



**REPORT OF:** HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER

**TO:** SPECIAL BUDGET EXECUTIVE

**DATE:** 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2017

**Report Author:** Julie Whittaker  
**Tel. No:** (01282) 661038  
**E-mail:** julie.whittaker@pendle.gov.uk

## **BROWNFIELD SITES FUND**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To propose that the Brownfield Sites Fund can be used to bring forward sites for employment use as well as housing. To provide an update regarding applications to the fund to date and to request an addition to the criteria for eligible sites.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To agree that the Fund can be used to bring forward employment sites, as well as housing sites, with the level of funding being decided on a case by case basis.
2. That progress with applications to the fund be noted.
3. To agree a new criterion stating that for a site to be eligible for assistance 'Work on the redevelopment of the site should not have been started (with the exception of site clearance) prior to a decision regarding the funding application being made by the Grants Panel.'

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To enable the Fund to be used to support the Council's economic development objectives.
2. To keep the Executive updated with progress.
3. To provide clarity to future applicants.

### **ISSUE**

1. A report concerning the Brownfield Sites Fund was submitted to the Executive meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 where it was resolved:  
  
(1) That progress with the use of the Brownfield Sites Fund be noted.

- (2) That consideration of the Fund being used to bring forward employment sites as well as housing sites with the level of funding being decided on a case by case basis be deferred and considered further at the next meeting.
- (3) That all applications for funding be decided by the Gearing up for Growth Grants Panel.
- (4) That £53,935 funding from relevant Section 106 agreements be added to the Fund and used for commercial development on brownfield sites.

### **Use of the fund for employment development**

2. Through our Business Support Team we engage with many local businesses who are looking to expand or develop new employment floorspace. Where a developer wishes to develop new employment space as a speculative development, rather than for their own expansion, it is difficult to fund them through the business support programmes available through Pendle and Growth Lancashire. This is because the job creation will be longer term and is not directly within their control. We do however have a need for additional modern floorspace to be created and wish to support developers with this.
3. Developing new employment floorspace on brownfield sites has a number of similar problems to developing housing, such as increased costs due to the need to demolish existing buildings and deal with contamination and reduced viability due to abnormal infrastructure costs. The Brownfield Sites Fund has so far been targeted at housing but it is proposed that, to help meet the objective of our Jobs & Growth Strategy of bringing forward suitable employment sites, it should also be used to bring forward new employment floorspace. It is proposed that each site would be looked at on a case by case basis and funding would only be provided for sites which are not viable, or marginally viable, without it.

### **Brownfield Sites Fund update**

#### **Brownfield Sites Grant Fund**

4. As we reported to the Executive in November, we have written to the owners of 28 brownfield sites with planning permission to let them know about the Brownfield Sites Grant Fund. 3 applications have been submitted and considered by the Grants Panel. One has been approved and two declined as they did not fully meet the grant criteria. A further 8 site owners have expressed an interest in submitting an application but they need to do some further work first to, for example, secure development finance, gain full planning permission or they wish to amend their scheme first.
5. An update has recently been sought from the owners of these 8 sites. A follow-up letter has also been sent to the remaining 16 site owners who didn't respond to the initial letter they were sent regarding the fund.

#### **Brownfield Sites Main Fund**

6. One application has also been made to the Brownfield Sites Main Fund and this was approved with conditions by the Grants Panel in December.

## **Revisions to the Brownfield Sites Grant Fund Criteria**

7. In light of the applications which have been considered to date, it is recommended that some minor revisions are made to the Grant Fund Criteria to provide clarity to future applicants. In order to be an eligible site, it is recommended that a criterion be added stating that:
  - Work on the redevelopment of the site should not have been started (with the exception of site clearance) prior to a decision regarding the funding application being made by the Grants Panel.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** Use of the fund for employment sites helps to support the delivery of the Council's Jobs and Growth Strategy

**Financial:** Funding for the Brownfield Sites Fund is within the approved Capital Programme for 2016/17.

**Legal:** None directly arising from this report

**Risk Management:** None directly arising from this report

**Health and Safety:** None directly arising from this report

**Sustainability:** None directly arising from this report

**Community Safety:** None directly arising from this report

**Equality and Diversity:** None directly arising from this report

## **APPENDICES**

None

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Reports to Executive on Brownfield Sites Fund:

17<sup>th</sup> September 2015

9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

17<sup>th</sup> November 2016