

Appendix D – Updates on projects which have received approval for GBF spend beyond 31 March 2022

The Observer Building, Hastings
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £2,028,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: East Sussex County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project will support the full redevelopment of the 4,000 sqm. Observer Building, which has been empty and increasingly derelict for 35 years, into a highly productive mixed-use building, creating new homes, jobs, enterprise space and support.</p> <p>The Observer Building will include leisure and retail uses on the lower three floors, a wide range of workspaces including studios, offices and open space, 15 capped-rent flats and a public roof terrace and bar with fantastic sea, castle and town views.</p> <p>The GBF investment will enable full renovation of the lower four floors, along with universal access (lift and entrance ramp), renovation works to the roof and external facades, installation of the new electricity substation and Air Source Heat Pumps, and key internal structural works that would otherwise be disruptive to tenants in the future.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in November 2022 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded.
Update on project delivery
The majority of the SELEP funded works were completed by 28 July 2022, however, work has subsequently been completed on the lift installation and installation of new windows. Tenants have started to move into the alley level and first floor office spaces.

UTC Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £1,300,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: East Sussex County Council
Brief project description
The project seeks to convert the former UTC@harbourside building into a multi-purpose facility including public services, education and training, and commercial workspace for SME's. The focus of the facility will be on the marine and sustainable technology sector.
Reasons why extension was sought
Delivery of the project has been delayed due to complex land ownership matters which have taken significantly longer than anticipated to resolve.
Update on project delivery
<p>Works to recommission the building and to ensure that the building is statutory compliant are ongoing.</p> <p>One tenant has been confirmed for the building and negotiations with other potential tenants are ongoing.</p> <p>Market testing for an operator for the unallocated spaces in the building will be conducted during Q1 2023/24, with a view to a tender process being launched in June 2023.</p>

Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Infrastructure Uplift
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £284,100
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: East Sussex County Council
Brief project description
Delivery of improved visitor infrastructure at Seven Sisters Country Park. The GBF funding will enable the refurbishment and kit out of the pump barn creating a multi-use retail, exhibition and event space.
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>GBF funding was not awarded to support delivery of the project until February 2022. The funding is being used to support the delivery of elements of the project which were previously removed due to cost constraints. Additional time was required to design and deliver these elements and therefore a 6 month extension to 30 September 2022 was granted.</p> <p>An additional £84,100 GBF was awarded to support delivery of the project in January 2023 and therefore a further 6 month extension to 31 March 2023 was agreed to allow spend of the additional GBF funding awarded.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>A contractor has been appointed to deliver the initial GBF funded works, and work commenced onsite on 4 July 2022.</p> <p>A contractor has also been appointed to deliver the additional works and it is expected that the project will be completed by June 2023. The majority of the remaining works relate to dealing with snagging issues and fit out of the onsite cottages.</p>

Food Street, Eastbourne
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £100,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: East Sussex County Council
Brief project description
Food Street is an aspiration to develop a vibrant, independent food and drink-based economy at the seafront end of Terminus Road, Eastbourne. The project will bring 5 commercial units back into use as part of an enhanced commercial offer in Eastbourne Town Centre.
Reasons why extension was sought
GBF funding was not awarded to support delivery of the project until February 2022. At that time, it was expected that the GBF funding would be spent in full by 31 March 2022, however, due to a delay in completing the required back-to-back agreement between East Sussex County Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, GBF spend extended into 2022/23.
Update on project delivery
The works to bring the commercial units back into use were completed in July 2022.
The GBF funding was transferred to Eastbourne Borough Council by East Sussex County Council during Q3 2022/23.

