

Record of individual Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Cllr. Anne-Marie Simpson
Key decision?	No - In accordance with South Oxfordshire District Council's Constitution, receipt of a government grant is excluded from the definition of a key decision.
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	24 March 2023
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Ricardo Rios Planning Policy Team Leader (Neighbourhood)
Officer contact details	Tel: 07801203535 Email: Ricardo.Rios@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To accept the award of £45,000 grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in accordance with the council's Financial Procedure Rules in relation to receiving funding outside of the usual budget setting cycle for which no budget exists, to transfer £22,500 to Vale of White Horse District Council, and to request the chief finance officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, to use the grant to support the delivery of the Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot project in accordance with the agreed Delivery Plan.
Reasons for decision	<p>The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) accepted a joint bid from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils take part in the Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot.</p> <p>The objective of the Pilot is to test whether a simpler form of neighbourhood planning could empower more communities to play a direct role in shaping their neighbourhoods.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire and the Vale signed Terms of Reference with DLUHC accepting to jointly take part in the Pilot on 14 February 2022. The Pilot is expected to last for at least 12 months and the councils are expected to work with at least 3 neighbourhood planning groups.</p> <p>In August 2022 the councils provided DLUHC with a delivery plan, which included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the delivery team and key responsibilities • Timeline for delivery including key milestones • Details of the groups the councils proposed to work with • Allocation of funds <p>The councils invited applications from community groups between 4 March and 1 April 2022. The councils selected Great Haseley Parish Council, Moulsoford Parish Council and Stoke Row Parish Council in South Oxfordshire and West Challow Parish Council, Kennington Parish Council and Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council in the Vale. Kennington Parish Council later decided to withdraw from the pilot.</p> <p>DLUHC provided the councils with £45,000 to support the delivery of the pilot in accordance with the agreed Delivery Plan (Appendix 1). The funds were paid to South Oxfordshire and therefore it is necessary to transfer £22,500 to the Vale to reflect joint nature of the project.</p> <p>The councils' bid to take part in the pilot committed to allocate up to £2,500 to each Local Pilot Group to ensure they had resources and freedom to test innovative approaches. This commitment was carried forward in the councils' Delivery Plan. We also committed to work closely with Local Pilot Groups, support their ideas and monitor how they use their share of grant funding.</p>
Alternative options rejected	<p>This is a national project and if the council chooses not to accept this funding, South Oxfordshire would not be able to take part in the pilot, which would disadvantage our residents.</p>
Climate and ecological implications	<p>Early engagement indicates the main output of the pilot, Neighbourhood Priority Statements, are likely to have a strong focus on the protection of the environment.</p> <p>The Government envisages Neighbourhood Priority Statements will influence the development of local planning policies in local plans and may act as a precursor to a neighbourhood plan. Overall, Neighbourhood Priority Statements may contribute towards furthering our understanding and enhancing the protection of the natural environment in the district.</p>
Legal implications	<p>In accordance with South Oxfordshire's Constitution, receipt of a government grant is excluded from the definition of a key decision.</p> <p>The Delivery Plan agreed with DLUHC (Appendix 1) and the Terms of Reference for community groups taking part in the Pilot (set out in Appendix 2) help clarify the parameters of the project and provide a framework to ensure accountability in the use of DLUHC funding.</p>
Financial implications	<p>Acceptance of the grant will not commit the council to any other additional unbudgeted expenditure over and above the grant funding received.</p> <p>Transferring £22,500 to the Vale is necessary to reflect the joint nature of the project.</p>

	<p>The £22,500 received and retained by South Oxfordshire will be used to provide up to £2,500 to each of the three Local Pilot Groups in the district. This will total £7,500 and this can be met from the funding received.</p> <p>The remainder of funds retained by South Oxfordshire will be used to cover costs associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and delivering capacity building workshops • Providing guidance and assistance to pilot groups • Coordinating communication and collaboration between pilot groups • Helping develop processes • Checking pilot outputs meet agreed standards • Liaising with DLUHC • Capturing lessons learnt and developing recommendations 			
Other implications	<p>There is a risk community groups and volunteers may lose enthusiasm and give up taking part in the pilot before the completion of a Neighbourhood Priority Statement.</p> <p>There is also a risk the project may not attract volunteers with the right skills to carry out this work and coordinate on behalf of their local community.</p> <p>The council is working closely with the pilot groups to ensure they overcome barriers and remain motivated throughout the process.</p>			
Background papers considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils' application to take part in the Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot. • Councils' Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot Delivery Plan (August 2022). • DLUHC's Simpler Approach to Neighbourhood Planning Pilot Terms of Reference. 			
Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?	N/A			
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk	Patrick Arran	Support	20/03/2023
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk	Nicole Tyreman	No comment	17/03/2023
	Human resources hadminandpayroll	N/A	No comment	23/03/2023

