
Subject:	ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING AWARDED FROM THE BROWNFIELD LAND RELEASE FUND ROUND 2 FOR REMEDIATION OF SITE AT POULTON CLOSE, DOVER
Date:	9 August 2023
Decision to be taken by:	Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Finance and Housing) and Section 151 Officer
Report of:	Helen Lamb, Head of Finance and Investment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Pam Brivio, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Skills and Education
Decision Type:	Executive Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Delegated authority	Paragraph C79 of the Scheme of Officer Delegations contained within Section 6 of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution: Delegation to the Section 151 Officer – ‘To make application for and to accept grants or other assistance on behalf of the Council.’

Purpose of the report: To agree to enter into a grant funding agreement and accept capital grant funding via the Brownfield Land Release Fund to facilitate the remediation of a Council-owned site at Poulton Close, Dover, to enable the development of 24 properties for temporary accommodation.

Recommendation:

1. To enter into a grant funding agreement and accept grant funding totalling £480,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities via the Brownfield Land Release Fund Round 2.
2. To determine that, in the opinion of the Chairman of the Council, this decision is an urgent one and should not therefore be subject to call-in.

1. Summary

- 1.1 In January 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched Round 2 of the Brownfield Land Release Fund, comprising £60 million of capital grant, available to English local authorities to support the release of Council-owned brownfield land for housing.
- 1.2 Dover submitted a bid to the One Public Estate Programme via Kent County Council (KCC) as coordinator, and has provisionally been awarded £480,000 to support remediation at a Council-owned site at Poulton Close which has planning approval for 24 temporary housing units. However, delivery has stalled due to viability issues.
- 1.3 This report requests approval from the Strategic Director (Finance and Housing) to enter into the grant funding agreement and approve the acceptance of the grant funding.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Government has made available funding to support the delivery of new build homes on brownfield sites. The first round of the Brownfield Land Release Fund was released in 2021, and the second round was released in January 2023.
- 2.2 Applications for projects in Kent (excluding Medway) were coordinated by KCC and submitted to One Public Estate. A bid was prepared to support remediation at a stalled affordable housing development by the Council on Council-owned land at Poulton Close, Dover. This project has previously been approved by Cabinet, and the development has planning permission for the development of 24 flats for temporary housing. The project had stalled on grounds of viability as a result of site abnormalities identified in the progression of the project.
- 2.3 On 1 August 2023, the Council received notification from One Public Estate via KCC that the bid submission from Dover DC was one of the Kent projects which had been awarded funding. The funding offer was for the full amount requested, i.e. £480,000. Funding will be awarded after the Section 151 Officer signs the Grant Funding Agreement, and the requirement is that this takes place by 16 August 2023.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 - To enter into the funding agreement and accept the grant funding.
- 3.2 Option 2 – To not accept the grant funding.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 is the recommended option as it will enable a previously approved, but stalled, affordable housing project to recommence, and facilitate the delivery of 24 units of temporary housing.
- 4.2 The decision-maker is invited to determine that the decision is an urgent one and the Chairman of the Council's permission should therefore be obtained to suspend call-in.
- 4.3 Option 2 is not recommended.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The overall funding offered is £480,000. This is capital funding only, for the purposes outlined in the funding bid. It cannot be used for any other purpose.
- 5.2 The funding is insufficient to cover the costs of the development but, as detailed in the Cabinet report dated 4 October 2021, the project will be funded by a combination of Retained Right-to-Buy receipts, Housing Revenue Account reserves and borrowing, to be determined by the Section 151 Officer on completion of the scheme.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money (AC)
- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor of the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make. HR
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report relating to the acceptance of funding awarded from the Brownfield Land Release Fund Round 2, in relation to the remediation of a site at Poulton Close Dover, does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149> KM

7. **Background Papers**

- Cabinet report Development of Interim Housing - 2 October 2017
- Cabinet report Development of Interim Housing - 14 May 2018
- Delegated Executive Key Decision - 29 September 2020
- Cabinet report Electric Heating and PV Installations - 19 July 2021
- Cabinet report Update on Development at Poulton Close, Dover
- 4 October 2021

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