Acceleration of full-fibre broadband deployment in very rural or very hard to reach areas
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £680,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>Superfast Essex is a broadband improvement programme which is run by Essex County Council. The programme aims to make superfast and ultrafast broadband available to as many homes and businesses across Essex as possible.</p> <p>Within the current Superfast Essex broadband rollout across Essex, it has become clear that in a significant number of cases the cost of deployment in rural areas has been underestimated by suppliers, and the cost of connecting up to 10% of the premises in the current rollout scope will exceed the contractual cost cap. In these cases, suppliers will provide evidence of the increased cost to Superfast Essex and will request further funding to fill the newly identified cost gap. If no such funding is available, it is envisaged that the impacted premises would be removed from the rollout programme. The GBF funding was requested to ensure that as many as possible of the identified higher-cost premises can be retained within the current rollout programme.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>In order to invest the funding awarded to support delivery of the Superfast Essex programme, it was necessary for Essex County Council to implement a change to the existing delivery contract. This change had to be approved by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), the agency within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which is overseeing the national rollout of broadband upgrades. BDUK have the responsibility of ensuring that all contracts remain in compliance with State Aid legislation and they also take a view on Value for Money offered by the contracts.</p> <p>The required change request was prepared and submitted to BDUK for consideration in early December 2020, which would have allowed sufficient time for the project to be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the GBF. Due to a wider national disagreement between BDUK and BT on a value for money issue, which had minimal impact on the Essex County Council contract, the change request was rejected in March 2021.</p> <p>Following the rejection of the change request, work was undertaken to seek agreement from BDUK that re-submission of the change request would be accepted. After a further 6 months of re-work and a series of high-level escalations with BDUK, involving Essex County Council Councillors and local MP's, the re-presented change request was approved by BDUK in October 2021.</p>
Update on project delivery
Delivery of the project completed in December 2022.

Extension of the full-fibre broadband rollout in Essex to reach rural and hard to reach areas
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £2,297,256
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 77.7%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>Superfast Essex is a broadband improvement programme which is run by Essex County Council. The programme aims to make superfast and ultrafast broadband available to as many homes and businesses across Essex as possible.</p> <p>The GBF funding was awarded to extend the Superfast Essex rollout programme to reach additional rural areas, with a focus on upgrading business premises.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>In order to invest the funding awarded to support delivery of the Superfast Essex programme, it was necessary for Essex County Council to implement a change to the existing delivery contract. This change had to be approved by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), the agency within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which is overseeing the national rollout of broadband upgrades. BDUK have the responsibility of ensuring that all contracts remain in compliance with State Aid legislation and they also take a view on Value for Money offered by the contracts.</p> <p>The required change request was prepared and submitted to BDUK for consideration in early December 2020, which would have allowed sufficient time for the project to be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the GBF. Due to a wider national disagreement between BDUK and BT on a value for money issue, which had minimal impact on the Essex County Council contract, the change request was rejected in March 2021.</p> <p>Following the rejection of the change request, work was undertaken to seek agreement from BDUK that re-submission of the change request would be accepted. After a further 6 months of re-work and a series of high-level escalations with BDUK, involving Essex County Council Councillors and local MP's, the re-presented change request was approved by BDUK in October 2021.</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays encountered by Essex County Council in securing the return of the GBF funding awarded to the Swan Modular Housing Factory project, which was subsequently removed from the GBF programme. Due to the delay in repayment, insufficient GBF funding was held by SELEP/the Accountable Body to issue the additional GBF funding awarded to support project delivery in January 2023. This funding continues to be held by SELEP whilst Essex County Council governance processes are completed.</p>
Update on project delivery

Delivery of the project is ongoing with completion expected in June 2023.

