

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Roger Gough, Leader of KCC

Michael Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Service Improvement Project

Key decision 23/00008

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: n/a

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Steve Manion, Dover North
David Brazier, Sevenoaks Rural North East
Andrew Kennedy, Malling North East
Alister Brady, Canterbury City North
Nick Chard, Sevenoaks West
Mike Dendor, Sittingbourne North
Trudy Dean MBE, Malling Central

Summary: The Gypsy and Traveller Service has successfully made bids to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Traveller Site Fund, and has secured £3.8million in capital grant to refurbish and complete a range of improvements to our sites.

As part of the bid, KCC agreed to contribute £250,000 towards the projects in match funding and this has been allocated by KCC Infrastructure from the Modernisation of Assets capital budget. The contribution was already 'ring fenced' for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services is asked to agree to the terms of receiving this funding as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and to agree the acceptance of this funding as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched the Traveller Site Fund in May 2022 and welcomed bids for improvement and development projects on designated Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

1.2 The Traveller Site Fund has the following strategic objectives:

- 1.2.1 Increase the provision of transit and permanent sites and temporary stopping places in England to meet the needs of travellers as set out in a recent local authority assessment of needs;
- 1.2.2 Increase the use of authorised transit sites and temporary stopping places and provide appropriate accommodation in suitable locations;
- 1.2.3 Improve travellers' life chances and social outcomes by providing pleasant, authorised places with facilities for them to live, and providing access to local services and facilities, particularly including education and health services;
- 1.2.4 Improve relations between travelling and settled communities;
- 1.2.5 Reduce enforcement costs for local authorities and police in dealing with unauthorised encampments.

2. Outcome of KCC Bids

- 2.1 The Gypsy and Traveller Service submitted 7 bids, one for each of our sites for varying amounts.

Site	Awarded Funding
Barnfield Park	£907,415.72
Greenbridge Park	£204,838.72
Three Lakes Park	£392,526.72
Aylesham Caravan Park	£1,196,357.01
Polhill Site	£268,779.72
Coldharbour Caravan Site	£696,927.72
Windmill Lane	£138,443.72

- 2.2 We were notified on 23rd December 2022, that we were successful in all of our bids and had secured £3.8million in capital grant, the full amount we had sought.
- 2.3 The condition of sites and the significant investment needed to undertake essential maintenance and improvement works have been identified through condition surveys undertaken by KCC Infrastructure as part of its wider surveying of the corporate estate. The successful bids mean that the repairs deemed as priority 1 and 2 (urgent and essential works required within 2 years to ensure compliance) can be completed and reduce the risk that is currently being carried by KCC due to the condition of sites.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The DLUHC funding provides £3.8million in capital grant, and the KCC match funding contribution of £250,000 from the Modernisation of Assets capital budget is necessary to secure the full amount bid for. The £250,000 capital contribution was already 'ring fenced' for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites.
- 3.2 Subject to the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the DLUHC would like to transfer the capital grant to KCC in early February 2023, with the spend being committed in the next (2023/24) financial year.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 The MOU is not a legal agreement, and it features 'expectations' of KCC as part of the funding deal.
- 4.2 From initial discussions with the lead from the DLUHC, the Department is very keen to allow the successful project teams to manage their own project plans and budgets and provide quarterly updates in return.
- 4.3 All aspects of the project will follow KCC project management processes and all works will be completed to the required legal standards and guidelines. KCC Infrastructure has agreed to dedicate a Project Manager and Building Surveyor to the project, to ensure that all statutory and legal requirements are fulfilled.
- 4.4 The award of any contracts will be in full compliance with all relevant procurement and governance regulations which include new or already commissioned agreements. Legal advice for any contracts exceeding £1m will be sought in consultation with the Office of General Counsel. This will be identified as part of the programme management and subsequent governance approval will be sought in future as required.

5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 From the Equality screening, this project is low risk. The screening has confirmed that there are no negative impacts, only a positive impact as this project focusses on improving services and accommodation for a protected group.
- 5.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be completed as part of the project planning.

6. Governance

- 6.1 Due to the numerous changes in central government last year, the decision around the award of the DLUHC Traveller Site Fund was delayed, and it was only advised to us on 23rd December 2022 that we had been successful in all our applications and have been awarded £3.8million in capital grant. Consequently, the timeframe for accepting the funding awarded is extremely short (13th January 2023).
- 6.2 An extension to this date has been agreed by DHLUC so KCC can comply with our formal governance processes, and as such, this decision is being taken through the 'semi-urgent' process.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The award of this funding is a great success for the Gypsy and Traveller Service and the approval of all 7 bids is outstanding.
- 7.2 It provides a unique opportunity to refurbish our sites which would not be possible without this funding.

7.3 This project will greatly improve the sites for our residents and ensure that KCC fulfils its legal responsibilities as Landlord.

8. Recommendation(s):

8.1 The Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services is asked to agree to the terms of receiving this funding as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and to agree the acceptance of this funding as shown at Appendix A.

9. Background documents

Appendix A: Record of Decision

Appendix B: EqIA

10. Contact details

Report Authors

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