

CABINET

PROPERTY LEVEL RESILIENCE GRANTS, LUNE SQUARE AND THE MILLRACE 21ST MARCH 2017

Report of Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To approve Property Level Resilience Grant allocations to Lune Square and The Millrace.			
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	22 nd February 2017		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JANICE HANSON

- (1) That a Property Level Resilience Grant of £96,240 be paid in relation to works to protect Lune Square, to be funded from Government grant.
- (2) That a Property Level Resilience Grant of £104,000 be paid in relation to works to protect The Millrace, to be funded from Government grant.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following Storm Desmond on 5th December 2015 the Government allocated funds to properties affected by flooding to enable property owners to invest in property level resilience measures as part of repairs to recover from flood damage.
- 1.2 For houses and bungalows and other ground floor accommodation these include things like flood gates, basement pumps and non-returnable valves on WC's for example. The current scheme for which Government funding has been allocated to the City Council to administer allows for expenditure up to £5,000 for each flooded dwelling.
- 1.3 Allocating these funds in line with general guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is undertaken by officers in Health and Housing/Regeneration and Planning/Resources under delegated powers.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The flooding which impacted properties in the City Centre affected new build apartments as well as traditional house types. During the recovery phase of the emergency difficulties were experienced with classifications of properties which were flooded as opposed to those classified as affected because only gardens and outbuildings had water ingress.
- 2.2 Whilst the residential floor space in two particular apartment blocks was classed as affected rather than flooded the properties became uninhabitable because the ground floor areas contained essential services such as electricity, and pumping for water supply. These were flooded and ceased to operate. The loss of essential services meant that residents had to leave their homes and had to take up alternative accommodation for some time until repairs could be affected.
- 2.3 Dealing with eligibility for Property Resilience Grant has also required a flexible approach as the need to apply property resilience to these buildings differs from the conventional approach in the DCLG scheme which relates primarily to homes with ground floor and basement areas. Nonetheless discussions with DCLG liaison Officials has clarified that within the spirit of the scheme, and the funding envelope made available to local authorities, they (the local authority) are expected to use their discretion.
- 2.4 For Lune Square the number of properties which would be protected by a scheme to provide flood protection for the ground floor services would be 84. The grant being sought is for £96,240 (including £16,040 irrecoverable VAT) which equates to around £1,146 per property (NB: administratively only 20 applications are required from the 84 occupiers/leaseholders to fund the cost of this project at a maximum of £5000 per application/grant approval), being protected from future flooding events.
- 2.5 For the Millrace the number of properties which would be protected by a scheme to provide flood protection for ground floor services would be 25. The grant sought is for £104,000 (rounded, including approximately £17,300 irrecoverable VAT) which equates to around £4,160 per property being protected from future flooding events.
- 2.6 Both schemes have been designed by industry experts and officers are satisfied that they are appropriate for the buildings concerned. The aim is to ensure that future events should they occur do not result in these property owners having to be rehoused or supported by other public funding again.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 The principle of applying local authority discretion to Property Resilience Grant applications for these properties has been the subject of discussions with DCLG Flood Liaison Officials.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To approve the discretionary grant allocations for these properties	Option 2: Not to approve the discretionary grant allocations for these properties
Advantages	Property resilience put in place. Future events should not result in residents being displaced.	No property resilience in place. Residents at risk of being displaced in future events.
Disadvantages	None	Additional public expenditure may take place to support residents in the event of future flooding.
Risks	<p>Firstly, scheme could be deemed to be ineligible by DCLG. Although the guidance is not clear and is open to interpretation, DCLG stress that LA's have the discretion to apply grants as they see fit. DCLG have been asked to confirm it has no objections to the proposed course of action and they have re-iterated that LA's have flexibility to approve community schemes provided it protects the properties of all of the claimants and that we're satisfied the application meets the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Secondly, deadline for submitting applications is 31 March 2017 and if a decision is not made at this time there is a risk that we will miss the deadline.</p>	Reputational damage to the local authority.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 Option 1 is the preferred option.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet are asked to authorise payment in these circumstances to ensure that these vulnerable properties are provided with an appropriate level of property resilience in line with the spirit of the Governments scheme.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council takes an active role in protecting its residents and property from flood risk in line with national flooding policy and its duty to cooperate with the Lead Flood Authority.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The decision would provide future protection for 109 households from flooding events, reducing the risk of any need for rehousing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None. The Council administers the grants on behalf of the Government. No further legal implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The domestic element of the Property Level Resilience Grant allocation from the DCLG is £1.25M. The City Council has so far approved grant applications totalling £384K to date (of which £264K has been paid on completion of the works). Commitments will increase by around £200K to £584K if the officer preferred option is approved, which still leaves an unallocated balance of around £666K.

It should be noted that as the scheme is due to end by 31 March 2017, at which point no further new applications will be accepted/approved, it is not expected that agreeing to the proposed discretionary grant allocations will present any additional financial implications for the Council.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The published scheme for Property Level Resilience Grants

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