

This Report is urgent.

Folkestone

Hythe & Romney Marsh
Shepway District Council



Report Number **C/17/71**

To: Cabinet
Date: 14 December 2017
Status: Non-Key Decision
Head of Service: Susan Priest, Corporate Director Strategic Development
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Monk – Leader of the Council

SUBJECT: **PLANNING DELIVERY FUND – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

SUMMARY: Cabinet is asked to delegate approval to submit an expression of interest to the Department for Communities and Local Government to the Corporate Director, Strategic Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

This report outlines the nature of the bid.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:

- a) The deadline for submission of an expression of interest is 11th January 2018 which falls before the next available Cabinet meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/17/71
2. To delegate approval to the Corporate Director, Strategic Development, to submit an expression of interest to the Department for Communities and Local Government for resources under the Planning Delivery Fund, following consultation with the Leader of the Council.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 On 4th December 2017 DCLG announced a package of measures to take forward implementation of the Housing White Paper; Planning for the right homes in the right places.

1.2 A prospectus for the Planning Delivery Fund, amounting to some £11 million, announced funds available for the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19 under three dedicated funding streams:

- A Joint Working Fund;
- A Design Quality Fund; and
- An Innovation Fund.

1.3 More information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-delivery-fund-prospectus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unlocks-25-million-to-deliver-more-homes>

1.4 The Design Quality Fund is the funding stream of interest to SDC in its capacity as local planning authority (see section 2). It seeks to increase design skills in local authorities and enable the effective use of new technologies to ensure that new development meets the Government's ambitions for quality as well as quantity.

1.5 Funding awards will be made annually to successful authorities via section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Funding will be confirmed for 2017/18 and indicative amounts awarded for 2018/19 by the end of January 2018.

1.6 Local authorities wishing to access the funding are invited to use a template (provided as appendix 1 to this report) which will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Strength of proposal to address an identified gap in the design resource available to the local authority, that will raise the quality of new planned development, and with a clear timescale for planned activity; and
- Strength of commitment to a step change in the design quality of new development, in particular where this will address related issues such as increasing densities in high-demand areas.

1.7 Successful bidders should be able to:

- provide evidence of senior council support;
- evidence a pipeline of schemes requiring dedicated urban design / masterplanning skills;
- provide information on how they propose to spend the money and assurance that money can be spent according to the agreed award profile;
- identify risks to delivery of outcomes / benefits and how these will be managed / mitigated;

- express the proposed impact of funding and how it will be measured; and
- comment on whether the bid relies on, or anticipates, other funding support from Government.

1.8 Successful bids can be up to £250,000 per bid for expenditure in 2017/18.

2. OUTLINE PROPOSAL – DESIGN QUALITY FUND

2.1 The basis of the SDC bid will be to produce design guidance to support Otterpool Park, but also the strategic expansion of Sellindge and development proposed in and close to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the Places and Policies Local Plan (PPLP).

2.2 Our Expression of Interest will highlight the opportunity to achieve the twin goals of design excellence and the early delivery of new housing by removing barriers to development and proactively addressing issues that might otherwise delay the planning application process.

2.3 Our bid will build on the work of the Charter, considered by Cabinet on 18th October 2017 (https://www.shepway.gov.uk/media/4649/A-Charter-for-Otterpool-Park/pdf/A_Charter_for_Otterpool_Park.pdf).

It will utilise expertise within the Otterpool Park Place Panel to procure and test the robustness of our emerging design guidance. We expect to procure and implement the work during February and March 2018, with completion expected by December 2018.

2.4 The document will seek to:

- Link to government guidance on new highest standard of design quality to create exemplar places for 21st Century.
- Reference the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) garden towns and cities guidance
- Reference our Expression of Interest to the Garden Towns Programme, with particular reference to Otterpool Park being landscape led and drawing on local distinctiveness including a need to draw on :
 - Landscape character within the redline
 - Setting of AONB and colour palette (direct request from AONB unit)
 - Local distinctiveness – materials, form, enclosures, character and style of a 21st century Kentish vernacular
 - Public buildings and public spaces
- Provide design guidance and assurance for self-builders who are potentially a key source of early housing delivery
- Consider design issues as they apply to energy efficiency.

2.5 We will make the case that this will speed up and assist housing delivery by:

- Providing direction and clarity to the applicant on what is looking to be achieved, speeding up the planning process

- Providing opportunity for local engagement in place making – an opportunity to directly involve statutory and non-statutory consultees and local people, as well as local businesses and architects
- Helping to ensure self and custom build sector and SME's provide for a significant portion of delivery by reducing risk and providing guidance
- Engaging with community and stakeholders will reduce risk – consultation has identified concerns over 'housing estate' type housing and greater desire to be involved. Influencing character and design is a proactive way to engage with local people
- Stream line reserved matters applications and applications to discharge conditions by providing detailed guidance

3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

3.1 There is limited risk management involved in this issue.

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Officer resource is used to scope and submit a bid which is unsuccessful	Low	Medium	The prospectus invites bids from all local authorities and successful awards will be made following a competitive process.

7. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

7.1 Legal Officer's Comments (AK)

The legal issues are covered fully in the body of this report.

7.2 Finance Officer's Comments (CS)

There are no financial implications to the Council of making an expression of interest for this available funding, and if successful it would support the financial aspects of major corporate projects such as Otterpool.

7.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (SP)

There are no equalities and diversity implications arising from the report.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Susan Priest, Corporate Director
 Telephone: 01303 853315.
 Email: susan.priest@shepway.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-delivery-fund-prospectus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unlocks-25-million-to-deliver-more-homes>

Appendix

Appendix – Design Quality Fund (Expression of Interest Template)