Enterprise Centre for Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £7,641,924
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 91.6%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project has delivered an Enterprise Centre for local businesses, including small business start-ups, small businesses focusing on innovation and growth, as well as businesses aiming to stabilise and consolidate their activities. The Enterprise Centre offers a variety of office spaces and a flexible conference space which can be transformed into smaller units.</p> <p>The Enterprise Centre forms the focal point for the Horizon 120 Business Park and is designed to drive collaboration, encourage idea generation and underpin problem solving.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in January 2023 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded (extension agreed until March 2023).</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays encountered by Essex County Council in securing the return of the GBF funding awarded to the Swan Modular Housing Factory project, which was subsequently removed from the GBF programme. Due to the delay in repayment, insufficient GBF funding was held by SELEP/the Accountable Body to issue the additional GBF funding awarded to support project delivery in January 2023. This funding continues to be held by SELEP whilst Essex County Council governance processes are completed.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>Delivery of the Enterprise Centre completed in September 2022 and the building is now fully operational.</p> <p>The additional GBF funding will be used to mitigate cost increases encountered during the construction programme and therefore this funding will be drawn down immediately following completion of the required legal processes and will be spent in full prior to 30 June 2023.</p>

Jaywick Market and Commercial Space
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £2,391,060
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 95.06%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project involves the build of a commercial facility and vibrant local market on a gateway site in Jaywick Sands in response to a known undersupply of commercial space and a high level of credible demand for affordable light industrial, studio and basic office facilities within the area.</p> <p>The intention is to construct 13 low-cost units offering 9,500sq ft lettable area and a covered local market of 20 affordable pitches. This will form part of a programme of wider regeneration and will deliver an extensive range of positive social impacts to help alleviate the severe deprivation experienced by much of the Jaywick Sands community - including increased employment opportunities, increased training opportunities, a rise in skills and employability, pride in the area, a rise in aspiration especially amongst younger people and significantly improved health benefits through affordable access to fresh foods.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>Due to concerns regarding the rising cost of materials and increasing volatility within the materials market, a full review of the design for the project was undertaken. This review took longer than anticipated and therefore an additional 6 months (to 30 September 2022) was required to spend the GBF funding awarded to support delivery of the project.</p> <p>Following commencement of construction, the discovery of unexpected ground obstructions and asbestos further delayed delivery of the project, resulting in a further 6 month extension to 31 March 2023 being granted.</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays encountered by Essex County Council in securing the return of the GBF funding awarded to the Swan Modular Housing Factory project, which was subsequently removed from the GBF programme. Due to the delay in repayment, insufficient GBF funding was held by SELEP/the Accountable Body to issue the additional GBF funding awarded to support project delivery in January 2023. This funding continues to be held by SELEP whilst Essex County Council governance processes are completed.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>A contractor has been appointed and work commenced onsite in May 2022. Delivery of the project has been delayed as a result of the discovery of unexpected ground obstructions and contamination. However, this issue has now been resolved and project completion is expected by June 2023.</p>

Tendring Bikes and Cycle Infrastructure
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £2,600,200
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 88.5%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project will deliver a bespoke bike scheme and cycle network infrastructure within Jaywick Sands and Clacton which is aimed at tackling inequality within one of the most deprived communities in Essex.</p> <p>The bike scheme will be a community-based project to help overcome the barriers to sustainable travel as a result of inequalities, will help tackle rising unemployment and align with the government agenda of active travel and physical activity post COVID-19. Lack of transport options is recognised as a factor in joblessness and insufficient transport provision is a reason for declining employment and access to skills suggesting that wider availability of cycling for transport has the potential to reduce transport inequality and promote access to jobs and education. The scheme directly links to the wider Clacton Town Centre Future High Streets Fund and sustainable infrastructure proposed as a result of this programme.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>Delivery of the project was delayed due to the need for changes to be made to the design for some elements of the proposed cycle routes in order to address concerns raised during the public consultation exercise. As a result, approval for retention of the GBF funding beyond March 2022 for a maximum period of 6 months was sought.</p> <p>A further 6 month extension to 31 March 2023 was granted due to the required redesign work taking significantly longer than expected to complete.</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays encountered by Essex County Council in securing the return of the GBF funding awarded to the Swan Modular Housing Factory project, which was subsequently removed from the GBF programme. Due to the delay in repayment, insufficient GBF funding was held by SELEP/the Accountable Body to issue the additional GBF funding awarded to support project delivery in January 2023. This funding continues to be held by SELEP whilst Essex County Council governance processes are completed.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>The bespoke bike scheme is operational and has started to issue bikes to local residents. The additional bikes funded through the award of further GBF funding can be purchased immediately following completion of the required legal processes.</p> <p>Work has commenced onsite to deliver the cycle network infrastructure and it is expected that the project will be completed by June 2023.</p>

