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Bill Cullen MBA (ISM), BA(Hons) MRTPI
Chief Executive

Date: **17 September 2018**

Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

To: **Members of the Executive**

Mr MA Hall (Chairman)
Mr K Morrell (Vice-Chairman)
Mr RG Allen
Mrs MA Cook
Mr C Ladkin
Mr M Nickerson
Mrs MJ Surtees

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear member,

Please find attached a report which was marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** on **MONDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2018** at **5.30 pm**.

I would be grateful if you could place this with your papers for the meeting.

Yours sincerely

RKOwen

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Officer

LATE REPORT

9. BUSINESS RATES 100% RETENTION PILOT (Pages 1 - 16)

   To provide an update on the 75% retention of business rates prospectus recently issued by DCLG.

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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

EXECUTIVE 24 September 2018
WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

75% Retention Business Rates Pilot Bid 2019/20

Report of Head of Finance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on the 75% retention of business rates prospectus recently issued by DCLG inviting local authorities to submit bids to become pilots for 2019/20 and the work currently being undertaken by Leicestershire Treasurers in preparing a submission.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Executive agrees to the inclusion of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council as a partner body in the one-year pilot bid for the Leicester and Leicestershire area for 2019/2020.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has issued a prospectus for Councils to apply to be a business rate pilot for the 2019/20 Financial Year. Submission deadline is the 25th September 2018.

3.2 In preparation for changes in the Business Rate Retention Scheme that has been operating since 2013, the Government issued a prospectus for Councils and their business rate pools to submit pilot bids to help inform the development of a new framework for business rates from 2020.

3.3 MHCLG issued prospectuses for 2017/18, 2018/19 and now for 2019/20. Council approved a submission for the 2018/19 pilot alongside all other Councils in Leicestershire. Unfortunately this was unsuccessful. However, MHCLG have indicated that 2019/20 pilots bids will be assessed independently of those who were successful in 2018/19.

3.4 The MHCLG evaluation criteria remains largely consistent to the 2018/19 pilot bid where authorities were asked to demonstrate how pooled income from growth will be used across the pilot area to either boost further growth, promote financial sustainability or a combination of these. On this basis, it is considered that a bid consistent with the bid submitted for the 2018/19 pilot (and agreed by all Councils) should form the basis of the 2019/20 submission. The bid for 2019/20 is still being drafted. The bid for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix 3 for reference.

3.5 The invitation to submit a pilot bid for 2019/20 is different in two key respects:

(a) Bids are being invited to be submitted based on the Government's indication of a 75% business rate retention scheme operating from 2020/21.
(b) The Government has removed the 'no detriment' safeguard that was in place in 2018/19. However, the existing safety net arrangements linked to the business rate pool remains and the likelihood of a call on the safety net is marginal.

3.6 A key part of the business rate retention scheme is to remove/replace separate Government grants. If the pilot bid was successful then the Council will forego Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Rural Services Grant in 2019/20 to be replaced by the increase yield from business rate pilots. RSG grant is £83,975in 2019/20 and HBBC does not receive Rural Services Delivery Grant.

3.7 The pilot bid is still in the process of being drafted by all the Councils in Leicestershire. Based on the draft allocation principles in Appendix B and initial modelling by Leicestershire Treasurers the potential gain to the Leicestershire and Leicester City region is £13.776 million. Applying the draft allocation principles (Appendix 1) would provide the allocations in the table below. It is important to note that the infrastructure allocation will be spent across the County area, though will not be allocated in proportion to those Districts who have contributed to the pool through business rate growth – schemes against this pot are still to be prioritised.

	Districts	County	Fire	Sub-total Two tier area	City	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Fire			138	138		138
Infrastructure		4,800		4800	291	5,091
Town/city centres	2,182			2182	2,182	4,364
Sustainability	727	1,454		2181	1,454	3,635
Balance	66	317		383	164	547
	2,975	6,571	138	9,684	4,091	13,775

3.8 Due to information released by MHCLG the pilot bid is considering a change to these allocations in order to give a greater priority to financial sustainability. The current allocations being considered at the time of drafting the report are noted below. As these are now considered the more likely options, fuller details are given in appendix 2.

