



## Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Council 25 January 2022

Wards affected: All wards

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### **Levelling Up Fund re the National Science and Conservation Centre at Twycross Zoo**

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Report of Chief Executive

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To report on the successful bid for £19.9m investment to create a new National Science and Conservation Centre at Twycross Zoo.
- 1.2 To secure approval to delegate authority to the Chief Executive and S151 Officer in liaison with the Leader of the Council and Executive Lead for Finance for sign-off of the Memorandum of Understanding contract for the Levelling Up Fund.
- 1.3 To establish a budget to administer the project provided by the £19.9m Levelling Up Fund.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Council note and welcome the successful bid by the Council in partnership with Twycross Zoo for £19.9m to deliver a new National Science and Conservation Centre at Twycross Zoo.
- 2.2 That the Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive and S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader and Executive Lead for Finance, for the sign off of the Memorandum of Understanding and Contract & Programme Delivery Arrangements in respect of the Levelling Up Bid of £19.9m.
- 2.3 That the Council approve the establishment of a budget of £19.9m for the Levelling Up Project, which will be profiled to be spent over the next three years.

### **3. Background to the report**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that following a successful bid to Government in the summer of 2021, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced in the Autumn Budget its approval in principle to the partnership bid from HBBC and Twycross Zoo, which was also supported by the Local MP.
- 3.2 The formal offer to be subject to a Memorandum of Understanding Contract between the Council and DLUHC and Funding Agreement between the Council and Twycross Zoo for the delivery of the scheme, which will comprise of the following capital works:
- New purpose-built National Science and Conservation Centre
  - A 200 seat lecture theatre
  - A new state of the art orangutan habitat
  - World class laboratories, classrooms and spaces for inspiring and educating scientists and researchers
  - Dedicated accommodation for visiting experts
  - Support infrastructure
- 3.3 The key outcomes from the project will be the creation of a new centre of both national and international significance which will:
- Increase knowledge and expertise for conservation and the environment
  - Create new employment on the site - up to 100 new jobs
  - Provide world leading research and conservation activity
  - Improve pathways for research and education
  - Sustain Twycross Zoo as an important education and tourism asset and focal point in the area
  - Build a reputation for research and science in HBBC
  - Increase opportunities for the local community
- 3.4 Due to reporting timescales and the delivery programme, it is vital that Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive and S151 Officer in liaison with the Leader and Executive Lead for Finance, to sign off contract and programme delivery arrangements to allow detailed planning and delivery of this major project to take place as soon as possible.
- 3.5 The Council are also required to formerly establish a budget to enable the income received from DLUHC to be administered.

### **4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**

- 4.1 This report is to be taken in open session.

## **5. Financial implications [AW]**

- 5.1 The Council will be responsible for project management of the scheme, current estimates of the costs involved are £0.2m for a full year. These costs will be recharged to the scheme so there will be no impact on the general fund. These costs cover any professional consultancy costs, audit costs, and internal administrations such as any finance support.

## **6. Legal implications [KU]**

- 6.1 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do; this includes the power to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding and Funding Agreement referred to in this report.
- 6.2 Use of the grant sums must be made pursuant to the grant terms and conditions and in accordance with the project proposal submitted to DCHLG.
- 6.3 Officers will liaise with Legal in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding, Funding Agreement and associated documents and legal will provide sign off on the agreement.

## **7. Corporate Plan implications**

- 7.1 This project will support the key corporate aim of creating a prosperous borough, securing sustainable economic growth and will also contribute to the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 A range of stakeholders were engaged and supported the bid, including Councillors, the local MPs, LCC, the LEP and Midlands Engine.

## **9. Risk implications**

- 9.1 There are a number of risks associated with entering into a contract linked to delivery and potential clawback. A detailed risk register has been compiled for the project. The Council will be using an independent firm of auditors to carry out due diligence on the delivery, financial and procurement arrangements and will put in place legal agreements with partners to help mitigate any financial risk to the Council.

## **10. Knowing your community - equality and rural implications**

- 10.1 This project will bring together our communities to inspire them to be actively involved in conservation and the environment and generate new jobs.

## **11. Climate implications**

- 11.1 This project will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and promote greater awareness amongst residents and businesses of conservation and the environment more generally.

## **12. Corporate implications**

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has considered the corporate implications and relevant service areas and expertise is assigned to supporting the effective delivery of this project.

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