Tindal Square, Chelmsford
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £1,200,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 90.2%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Essex County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project will create a new civic public square of over 3,000sqm that provides a destination space for arts, events and celebrations outside Shire Hall.</p> <p>Replacement of all existing surfacing with quality/robust new paving, including a radial design pattern extending from Shire Hall. Existing street clutter to be removed and replaced with other co-ordinated street furniture, wayfinding signage and tree planting. DDA compliant and improved pedestrian access for all to Shire Hall.</p> <p>Provision of comfortable public seating and co-ordinated and well managed seating area for tables and chairs potential to enable food and beverage businesses to expand their offer on the High Street.</p> <p>The scheme removes motorised traffic from this part of the City Centre (except for High Street service vehicles), reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, whilst introducing a shared pedestrian space with a key cycle connection route through the space.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in November 2022 (and January 2023) and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded (extension agreed to 31 March 2023).</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays encountered by Essex County Council in securing the return of the GBF funding awarded to the Swan Modular Housing Factory project, which was subsequently removed from the GBF programme. Due to the delay in repayment, insufficient GBF funding was held by SELEP/the Accountable Body to issue the additional GBF funding awarded to support project delivery in January 2023. This funding continues to be held by SELEP whilst Essex County Council governance processes are completed.</p>
Update on project delivery
Delivery of the project continues onsite, with completion expected in June 2023.

Javelin Way Development
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £814,452
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
<p>Javelin Way is an employment site on the Henwood Industrial Estate in Ashford. The project will support the development of the site for employment use, with a focus on the development of Ashford's creative economy.</p> <p>The scheme consists of two elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of a 'Creative Laboratory' production space (with a ground floor internal area of 1,293 sqm). This will be leased from Kent County Council by Jasmin Vardimon Company, a world-renowned dance company and creative organisation. • The development of 29 light industrial units (with a gross internal area of 3,046 sqm), for sale and/or lease, suitable for additional creative businesses as well as the general market. Mezzanine floors will be available for the 29 industrial units, with full flexibility on the sizes of mezzanines to meet market demand.
Reasons why extension was sought
Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in November 2022 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded.
Update on project delivery
<p>Delivery of the project is complete, other than some small snagging issues and the discharge of 3 planning conditions.</p> <p>The Jasmin Vardimon Company is now operating from the 'Creative Laboratory' production space and the majority of the light industrial units have either been sold or leased to businesses.</p>

Romney Marsh Employment Hub
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £3,536,466
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
The project will further develop the Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, including the development of a business hub of 751 sqm (GEA) divided into 14 rooms of varying sizes. The offices will be built for businesses that will range in size from 2-10 employees. The planned flexibility of the space within the business hub will mean that it could also lend itself to providing space for skills training. There is land within the hub site for the building to be further extended by 427 sqm to provide either more business space or a more bespoke skills facility depending on demand. The GBF funding will be used to support the delivery of enabling service and access infrastructure.
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>A 6 month extension was sought due to delays in the delivery of the utility infrastructure works due to the statutory utility companies working to longer than expected timescales when considering requests for information or approvals for proposed works.</p> <p>A further extension was sought due to the significantly extended lead-in times for electrical substation switch gear which was required to enable electricity to be switched on at the site.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>Delivery of the project is nearing completion following further delays caused by extended response times from utility companies. The primary remaining elements of the project are the completion of the utility installation works (water and gas installation are 95% complete), installation of substations and the remaining fencing.</p> <p>Project completion is expected in June 2023.</p>