	Districts	County	Fire	Sub-total Two tier area	City	Total
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Sustainability	1,400	2,800	138	4,338	2,800	7,138
Housing & Commercial Infrastructure	1,592	3,847		5,439	1,194	6,633
	2,992	6,647	138	9,777	3,994	13,771

3.9 Whilst the primary role of the pilot scheme is to develop learning for the MHCLG, for the 2020 new business rate framework there is the requirement for bids to propose a ‘tier split’ between County and Districts. This is still under discussion as the Districts do not want to dilute on a recurring basis its current 40% retention. The figures in the table below reflect the full allocation of the £4.8 million infrastructure to the County allocation, although the benefit will be experienced in those Districts where infrastructure takes place.

	Districts	County	Fire
Current 50% retention	40%	9%	1%
Possible Government position in 2020 if 75% retention implemented	40%	34%	1%
Notional Tier split noted on bid application	37.5%	36.5%	1%
Allocation Assumptions if principles applied from previous pilot bid to the additional 25% retention gain	30%	69%	1%

3.10 Recognising the need not to set a local precedent in respect of tier splits the following has been included within the draft allocation principles (Appendix B)

“The pilot tests a distribution of resources for the purpose of trialling new ways of working, in support of the Government’s aim to test new business rates retention arrangements. To the extent that there is any local choice about tier splits from 2020/21, these allocation principles (Appendix 1) are not intended to prejudge what we might decide locally.

3.11 The final pilot submission is still being drafted but is expected to be mainly consistent with last years bid, subject to the potential change to give financial sustainability a higher precedence in order to achieve a successful bid, which is attached as reference (Appendix A). However, MCHLG have noted that fewer pilots will be approved than in the past, so there is no guarantee of success.

3.12 The management of risks and governance arrangements are consistent with the 2018/19 pilot bid previously agreed by Council. The only material change is the removal of the ‘no detriment’ clause - this is unlikely to have any impact based on our current modelling.

3.13 Due to the tight timescale between the issue of the prospectus, July 2018 and the submission date of 25th September 2018, finalisation of the bid and approach is still be worked on.

Proposal conditions

3.14 The table below sets out the core conditions of any application to be a Business Rates Pilot, along with the actions proposed by the LTA.

Condition	Proposed action(s) / comment
All authorities must agree to be in the proposed pool for 2018/19	The S151 officers agreed at the LTA that an application is made for a Leicestershire wide bid, subject to member approval. If one authority does not wish to proceed, the pilot cannot go ahead.
Arrangements must propose a split for sharing additional pooled BR income	A proposed split has been included in the draft submission, see Appendix 1. In summary: • City Council – 30% • County area – 70% and further split County Area - 30% Districts/70% County. The current share being protected and not included in the above split.
Proposals should show DCLG how pilots will use additional growth to promote the financial stability and sustainability of the pilot area (and expects investment of some retained growth to encourage further growth in the area)	Investment areas have been included in the draft submission at a high level, see Appendix 1. Note, these may change if financial sustainability is given more prominence.
Applications **should detail how authorities will work together to manage risk within their proposed arrangements**	Investment areas have been included in the draft submission at a high level, see Appendix 1. In summary: • City Council 30% • County area 70% (further split 17% districts/ 83% county based on net expenditure, reflecting individual councils' ability to cope with a deficit).
Applications should make clear whether they would be willing to be a 75% BRR pilot if the 2019/20 pilots did not benefit from a 'no detriment' clause	This has been stated. The risk of detriment is considered low as business rate growth would have to fall by over 10%, which is unlikely based on forecasts.
Pool applications must nominate the lead authority. DCLG will treat pilot pools as one entity for BRR with one tariff or top up and safety net threshold.	The County is the lead authority for the bid.
Clear outline of the proposed pooling arrangements and governance. Authorities cannot apply to be part of more than one pilot pool. Authorities in existing BR pools need to state their non-pilot pool proposals if the pilot application is unsuccessful	This has been noted in the draft bid.

