

REPORT OF LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

GETTING BUILDING FUND

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to enter into the Getting Building Fund offer agreement for the 5G Enabled Digital Centre in North Nottinghamshire.

Information

2. Nottinghamshire County Council truly believe that the county will help lead the country out of the crisis and into recovery. The council has a proven track record of delivering successful projects and has been working hard to understand what businesses need and where investment will have the most impact.
3. Over the last few months the council has been successful in bringing forward, at pace, a range of excellent projects that provide the opportunity to drive forward the potential in the Nottinghamshire economy at this challenging time. Investment in excess of £6m has already been secured. Projects to be funded in Nottinghamshire include:
 - East Midlands Development Corporation – expected to create more than 84,000 new jobs
 - Improved digital connectivity in rural areas with the Nottinghamshire Gigabit Voucher Scheme - on top of 98% superfast coverage to help people work from home
 - New infrastructure - A1, A614, A612
4. Nottinghamshire businesses are amazingly resilient yet the pandemic has taken its toll so the council will use these carefully selected projects to target those areas and industries particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and to deliver schemes rapidly to stimulate further investment. More will come forward in the coming weeks and months.
5. In June 2020, the £900 million Getting Building Fund was announced by the Prime Minister, aimed at investing in shovel-ready housing and infrastructure projects creating jobs and supporting economic recovery across the country. As part of that announcement, £44.4 million was awarded for projects within the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) area as a next phase of financial stimulus to restart the economy.
6. Having received endorsement by the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee at its 16 July 2020 meeting, Nottinghamshire County Council submitted four accelerated project proposals. These were: Full fibre broadband; 5G Enabled Digital Centre; Zero Carbon Regional Demonstrator, Top Wighay; and Lindhurst Berry Hill, Mansfield.
7. Following an independent review of the proposals, ten projects across D2N2 were called forward to submit full business cases. All ten will be considered by the D2N2 Investment and

main Boards. For the council, two of the four projects originally submitted were successful, they are the 5G Enabled Digital Centre and Lindhurst Berry Hill, Mansfield projects.

8. This report is seeking approval for the County Council to enter the Getting Building Fund Grant Confirmation Document for the 5G Enabled Digital Centre (the Lindhurst Berry Hill, Mansfield project features separately as part of this Committee's agenda under a report entitled 'Lindhurst Development Update – Site Disposals'). The Council is familiar with, and has signed up to on numerous occasions, the D2N2 LEP's standard grant offer agreement. The only difference on the Getting Building Fund offer agreement is a revision to the publicity section and payments will now be made on a claims basis, rather than an agreed grant profile.
9. Whilst the full fibre broadband and the Zero Carbon Regional Demonstrator at Top Wighay projects were not called forward to full business case on this occasion, all is not lost. Firstly, an opportunity arose over the summer for the Council to participate in the Governments Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme. This Scheme will run alongside the existing full fibre network programme, providing Nottinghamshire residents and businesses greater choice of access to a gigabit-capable internet service provider connection equal to 1,000 megabits per second. The timing of the planned ministerial announcement at the beginning of September, meant that approvals to participate in this Scheme had to be subject to the Council's urgency decision process. This decision taken under urgency procedures also features separately in today's Committee agenda.
10. Secondly, on 5 August 2020 D2N2 LEP announced their intention to create a reserve list of future investment propositions should further funding become available. With funding made up of grants from Homes England, the D2N2 LEP and from the council, the Top Wighay development is one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by the county council. It will boost the county's economic growth and will regenerate an area at the heart of the County, benefitting not only the current populations but many generations to come. It is for this reason that officers are in the process of resubmitting the Zero Carbon Regional Demonstrator at Top Wighay which could be presented to any new funding allocations as they arise.

Other Options Considered

11. The Council is committed to making sure Nottinghamshire is a well-connected County. This means harnesses the future potential of 5G, the related technologies it enables and encouraging the growth of skills to support new and emerging sectors. It is for this reason, the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

Reason for Recommendation

12. The 5G Enabled Digital Centre builds on the Council's recent success in the Government's 5G Rural Connected Communities Competition with funding secured to launch a 25-month testbed and trial programme creating the world's first 5G Connected Forest at the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and surrounding area. The current project end date is set for January 2022, any delay in signing the grant agreement compromises both the start and end date of the project. Members approval to enter into the grant agreement is recommended as it will enable the Council to immediately lead another project specifically aimed at stimulating economic activity and supporting job creation in the context of post-COVID 19 recovery.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human

rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

14. The grant fund totals £592,000. Approval is not being sought for any additional funding.

RECOMMENDATION

1) The 5G Enabled Digital Centre project is part of Nottinghamshire's £3.5 million Getting Building Fund allocation that supports the Nottinghamshire County Council Covid-19 Economic recovery Action Plan 2020-22, providing much-needed jobs, growth and further investment at this critical time. It is recommended that Policy Committee approves the Council entering into the Getting Building Fund offer agreement.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE Leader of the County Council

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Constitutional Comments (KK 04/09/2020)

15. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Policy Committee.

Financial Comments (GB 15/09/2020)

16. The £592,000 grant funding sought from the Getting Building Fund would be capital in nature. As such, were the Council to be successful in securing the grant funding there would be a requirement to vary the capital programme through the usual capital approval process.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Nottinghamshire COVID-19 Economic Recovery Framework, report to COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee, published 16 July 2020

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All