Thanet Parkway Railway Station
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £12,874,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project will deliver a new train station which will be located approximately 2 miles east of Ramsgate on the Ashford International to Ramsgate line.</p> <p>The proposed station will provide two platforms suitable for use by 12-car trains. Each platform will be fitted with lighting columns that host CCTV cameras and public address speakers; two customer information displays and one passenger help point; and shelters to provide weather protection. Lifts, stairs and an underpass will provide access to the platforms.</p> <p>The station forecourt will include two ticket vending machines, two bus shelters and bus passenger information points. A set down area will be provided for buses, taxis and passenger drop off, together with staff parking. Parking will be provided for 297 cars plus 20 short stay bays for passenger drop off and taxis (including 16 disabled bays and 60 spaces with provision for electric vehicle charging), motorcycles spaces, 40 pedal cycle parking spaces.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in November 2022 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded.
Update on project delivery
<p>Construction of the station is predominantly complete. The remaining works relate to the required level crossing and signalling works which must be completed before the new station can enter service. The level crossing and signalling works commenced onsite in January 2023.</p> <p>It is currently expected that the new station will open for passengers in late July 2023.</p>

Discovery Park Incubator (First and Second Floors, Building 500, Discovery Park, Sandwich)
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £2,750,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
Refurbishment of circa 50,000 sqft of space across two floors to create high quality incubator laboratories for early stage and scale-up biotechnology and life science businesses.
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>Delivery of the project was delayed due to additional work which needed to be undertaken after initial costs showed that project costs were significantly higher than anticipated.</p> <p>An additional 6 month extension to 31 March 2023 was agreed in January 2023 following the award of additional GBF funding to support project delivery.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>Fit out of the building is continuing as planned, with full completion expected in July 2023.</p> <p>The first tenants moved into the building in May 2023.</p>

Techfort
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £1,009,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
<p>The Dover Citadel site is a significant heritage asset which is currently closed to the public and subject to intrusion, graffiti, deterioration and ivy invasion. The site is an attractive proposition to potential private sector tenants, however, the need to establish an anchor activity is essential to kickstart the redevelopment of the entire site.</p> <p>The project will maintain and upgrade Casemates 51 and 52 comprising 1,012 sqm to accommodate a mix of cultural uses.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>GBF funding was not awarded to support delivery of the project until February 2022. Additional time was required to secure the required consents and to facilitate delivery of the project.</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 31 March 2023 was agreed as the delivery programme had to be extended due to the need for more extensive roof and revetment wall work to ensure the quality of the project was maintained. In addition, the process to discharge the conditions attached to the planning and Scheduled Monument consents took longer than anticipated.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>Planning Consent and Scheduled Monument Consent were both granted in advance of the 20 May 2022 deadline set by the Board.</p> <p>Construction has commenced onsite and practical completion was achieved during Q4 2022/23.</p>

Techfort – Phase 2
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £850,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 0%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Kent County Council
Brief project description
<p>The project seeks to bring the Casemates at The Citadel into beneficial economic use, helping to stabilise the ancient monument and creating jobs in Dover. The Casemates were previously used by the Ministry of Justice but are currently redundant and need refurbishment before they can be re-occupied.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the project specifically seeks to refurbish Casemates 53 and 54, creating 757 sqm of space for small businesses, craft workshops, retail, food and entertainment uses.</p> <p>The GBF funding is sought to kick-start the development process at The Citadel, with these works representing the initial phases of a long-term vision for the site</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the project in January 2023 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded.
Update on project delivery
Phase 2 of the project is being delivered by the same contractor as Phase 1 and therefore work has already commenced onsite, with completion expected in June 2023.

