From: Simon Jones – Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Special Projects

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Subject: Reallocation of Getting Building Funding

Decision no: 26/00063

Non Key Decision: Yes – expenditure under £1 million

Classification: *Unrestricted*

Past Pathway of report: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 10 November 2026

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division:

The Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project:
- Northfleet and Gravesend West
- Gravesend East division

The A249 Bearsted Road project: Maidstone Rural North

Is the decision eligible for call-in? *Yes*

Summary: This paper sets out a need to reallocate £370,000 of Getting Building Fund money to the Bearsted Road Project from the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project due to unforeseen delays with the latter

Recommendation(s):
The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects is asked to agree the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to approve the reallocation of £370,000 of Getting Building Fund grant from the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project in Gravesend to the A249 Bearsted Road scheme in Maidstone.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Getting Building Funding (GBF) was announced by the Government in June 2020. The funding was part of the then Government's plan to deliver upgrades to local infrastructure, boost skills, and help fuel an economic recovery by investing in shovel-ready housing and infrastructure projects, creating jobs and supporting economic recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 The previous Government decided that the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) would allocate the funding with their approval. In total, the Government provided £85m of GBF to SELEP in 2020.

1.3 In summer 2023, SELEP announced that there was £2.05m of unallocated GBF available to bid for. Projects had to be shovel-ready capital projects which would deliver within 12 months. Business cases for Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend and the A249 Bearsted Road Project were amongst those submitted for consideration.

1.4 SELEP Accountability Board met and considered the business cases submitted from across their area (Essex through to East Sussex).

1.5 On 12 January 2024, the SELEP Accountability Board agreed to "the award of £370,000 GBF to Kent County Council for the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace, Gravesend, project which has been assessed as offering High value for money with a Medium/High certainty of achieving this, subject to receipt of Government approval of project inclusion within the GBF programme, and agree that the GBF funding can be retained against the project for a maximum period of **12 months to 31 January 2025**."

1.6 The A249 Bearsted Road project was not originally awarded funding, but was placed on SELEP's reserve list of projects, were more GBF to become available.

2. Key Considerations

2.1 Regular monitoring of the GBF programme is now undertaken by KCC which has become the accountable body for the SELEP legacy capital programmes following the closure of SELEP.

2.2 In late 2024, the project promoter requested a project extension with the GBF allocation to be fully spent by 31 March 2025. This request was agreed by Central Government.

2.3 This revised deadline was subsequently not met and a further extension to April 2026 was also agreed. In January 2026 the project promoter, Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) confirmed that the project was no longer deliverable and had been cancelled. An alternative project was put forward by GBC but it was at a very early stage of project development and would therefore be unlikely to meet the delivery requirements and spend deadlines.

2.4 Consequently, the deliverability concerns and risks of not spending the GBF allocation by March 2027 were discussed by senior KCC officers (from GET and Finance Departments). Their recommendation to the Cabinet Member is to reallocate the funding to the A249 Bearsted Road Project, a project on SELEP's original reserve list that was assessed as offering High value for money, is currently in delivery and does not require a funding agreement to be set up with a 3rd party to release the funds.

2.5 The A249 Bearsted Road project is due to complete construction in February 2027, which would ensure prompt spend of the reallocated GBF by the new requirement of March 2027.

2.6 The business case demonstrates that the project aligns with the original aims of the GBF that were set out by Central Government. It will unlock development at the Kent Medical Campus Enterprise Zone, which is restricted to 75% build out without improved highway capacity (from the Bearsted Road scheme and M20 Junction 7). This is a key employment site for the county and will create 3,700 highly skilled jobs, including specialised research and development – an area key to boosting productivity.

2.7 The reallocation of funding will also benefit existing businesses and local communities through further investment in one of the original GBF projects approved by Central Government.

3. Background

3.1 A previous decision has been taken by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Regeneration in October 2025 to reallocate GBF (£300,000) originally awarded to Maidstone Business suite Phase 2 to A249 Bearsted Road Project. **Decision - 25/00074 - Reallocation of Getting Building Funding**

4. Options considered and associated risk

4.1 Option 1 – do not reallocate the GBF to Bearsted Road (discounted) If Kent County Council were to choose to not reallocate the funding to a project on SELEP's original reserve project list, the GBF would need to be returned to Central Government, with associated risk of reputational damage of not retaining funding allocated within Kent which have already been earmarked for investment in the County. This option may also leave KCC with a potential cost pressure on the A249 Bearsted Road project, as other match funding has not been confirmed.