Potential risks

3.15 The proposed pilot arrangements under the bid do not come with a "no worse of Guarantee" as did previous pilot schemes. This is not considered likely as growth forecasts do not support a drop in collectable rates, but this is not guaranteed.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

4.1 Report to be taken in open session

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [AW]

5.1 Contained within the body of the report

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS []

6.1 Section 59A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows local authorities to pool business rates. The pooling between the Leicestershire Council's will be governed by a legal agreement between the parties.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report and its outcomes contribute to all the Council aims, but particularly that of "Providing value for money and proactive services".

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 All budget holders and members of Executive, Scrutiny and Finance, Audit and Performance Committee will be consulted in the Budget setting process.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

1. Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
That the Council has insufficient resources to meet its aspirations and cannot set a balanced budget	A budget Plan is produced to ensure that the objectives of the budget exercise are known throughout the organisation. The budget is scrutinised on an ongoing basis to ensure that assumptions are robust and	Strategic Leadership Team Strategic

  That the MTFS has no robust and costed plan to ensure sustainability, resulting in public criticism on value for money from the internal and external auditors	reflective of financial performance. Decisions are made which provide costed reassurance that sufficient levels of reserves and balances are maintained to ensure financial resilience over the period of the MTFS	Leadership Team Council

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The implications of the pilot impact on the budget process will impact on all areas of the Borough and all groups within the population

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Medium Term Financial Strategy, Budget Monitoring Reports

Contact Officer: Ashley Wilson, Head of Finance, ext 5609

Executive Member: Cllr C Ladkin

Appendix 1

Business Rates Pilot 2019/20 – Draft Allocation Principles

1. The purpose of this note is to propose a mechanism for allocating business rates income which will be received by Leicester/Leicestershire if the pilot bid is successful.

2. In summary, these principles aim firstly to put everyone in the position they would have been in were we not in a pilot, and secondly to share the surplus or deficit from the pilot.

3. The allocation principles are made more complex by the existence of the business rates pool, which has its own resources, and for which we have already agreed rules for sharing surpluses/deficits. These principles are written on the basis that we will want to maintain the integrity of the pool and leave it in exactly the same position it would have been in were we not in a pilot. This means that the whole of the additional surplus from the pilot will be available for allocation, whilst the monies available from the pool will be the same as they would have been.

4. The pilot tests a distribution of resources for the purpose of trialling new ways of working, in support of the Government's aim to test new business rates retention arrangements. To the extent that there is any local choice about tier splits from 2020/21, these allocation principles are not intended to prejudge what we might decide locally.

5. Unlike the previous bid, it is assumed that "qualifying relief" (rates relief granted in respect of enterprise zones) will be met separately by the Government. This is currently the position (it is deducted from the central share). Last year's bid, if successful, would have led to 100% rates retention and no central share from which to fund this payment.

6. If this is not the case, the principles below will be adjusted to achieve neutrality.

Definitions

7. "Aggregate business rates income" means the totality of business rates income actually arising in Leicester and Leicestershire if the pilot bid succeeds, and includes the following:-

   (a) The total of the authorities' 75% share of business rates which are subject to the business rates retention rules (i.e. excluding rates growth in Enterprise Zones, cost of collection allowances, renewable energy projects, etc.);

   (b) Plus Section 31 grants received from the Government;

   (c) Minus the total tariff payable in respect of the whole pilot;

(d) Plus any safety net payment received from central government (which will only happen if the pilot does exceedingly badly – i.e. dips below the 95% threshold).

8. "Individual authorities' notional business rates income" means the rates income each authority would have received under the 50% business rates retention scheme, had pilot status not been awarded. This will include:-

   (a) The relevant proportion of rates generated which are subject to the business rates retention rules;

   (b) Plus Section 31 grants which would have been received from the Government;

   (c) Plus/minus top-ups/tariffs which would have applied;

   (d) Minus levies which would have been paid to the pool;

   (e) Plus safety net grant which would have been received from the pool.

