

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD1388

Title: Commissioning Fund - Uxbridge Road Growth Strategy

Executive Summary:

Approval was obtained in the High Street Fund report to IPB in January 2015 for a £400,000 'Commissioning Fund' to develop a pipeline of projects in areas of London where there is strong growth potential.

This decision concerns a project as part of this fund – Uxbridge Road Growth Strategy for LB Hillingdon.

Decision:

The Executive Director approves expenditure of up to £50,000 to procure and appoint a consultant to produce a physical and economic Growth Strategy for the Uxbridge Road corridor and provide support to LB Hillingdon in its implementation.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.
It has my approval.

Name: Fiona Fletcher-Smith

Position: Executive Director Development Enterprise and Environment

Signature:



Date: 7/10/2015

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Approval was obtained in the High Street Fund report to IPB in January 2015 for a £400,000 'Commissioning Fund' to develop a pipeline of well scoped regeneration projects in areas of London where there is strong growth potential, which may have had limited attention to date. The request was made in the light of advice from the High Street Fund moderation panel, that there was a lack of strong proposals from certain areas of London and in particular from some areas which have strong growth potential. The aim of the commissioning fund is to redress this imbalance.
- 1.2. This was signed off in MD1469, which encompassed the decision to delegate allocation of the fund to the Executive Director Development Enterprise and Environment.
- 1.3. The project brought forward in this decision is the Uxbridge Road Growth Strategy (£50,000). There are no High Street Fund projects in LB Hillingdon, and Uxbridge has not had similar attention in the recent past.
- 1.4. The scope and justification for the project has been has been discussed with LB Hillingdon.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. Commissioning Fund

- 2.1.1. The general criteria for selecting projects for funding, in order to identify suitable areas of London in which to develop pipeline projects, follows that described in the Accommodating Growth in Town Centres report. The report identifies three characteristics for areas to receive regeneration funding. They should have the potential for intensification, be under threat of decline as a result of structural change and there should be a local commitment and capacity to deliver intensification.
- 2.1.2. It is likely that priority areas for intervention will be in the middle category of centres where the greatest retail restructuring is expected. Further indicators would be persistently high vacancy rates for retail floor space, a worsening retail offer, a poor qualitative experience, a high proportion of comparison goods relative to the size of centre, retail rents that are low by sub-regional standards and are stagnant or declining, high levels of secondary office space, land availability for residential development, high levels of public transport accessibility and planned transport improvements that might improve accessibility.
- 2.1.3. Prior to presenting projects for the commissioning funding, the GLA's Regeneration team has spent time with boroughs to develop a series of project proposals. A long list of potential projects was also discussed with the chair of the Mayor's Design Advisory Group in May 2015. This included Erith (LB Bexley), Crystal Palace (cross borough), Wimbledon (LB Merton), Tolworth (LB Kingston), Church End (LB Brent), North Acton (LB Ealing), Uxbridge Road (LB Hillingdon), Feltham (LB Hounslow), Enfield Town (LB Enfield), and Ilford (LB Redbridge).
- 2.1.4. The type of support that is proposed to be provided through the commissioning fund varies depending on the degree to which development work has been undertaken by the borough, local business or community organisation, from town centre strategies to more focussed place specific development projects aimed at addressing the threats and opportunities outlined above.

2.2. Uxbridge Road Background

- 2.2.1. The Uxbridge Road runs east-west through Hillingdon and is part of the Roman Road from Oxford Street. It lacks a clear identity as it stretches across the borough, outside of Uxbridge Town Centre. However these interstitial stretches of High Road are reasonably well used, mostly by local residents, although there is a wider population catchment too. Uxbridge is a reasonably successful metropolitan centre located at the western edge of London. Retail demand is expected to stay fairly steady here, as a result of various trends in the retail sector. It is identified as a Strategic Outer London Development Centre with the London Plan (2011). The Mayor is committed to work with relevant stakeholders to explore the potential of these and other locations for strategically significant, specialist growth in ways which will help achieve the Mayor's wider objectives.
- 2.2.2. Hillingdon Council is investing £1,628,673 of their New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding in public realm along the Uxbridge Road corridor by the end of financial year 2016/17 (and a further £1,749,327 from other sources in by the end of financial year 2018/19). This is focused on the eastern side of the borough near Southall, dubbed "The Hayes Parades" due to a very long parade of shops on one side of the Uxbridge Road dual carriageway, with a service road in front of the retail units. The works are intended to make the service road feel like part of the shopping environment, by adopting shared surface principles, and rationalising street furniture and car parking, and thereby increasing the sense of place. This area is also expected to benefit from the borough-wide shop-front project using £617,408 NHB funding.
- 2.2.3. There are further opportunities, just outside Uxbridge town centre along the Uxbridge Road, in relation to the £150 million transformation of the former RAF Uxbridge site into some 1,300 new homes and 18,500m² of office and retail space, to better integrate and allow the appropriate expansion of Uxbridge Town Centre. This should build upon the continued momentum from corporates such as Coca-Cola and Nexen choosing to keep their European headquarters within Uxbridge, retaining significant jobs within the town centre, as well as opportunities to overhaul and remodel retail centres with a variety of food options, destination stores with a High Street presence, and public realm improvements.
- 2.2.4. Work to support town centres in LB Hillingdon to date has been led by the borough's Transport & Projects team, who recognise a need for economic development expertise in the council, to ensure physical investment is part of a coherent and wide-ranging strategy for the businesses and economy of a place. The Growth Strategy is intended to complement the Local Plan and make the most of recent and planned investment to achieve further growth going forward. The desired outcomes are high quality development to bring a mix of uses and new sectors providing job opportunities and local amenity.

