

Portfolio Holder Decisions/Leader Decisions

Friday 14 October 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Isobel Seccombe OBE

1. Cycle Rail Routes to Stations Grant Funding

Resolved

The Deputy Leader of the Council:

- Approves the entering into of a grant agreement with Sustrans for the Cycle Rail Routes to Stations Warwick project and delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Communities to enter into the grant agreement and any other necessary legal agreements to give effect to the project on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.
- Approves the allocation of £0.2045 million grant funding from Cycle Rail to the existing A429 M40 J15 to A46/B4115 capital scheme to deliver cycle infrastructure on the A429 Coventry Road.

2. Smallholdings New Lettings


Resolved

The Portfolio Holder approves the grant of a new Farm Business Tenancy at Famington Farm, Bidford-on-Avon to the preferred bidder on terms outlined in paragraph 2.3 below and acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

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Portfolio Holder Decision

Cycle Rail Routes to Stations Grant Funding

Portfolio Holder	Deputy Leader
Date of decision	14 October 2022
	<p>Signed</p>  <p>Pp</p>

1. Decision taken

The Deputy Leader of the Council:

- Approves the entering into of a grant agreement with Sustrans for the Cycle Rail Routes to Stations Warwick project and delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Communities to enter into the grant agreement and any other necessary legal agreements to give effect to the project on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.
- Approves the allocation of £0.2045 million grant funding from Cycle Rail to the existing A429 M40 J15 to A46/B4115 capital scheme to deliver cycle infrastructure on the A429 Coventry Road.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 The County Council has been allocated £0.2045 million from the Government's Cycle Rail Routes to Station Fund administered by Sustrans, subject to agreeing the grant conditions. The grant has been awarded to enhance a cycle route due to be constructed in 2023 on the A429 Coventry Road Warwick using funding from the Government's Getting Building Fund and internal funds.
- 2.2 Deputy Leader approval is required to enter into a grant agreement with Sustrans and to allocate the capital funding to the Coventry Road cycle scheme.
- 2.3 It is also requested that authority is delegated to the Strategic Director for Communities to enter into the grant agreement and any other legal agreements necessary to give effect to the project on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

3. Background information

- 3.1 In 2020 the County Council secured £1.9 million from the Getting Building Fund to deliver the Warwickshire Cycling Network Expansion Project and bring forward 7km of new or enhanced priority cycle routes. This included a new route on the A429 Coventry Road, Warwick between the Spinney Hill roundabout, where the route would connect to the National Cycle Network Route 52 to Kenilworth, and the St Johns junction on the edge of Warwick town centre. The scheme was identified as a high priority by the 2018 member led cycling infrastructure Task and Finish Group. Design work on the scheme commenced in late 2020 and stakeholder and public engagement on the initial design took place in autumn 2021.
- 3.2 During 2021 Sustrans invited expressions of interest from local authorities in applying for a Cycle Rail Routes to Stations Grant for the purpose of improving cycle routes to National Rail railway stations and increasing rail passengers or helping existing passengers to switch from car use to cycle. The Coventry Road scheme connects with Warwick station as well as linking residential areas in north Warwick and the town centre and improving connections to the wider town cycle network. An expression of interest was submitted to Sustrans with the aim of securing funding for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the Coventry Road route and aligning the design with the Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20), Cycle Infrastructure Design, which is a requirement of the funding.
- 3.3 In late 2021 Sustrans informed the Council of their intention to award £204,500 funding to the Coventry Road scheme, subject to assurances over the route design. A joint design review was subsequently carried out with Sustrans with enhancements made including improved junction treatments to assist the movement of cyclists past side junctions and providing additional crossing facilities to improve connections to the existing cycle network. Sustrans is satisfied that the scheme design now meets the Cycle Rail fund criteria and can award the funding subject to the grant agreement being signed.
- 3.4 The Council will invite input from stakeholders and the public on the revised scheme design and consult on the required legal orders during the autumn and subject to the feedback received, intends to construct the scheme in the first part of 2023.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Entering into a grant agreement with Sustrans will enable the County Council to utilise £0.2045 million for the Coventry Road scheme and deliver a higher quality scheme than would be possible without this funding. The current cost estimate for the scheme is £0.715 million and is funded by:
 - Cycle Rail Routes to Station - £0.2045 million
 - Getting Building Fund - £0.3075 million
 - Casualty Reduction - £0.15 million
 - Delegated Budget - £0.053 million
 - Total - £0.715 million
- 4.2 The agreement with Sustrans requires the grant to be committed by the end of March 2023 which is achievable within the current project programme. Should the project be delayed, for example due to receiving objections to legal orders or delays in construction, and the funding withdrawn it would be possible to descope the project to ensure costs remain within the available budget.
- 4.3 Any increase in costs above the current estimate would have to be met, however the cost

estimate is based on a detailed understanding of the scheme design and includes allowances for contingency and inflation. Cost overruns could be funded from the overall Getting Building Fund (GBF) grant for the Warwickshire Cycling Network Expansion Project, however any additional GBF grant spent on the Coventry Road scheme would reduce the funding available to deliver the remaining contracted project outputs and this would require agreement with the funding body to vary the project outputs, schemes to be descoped or alternative funding to be found.

5. Environmental implications

5.1 Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. The Coventry Road cycle scheme will provide cycling infrastructure which will enable more journeys to be made by bicycle, thereby contributing to reduced carbon emissions as well as lower levels of congestion and improved air quality. The Cycle Rail funding will enhance the quality of the Coventry Road cycle route and maximise the environmental benefits of the scheme by attracting a higher volume of users and encouraging more people to make local journeys by bicycle in preference to private cars.

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Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Butlin Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Caroline Gutteridge

Finance – Andy Felton

Equality – Keira Rounsley

Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – Warwick, Boad, Philipps and Redford

Local Member(s): Cllr Jackie D’Arcy, Cllr John Holland, Cllr Parminder Singh Birdi

Portfolio Holder Decision Smallholdings New Lettings

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property
Date of decision	14 October 2022
	<p>Signed</p>  <p>Pp</p>

1. Decision taken

- 1.1 The Portfolio Holder approves the grant of a new Farm Business Tenancy at Famington Farm, Bidford-on-Avon to the preferred bidder on terms outlined in paragraph 2.3 below and acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 Following the death of the tenant farmer and the removal of any Agricultural Holdings Act status on this farm, a new occupier was needed to manage and take forward the stewardship of this asset.
- 2.2 Aligned to the Warwickshire County Farms and Smallholdings Strategy a competitive tendering process was undertaken. This process followed key asset plan principles, promoting good standards of stewardship whilst providing equal opportunities for entrants to bid. A competitive tendering process provides a level playing field for new entrants into the farming industry.
- 2.3 The terms proposed in the tender reflect the market rental value for a 10 year Farm Business Tenancy from October 2022 at a rent of £45,015.39 pa. It will be a fully repairing and insuring Farm Business Tenancy based on an initial rent of £45,015.39 pa with a rent review every 3rd year on the 1st October. It is proposed that the Tenancy will commence in October 2022.
- 2.4 The Council will be required to undertake some enabling works including refurbishments to the farmhouse to meet decent homes standards together with repair works to address impact damage and drainage matters. The cost of these works is estimated at £50,000 which will be met from the Smallholdings Capital Maintenance budget.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Famington Farm which is situated in Bidford-on-Avon extends to 148.36 acres and includes a farmhouse, farm buildings, mixed arable and pastureland together with woodland. The Farm had been subject to a historic Agricultural Holdings Act lease which came to an end following the tenant passing away.
- 3.2 A new 10 year Farm Business Tenancy has been marketed via a competitive tender process which was advertised nationally. Due to the quality of the land and a range of modern buildings, we received a high level of interest with strong rental offers.
- 3.3 Candidates were assessed and shortlisted in accordance with the terms of the invitation to tender. The shortlisted candidates were then invited to attend an interview process. The outcome of this interview process has identified a preferred applicant for this farm.

4. Financial implications

4.1 Famington Farm – 10 year fully repairing and insuring Farm Business Tenancy based on an initial rent of £45,015.39 pa. Rent review every 3rd year on the 1st October. Proposed start date October 2022. Landlord enabling works to include refurbishments to the farmhouse to meet decent homes standards plus repair works to address impact damage and drainage matters (Budget estimated at £50,000).

5. Environmental implications

5.1 This new letting presents an opportunity to consider energy efficiencies within the works proposed. The council will consider the potential to improve on the existing EPC ratings when refurbishing the farmhouse building.

Report Author	Jason King jasonking@warwickshire.gov.uk,
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury Assistant Director Governance and Policy
Strategic Director	Rob Powell Strategic Director for Resources
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Butlin Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property
Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	Yes

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?

No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin

Corporate Board – Rob Powell

Legal – Sarah Duxbury

Finance – Andrew Felton

Equality – n/a

Democratic Services – Deborah Moseley and Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – Warwick, Birdi, Boad and Philipps

Local Member(s): Daren Pemberton

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