

Report of: Director Environment and Housing

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 5th March 2014

Subject: 16807/000/000 Expansion at Cottingley Springs Site

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Farnley and Wortley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Cottingley Springs is the Leeds City Council managed site, comprising 41 pitches, for Gypsies and Travellers.
2. In September 2012, Executive Board requested that officers identify how Cottingley Springs can be expanded with the development of twelve new pitches. Funding of £1.074m for the twelve new pitches from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has been secured to cover the expansion costs.
3. In December 2013 planning permission was approved subject to call in by the Secretary of State to build 12 additional pitches on land adjacent to Cottingley Springs. The Secretary of State has now confirmed that the application is to be called in and a Local inquiry will be held into the planning application.
4. There is a funding gap of £700k and available section 106 affordable housing funding has been requested to compliment the grant funding.

Recommendations

1. Executive Board is requested to inject £0.7m of available affordable housing S106 funding into the capital programme.
2. Executive Board is requested to authorise spend of £1.79m to develop twelve new pitches for the expansion of the Cottingley Springs Site subject to the outcome of the Local Inquiry to be held by the Secretary of State into the planning application.

-
-
3. The Director of Environment and Housing will be responsible for the progression of this development and a further report will be brought to Executive Board following the outcome of the Local Inquiry.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval to inject £0.7m of available affordable housing S106 funding into the capital programme for the purpose of building 12 additional pitches of accommodation at Cottingley Springs.
- 1.2 To seek authority to spend £1.79m to develop 12 new pitches for the expansion of the Cottingley Springs Site subject to the outcome of the Local Inquiry to be held by the Secretary of State into this planning application.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Cottingley Springs is the Leeds City Council managed accommodation site for Gypsies and Travellers and comprises 41 pitches over two sub-sites. In September 2012, Executive Board approved proposals, subject to a successful planning application, to expand Cottingley Springs by an additional 12 pitches. In December 2013 planning permission was approved subject to call in by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has confirmed that the planning application is to be called in and so the recommendations in this report are subject to the outcome of the Local Inquiry to be held by the Secretary of State into this planning application.
- 2.2 The Council has secured £1.074m funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to cover the cost of developing the 12 new pitches.
- 2.3 The grant approval was awarded to the council in 2011 and at that time a site had not been identified. At the time of the bid an assumption was made that a Greenfield site without abnormal or infrastructure costs would be identified.
- 2.4 An extensive search of suitable land was undertaken following prescribed assessment criteria, the conclusion reached was that none of the 35 assessed sites were suitable at that time for use as accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers. The expansion of Cottingley Springs became the only viable solution and so 12 additional pitches on the site will be built subject to the outcome of the Local Inquiry and the decision of the Secretary of State.
- 2.5 The funding gap between the total scheme costs and the grant funding available is estimated at £0.7m and it is proposed that available affordable housing S106 funding is utilised to compliment the grant funding to ensure that the scheme can be completed.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Council has secured £1.074m funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to cover the cost of developing the 12 new pitches.

- 3.2 A project board and a project team have been established to oversee the new build programme at Cottingley Springs. A Project Plan and an Engagement Plan has been produced to show how the development will be managed.
- 3.3 Following successful ground investigation works and feasibility studies a planning application was submitted in August 13. The application was approved in December 2013 subject to call in by the Secretary of State. A decision on the call in was made on 24 February and it was decided by the Secretary of State to call in the planning application. A Local Inquiry will now be held to determine the outcome of the planning application.
- 3.4 Following the identification of Cottingley Springs as the most suitable site to develop, a programme of site surveys and ground investigation work was undertaken.

3.5 The works to be carried out on site with estimated costs are as follows :-

• 12 New Build Huts	£ 480,000
• External Works/ Garden Areas	£ 350,000
• New and existing Roads & Footpaths	£ 260,000
• Play Area	£ 77,000
• Services Infrastructure	£ 215,000
• Main Site Preliminaries	£ 225,000
• Site Abnormals	£ 182,000
• Total Estimated Costs	£ 1,789,000

- 3.6 The above costs are an estimate and following a tendering process an exact figure for the cost of developing 12 new pitches will be known.
- 3.7 The proposal to build 12 new pitches for Gypsies and Travellers to create additional affordable housing is in accordance with the agreed criteria and priorities for the use of available affordable housing S106 funding.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

The proposal to build 12 new pitches of accommodation at Cottingley Springs has been the subject of extensive consultation. A Project Board has been established chaired by the Chief Housing Officer with representation from the Lead Member

for Gypsy and Travellers, as well as other representatives from within and external to the Council.