2.3. The Uxbridge Road Growth Strategy and its Outputs

- 2.3.1. The Growth Strategy commission will provide a physical strategy and delivery approach for knitting together the opportunities along the Uxbridge Road corridor, focusing on the Hayes Parades and Uxbridge Town Centre. The Growth Strategy commission will be expected to make the most out of the spaces between identified development sites, identify additional development sites and projects, and provide an economic development focus for the borough. More specifically it will:
- 2.3.2. Identify and prioritise projects with work to underpin future funding bids and delivery (approx. £5,000)
- Review existing spatial and economic strategies and projects on the ground and in the pipeline
 - Identify a number of 'quick win' projects that would increase the scope of current NHB projects and open up new projects as part of the wider growth strategy

- Carry out preparatory work to support funding bids
- 2.3.3. Prepare a spatial and economic strategy for Uxbridge town centre and its vicinity (approx. £20,000)
- Review existing spatial and economic strategies and projects on the ground and in the pipeline
 - Assess the economic evidence and identify the current and future offer and market positioning of Uxbridge in terms of retail, leisure, office and residential uses.
 - Provide detail on identified additional development opportunities, and 'quick win projects, for example development briefs or project briefs.
- 2.3.4. Prepare a spatial and economic strategy for the Hayes Parades and wider Uxbridge Road (approx. £10,000)
- Explore opportunities to forge an identity for "The Hayes Parades" stretch.
 - Explore opportunities for relationships of the Lombardy Retail Park and potential development sites and briefs as part of reconfiguration of the 'Grapes' junction.
 - Support the delivery of the NHB public realm programme, ensuring good quality designs that are flexible enough to adapt to future economic projects, for example the proposed 'green buffer' to the dual carriageway could accommodate an edge of retail kiosks or market stalls to support the single sided parade with active uses.
 - Draw conclusions and principles for the wider High Road condition repeated along the Uxbridge Road corridor at various levels of intensity.
- 2.3.5. Provide implementation economic development support to LB Hillingdon (approx. £15,000)
- Engage with landlords, existing businesses, and potential new business occupiers.
 - Engage with developers on potential development opportunities.
- 2.3.6. The project will be entirely funded and commissioned by the GLA to support the borough's various capital investment work streams, and will be supported by borough officer time. The paragraphs above indicate the expected budget for each element of the work, which has been derived in discussion with the borough.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Through their existing public sector duties and via the requirements which will be set out in the funding agreement, the Council must ensure that they give due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out this project.
- 3.2. The following issues have been considered specifically:
- Design and strategy (project) proposals: All proposals will be assessed in terms of accessibility to ensure we minimise disadvantages suffered by people who share a protected characteristic. age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation.
 - Documents and publications: All documents produced will comply with Mayor of London branding guidelines, it being based on guidance from the Royal National Institute of Blind People. Where possible accessible formats will be available.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. Key risks and issues:

4.1.1. Key risks and their control measures will be reported to BPR as part of the regular updates and performance management. At present a strategy document does not pose any significant risks in terms of delivery. There may be risks in managing various stakeholders and achieving buy-in from teams within the council, and the private sector partners, however not attempting to do this has an opportunity cost where things proceed in an uncoordinated manner, lacking a wider strategic purpose in terms of maximising economic growth.

4.2. Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities:

4.2.1. Uxbridge is identified as a Strategic Outer London Development Centre with the London Plan (2011). The Mayor is committed to work with relevant stakeholders to explore the potential of these and other locations for strategically significant, specialist growth in ways which will help achieve the Mayor's wider objectives (including tackling congestion and carbon emissions by reducing the need for long-distance commuting).

4.2.2. The Commissioning Fund has been developed to support London Plan policies with regard to Town Centres, Retail, Lifetime neighbourhoods, public realm and urban design. It also supports the ambition set out in *Action for High Streets* to make high streets better places to live in, work in, and do business in.

4.3. Impact assessments and consultations:

4.3.1. As part of the tender process for consultants and contractors on the project, tenderers will be asked to provide details of their equality policy and environmental impact policy.

5. Financial comments

5.1 Approval is being sought to procure consultancy services to produce a physical and economic Growth Strategy for the Uxbridge Road corridor and provide support to LB Hillingdon in its implementation, at a cost of up to £50,000.

5.2 It is expected the commission will be wholly undertaken in 2015/16 and the revenue cost of up to £50,000 will be funded from the High Streets Commissioning Fund.

6. Legal comments

6.1 Under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the 'Act') the Mayor, acting on behalf of the GLA, is entitled to do anything that he considers will further the promotion, within Greater London, of economic development and wealth creation, social development, and improvement of the environment.

6.2 In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and

- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.4 Any procurement required and authorised should be undertaken in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and in consultation with Transport for London Procurement, who will determine the procurement strategy.

6.5 Officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed by the successful bidder and the GLA before the commencement of the services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. The project will be a direct consultant commission by the GLA Regeneration Team, with a steering group made up of LB Hillingdon officers (Transport & Projects and Planning teams). In line with GLA/TfL consultant procurement procedures, this commission will be procured competitively.

7.2. How the project will be delivered, and the outline timetable is set out below:

Uxbridge Growth Strategy:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	Sep 2015
Delivery Start Date	Oct 2015
Delivery End Date	Feb 2016
Project Closure:	Mar 2016

Appendices and supporting papers:

None

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Note: This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES

If YES, for what reason:

To allow time to launch the procurement process, without unduly providing foresight of these proposals and budget figures to potential bidders.

Until what date: 30/10/2015

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Levent Kerimol has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Debbie Jackson/ Finn Williams have reviewed the documentation and are satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

M. J. Allen

Date

6.10.15