4.2 Option 2 – reallocate the GBF to The A249 Bearsted Road (preferred) – Bearsted Road is the only project remaining on SELEP's reserve list that is in delivery and requires additional funding. Reallocating the £370,000 to Bearsted Road will reduce the risk of potential cost pressures for the Council as other match funding has not been confirmed.

5. How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

5.1 A reallocation of funding would align with KCCs strategic statement as the investment would support the aim of Building Better Communities by improving the quality of roads in Maidstone and ensuring that an infrastructure improvement is completed which will enable economic growth in Kent.

5.2 The A249 Bearsted Road and its adjacent junctions is a key part of Maidstone's highway infrastructure contributing to a link around the north and east side of the town. The dualling scheme is underway and proposes a safer and resilient solution which once complete will provide an enhanced corridor alongside further improvements planned for M20 Junction 7. This is considered imperative at a time when growth in the business sector is paramount.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The reallocation of GBF to the A249 Bearsted Road scheme will enable scheme delivery to continue as planned and provide an additional £370,000 towards the £10.8m construction contract, replacing other previously identified match funding which has been withdrawn and currently leaves KCC with a funding gap. This will help reduce the potential cost pressures for KCC and avoid the money being returned to Central Government.

7. Legal implications

7.1 The award report for the A249 Bearsted Road construction contract was signed in July 2025. The required funding agreements have also concluded and the scheme is due to complete in February 2027.

7.2 The funding agreement that was in place with Gravesham Borough Council to deliver the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project has lapsed as the project was not delivered within the specified timescales. Therefore, there are no legal implications with this.

7.3 As KCC is now accountable for the Getting Building Fund programme, it can report this update to central government and use the reallocated funds to support the delivery of the A249 Bearsted Road project. No further funding agreements are required.

8. Equalities implications

8.1 Both the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project and the A249 Bearsted Project had to complete an EqIA as part of the SELEP business case process.

8.2 The current EqIA Assessment for Bearsted Road is included as Appendix B. The completion of the A249 Bearsted Road project will improve travel in Maidstone for all groups of the population, reducing journey times and delays for residents, including those with protected characteristics.

9. Data Protection Implications

9.1 A DPIA is not required for this decision or scheme. There are no foreseen data protection implications.

10. Other corporate implications

10.1 It is not considered that this decision will have further corporate implications to other Directorates within KCC.

11. Governance

11.1 As accountable body for the legacy SELEP capital programme, KCC is responsible for overseeing the allocation and management of Getting Building Fund monies. The proposed decision seeks approval to reallocate £370,000 of GBF funding originally allocated to the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project to the A249 Bearsted Road project

11.2 Should the recommended decision be progressed, authority will be delegated to the Director of Growth and Communities to implement the reallocation of £370,000 of Getting Building Fund funding from the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project to the A249 Bearsted Road project, including but not limited to finalising and entering into any required funding, contractual and legal documentation to give effect to the decision.

12. Conclusions

12.1 The reallocation of this GBF allocation to the A249 Bearsted Road project is an important way of retaining monies within Kent which have already been earmarked for investment in the County. It will also reduce the burden on KCC to cover any cost overruns that may occur on the A249 Bearsted Road project.

12.2 The investment aligns with KCCs strategic statement and will support the aim of Building Better Communities by improving the quality of roads and providing an infrastructure improvement in Maidstone which is necessary to enable economic growth.

12.3 The A249 Bearsted Road and its adjacent junctions is a key part of Maidstone's highway infrastructure contributing to a link around the north and east side of the town. The dualling scheme is underway and proposes a safer and resilient solution which once complete will provide an enhanced corridor alongside further improvements planned for M20 Junction 7. This is considered imperative at a time when growth in the business sector is paramount.

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13. Recommendation(s):

13.1 The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects is asked to agree the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A), to approve the reallocation of £370,000 of Getting Building Fund grant from the Tech Hub Flexible Workspace project in Gravesend to the A249 Bearsted Road scheme in Maidstone.

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14. Background Documents and Appendices

14.1 Appendix A – PROD
14.2 Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

15. Contact details

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