	@southandvale.gov.uk			
	Strategic property Property@southandvale.gov.uk	Jessie Fieth	No comment	22/03/2023
	Climate and biodiversity climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk	Lynne Mitchell	No comment	21/03/2023
	Diversity and equality equalities@southandvale.gov.uk	Christopher Mobbs	No comment	22/03/2023
	Health and safety healthandsafety@southandvale.gov.uk	Debbie Porter	No comment	21/03/2023
	Risk and insurance risk@southandvale.gov.uk	N/A	No comment	23/03/2023
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk	Andrea Busiko	No comment	22/03/2023
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	No			
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	N/A			
Has this been discussed by Cabinet members?	No			
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature _____ Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson _____ Date _____ 24 March 2023 _____			

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 24 March 2023	Time: 15:10
Date published to all councillors	Date: 24 March 2023	
Call-in deadline	Not applicable as this is not a key decision.	

Guidance notes

1. This form must be completed by the lead officer who becomes the contact officer. The lead officer is responsible for ensuring that the necessary internal consultees have signed it off, including the chief executive. The lead officer must then seek the Cabinet portfolio holder's agreement and signature.
2. Once satisfied with the decision, the Cabinet portfolio holder must hand-sign and date the form and return it to the lead officer who should send it to Democratic Services immediately to allow the call-in period to commence.
Tel. 01235 422520 or extension 2520.
Email: democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk
3. Democratic Services will then publish the decision to the website (unless it is confidential) and send it to all councillors to commence the call-in period (five clear working days) if it is a 'key' decision (see the definition of a 'key' decision below). A key decision cannot be implemented until the call-in period expires. The call-in procedure can be found in the council's constitution, part 4, under the Scrutiny Committee procedure rules.
4. Before implementing a key decision, the lead officer is responsible for checking with Democratic Services that the decision has not been called in.
5. If a key decision has been called in, Democratic Services will notify the lead officer and decision-maker. This call-in puts the decision on hold.
6. Democratic Services will liaise with the Scrutiny Committee chairman over the date of the call-in debate. The Cabinet portfolio holder will be requested to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer the committee's questions.
7. The Scrutiny Committee may:
 - refer the decision back to the Cabinet portfolio holder for reconsideration or
 - refer the matter to Council with an alternative set of proposals (where the final decision rests with full Council) or
 - accept the Cabinet portfolio holder's decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately.

Key decisions: assessing whether a decision should be classified as 'key'

The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' Constitutions now have the same definition of a key decision:

A key decision is a decision of the Cabinet, an individual Cabinet member, or an officer acting under delegated powers, which is likely:

- (a) to incur expenditure, make savings or to receive income (except government grant) of more than £75,000;**

- (b) to award a revenue or capital grant of over £25,000; or**
- (c) to agree an action that, in the view of the chief executive or relevant head of service, would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward in the area of the council.**

Key decisions are subject to the scrutiny call-in procedure; non-key decisions are not and can be implemented immediately.

In assessing whether a decision should be classified as 'key', you should consider:

- (a) Will the expenditure, savings or income total more than £75,000 across all financial years?
- (b) Will the grant award to one person or organisation be more than £25,000 across all financial years?
- (c) Does the decision impact on more than one district council ward? And if so, is the impact significant? If residents or property affected by the decision is in one ward but is close to the border of an adjacent ward, it may have a significant impact on that second ward, e.g. through additional traffic, noise, light pollution, odour. Examples of significant impacts on two or more wards are:
 - Decisions to spend Didcot Garden Town funds (significant impact on more than one ward)
 - Changes to the household waste collection policy (affects all households in the district)
 - Reviewing a housing strategy (could have a significant impact on residents in many wards)
 - Adopting a supplementary planning document for a redevelopment site (could significantly affect more than one ward) or a new design guide (affects all wards)
 - Decisions to build new or improve existing leisure facilities (used by residents of more than one ward)

The overriding principle is that before 'key' decisions are made, they must be published in the Cabinet Work Programme for 28 calendar days. Classifying a decision as non-key when it should be a key decision could expose the decision to challenge and delay its implementation.