



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 31 January 2017	Matter for Information
---	--------------------------	------------------------

Title: **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
Bid to the Large sites and Housing Zones Capacity Fund**

Author: **Anne Court (Director of Services)
Adrian Thorpe (Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager)**

1. Introduction

This report gives brief details of a funding opportunity to support delivery of housing sites. In light of the short timeframe for submission of bids members are provided with details of the bid that was submitted.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note that a bid for funding to support delivery of housing sites in the borough was submitted by the 9 December 2016 deadline.

3. Information

3.1. The fund is up to **£18m** of resource funding available in **2016/17** to develop/build capacity in local authorities and to extend the capacity within the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) (through external resources) to support the delivery of large and complex sites (a large site is defined as delivering more than 1,500 units).

3.2. It is aimed at existing government initiatives/programmes in priority order:

1. Housing Zones and Large Sites, where capacity funding will unlock housing before 2021;
2. Housing Zones and Large Sites, where capacity funding will unlock housing before 2026;
3. Sites, or collections of sites below 1,500 units, where capacity funding will unlock housing before 2021; or
4. Sites or collections of sites, below 1,500 units where capacity funding will unlock housing before 2026.

3.3. The fund is for delivery of improvements to public and social infrastructure by creating capacity to design, manage and implement these improvements through:

- funding to create additional capacity in local authorities to manage applications for large developments
- access to expert planning and technical support and advice to help schemes progress from conception through to planning consent
- supporting the development of housing zone bids submitted to DCLG for approval;
- through Planning Performance Agreements, resources will be made available to

- local planning authorities to assist them with reviewing and determining large scale public sector sites that are capable of delivering new homes
- brokerage support is also available from central government to help resolve barriers that are preventing schemes from moving forward

3.4. Support can be grant funding or HCA managed consultancy support. They wish a level of matched support/contribution (either funding or staff). Funding was available via a short bidding process **by Friday 9 December 2016**. In light of the short timescale, Senior Management Team approved officers submitting a bid relating to two potential proposals as detailed in paragraph 3.5 below.

3.5. **Proposal**

On the basis that with the short time frame the bid round may not be oversubscribed and whilst the bid cannot meet the top criteria there are likely to be significant rewards if successful. The following potential proposals were identified and included in a bid:

The support was sought at two levels

1. HCA managed consultancy support to look at solutions to bringing forward town centre sites. Specifically:
 - potential to interlink sites to produce a more comprehensive and viable package for development for sites in Oadby at Sandhurst Street and East Street.
 - in terms of bringing forward development whilst ensuring no loss of public car parking provision in Oadby and Wigston town centres
2. Professional planning support to look at individual town centre sites, identify barriers and come up with solutions to bringing forward development. This would cover the three towns of Oadby (in addition to those sites in 1 above) Wigston and South Wigston.

The bid included an element of matched funding which would be provided as officer time from existing resources to support work undertaken through the HCA managed consultancy support. It is envisaged this would be at an equivalent ratio of 10% value of the support given by the HCA.

3.6. A decision on the bid is expected in January 2017.

Email: stephen.meynell@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2705

(Continued overleaf)

Implications	
Financial (CR)	None directly in submitting the bid however if successful then the Council would provide match funding in the form of staff resources to support and work with the HCA managed consultancy support. This would include management, clerical support and if and when required any accommodation. It is envisaged this would be at an equivalent ratio of 10% value of the support given by the HCA.
Legal (AC)	If successful the Council would be required to enter into a funding agreement with the HCA.
Risks (AT)	<p>Corporate Risk 5 (effective utilisation of land and buildings) and 9 (economy) The bid is not successful: <i>Attempt to meet highest possible 'priority from the list'</i></p> <p>Corporate Risk 5 (effective utilisation of land and buildings) and 9 (economy) The Council cannot meet the tight timescale although it is caveated as ' they expect every endeavour to be made to use the funding in 2016/17 as far as is possible': <i>If a grant is offered and the Council decides that it can't meet the timescales using 'every endeavour' we could not take up the grant.</i></p> <p>Corporate Risk 5 (effective utilisation of land and buildings) It may deflect from our key priorities by spreading staff resources too thinly: <i>Flexible use of staff resources to obtain maximum benefit from grant funding initiatives that support the Council's key priorities.</i></p>
Equalities (AT)	<p>An Equalities Assessment will be carried out if the bid is successful.</p> <p>Equality Assessment:-</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Initial Screening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable</p>