Innovation Park Medway – Sustainable City of Business
Extension granted: 12 months
GBF allocation: £1,178,323
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Medway Council
Brief project description
<p>The vision for the IPM site includes Runway Park, which is intended to become the signature open space for the site, offering distinctive character areas which will provide a series of flexible spaces designed to accommodate a range of activities.</p> <p>GBF funding was sought to enable delivery of one section of the Runway Park. The GBF funding will be used to deliver pavements and footpaths, planting, street furniture and preparatory ground works.</p> <p>The Runway Park will establish itself as the forum for collaboration, bringing businesses and individuals together in the public realm to foster an innovative spirit. The high-quality open space will be key to attracting investors and retaining skilled staff. Early delivery of Runway Park will enable businesses to interact with the wider community and will add to the marketability of the site.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
Additional GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the approved Business Case in November 2022 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded.
Update on project delivery
No update on project delivery was provided by Medway Council in advance of this Board meeting.

Better Queensway
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £4,200,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 0%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Southend-on-Sea City Council
Brief project description
<p>Better Queensway is an estate and town centre renewal project, seeking to transform a 5.2-hectare site to the north of Southend town centre. The project will include phased demolition of existing residential and commercial units, including four tower blocks and redevelopment to provide up to 1,669 dwellings and 7,945sq m of commercial space made up of retail, office, and community and leisure space. The project will also involve significant infrastructure and engineering work to provide a new four lane carriageway with footpath, cycle and bus facilities, which will remedy the sites severance with the High Street, provide a greater developable area, reduce pollution and improve connectivity, including important through traffic routes to the seafront.</p> <p>Better Queensway is being delivered as a joint venture between Southend-on-Sea City Council and Swan Housing.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>A hybrid planning application for the full Better Queensway scheme was submitted to Southend-on-Sea City Council in September 2020. This application was subsequently considered by Planning Committee on 31 March 2021 and it was resolved that the Interim Director of Planning at Southend-on-Sea City Council be delegated to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 agreement in relation to the development. The S106 agreement took longer to complete than anticipated, which delayed the formal award of hybrid planning consent until September 2021.</p> <p>In addition, the Project has experienced delays to the procurement of the enabling works due to utility companies requiring longer than usual lead-in times. This is in part due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic but is also related to other supply chain issues which are being experienced more generally across the construction industry (extension agreed to 31 March 2023).</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to the need for Sanctuary Housing Association to complete their due diligence in relation to the information inherited from Swan Housing before they could accept the GBF funding.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>The GBF funding is being spent on the early enabling works to support the delivery of the major wider regeneration project, which is expected to complete in 2034. The GBF funding has been used to support the early acquisition of properties on the estate and the development of the detailed design for the highway improvement works. It should be noted that Southend-on-Sea City Council continue to hold the full GBF funding</p>

allocation. This funding will be released once Sanctuary Housing Association have completed their required due diligence in relation to Swan Housing activities and have confirmed that they are satisfied that all expenditure claimed by Swan Housing is eligible and complies with the GBF grant conditions.

As outlined at previous Board meetings, the Regulator of Social Housing took the decision to downgrade Swan Housing Association's viability and governance grades. As a result of this decision, Swan Housing did not meet the Regulator's governance and viability standards and steps needed to be taken to improve work in these areas.

It has been confirmed that the planned merger between Swan Housing and Sanctuary Housing Association has completed, with Swan Housing becoming a subsidiary of Sanctuary.

Sanctuary Housing Association are currently reviewing the business plan for the wider project, with a view to returning an updated business plan to Southend-on-Sea City Council in Summer 2023. This business plan will provide clarity on, amongst other things, phasing, key milestones, cashflow and housing delivery.

Following completion of internal Southend-on-Sea City Council governance processes, further assurances will be sought regarding the delivery of the wider project and a further update will be provided to the Board.