- 4.2 The proposal to build 12 additional pitches at Cottingley Springs was the subject of an Executive Board approval in September 2012 and member consultation was carried out at that time. The proposal has also been subject to a planning application in December 2013 and extensive consultation was carried out at that time.
- 4.3 This consultation included Statutory Consultees, The Coal Authority, Environment Agency. Non Statutory Consultees, Yorkshire Water, Highway Authority, Environmental Protection Team, Waste Management, Education, West Yorkshire Police, Architectural Liaison Officer, Contaminated Land Officer and Landscape Officer. Ward members were also consulted.
- 4.4 Ward members for Farnley and Wortley and Morley North have been consulted throughout the process and it is noted that an objection to the proposed extension was expressed by ward members in Morley North and that the two Councillors who represent the Green Party in Farnley and Wortley have also objected to the proposal to expand the site. There were also objections lodged by Gildersome Parish Council and Morley Town Council to the application, as well as objections from members of the public.

5.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening exercise has been carried out. This has confirmed that equality diversity cohesion and integration considerations have been effectively considered in relation to developing proposals to better meet the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

6.0 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 6.1 Action to address the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the City reflect two of the aims of the Vision for Leeds: 'Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming' and 'All Leeds communities will be successful'. The additional 12 pitches at Cottingley Springs will contribute to the 'safer and stronger communities plan' to increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities, as well as those relating to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.2 The Housing and Regeneration City Priority Plan 2011-15 identifies as one of its priorities the aim to maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods. Performance to be measured by number of new affordable homes delivered per year.

7.0 Resources and value for money

- 7.1 The Council has successfully secured grant funding of £1,074m in order to build 12 new pitches for affordable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers
- 7.2 The contribution of approx. £0.7m from available affordable housing S106 funding equates to a cost of £58,333 per unit and this is considered to be good value for money for a new unit of affordable housing.

7.3 Prior to 2012/13, the Council was incurring annual costs in excess of £300k for legal and site cleaning relating to unauthorised encampments. The provision of new permanent pitches will ensure that this figure is reduced.

7.4 Capital Funding and Cash Flow

Funding Approval :	Capital Section Reference Number :-		CSR X0044				
Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL	TO MARCH	FORECAST				
	£000's	2013 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
CONSTRUCTION (3)	816.0		816.0				
OTHER COSTS (7)	300.0		300.0				
TOTALS	1116.0	0.0	1116.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL	TO MARCH	FORECAST				
	£000's	2013 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
CONSTRUCTION (3)	1475.0			1475.0			
OTHER COSTS (7)	314.6			314.6			
TOTALS	1789.6	0.0	0.0	1789.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL	TO MARCH	FORECAST				
	£000's	2013 £000's	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
LCC Supported Borrowing	15.6			15.6			
Section 106	700.0			700.0			
Government Grant	1964.0		890.0	1074.0			
Departmental USB	226.0		226.0				
Total Funding	2905.6	0.0	1116.0	1789.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Parent Scheme Number : 16807 / 000 / 000
 Title : Cottingley Springs G&T Site

Revenue Implication

Any revenue implications will be funded through existing budgets.

8.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

8.1 The report is open to call in

8.2 There is no legal requirement for the council to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers but the Council does have a duty to consider and make reasonable provision for the accommodation needs of this group.

8.3 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The £1.074m of grant funding secured from the HCA will be lost if the scheme is not completed. This will result in the loss of 12 additional units of accommodation and will increase the legal and clean-up costs associated with illegal encampments across the City.

9.2 The Council will also lose the additional money generated by the New Homes Bonus.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 The Council has successfully secured grant funding from the HCA to expand the Gypsy and Traveller site at Cottingley Springs by an additional 12 pitches.

10.2 Planning permission was approved in December 2013. The Secretary of State confirmed on 24 February that the planning application was to be called in. A Local Inquiry will now be held, to determine the outcome of the planning application.

11.0 Recommendations

1. Executive Board is requested to inject £0.7m of available affordable housing S106 funding into the capital programme
2. Executive Board is requested to authorise spend of £1.79m to develop twelve new pitches for the expansion of the Cottingley Springs Site subject to the outcome of the Local Inquiry to be held by the Secretary of State into the planning application.
3. The Director of Environment and Housing will be responsible for the progression of this development and a further report will be brought to Executive Board following the outcome of the Local Inquiry.

Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

