

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET

Date: 7 NOVEMBER 2018

1. **REPORT TITLE** **ONE PUBLIC ESTATE – KNUTTON MASTERPLANNING PROJECT**
- Submitted by:** **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT)**
- Portfolio:** **PLANNING & GROWTH**
- Ward(s) affected:** **KNUTTON**

Purpose of the Report

To seek Members' approval for the joint submission of a bid to the Government's "One Public Estate" programme for funding for the Knutton masterplanning project.

Recommendations

- (a) That officers be authorised, in liaison with the relevant Portfolio Holder and officers of Staffordshire County Council, to submit a bid for funding from the Government's One Public Estate programme (round 7) to support the masterplanning of relevant surplus land parcels in the ownership of the two Councils.
- (b) That, in the event that the funding bid succeeds, officers be authorised, in liaison with the Portfolio Holder, to work with officers of the County Council to procure appropriate consultants to prepare the masterplan, including any associated actions.
- (c) That, subject to (a) and (b), officers be asked to report back the outcome of any masterplan.

Reasons

Members agreed in June 2011 to dispose of the former Knutton Recreation Centre site as part of the plans to develop Jubilee 2 and this was reaffirmed in October 2011 following comments from Scrutiny Committee. More recently Cabinet agreed, in principle, to procure masterplanning work in this location (along with two other areas). It is considered that the OPE round 7 programme presents an opportunity to lever external funds to support the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan focussing upon the surplus land of the two Councils along with potential land/property in the ownership of the Council's strategic partners.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 At Cabinet on 19 September 2018 Members resolved, in the context of an updated Asset Management Strategy, to procure masterplans in respect of three locations involving Council-owned land; Birchenwood, adjacent to Bradwell Crematorium and Knutton.
- 1.2 The Government is seeking submission of bids under round 7 of its "One Public Estate" (OPE) programme (key excerpts are underlined to provide relevant emphasis). The One Public Estate (OPE) programme is "a cross Government partnership between the Cabinet Office, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities

and Local Government (MHCLG), who are partnering to support the best use of that land and property including unlocking surplus public land for housing.”

- 1.3 The bid guidance document goes on to say that “In addition to practical and technical support, a national fund of circa £15 million is available. This will comprise of £12 million in grant funding and £3 million in sustainable grants. New and existing OPE partnerships are invited to apply, and funding is likely to be awarded as a combination of grant and sustainable grant. This will support the delivery of collaborative public sector land and property projects – in particular those which enable the release of public land for new homes.”
- 1.4 The relevant guidance document goes on to say that:
“Whilst funding for OPE will focus on delivering housing, our core ethos remains the same. OPE continues to be locally led, driven by the shared local and national priorities. It is for partnerships to decide which schemes they seek funding and support for, based on these shared priorities.”
- 1.5 More specifically in terms of qualifying criteria the guidance states that:
 - All OPE projects must involve collaboration between two or more public bodies.
 - All projects will be required to demonstrate collaboration across local government, where there is a case to do so.
 - We particularly encourage applications seeking to unlock or accelerate housing schemes using innovative technologies and delivery solutions such as Modern Methods of Construction which will deliver quality housing at pace.”

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 In view of the above it is considered that the Knutton locality offers the greatest prospect of achieving a successful funding bid including land owned by both the Borough and County Councils. There is also potential scope for involving land in the ownership of key partners of the Council.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 Do nothing – this is not an option. The Council (and Staffordshire County Council) own surplus land and property in Knutton which would benefit from comprehensive masterplanning. Previous resolutions have been made during the Renew programme period and most recently in the decision made at Cabinet in September 2018 which, when taken together, indicate that this is not an option.
- 3.2 Disposal of land parcels disparately and incrementally – this option may enable the better quality sites to be developed relatively quickly but may mean that the poorer quality sites are shown to be unviable on their own.
- 3.3 Commissioning of a comprehensive masterplan – this option presents the opportunity to share costs (including the sharing of infrastructure costs) and values as well as creating a coherent overall distribution of land uses. Additionally there is greater scope to introduce a variety of approaches to housing delivery such as Modern Methods of Construction or Self-Build in some parts of the overall area. The opportunity to secure external funding (through OPE round 7) would mean that any local resources (in kind or otherwise) would be optimised.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The preferred option is the commissioning of a comprehensive masterplan by bidding for OPE round 7 funding for the reasons cited above.

5. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The proposal would contribute to the new Council Plan priority of “Growing our people and places”.

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the submission of this bid other than officer time.

7. **Major Risks**

- 7.1 There are no major risks arising from participating in the bidding process. Should the bid fail then the two Councils would have to consider alternative options for progressing the matter.

8. **Key Decision Information**

- 8.1 This is not a key decision at this stage but it has been brought to Cabinet in the context of the recently updated Asset Management Strategy.

9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 9.1 19.9.18 – Cabinet approval of new Asset Management Strategy.
- 9.2 Previous resolutions in relation to the Market Renewal programme and decisions in relation to the closure and subsequent demolition of the former Knutton Recreation Centre.

10. **Background Papers**

- 10.1 OPE Round 7 guidance.