

**Proposed Key Decision to be taken by the
Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
on 29 April 2014**

**European Regional Development Fund
Bermuda Connectivity Project**

Recommendations

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves an outline bid being submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government for allocation of European Regional Development Funding to the Bermuda Connectivity Project.

1.0 Background

1.1 An underspend of £12 million has been released back into the West Midlands: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme, which provides resource to support business growth across the geography of the six Local Enterprise Partnerships of the West Midlands. Consequently, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has launched a competitive process seeking outline proposals for new projects that can deliver additional impacts, benefits and value to a current ERDF funded project, and can be completed by 31 December 2015.

1.2 The ERDF grant is usually limited to 50% of the total capital cost for delivering a project. The deadline for the submission of outline bids is 9th May 2014. Subsequently, all applications will be reviewed against the criteria through an Outline Assessment, which will determine whether they will be recommended to the Local Management Sub Committee for outline endorsement and progression to full application stage. County Council officers will be notified of the decision by Friday 20 June 2014. Those projects which are selected to full application stage will be asked to submit a full application by noon on Friday 1 August 2014.

1.3 This report sets out the proposed outline bid from the County Council for ERDF funding, and seeks the approval from the Portfolio Holder to proceed on this basis.

2.0 Bermuda Connectivity Project

2.1 The delivery of Bermuda Rail Station forms a major part of the NUCKLE project which has received funding from the current ERDF programme, and is expected to open in summer 2015. County Council officers wish to submit a bid for further ERDF funding to contribute towards delivering a project that would enhance accessibility to Bermuda Rail Station.

- 2.2 A bridge is in place over the A444 in Nuneaton linking Bermuda Village with the Bermuda Industrial Estate and Bermuda Rail Station. The County Council owns the bridge. However, a Developer (Deeley Properties Ltd) owns the embankments and approach roads either side of the bridge. Currently, only pedestrians have right of way regarding use of the bridge. However, it is designed to accommodate two-way traffic flow. A Section 106 Agreement between Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the Developer stipulates that the Borough Council (or its nominated partner) is entitled to undertake works to construct a cycleway to an adoptable standard across the bridge and along the approach road and embankments either side of the bridge, in order to provide a connection with the existing cycleway.
- 2.3 The Bermuda Transport Bridge Feasibility Study is being undertaken to investigate potential options for the future use of the bridge above and beyond those committed in the Section 106 Agreement. The study has examined whether opening the bridge to all traffic would be feasible, deliverable and yield a suitable level of benefits. The study is expected to be completed by the end of April 2014.
- 2.4 The study will recommend that the preferred potential option for future use of the bridge focuses on the 'Bermuda Connectivity Project'. This involves opening the bridge to all traffic and road users. In parallel, holistic complementary measures are also to be delivered for the purpose of mitigating the impact of opening the bridge on the local highway network. These measures are as follows:
- Improvements to Heath End Road / Bermuda Road junction;
 - Enhancements to the carriageway on St Georges Way;
 - Enhancements to Griff Roundabout;
 - Provision of additional car parking for Bermuda Rail Station off St Georges Way;
 - Provision of a shared use cycle / pedestrian only link between the bridge and Barling Way for access to George Eliot Hospital.
- 2.5 A liaison meeting to discuss the initial outcomes of the Bermuda Transport Bridge Feasibility Study was held with affected local Members (Cllr Bill Olnor, Cllr Caroline Phillips and Cllr June Tandy) in March 2014. At the meeting, the Members supported further investigation of potential options regarding the use of the bridge. A further liaison meeting with the Members to discuss the draft final report in relation to the study is scheduled to take place on 23 April 2014.
- 2.6 The 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' is included on the transport element of the Strategic Economic Plan produced by the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

3.0 Proposed European Regional Development Fund Bid

- 3.1 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council officers endorse the 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' and have nominated the 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' as the Borough Council's priority project in terms of stimulating job creation

and economic growth. Therefore, the Borough Council is submitting a bid to the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership for a Growing Places Fund grant up to £500,000 in value.

3.2 It is proposed that the County Council bid for an ERDF grant to contribute towards the cost of delivering the 'Bermuda Connectivity Project'.

4.0 Scheme Costs and Benefits

4.1 The capital cost of the 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' is estimated to be in the region of £3million. It is proposed to bid for 50% of the total capital cost (e.g. £1.5million), with the balance comprising of match funding by the County Council. If Growing Places grant funding is obtained by the Borough Council, this would reduce the amount of match funding required from the County Council. It is proposed that a bid be submitted to the Council's Growth Fund for this match funding. However, it will not be possible to secure funding from the Council's Growth Fund by the time the ERDF bid has to be submitted on 9 May 2014. Therefore, the offer of match funding will be underwritten using existing funding from the Transport Capital Programme.

4.2 The 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' is expected to deliver a substantial level of benefits in terms of the following:

- Enhancing accessibility to the new Bermuda Rail Station;
- Enhancing accessibility to existing and future employment and housing outlined in the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Local Plan;
- Provide a new sustainable link between the east and west of Nuneaton;
- Contribute towards reducing congestion, thereby improving traffic flow, reducing journey times and improving the local environment; and
- Provide support to existing and future businesses in the area as an outcome of the decongestion benefits.

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Subject to the outcome of the decision, the County Council will submit its outline ERDF bid to the DCLG on 9 May 2014. If the outline and final applications are successful then work to deliver 'Bermuda Connectivity Project' would commence in 2014-15.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Nigel Whyte	01926 412179 nigelwhyte@warwickshire.gov.uk
Head of Service	Graeme Fitton	01926 412046 graemefitton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty	01926 412514 monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Butlin	01788 816488 cllrbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk