

## OFFICER DECISION RECORD

**Decision Title:** Weston Business Quarter & Revolving Infrastructure Fund

**Decision reference number:** 08.07.21

**Decision date:** 28 July 2021

**Background / reason for decision:**

On 25 June 2021, the West of England Joint Committee agreed to note the submission of the Outline Business Case for the Weston Business Quarter project, and delegate approval and the award of £674k to progress the Full Business Case to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the West of England unitary authorities, subject to headroom in the Revolving Infrastructure Fund being available and there being no other immediate calls on these funds.

**Revolving Infrastructure Fund:**

Subsequent to the 25 June meeting, in seeking to confirm that headroom is available to accommodate the Weston Business Quarter project, the operation of the Revolving Infrastructure Fund was reviewed and a set of principles developed through the authorities' S151 officers (see Appendix 1). The key principle is that the previously agreed repayment profile is underwritten by the respective Council which provides certainty that funds will revolve and opens up headroom to allocate back out to further projects.

There were three historic projects which were provisionally or conditionally approved for Revolving Infrastructure Fund support, namely the Junction 21 Queensway junctions, Junction 21 Northbound Merge and Watershed Redevelopment. Given that these schemes have not been confirmed for funding and, through discussion with S151 officers, are not deemed to be priority schemes, it is proposed that they are removed from Revolving Infrastructure Fund commitments. If appropriate, they could seek to re-enter the programme at some point in the future via the submission of a Business Case, should funding be available. It is proposed that this approach will be confirmed by the West of England Joint Committee in October 2021 alongside the Revolving Infrastructure Fund principles.

No further potential Revolving Infrastructure Fund projects have been identified by the West of England councils at this time.

**Weston Business Quarter - progression of Full Business Case:**

As above, an [Outline Business Case](#) has been submitted by North Somerset Council for the Weston Business Quarter seeking funding through the Revolving Infrastructure Fund. The Executive Summary is shown in Appendix 2. This would deliver the infrastructure and utilities required to service the remaining 30 acres of land which is yet to be developed and in the ownership of North Somerset Council in the Weston Business Quarter, which is part of the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. The project seeks to de-risk the site making it attractive for commercial development, enabling jobs and business rates growth and helping to facilitate future phases of The Food Works which was supported through the Local Growth Fund. Funding of £674k is sought to progress the project to Full Business Case with a further £10.4m identified as the cost for delivery. The Revolving Infrastructure Fund is a repayable fund and it is planned that funds would be returned from the land receipts over the period 2024/25 to 2028/29. There is Revolving Infrastructure Fund available to fund this initial award of £674k, and subject to the other repayments expected in 2021/22 being made, full funding could be accommodated within the Revolving Infrastructure Fund programme, this to be confirmed at Full Business Case. The Assessment Summary Table is shown in Appendix 3.

**Options considered:**

Not applicable in relation to this specific decision, i.e. this was the option considered.

**Decision:**

1. To approve the Weston Business Quarter Outline Business Case and award of £674k of repayable Revolving Infrastructure Fund to develop the Full Business Case, subject to repayments being made to accommodate the current shortfall in delivery funding (£90k) by the time the Full Business Case is approved. The £90k risk in funding to be accepted by North Somerset Council.
2. To endorse the proposed Revolving Infrastructure Fund principles, to be reported to the West of England Joint Committee in October 2021.

**Consultation:**

The Chief Executives of the West of England unitary authorities were consulted on these proposals.

**Officer making decision:** Patricia Greer

**Position:** Chief Executive, West of England Combined Authority

**Report / appendices / background documents:**

Appendix 1: Proposed Revolving Infrastructure Fund principles  
Appendix 2: Weston Business Quarter Executive Summary  
Appendix 3: Weston Business Quarter Assessment summary table