Initial Allocation of Aggregate Business Rates Income

9. All authorities will be paid the sums which they would have received had the pilot not been approved. This will include:-

   (a) Individual authorities' notional business rates income;

   (b) Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Grant which would have been received, but for the pilot.

10. To maintain the integrity of the pooling agreement, monies which would have been paid to the pool or received from the pool will continue to be paid in line with the existing agreement. This means that:-

   (a) The pool will receive sums which would have been paid as levies avoided, had there not been a pilot;

   (b) The pool will pay sums it would have paid in lieu of safety net grant, had there not been a pilot;

   (c) The pool will be compensated from aggregate business rates income if it would have been entitled to a safety net payment from the Government.

11. In the event that the pool would have been in deficit, this will be funded in line with the existing pooling agreement, i.e.:-

(a) The pool contingency will be the first call;

(b) The provisions of paragraph 6.4 of the pooling agreement will apply for sharing any residual deficit.

12. The estimated initial allocation is shown in the report.

Sharing the balance of aggregate business rates income

13. After paying to each authority sums they would have received had 50% rates retention continued, and compensating the pool for any safety net payment it would have received, any balance of aggregate business rates income will be shared as follows:-

(a) 1% to the Combined Fire Authority;

(b) 99% as described in paragraphs 14 to 18 below, which proceed in sequence.

14. £5m of any remaining balance will be allocated to fund investment in infrastructure to unlock housing growth. Should the balance be less than £5m, the whole of the balance will be allocated for this purpose. *[The great majority will be spent in the county area. The working assumption is that £0.2m will be spent in the city].*

15. After allocating £5m to fund investment in infrastructure to unlock housing growth, £4.4m of any remaining balance will be allocated to fund public realm improvements in town centres and the city. This sum will be split between the City Council (50%) and the district councils (50%). The district allocation will be shared between the districts, in proportion to mid-2017 population (or such basis as the districts agree). Should the balance be less than £4.4m, the whole of the balance will be allocated for this purpose.

16. After allocating £4.4m to fund public realm improvements in town centres and the city centre, £3.6m of any remaining balance will be allocated to support the financial sustainability of the sub-region, with particular emphasis on investment to save expenditure. This sum will be split between the City Council (40%), County Council (40%) and the district councils (20%). In the upper tier authorities, the key focus of this spending will be investment in interventions that reduce the future costs of looked after children. In the districts, the key focus will be to fund upfront investment in schemes that will generate future savings. The district allocation will be shared between the districts, in proportion to mid-2017 population (or such basis as the districts agree). Should the balance be less than £3.6m, the whole of the balance will be allocated for this purpose.

17. The final tranche of funding, which based on current projections is around £0.6m, will be available to authorities to address financial pressures more generally, and will be split as follows:-

(a) City Council – 30%;
(b) County area – 70%.

18. As this will address financial pressures, the county area share will be split based on 2018/19 budget requirements:

(a) 82.8% to the County Council;

(b) 17.2% will be shared between the districts, in proportion to mid-2017 population (or such basis as the districts agree).

19. The effect of the above allocation methodology in totality is (approximately) as follows:

(a) City Council – 30%;
(b) County area – 70%.

20. Within the county area, the split is approximately:

(a) County Council – two thirds;
(b) District councils – one third.

Risk Share

21. In the event that aggregate business rates income is insufficient to put everyone (and the pool) in the position they would have been in, the deficit will be split:-

(a) City Council – 30%;
(c) County area – 70%.

22. The county area share will be split:-

(a) County Council – 82.8%;
(b) District Councils – 17.2%.

23. The district council share will be split between districts in proportion to mid-2017 population (or such basis as the districts agree).

Appendix 2
Potential gain and allocations

Rates Pilot - Allocation of Surplus/Deficit - Alternative Proposal following CLG Conference

		City	County	Districts	CFA	Total	Splits			
		{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*	*{£000}*	*{£000}*				
1. Surplus As Forecast Now										
Total available						*13,771*				
Fire	138				138	138				
Financial Sustainability	7,000	2,800	2,800	1,400		7,000	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Housing & Commercial Infrastructu	6,633	1,194	3,847	1,592		6,633	18.0%	58.0%	24.0%	100.0%
	13,771	**3,994**	**6,647**	**2,992**	**138**	**13,771**				
Previously		*4,030*	*6,607*	*2,996*						
Difference		*-36*	*40*	*-4*						
Percentage of total (excl. Fire)		*29.3%*								
Percentage of county area			*69.0%*	*31.0%*		*100.0%*				
2. Surplus, Less Than Expected										
Total available (80%)						*11,017*				
Fire	110				110	110				
Financial Sustainability	7,000	2,800	2,800	1,400		7,000	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Housing & Commercial Infrastructu	3,907	703	2,266	938		3,907	18.0%	58.0%	24.0%	100.0%
		3,503	**5,066**	**2,338**	**110**	**11,017**				
Percentage of total (excl. Fire)		*32.1%*								
Percentage of county area			*68.4%*	*31.6%*		*100.0%*				
3. Surplus, More Than Expected										
Total available (120%)						*16,525*				
Fire	165				165	165				
Financial Sustainability	7,000	2,800	2,800	1,400		7,000	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Housing & Commercial Infrastructu	9,360	1,685	5,429	2,246		9,360	18.0%	58.0%	24.0%	100.0%
		4,485	**8,229**	**3,646**	**165**	**16,525**				
Percentage of total (excl. Fire)		*27.4%*								
Percentage of county area			*69.3%*	*30.7%*		*100.0%*				

Appendix 3

Leicester and Leicestershire 100% Business Rate Pilot Submission

October 2017

Introduction

This is a 100% business rate pilot bid on behalf of Leicestershire County, Leicester City, The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority and all seven District and Borough Councils (Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, Oadby and Wigston and North West Leicestershire). All authorities are committed to the bid, including the resource allocation principles.

We believe we have an attractive proposition:

- A pilot representing an entire sub-region, which includes a City, market towns, and sparse rural districts and a mix of two tier and unitary government;
- A fire authority, which would enable CLG to test arrangements for their inclusion (or not) under 100% retention;
- 10 authorities with a track record of working successfully, including an existing and innovative pooling arrangement;
- A proposal that prioritises the incentivisation of growth, rather than using additional monies to prop up current budgets.

This bid will preserve the integrity of the pooling arrangements during the pilot year. If the bid is unsuccessful, all the partners wish to remain in a pool.

Leicester and Leicestershire Economy

Leicester and Leicestershire is a functioning economic sub region and the geography of the bid is coterminous with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). The LLEP will continue to play an important role in the business rate pool and pilot.

The region is growing quickly and 150,000 new houses are forecast to be built over the coming 30 years. The region has been successful in bidding and investing in transport infrastructure to unlock and accelerate this growth. All the business rates generated by the current pooling arrangements (c£20m by March 2018) will be invested by the LLEP in infrastructure projects (none is used to support authorities' budgets). This bid will build on this investment

The local economy generates £360m in business rates and has grown at a rate of x% a year since 20xx.(………*a few more facts and figures, recent growth, key sectors, key growth sectors etc. to be included in final version)*

Investment and Governance

A first cut of the 100% rates income will put all partners in the position they would have been in under the 50% scheme, in order to maintain the integrity of current medium term financial plans.

Investment in Growth

The local authorities are working closely together to plan strategically for future housing provision and economic growth. We are preparing a Strategic Growth Plan which looks ahead to 2050.

We want to invest in infrastructure in ways which meet the short term need to unlock housing and employment growth and which put in place infrastructure to support long term growth.

It is essential we unlock this growth in a planned way and quickly. It is proposed that we use £7m of the potential business rate income to progress key schemes. The investment will include undertaking feasibility studies, design and investment in infrastructure including new roads. Alongside this we have secured or are seeking to secure funding for key infrastructure from other sources.

