

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	25 July 2022
Title:	The Ravenside Gateway Roundabout Improvement Project Update
Report of:	Ben Hook, Director – Place and Climate Change
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Timpe
Ward(s):	Pebsham and St. Michaels
Purpose of Report:	To update on the Ravenside Roundabout Project
Decision Type:	Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That the cost of the Ravenside Roundabout Project be retained on the Capital Programme, but the allocation of Bexhill Local Community Infrastructure Levy (£150,000) be removed; **AND**

It be **RESOLVED:** That other sources of funding be sought with a paper to be brought at a future date outlining options for consideration.

Introduction

1. The National Highways (NH) roundabout at Ravenside is situated at an important gateway into Bexhill-on-Sea. Its unkempt appearance makes a poor first impression on visitors and has been a cause of resident dissatisfaction for many years. Appeals to NH to improve the appearance of the roundabout and increase the frequency of maintenance have been unsuccessful.
2. In July 2020, Full Council approved a project to improve the roundabout and commission the installation of a sculpture or artwork on the roundabout. A contribution from the Bexhill Local Community Infrastructure Levy (BL CIL) of £150,000 was allocated towards this project.
3. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has a successful roundabout sponsorship scheme administered by Keegan Ford Ltd. Their experience in securing the sponsorship and expertise in traffic management, plus health and safety for works on the Highway, mean that they will need to play a key role in facilitating the project, as RDC does not have that level of expertise.

Progress Update

4. Officers have been trying to work in conjunction with NH and ESCC to investigate options and costs for improvements to the roundabout, including a possible two-phase approach involving a phase 1 clearance followed by a phase 2 installation of a sculpture and hardstanding.

5. However, the presence of an invasive plant species, Horsetail, has meant significant delays to clearance of the site. NH have stated that no works can be undertaken on the roundabout unless it is done by their contractors under their supervision. Horsetail needs a series of treatments over a period of time to ensure eradication.
6. This has meant that the phase 1 works for the project have not yet been programmed in.

Conclusion

7. The allocation of BL CIL was intended to enable this project to move quickly and give certainty of funding. This project, whilst important, should not stop the progression of other improvements in Bexhill, and therefore it is recommended that the BL CIL allocation be removed at this time.
8. When combined with currently unallocated BL CIL collected before the formation of the Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council there will be a total of approximately £218,000 available for other projects, to be discussed later on this agenda.
9. This would mean that should the project progress to phase 2 it will require a funding stream to be identified. It is proposed that external funding be sought, including a request for a contribution from Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council. A further paper will be brought at an appropriate later date.

Environmental Implications

10. This project seeks to improve the physical environment of a key gateway roundabout welcoming visitors and residents to Bexhill-on-Sea.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Sustainability	Yes	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

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Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None