

VILLAGE AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEMES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) has delegated authority to commit expenditure in respect of the Hullbridge and Hockley regeneration schemes. An issue has arisen whereby clarification is sought from Members prior to his exercising the delegation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee held on 2 October 2002 a report was presented seeking Members' views in respect of allocating Essex County Council monies from the Rochford scheme where it was not required to the Hullbridge and Hockley schemes which were exceeding original estimates. A copy of the report and minute of that meeting are shown at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 Following revisions by Essex County Council in respect of the amount of money which was available, a further report was presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November, whereby budgets were allocated to Hullbridge to complete the scheme and Hockley to complete as much as possible of the scheme. A copy of the report and minute are shown at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 The crux of the minute on 2 October was that £25,000 should be allocated to Hullbridge in order to complete phase 2 of the scheme. There was a proviso, however, in that any underspend on Hullbridge would be transferred to Hockley.
- 2.4 The report to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members of the revised amount which Essex County Council envisaged would be available from the Rochford scheme. The report also advised that the Hullbridge phase 1 scheme was estimated at £90,000. This meant that the total for both phase 1 and 2 would be in the region of £115,000. On the basis that Hullbridge would be completed all other funding was transferred to Hockley.

3 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The estimated cost of the phase 1 scheme is now £95,000. This means that only £20,000 is available for phase 2 which puts the scheme in jeopardy. If the budget is increased back up to the original provision of £25,000, then at present the money would have to be withdrawn from the Hockley scheme.

- 3.2 Whereas the original Hockley scheme was only going to be completed as far as possible, County officers have made a successful bid for £62,000 Government funding which would now allow the Hockley project to be completed in full. Taking £5,000 from the Hockley project now could have a disproportionate effect on the scheme.
- 3.3 It is for the above reasons that the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) is now seeking Member guidance in resolving this issue.

4 OPTIONS

- 4.1 The budget of £115,000 for Hullbridge could be adhered to, but this would most likely mean that the original policy of completing the scheme would not be achieved.
- 4.2 Monies could be transferred from Hockley. The full scheme may not be achieved despite the additional funding negotiated by Essex County Council. This would be extremely disappointing, given the significant additional contributions arising from 24Seven and Hockley Parish Council.
- 4.3 The shortfall is now quite small, being £5,000 over a £350,000 budget for the three town centres. This represents an overspend of only 1½%. The Council could consider agreeing additional funding in order to complete all of the schemes. Should any of the schemes come in under the new revised budgets, then the £5,000 may not be required.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of the three schemes are all included within the capital programme. Throughout any financial year, it is necessary to make small adjustments to the programme in respect of minor over or under spends on projects. The revised programme will be reported to Members in July, but it is anticipated that an adjustment of this magnitude could be accommodated.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford have benefited from these improvement schemes.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** to the Environmental Services Committee:

that the schemes at Hullbridge and Hockley are completed and that up to £5,000 be allocated from within the capital programme to achieve this.

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Background Papers:

None.

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