

Grant funding to support the redevelopment of the Former Copperfields College site

Date: 26 March 2024

Report of: Regeneration Officer

Report to: Head of Regeneration

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The Former Copperfields College site is allocated for the delivery of Housing, a school, and retail as part of the Aire Valley Area Action Plan/ Leeds Local Plan. The site is owned by the Council and a Masterplan has been developed to deliver the site in phases with a new SEN school (phase 1), playing pitch re-provision (phase 2a), affordable housing development (phase 2b) and retail (phase 3).

The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration approved the marketing of the residential development site, on 28 October 2022, declaring the site surplus to Council requirements, ring fencing the site for disposal to the Registered Provider housing sector, and inviting financial offers and proposals to purchase and develop the site for 100% provision of affordable housing. This decision was taken as a Significant Operational Decision following an earlier Key Decision taken by Executive Board which included the site within the capital receipts programme for disposal.

As a part of these proposals there is a planning requirement to replace an existing on-site playing pitch to enable development. This requires that the Council forward funds and commits to commencing and delivering the replacement pitch to align with anticipated timescales for completion of the site sale and a start of development.

The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration approved the forward funding of pitch re-provision work through a Key Decision on 18 January 2024.

This report seeks approval for Leeds City Council to enter into a grant agreement with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority through the Housing Accelerator Fund to support preliminary work on the re-provision of sports pitches to enable the delivery of an affordable housing scheme on the Former Copperfields College site.

The Grant of £107,864 will support the work set out through the Key Decision DDN of 18 January 2024 for the funding of pitch re-provision on the Copperfields site.

Recommendations

The Head of Regeneration is asked to:

- a) Agree that Leeds City Council enters into a grant agreement with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for £107,864 to support preliminary works on the re-provision of Sports Pitches to enable the disposal of the former Copperfields College site for the delivery of an affordable housing scheme.

What is this report about?

1. The Former Copperfields College site is allocated for the delivery of Housing, school, and retail as part of the Aire Valley Area Action Plan/ Leeds Local Plan. The site is owned by the Council and a Masterplan has been developed to deliver the site in phases with a new SEN school (phase 1), playing pitch re-provision (phase 2a), affordable housing development (phase 2b) and retail (phase 3).
2. The re-provision of sports pitches on the Copperfields site is essential to unlock the site for the delivery of a 100% affordable housing scheme.
3. The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration approved the forward funding of pitch re-provision work through a Key Decision on 18 January 2024.
4. In November 2023 Leeds City Council applied to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for funding to support preliminary work on replacement sports pitches to facilitate the development. This application was successful, and this report recommends entering into a grant agreement for the injection of £107,864 to fund this preliminary work. The re-provision of sports pitches on the Copperfields site is essential to unlock the site for the delivery of a 100% affordable housing scheme.
5. A planning application for the provision of a new sports pitch and training area has been submitted, Planning ref 24/00828/FU, with determination expected by the end of May 2024.

What impact will this proposal have?

6. Entering into the Grant Funding Agreement will support the disposal of the former Copperfields College site and its comprehensive regeneration to include a 100% affordable housing scheme, new local retail, sports pitches and public open greenspace.
7. The Grant Funding Agreement provides for the up-front planning and feasibility costs that will unlock the scope for development and the potential for a capital receipt upon disposal, which would support the Council's financial position.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

8. This proposal will support:

- **Health and Wellbeing** through the provision of new and improved sports pitches which will upgrade opportunities for local residents to engage in physical fitness and wellbeing
- **Inclusive Growth** by facilitating an affordable housing scheme and local retail development that could bring a new affordable fresh food offer as part of the regeneration of this neighbourhood.

- **Zero Carbon** by facilitating sustainable development of a brownfield site in a city-centre adjacent location

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

9. Ward Members for Burmantofts and Richmond Hill have been consulted extensively on the wider proposals for the Copperfields College site as well as the proposed process for pitch relocation on the site. Ward Members agree with the proposals for the site.
10. Information events were held locally in February and March 2024 for local residents setting out plans for the wider site including at a local sports club that currently hires the pitches.
11. The Executive Members for Resources and Housing have been consulted on plans for this site, with the most recent meeting taking place on 19 September 2023. Executive Members are supportive of proposals for this site.
12. The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration approved the forward funding of pitch reprovision work through a Key Decision on 18 January 2024.

What are the resource implications?

13. This will result in a saving for the local authority as it will enable the injection of external funding to deliver the preliminary planning and feasibility works for this project.
14. Entering into a grant funding agreement is a benefit to the Council, which offsets the need to draw on revenue or to borrow funds in advance of the disposal and a capital receipt. Any additional costs beyond the preliminary works covered by the grant for the reprovision of pitches will be funded via the future capital receipt, as agreed by the Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration on 18 January 2024.
15. It is a condition of the grant that should the disposal of the site generate a positive capital receipt that exceeds the grant amount and the total cost of enabling works, the grant could be recovered by the Combined Authority.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

16. There is a risk to the critical path for the disposal and development of the site as pitch works need to commence in Summer 2024, to align with the most effective grass planting season. This risk is being managed at a project manager level through proactive engagement with key stakeholders to support the effective resolution of issues as they arrive. A planning application for pitch reprovision has been submitted and is expected to be determined by the end of May 2024 in order to allow pitch works to commence in summer 2024.

What are the legal implications?

17. The grant agreement has been reviewed by Leeds City Council legal officers who are comfortable with the Council entering into this grant agreement with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

18. Funding through existing Council resources or from the land receipt for the housing site were considered. Entering into a grant agreement is the preferred option due to its positive impact on Leeds City Council finances, minimising impact on existing revenue budgets or the need to borrow in advance of site disposal.

How will success be measured?

19. Success will be measured by the delivery of reprovided sports pitch and new training area on the Copperfields college site. This will ultimately facilitate an affordable housing scheme on the site, significantly advancing the regeneration of the former Copperfield's college site.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

20. The pitch works will be delivered by NPS, cliented by Leeds City Council Asset Management and Regeneration service. Works will be carried out in Summer 2024 with a further year needed for the new pitch to bed in, ahead of anticipated housing delivery in 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 HAF project scope

Background papers

- None