

OFFICER DECISION RECORD

General guidance note: Please complete using Plain English, avoiding acronyms and use of jargon; this will be a published document so please be mindful of a public audience in completing this decision record.

Decision Title: Change Request for the Pollinator Project

Decision reference number: *(Democratic Services to add)*

Decision date: 28/06/23

Background / reason for decision:

This decision confirms how the £800,000 additional funding approved by the West of England Combines Authority Committee will be spent across the remaining year of the project, which differs slightly from the original FBC in terms of type/scale of projects and staff resources required. The aims and objectives of the fund remain fundamentally the same.

A delegation for the approval of funding through the Green Recovery Fund was granted to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils in September 2022. In March 2023, Committee supported expansion of the Green Recovery Fund by £10m to invest in priority projects that target the climate and ecological emergencies, including allocating £6m from the existing Combined Authority Investment Fund – including the Pollinator Fund Expansion by £800k, the subject of this Officer Decision Form.

Scope

The scope of the project is slightly broadened with the additional funding by enabling the investment in a more strategic project. This will enable the project to link into wider initiatives that the CA are working on such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This slight broadening of the scope has been widely supported by key experts supporting the project.

Resources

A slight increase in staff resources is sought which directly links to the increase in funding and corresponding volume of work the project team will be expected to deliver.

Benefits

- Additional small/medium/large projects delivered with minimal additional resources, delivering targets for pollinators, and engagement with people.
- High profile Bee Bold Award Launch and Award Events to engage with businesses, community groups to help deliver Mayoral objective to be the Pollinator Capital of the UK.
- Strategic Project to deliver landscape scale nature recovery to benefit pollinators and help deliver the priorities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Options considered:

Scope

Only focusing on community scale projects would continue to increase habitats for pollinators and community engagement in the issue. However, it is unlikely that with the funding we have it will make a substantive difference to Nature Decline in the long term.

Resources

We could wait 6-9 months to draw on the £800k additional funding (which would be roughly when the current team will have finished the administration of Round 2). However, this would result in lost opportunities in terms of overspill from round 2, as well as not being able to start the development of the more strategic project that our expert advisors have suggested is needed.

Decision: To approve the change request and the award of an additional £800k from the Green Recovery Fund for the Pollinator Project.

Consultation: Proposals were discussed separately with Officer groups across the Unitary Authorities.

Officer making decision: Richard Ennis

Position: Interim Acting Chief Executive, West of England Combined Authority

Report / appendices / background documents:

Appendix 1 – Spend profile (below)

Appendix 2 - Change Request for the Pollinator Project (below)

Appendix 1 – Spend Profile

Proposal	Detail	Approx Cost
1) Round 3 of the Pollinator Fund	Round 2 of the pollinator fund identified a significant number of small, medium and large projects that were of a high quality and the panel was keen but unable to fund. We are now proposing to use a third of this new allocation to fund those projects. Approval of these projects would be confirmed through the same route as round 2 (UA officers followed by approval by Head of Environment in consultation with UA Environment Directors).	£270,000
2) Bee Bold Award 2024	Bee Bold business and community award recognising and promoting exemplar behaviours. This funding is for both launch of the award and Award Event. Cost based on average for past 2 awards.	£10,000
3) Targeted Grant	Following feedback from Pollinator Panel and discussions with Regional Environment Directors, the need and appetite for using this funding is towards one or two strategic projects. They could be focused on landowners/managers to meet objectives for pollinators, engagement with people and to deliver LNRS priorities. A business case would be brought back to Environment Directors for approval (as per existing delegation for this fund).	£400,000
4) Staff resource	To deliver this work additional staff resource is required to deliver above work in 2023/24 & 24/25.	£120,000
	Total	£800,000

Appendix 2

SCHEME / PROJECT NAME: Community Pollinator Fund

ORIGINATION DATE:	23/06/2023
REFERENCE:	
AUTHOR:	Roger Hoare

CHANGE CATEGORY:

*Please select one or more, as appropriate, from list below: **[Please do not amend the categories listed below]***

This change request relates to:

- **Time:** change request relating to delivery timeframe, including change in milestone dates.
- **Spend profile:** change request relating to spend profile.

DESCRIPTION AND CAUSE OF CHANGE:

£800,000 additional funding has been approved by West of England Combined Authority Committee, which had been profiled across the remaining years of the project, including £99,000 into 25/26. (covered in March 23 Change Request)

This Change Request now sets out how we will use that funding, which differs slightly from the original FBC in terms of type / scale of projects and staff resources required.

