

CABINET

BAILRIGG GARDEN VILLAGE – CAPACITY FUNDING 14 February 2017

Report of Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
Following the announcement of the City Council's success in securing support for its Expression of Interest for the development of a Garden Village in South Lancaster, Cabinet's authority is sought to formally accept the funding offered by the Homes and Communities Agency to provide capacity to advance the delivery of Garden Village Project.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		16 January 2017		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JANICE HANSON

- (1) That Cabinet authorises the Chief Officer (Regeneration) to accept the nomination to develop a Garden Village at Bailrigg, Lancaster and the associated funding offer from the Homes and Communities Agency to assist in accelerating delivery.
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Resources) to update the General Fund Revenue Budget between 2016/17 and 2017/18 once profiling of expenditure and grant terms and conditions are known.
- (3) That officers be authorised to begin preparatory work in partnership with the County Council and the University of Lancaster and the Homes and Communities Agency to undertake master planning, infrastructure planning and community consultation alongside the ongoing Local Plan process.
- (4) That officers report back to Cabinet with a progress update on project planning and the role anticipated for the City Council when more information is known.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Back in July 2016 local authorities were invited to submit expressions of

interest in the delivery of locally led Garden Villages. These are properly master-planned new settlements to be designed close to and well connected to large sustainable settlements, with the capacity to deliver between 1,500-10,000 new homes.

- 1.2 The Homes and Communities Agency were particularly encouraging the council to examine the potential for such a Garden Village in Lancaster District given the identified need for housing growth evidenced in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.3 Officers then developed a concept plan which took the preferred option for an urban extension in south Lancaster and redesigned it around other planned change at the University Campus to create a proposal for a “Bailrigg Garden Village”.
- 1.4 On 14th December 2016 Full Council agreed to publish the consultation draft Local Plan. That plan had been updated to include the Garden Village as a firm proposal. On 2nd January 2017 the Minister for Planning announced that the City Council’s Expression of Interest has been successful. The details of the Expression of Interest are attached as Appendix A.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 To enable local authorities to realise their vision for new garden villages, the Government will provide a tailored package of support that will include capacity funding to ensure, amongst other things, that the local authority has the right skilled staff in place, and/or specific funds to commission key studies and assessments. The funding will be available in 2016/17 and 2017/18 with further funding subject to review.
- 2.2 In addition direct support to delivery will also be made available through the Homes and Communities Agency, including through their Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) to provide expertise for managing such a large project.
- 2.3 The City Council will receive around £200K from the Homes and Communities Agency, the precise figure will be determined at the end of January. It is not clear at this stage what terms and conditions are attached.
- 2.4 Ultimately, the Garden Village will be delivered by the private sector under the umbrella of an agreed master plan, which will also co-ordinate delivery and infrastructure provision. It is encouraging to note that developers are already approaching the Council with a view to establishing a consortium capable of taking this idea forward.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Informal consultation has taken place with the Director of Estates at the University of Lancaster and the Vice Chancellor has joined the City Council’s Cabinet Member in welcoming the Planning Ministers decision. The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and the County Council also support the scheme.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Not to accept the nomination to develop a Garden Village and associated funding.	Option 2: To accept the nomination to develop a Garden Village and to accept the funding offer to accelerate delivery.
Advantages	No additional draw on resources other than those	Enables the appropriate staff resource and skills to be

	allocated to Local Plan preparation at this time.	recruited to manage delivery at a reasonable pace, in addition to providing funds to appoint specialist expertise to work to define infrastructure needs.
Disadvantages	Delivery of the concept post Local Plan preparation will be much slower and a higher drain upon the City Council's resources as Government assistance may not be available at that time.	Adds to the number of high profile major projects being managed in the Regeneration and Planning Service at this time.
Risks	Reputational damage after submitting proposals found to be innovative then declining to take up the means to deliver them at a greater pace.	Given competing demands the level of resources able to be accessed by this funding may not be enough.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 Option 2 is preferred.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The development of a Garden Village in place of the urban extension option investigated in the run up to the Council decision on the Consultation Draft Local Plan is a much better option for the district. It should have the ability to generate far more consensus about a development of this scale, and enable both the City and County councils and the University of Lancaster to promote a high quality bespoke development significantly enhancing the City's reputation as a place to live and work.
- 6.2 The work needed up front to design and plan infrastructure for a new settlement of this scale would be an additional burden for the City Council without this significant help from the Government via the Homes and Communities Agency. Developing a Garden Village in this way now clearly supports the Council's objectives for managed growth as represented in their Consultation Draft Local Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Bailrigg Garden Village is a strategic housing growth allocation in the City Council's Consultation Draft Local Plan.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

This proposal will deliver opportunities for affordable housing to meet the needs of those currently disadvantaged in the open housing market. It will also take pressure of the wider rural areas for housing growth which might not meet high standards of sustainability.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Although the Garden Village will be delivered primarily by the private sector, there will be a need for appropriate mechanisms to be put into place to ensure the necessary infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner and that costs are shared equitably between all parties involved. At this early stage, work will focus on the principles of such an agreement with the detail to follow later.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Although actual terms and conditions associated with the HCA grant offer are not yet known, it is not anticipated that there will be any additional implications arising through acceptance of the award at this stage.

In order to progress the project and align delivery with the current draft Local Plan aspirations, the council will need to appoint a dedicated full time project officer for a fixed term period in line with the duration of the funding offer. This is expected to cost in the region of £45K per annum including on-costs, with any remaining funding being used to procure specialist external advice as and when needed.

The council is well versed with managing external grant funding / claims including that previously awarded by the HCA and so any associated administrative workload arising (outside of that specifically managed by the dedicated project officer) is not expected to be overly onerous and so can be absorbed within existing resources.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

Recruitment of a project officer is likely to be necessary although there may be opportunities for secondment from other partner organisations.

Information Services:

Associated with above

Property:

The City Council owns various parcels of land within the Garden Village area and at the appropriate time the council will need to consider how best to deploy these assets.

Open Spaces:

None in terms of council open space

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 further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A Submission of an Expression of Interest for a Locally Led Garden Village

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