The types of schemes this investment could be used for include;

- Major housing and development sites and schemes in the County including Lutterworth Growth Area, Melton southern distributor road, Loughborough Town Centre, Hinckley Town Centre, Coalville Transport Strategy, Newton Lane Junction, M1 and M69 Junctions south of Leicester.

- Major Housing sites at Ashton Green urban extension and Waterside/Abbey Meadows regeneration areas.

City and Town Centres

The housing strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire is based on strengthening the role of the city as the major urban centre, whilst at the same time ensuring that urban centres in the county have the right infrastructure and facilities for the rising population. It is planned to invest £6m in schemes across the region.

Potential schemes include;

- In Leicester City there are well developed schemes to improve connectivity in the city centre and revitalise Haymarket and Churchgate.

- Improvements to the town centres of Blaby, Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough, Melton, Wigston including better accessibility and physical environment and the capacity of these centres to cope with the increased population.

All schemes are well developed and the additional funding will be invested quickly

Financial Stability

All authorities are facing an increasingly tough financial outlook as a result of a combination of reducing resources and rising demand.

To help ensure the financial sustainability of all organisations it is proposed that an element of business rate growth (£5m) is allocated to address some of the short term pressures on a spend to save basis to enable services to invest to achieve longer term savings. This investment will include;

- Initiatives to reduce demand in children's social care including more focused early intervention (investment in multi-systemic therapy to divert children from care) and more appropriate alternative placements such as foster care to reduce the use of expensive residential placements.
- Investment in back office automation to improve productivity and reduce cost.

- Front line service redesign with a focus on improved efficiency.

The partnership will also share best practice and work co-operatively to address financial sustainability issues. For example the Leicester and Leicestershire pilot will seek to address any new in year 2018/19 pressures collectively rather than seek any additional funding from government departments.

<u>Tier Splits</u>

The balance of funding will be split 30%:70% between the city and county and within the county will be allocated by tier splits based on the relative size of budgets. This element of the proceeds of growth is anticipated to be relatively small (c£1m) and will be used by individual organisations for further spend to save initiatives.

Overall Allocation of the proceeds of business rate growth

In overall terms it is anticipated that the additional share of business rate growth will be allocated in the following proportions;

- City Council – 30%
- County area – 70% and further split County Area - 30% Districts/70% County.

The scope of the pilot, and our consensual approach to targeting surpluses to meet areas of real need, means direct comparison with the shares under the 40% scheme is not possible. In addition 1% will be retained by the CFA.

Risk Share

The pilot will be willing to accept a no detriment clause. This is the arrangement with the existing pool and all members are comfortable with the risks. The risk share arrangements will mirror the tier splits;

- City Council 30%
- County area 70% (further split 17% districts/ 83% county based on net expenditure, reflecting individual councils' ability to cope with a deficit).

This recognises the greater ability of both the city and county to carry the risk of up to £6m if business rates were to fall. The partners are willing to remove the fire service from the risk share arrangement given they have no levers they can use to help stimulate economic growth.

There are unlikely to be residual assets and liabilities at the end of the bid period, but if there were they would be shared in line with the risk share agreement.

Administration

The sub region has an active Treasurers Group which meets regularly and works collaboratively on a range of initiatives including business rates. The pilot bid provides an opportunity to further deepen these links. If successful, we will

- Investigate a joint business rate relief scheme to attract new investment in the sub region.;
- Further integrate accounting, administration, fraud prevention and improve forecasting with the aim to improve process, reduce fraud and increase collection.

New responsibilities

Although we understand that only revenue support grant and rural services grant will be absorbed into the pool. The partnership would be interested in a discussion about including other existing grants such as the public health grant if this is a realistic possibility.

Summary

This bid ensures that significant resources will be allocated to unlock housing growth and improve infrastructure, in the process generating economic growth and jobs. The pilot builds on a strong existing partnership which will enable it to hit the ground running. All organisations are familiar with business rate pooling and the compromises and real benefits that it brings. We are very keen to become a pilot and are more than willing to further shape our bid to fit with government priorities.

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