

To: City Executive Board

Date: 29 January 2015

Report of: Executive Director Community Services

Title of Report: Memorandum of Understanding – Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Schemes

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval to complete the memorandum of understanding

Key decision:No

Executive lead member: Cllr Bob Price, Board member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan and budget

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board delegate authority to the Executive Director Community Services to complete the Memorandum of Understanding in respect of the Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Schemes

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Oxford and Abingdon Memorandum of Understanding and
Appendix 2 Annex to MoU

Background

1. At the time of the flooding in the winter of early 2014 the City Council took a leading role in promoting the need to bring forward the earlier work of the Environment Agency to provide a major flood relief scheme for the city. We also raised the idea of linking the funding of the scheme to the economic impact of flooding with a view to securing funding from the Strategic Infra Structure Plan and having the scheme supported in the Autumn Statement.

2. Much has happened since then. Having secured the support of the Prime Minister, the Floods Minister for the South East and local MPs the scheme has been re-prioritised within the work programme of the Environment Agency, funding has been secured from the Flood Defence Grant in Aid Programme, the Regional Flood Relief Fund, the Strategic Infra Structure Fund and most recently the scheme was supported in the Autumn Statement.
3. A Sponsorship Group for the scheme has been formed by key stakeholders and the Environment Agency has taken up the lead for taking the project forward and has committed significant resources to the project management of the scheme.
4. The total scheme is now estimated to have a total cost of circa £140m. The scheme, subject to DEFRA and Treasury approvals, will take around six years to plan in detail and complete with construction commencing in 2018.
5. There is clearly still a long way to go in terms of detail scheme designs, gaining approvals, including planning permission, and securing the total funding package.
6. To steer the work of the Sponsoring Group a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted which the City Council and partners have been asked to complete. The City Council, via the Leader of the Council and myself, was consulted in the drafting of the agreement.
7. The agreement and Annexes are included as appendices to this report. It will be seen that the MoU is not intended to be legally binding and does not commit the city council to current or future funding.

Legal Issues

8. The MoU is drafted so as not to be a legally binding and is merely a statement of understanding and intent.

Financial Issues

9. There are no financial implications arising from the MoU. The City Council has indicated to the Sponsoring Group that it is prepared to contribute up to £1.5m over this and the following 2 years provided that is match by local funding from the County Council which is the lead local flood authority. No payments have been made or called for as yet. If and when calls are made for these monies consideration will have to be given to the source of funding including the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Environmental Impact

10. There are none arising from the completion of the MoU. There will be significant implications arising from the scheme itself which will be dealt with through the relevant approvals processes.

Level of Risk

11. Completion of the MoU is considered low risk.

Equalities Impact–

12. There are none.

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List of background papers: None

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