

**To:** Oxfordshire Growth Board

**Title of Report:** Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Financial Report  
Quarter 4 2020/21

**Date:** 19 July 2021

**Report of:** Director of Finance, Oxfordshire County Council  
(Accountable Body)

**Status:** Open

## **Executive Summary and Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to update the Growth Board on the 2020/21 financial position at the end of Quarter 4 for the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The report covers the three grant funding streams:

- Infrastructure programme
- Affordable Housing programme
- Growth Deal Capacity Fund

The report is prepared by the Director of Finance for Oxfordshire County Council in the capacity of Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body for the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and gives assurance over the grant funding and expenditure.

The fourth strand of the Deal, Productivity is reported through the OXLEP Board under separate arrangements

**Recommendation:** That the Growth Board notes the 2020/21 Quarter 4 financial report.

## **Appendices:**

Annex 1 – Infrastructure Fund Programme  
Annex 2 – Affordable Housing Programme  
Annex 3 – Capacity Fund

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report sets out the financial position for Quarter 4 2020/21 of the following three stands of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and associated funding streams from Homes England (HE):

- Infrastructure Programme.
- Affordable Housing Programme.

- Growth Deal Capacity Fund.
- 1.2 This report is prepared by the Director of Finance for Oxfordshire County Council (the County Council) in the capacity of Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body for the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and gives assurance over the grant funding and expenditure.
- 1.3 Funding for the fourth strand of the deal Productivity Programme is managed by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) and financial performance is reported independently to the Growth Board.

## **2.0 Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Fund Financial Governance**

- 2.1 In accordance with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan, the County Council is the accountable body for the financial management of the three key financial streams. A quarterly report is provided to the Growth Board. Responsibility for the management of each financial stream is held by the programme lead.
- 2.2 As the Accountable Body, the County Council is responsible for ensuring that:
- Funding is received from Government.
  - Recommendations to the Growth Board on schemes to be funded are in accordance with the grant conditions.
  - Regular monitoring reports are provided to the Growth Board.
- 2.3 The County Council also holds the risk should Government require funding to be repaid if it is unspent or deemed to have been misused.

## **3.0 Financial Summary Quarter 4 2020/21**

### **3.1 Infrastructure Fund**

- 3.1.1 The Infrastructure Fund is a fund of £150.0m. The grant funding is paid in five equal annual instalments of £30.0m to the Accountable Body. 2020/21 was the third year of the Infrastructure Fund Programme.
- 3.1.2 The full list of schemes and latest profile of spend over the remaining programme is set out in Annex 1. The total spend on growth deal schemes reported for the 2020/21 financial year was £28.8m. Within the total spend, £16.5m related to a funding agreement with Highways England for the Upper Heyford Mitigation Package of works to the M40 which was passported to Highways England. As these works have yet to be completed, this has been accounted for as a prepayment in the County Council's accounts.
- 3.1.3 The total spend reported for the Growth Deal Infrastructure programme to 31 March 2021 was £72.1m.

## 3.2 Affordable Housing Fund

- 3.2.1 The Affordable Housing Fund is a fund of up to £60.0m to support the delivery of affordable housing. The funding is available over the first four years of the growth deal from 2018/19 to 2021/22 following agreement to extend the original three-year programme by a year into 2021/22.
- 3.2.2 The Affordable Housing Programme detail is set out in Annex 3. The actual funding claimed is agreed periodically with Homes England based on the number of affordable housing units that are in contract to be delivered. To support the cashflow of the housing authorities, it has been agreed with Homes England to move from an annual claim to a quarterly claim process. This will also support the in-year monitoring by giving greater visibility of progress to date.
- 3.2.3 Funding of £14.3m was claimed in the first two years of the programme. During 2020/21 a further claim of £11.3m was made taking the total claim to date to £25.6m. There is therefore up to £34.4m available to claim in 2021/22.
- 3.2.4 The breakdown of the claim for 2020/21 is set out in the following tables analysed by local housing authority area (Table 1) and unit category (Table 2):

**Table 1**

| Housing authority                    | Grant Claim | Affordable Housing Units |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
|                                      | £m          | No.                      |
| Cherwell District Council            | 4.0         | 99                       |
| Oxford City Council                  | 3.8         | 92                       |
| South Oxfordshire District Council   | -           | -                        |
| Vale of White Horse District Council | 0.8         | 24                       |
| West Oxfordshire District Council    | 2.7         | 60                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>11.3</b> | <b>275</b>               |

**Table 2**

| Unit Category     | Grant Claim | Affordable Housing Units |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
|                   | £m          | No.                      |
| Social Rented     | 5.9         | 103                      |
| Affordable Rented | 1.6         | 38                       |
| Shared Ownership  | 3.8         | 134                      |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>11.3</b> | <b>275</b>               |

- 3.2.5 As set out in Annex 2, the estimated deliverable units including 2021/22 currently exceed the available grant funding of £60.0m by £4.4m. This is deemed to be reasonable as a number of schemes are at the early stages of planning and may reduce in size or be removed from the programme. If this does not happen, a decision will need to be made to prioritise schemes as the total cost of the scheme cannot exceed the available grant.

### 3.3 Growth Deal Capacity Fund

3.3.1 The Growth Deal Capacity Fund is a fund of £5.0m. The grant has been paid to the County Council in three instalments. The first instalment of £0.5m was paid in 2017/18, followed by an instalment of £2.5m in 2018/19 and £2.0m in 2019/20.

3.3.2 The funding is available to be used over the life of the programme which was originally planned to run from 2017/18 to 2022/23. At year end, funding that has not been spent is carried forward through the County Council's Earmarked Reserves. The budget is split into three elements:

- Housing Delivery: Staff costs for the core Housing and Growth Deal team.
- Delivery of the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan including staff costs.
- Feasibility: costs of feasibility works including Rail Connectivity Study and Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) refresh.

3.3.3 Annex 3 sets out the actual spend to 2020/21 and estimated spend for the remaining programme. The future profile of spend remains under review.

3.3.4 During 2020/21 there was a net drawdown of £0.1m from the Capacity Fund reserve to fund the activities of the programme team and Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP). In previous years the JSSP costs have been reported as the budgeted amount and any underspend against the budget has been held in reserve by the City Council. This underspend has now been returned to the Capacity Fund to give greater transparency about the remaining funding available.

| Capacity Fund                            | 2020/21<br>£m |
|--|---------------|
| Housing Delivery (Programme Team)        | 0.4           |
| Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan | 0.1           |
| Return of JSSP reserve from City Council | (0.4)         |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                 | <b>0.1</b>    |

3.3.5 The balance of the Capacity Fund Reserve was £2.4m at 31 March 2021.

### 4.0 Risk Management

4.1 The financial performance of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Grant funding streams is closely monitored by the Growth Deal Programme Board. This will ensure that forecast spend of the Growth Deal period is accurate, based on the knowledge of the programme plans, and actual spend is reported, based on a monthly review of all transactional activity and balanced to the County Council financial systems.

4.2 Any risk identified to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Funding streams will be reported to the Growth Deal Programme Board for review and

appropriate mitigation action will be agreed. Any strategic risk to the overall programme will be reported to the Growth Board.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 This report sets out the spend against the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal funding streams for Quarter 4 2020/21.

5.2 The Growth Board is asked to note the 2020/21 Quarter 4 financial report.

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