The aims and objectives of the fund remain fundamentally the same. With the additional funding we propose to allocate it as follows:

Proposal	Detail	Approx Cost
1) Round 3 of the Pollinator Fund	Round 2 of the pollinator fund identified a significant number of small, medium and large projects that were of a high quality and the panel was keen but unable to fund. We are now proposing to use a third of this new allocation to fund those projects. Approval of these projects would be confirmed through the same route as round 2 (UA officers followed by approval by Head of Environment in consultation with UA Environment Directors).	£270,000
2) Bee Bold Award 2024	Bee Bold business and community award recognising and promoting exemplar behaviours. This funding is for both launch of the award and Award Event. Cost based on average for past 2 awards.	£10,000
3) Targeted Grant	Following feedback from Pollinator Panel and discussions with Regional Environment Directors, the need and appetite for using	£400,000

	<p>this funding is towards one or two strategic projects. They could be focused on landowners/managers to meet objectives for pollinators, engagement with people and to deliver LNRS priorities. A business case would be brought back to Environment Directors for approval (as per existing delegation for this fund).</p>	
4) Staff resource	To deliver this work additional staff resource is required to deliver above work in 2023/24 & 24/25.	£120,000
Total		£800,000
<p>CONSEQUENCE OF THE CHANGE (including overall cost, spend profile, milestones, scope, benefits):</p>		

Overall cost

The additional £800k of funding enables a Third round of the Pollinator Fund to be run as well as enabling a more strategic large scale project that will help the region towards the goal of being an exemplar / pollinator capital with regards support for habitats and pollinators.

Spend Profile

The revised profile of forecast spend is detailed below, with more of the round 1 projects drawing down funding in 23/24. There will be additional spend in 25/26 due to the project continuing to deliver the additionally approved funding across the project. The scope and benefits of the project will be expanded with additional projects set to receive funding, creating further ecological and community benefits across the region. The full detail of the additional scope and benefits will be provided later in the year, once round 2 of funding has been completed, and the learnings having fed into the plan.

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total	Total	Jobs/Benefits
	GRF	GRF	GRF	GRF	GRF	Match	
						Funding	
Current	229	580	649	0	1,458	250	
Proposed	95	1,449	615	99	2,258	450	

Milestones

September 2023: Pollinator Round 3 approval of c. 10 small/medium/large projects from Round 2.

January 2023: Launch of Bee Bold Award 2024.

Summer 2024: Bee Bold Award 2024

September 2023 – Summer 2024: Build business case, and identify and deliver strategic project, to meet objectives for pollinators, engagement with people and to deliver LNRS priorities.

Scope

The scope of the project is slightly broadened with the additional funding by enabling the investment in a more strategic project. This will enable the project to link into wider initiatives that the CA are working on such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This slight broadening of the scope has been widely supported by key experts supporting the project.

Resources

A slight increase in staff resources is sought which directly links to the increase in funding and corresponding volume of work the project team will be expected to deliver.

Benefits

- Additional small/medium/large projects delivered with minimal additional resources, delivering targets for pollinators, and engagement with people.
- High profile Bee Bold Award Launch and Award Events to engage with businesses, community groups to help deliver Mayoral objective to be the Pollinator Capital of the UK.
- Strategic Project to deliver landscape scale nature recovery to benefit pollinators and help deliver the priorities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:	
<p><u>Scope</u> Only focusing on community scale projects would continue to increase habitats for pollinators and community engagement in the issue. However, it is unlikely that with the funding we have it will make a substantive difference to Nature Decline in the long term.</p> <p><u>Resources</u> We could wait 6-9 months to draw on the £800k additional funding (which would be roughly when the current team will have finished the administration of Round 2). However, this would result in lost opportunities in terms of overspill from round 2, as well as not being able to start the development of the more strategic project that our expert advisors have suggested is needed.</p>	
PROPOSED OPTION:	
<p><u>Scope</u> The proposed option is to proceed with the three options set out above.</p>	
FUTURE MITIGATION AND LEARNING POINTS:	
<p>This change request is in response to additional funding being made available to the project and could not have been anticipated when the original Pollinator Fund FBC was proposed.</p>	
<p>s151 / Chief Finance Officer Approval <i>(required for costs changes: spend profile changes across financial years and increases in project cost)</i></p>	
<p>I confirm the project continues to deliver good value for money in the use of public resources, that being the suitability and effectiveness of the project as well as the economic growth and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the public resources received.</p>	
<p>Name: Roger Hoare</p>	<p>Signed: *</p>

**Note: where WECA is the promoting body this should be signed by the appropriate Director or Head of Service*