

TITLE	One Public Estate - Authority and Governance for Participation in the Berkshire Property Partnership
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 23 February 2017
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive
LEAD MEMBER	Mark Ashwell Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that the correct governance arrangements are in place for the Council in the One Public Estate (OPE) programme, including the authority and terms of reference of the Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) approves the Terms of Reference for the Berkshire Property Partnership, set out in Appendix A to the report to enable the allocation of the £500,000 grant;
- 2) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make decisions supporting the programme delivery in accordance with the Terms of Reference and;
- 3) notes that any additional budget requirements or capital commitments will not be entered into without further Executive approval.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Chief Executives of the Berkshire Authorities agreed for Wokingham Borough Council to take the lead on a joint pan Berkshire bid to join the fourth phase of the Cabinet Office initiative, the One Public Estate. The Group is known as the Berkshire Property Partnership (BPP).

The bid has been successful and an award of £500,000 has been made for funding to support the objectives and projects of the joint bid. This is the largest grant made in this round of the scheme.

A condition of the award is that participants match grant funding, although this can be in cash or consideration and will be within existing budgets.

Terms of Reference are now required under the OPE framework and these set out the administrative arrangements and objectives and will enable the BPP to allocate the £500,000 grant received from the Cabinet Office.

No budgetary commitments can be made by the BPP in excess of the grant. If any supplementary resources are required, a report will be brought back to Executive

seeking necessary approvals.

Authority to participate and invest in the programme is now required.
The alternative option is to not join the programme and continue to operate independently.

Background

Through its Government Property Unit, the Cabinet Office has established a programme called One Public Estate (OPE). Launched in 2013, the programme is now in its fourth round of funding applications and it was agreed that a pan Berkshire bid be established with Wokingham Borough Council's Chief Executive taking the lead role in the bidding process.

Over 150 councils working across 37 partnerships are set to join the next phase of OPE. Partnerships of councils and the wider public sector have been awarded a total of £7.5m to deliver land and property initiatives, delivering new jobs and homes as well as capital receipts and revenue savings.

Over the next 5 years, existing members of OPE are set to:

- create 36,000 jobs
- release land for 16,500 homes
- raise £138 million in capital receipts from land and property sales
- save £56 million in running cost savings

Currently the Berkshire Property Partnership comprises all the Berkshire Unitary Authorities plus representatives from local NHS agencies, Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The Home and Communities Agency is also fully engaged with the work. The Partnership has been awarded the largest grant made in this round of the scheme namely funding of £500,000 to support the objectives and projects contained in the joint bid.

The principle core areas of work under consideration and identified in the joint bid are:

Placed Based Projects.

These generally look at a geographic area, map out all public assets and seek collaborative ways to deliver services in that locality to drive asset efficiencies, free up capital assets and create jobs and possibly housing. It is proposed that the first area to be considered under this scope is a Slough based area project. Reading, and the Bracknell-Wokingham corridor, will be the areas of focus for the subsequent reviews

Property Based Project

Under this area of work each participant has suggested sites where projects could be worked up with one or more parties for a combined gain. There were around 30 locations identified in the bid.

Shared or combined professional service unit

The group recognises that there is a serious pressure on the public sector's ability to attract, retain and incentivise professional property expertise in the South East. This is due to the opportunities offered in the private sector and the proximity to London. A pooling of resources could be a way of dealing with this challenge and provide a higher level of resilience. This will be investigated as part of the programme. This pooling could lead to the extension of the existing shared Operational Property service between Wokingham and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, to incorporate other local authority and public service partners across the county. A joint venture, with an established commercial Property and Facilities Management company will also be explored as part of the project. Decisions will be returned to the Executive for approval

The detailed draft Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See below	Yes	Revenue/Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See below	Yes	Revenue/Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See below	Yes	Revenue/Capital

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The project should lead to capital receipts and revenue savings, but at this stage, these cannot be quantified.

It is anticipated that 'in kind' contributions will be the means by which match-funding is provided.

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers

None

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