No Use Empty South Essex
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £1,200,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 33.9%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Southend-on-Sea City Council
Brief project description
<p>The project will provide short-term secured loans to property owners to enable the return of long-term empty commercial properties back into effective use for residential, alternative commercial or mixed-use purposes. The project will focus on secondary retail and other commercial premises which have been significantly impacted by changing consumer demand, the impact of the pandemic and which may have been impacted by larger regeneration schemes.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>The launch of the No Use Empty South Essex scheme was initially delayed as a consequence of the COVID-19 restrictions, including lockdowns, which were implemented by Central Government. These restrictions meant that it wasn't possible to meet with property owners and developers or to conduct site visits to see potential properties.</p> <p>These issues were further compounded by resourcing issues which arose due to staff being seconded to support operational activities associated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>As Kent County Council are experienced in delivering the No Use Empty initiative and have a complete package of established processes in place, the intention was that a Service Level Agreement would be put in place between Southend-on-Sea City Council and Kent County Council for provision of back-office services to support the project. The resourcing issues identified above led to delays in negotiating the terms of the Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>As a result of the factors outlined above the launch of the No Use Empty South Essex initiative was significantly delayed.</p> <p>Following the launch of the No Use Empty initiative in South Essex, it has been discovered that the time required to complete the necessary due diligence and legal checks is significantly longer than anticipated, and therefore a further extension to 30 June 2023 has been agreed.</p>
Update on project delivery
<p>The No Use Empty South Essex initiative was launched on 19 April 2022. However, the timeline for processing and approving the applications has been longer than anticipated, with an approximate 18 week turnaround.</p> <p>The full GBF funding award has now been allocated to No Use Empty loans, however, due to the extended timeline for approving applications, it was not possible for 4 of the 6 loans to be completed prior to the end of March 2023. It is expected that all loans will complete by 30 June 2023.</p>

ASELA LFFN – Phase 3
Extension granted: 15 months
GBF allocation: £500,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 11%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Southend-on-Sea City Council
Brief project description
<p>The project seeks to further build upon the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) funded LFFN ASELA Project and extend through additional funding the delivery and access to fibre connectivity across the South Essex Region to realise benefits for local businesses and communities, enabling them to grow and flourish post COVID-19.</p> <p>The funding will enable ASELA to address some key ‘Not Spot’ areas that have not yet benefited from investment. In addition, the funding will enable ASELA to link the fibre infrastructure into the Southend region fibre network which will bring significant additional benefits to the ASELA region, in terms of sharing of services, cost savings and supporting the rollout of a pan ASELA Internet of Things (IOT) network.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the project was supported by DCMS and Phase 2 was supported by an initial GBF allocation of £2.5m.</p>
Reasons why extension was sought
<p>GBF funding was awarded to support delivery of the project in November 2022 and therefore additional time was required to allow spend of the GBF funding awarded (extension granted to 31 March 2023).</p> <p>A further 3 month extension to 30 June 2023 was sought at the April 2023 Board meeting. This extension was sought due to delays in completing the required Variation Agreement which formalised the award of funding to the project. This delay was caused by the decision to seek Board approval to release the funding to Southend-on-Sea City Council, rather than Thurrock Council following the announcement that Thurrock Council had issued a Section 114 notice.</p>
Update on project delivery
Delivery of the project has commenced, with completion expected by September 2023. Full GBF spend to be achieved by 30 June 2023.

ASELA LFFN – Phase 2
Extension granted: 6 months
GBF allocation: £2,500,000
% of GBF funding spent to end of Q4 2022/23: 100%
Responsible Upper Tier Local Authority: Thurrock Council
Brief project description
The GBF investment will build upon the DCMS funded LFFN ASELA Project by extending through this additional funding the delivery and access to fibre connectivity across the South Essex Region.
Reasons why extension was sought
Delivery of the project was delayed due to the discovery of unexpected duct blockages. Approval for retention of GBF funding beyond March 2022 was sought to allow time for the blocked ducts to be resolved.
Update on project delivery
Delivery of the GBF funded elements of Phase 2 of the project has now been completed.