconsfield at A4 Taplow transport schemes, however as previously reported the delivery of Eastern Link Road (Woodlands) and South East Aylesbury Link Road (Stoke Mandeville) have incurred significant delays due to complexities around land acquisition, planning issues and funding.

A total of £8.3 million LGF grant that was allocated to the Local Transport Body (LTB) in the first round of growth deal funding was due to be spent by end March 2019. This has not been achieved resulting in programme slippage of approximately £5.3m capital grant. The County Council in discussion with Buckinghamshire LEP and Local Transport Body has prepared a revised package of transport priority schemes for approval and to ensure that remaining grant funding is committed and spent by March 2021.

The combination of delays to major transport scheme and LTB programme slippage presents a significant risk to overall LGF programme delivery, which could affect future Buckinghamshire LEP performance review. Buckinghamshire County Council has therefore been invited to this Board meeting to provide an update on the LGF transport schemes including the LGF funded Local Transport Body priorities.

2 Buckinghamshire Country Council – Priority Transport Schemes

Of the total £73m capital grant for Buckinghamshire LEP area, an approximate total of £52m (71%) has been allocated to priority transport schemes being promoted and delivered by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) in conjunction with the District Councils, Developers, DfT and other partners.

This ambitious programme aims to address some of the critical areas of the transport infrastructure and road network to improve north south connectivity and support delivery of key objectives in the Strategic Economic plan. A summary of the LGF funding awarded to BCC transport schemes is shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1 - LGF grant allocation for BCC Transport Schemes

Scheme	LGF Grant	
LTB – included in LGF 1 (£2.1m Stocklake Link Road)	£8,300,000	LGF1
ELRS & Stocklake Link	£11,970,000	LGF1
Wycombe Town Centre & SQTS	£8,480,000	LGF1
A355 Beaconsfield Improvements	£6,050,000	LGF1
Sustainable Links to Taplow - Crossrail	£1,542,000	LGF1
Sustainable Links to Winslow - East West Rail	£2,151,726	LGF1
South East Aylesbury Link Road - DfT Retained Scheme	£13,472,000	LGF3
Total LGF allocated to BCC Transport	£51,965,726	

Scheme Summary

Aylesbury Stocklake Urban Link Road – Completed 2015/16.

Wycombe Town Centre & SQTS – Full LGF allocation has been spent and the scheme is currently on track for successful completion later this year.

A355 Beaconsfield Improvements – Construction works are being progressed on the Northern section on the new link road with expected completion by the Autumn 2019. Timing and determination of a planning application submitted on adjoining land by Inland Homes for the Wilton Park development site has impacted delivery of the southern link to the Pyebush roundabout. The County Council is in discussion with the Planning Authority and developer Inland Homes to advance delivery of this scheme. Estimated timescale for completion of the Pyebush link is 2021.

Sustainable Links to Taplow Station Crossrail – Works started in April after extensive period of public consultation and delays in procurement. The scheme is expected to be completed in November 2019.

Sustainable Links to East West Rail Station Winslow – completed.

Eastern Link Road South (ELRS) and Stocklake Urban Link Road – Section 106 Agreements with owners for signature to secure Outline Planning Approval for the Woodlands development. The LEP issued a Grant Offer Letter to the County Council in May 2018 following approval of the Outline Scheme Business Case for the Eastern Link Road South project and full grant transferred to the County Council for acquisition of land for the delivery of the ELRS Scheme. Land to be marketed early Autumn to confirm consented value. Acquisition will follow shortly after.

South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) – This is a DfT retained scheme, contract for LGF grant funding is therefore directly between the County Council as Scheme promotor and the Department for Transport. The detailed scheme design, DfT Business Case, planning and land assembly are being progressed with a view to planning application being submitted this year. The DfT have expressed concerns about the ambitious delivery timetable for this project and asked the Buckinghamshire LEP to work closely with the County Council and DfT to support delivery of this scheme.

In view of the critical aspect of these schemes in the LGF programme, The LEP team has established regular programme meetings with the County Council to provide support and maintain overview of scheme delivery.

Local Transport Body (LTB) – A sum of £2.1m of the total £8.3m grant was allocated and spent on the Stocklake Urban Link Road which was completed in 2015/16. The full grant allocation was profiled to be spent by end March 2019. In January 2018 a decision was taken to reallocate the remaining £6.2m LTB funds to other transport priorities including A355 Beaconsfield ‘gap funding’ and the Wycombe A40 corridor scheme. Subsequently the A355 scheme was successful in securing HIF marginal viability funding. This has created notional headroom for the LTB programme funds.

A revised package of priority transport schemes has been developed in discussion with LTB and Buckinghamshire LEP, to ensure that the remaining £5.3m grant is committed and spent by March 2021.

3 Business & Skills Capital Projects

NFTS – National Centre for Immersive Storytelling

At the project initiation meeting with the NFTS project team on 11th June, NFTS outlined the scope of the project, risks and proposed delivery timetable. The equipment for the ‘Dolby Atmos’ sound installation has been procured following successful negotiation with the supplier and offered at a discount to the NFTS. This has offset increased cost of building and construction work, which is planned to take place during the summer months. The Dolby Atmos equipment installation is planned for late August with the facilities being certified and operational by end September 2019 ready for new year student intake.

The NFTS presented an alternative option being for the refurbishment of the ‘Dubbing Studio’ which is located in a 1920’s building. This option would cost an additional £70k and further to a request by NFTS, Buckinghamshire LEP confirmed that it could not provide any additional LGF grant towards the scheme.

BNU - Bucks Creates @ Pinewood

Following award of LGF Grant, discussions were held between Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) and Creative Media Skills (CMS) to review the project implementation, funding and lease arrangements for the facility at Pinewood Studios. Contract terms have now been agreed and initial works have started. The scheme is due to be completed by the Autumn 2019, in readiness for start of the new year graduate programme.

University of Buckingham - School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence

The final changes to the preferred design are being agreed with the client and with a view to submitting a reserved matters planning application by September 2019. Contract procurement will take place later this year and it is anticipated that works will commence in the spring 2020.

Levels of confidence remain high that all three of these schemes will be completed well within the March 2021 deadline.

Members are asked to:-

Note the content of this report and acknowledge summary update and risks to programme delivery.