

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Levelling Up Fund – former Market Hall and Windsor Street sites

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

1. In November 2021, the government approved a £14.492,000 grant for Bromsgrove District Council from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The grant will support the redevelopment of the former Market Hall site and pre-development works (demolition and remediation) on the Windsor Street site to enable a future site redevelopment. Windsor Street site is owned by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC). In addition, Bromsgrove District Council committed £1.610m in match funding, as required by the LUF programme.
2. In January 2022, the Cabinet approved the acquisition of the HWFRS site. A copy of the Cabinet Report is attached in Appendix 1. In March 2022, the WCC site became available for purchase. Its acquisition would give the council 100% control over the site and the future development options. Member approval is therefore required to enable the purchase of the County Council site.
3. Subject to this approval a purchase price of £1.806 million has been agreed (conditionally) with both HWFRS and WCC for the combined purchase of both organisations' sites on Windsor Street. Whilst the precise allocation from this figure to each of these organisations will be subject to the outcomes of negotiation, the overall price will not exceed this figure.
4. External advice has been sought and received from Savills confirming that the proposed purchase price of £1.806 million for the combined site satisfies that Councils requirement to demonstrate that best value has been achieved in respect of expenditure of the levelling up funding on the redevelopment of the site. At this purchase price, a maximum SDLT of £79,800 would also be due.
5. Recognising the historic use of the site officers commissioned an external professional feasibility study, including ground investigations, for the entire Windsor Street site. This included consideration of external survey advice on land contamination. In considering proposals to extend the site to include WCC's land, the Council has received confirmation from their advisors that no additional issues with land contamination have been identified.
6. To enable the proposed acquisition of the entire Windsor Street site to be completed by 31 March 2022, the project requires Cabinet approval to purchase the County Council site and Council approval to reprofile the expenditure of the grant funding allocated to enable £385,800 of capital funding originally allocated to 2022/23 into 2021/22 to be brought forward to 2021/22 to enable the purchase both sites at the agreed sums. This will then result in a need to reprofile the accounts to take account of this as an underspend in 2022/23. A separate Urgent Decision Notice requesting this financial approval has been submitted to the Council.

Decision:

Approval is required for the purchase of the Worcestershire County Council site on Windsor Street Bromsgrove at the asking price (pro-rata).

Date: March 2022

RESOLVED:

Cabinet RESOLVE that authority be delegated to the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR), following consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships to complete the purchase of the Worcestershire County Council site at Windsor Street, Bromsgrove.

Grounds for Urgency:

The Levelling Up Fund grant allocated for the Windsor Street site acquisition must be spent by 31 March 2022.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

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Chief Executive

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Dated

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Section 151 Officer

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Dated

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Monitoring Officer

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Dated

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Leader

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Dated

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Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

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Dated

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Chairman

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Dated