

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).
 The form must be completed and passed to the Head of Members' Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Head of Members' Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To accept the Section 31 grant funding from the Site Delivery Fund of £50,000 to be paid in two tranches over 2014-15 and 2015-16 from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

2. Date of decision

28 November 2014

3. Reasons for decision

The funding is offered by the Government to help local planning authorities remove barriers to development starting on site, especially where this is delaying the provision of housing.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative is not to accept the funding. This has been rejected on the basis that the funding will assist the Council to accelerate housing completions and meet its housing targets.

5. How decision is to be funded

There is no cost arising from this decision.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Deel

Signed *St Holland*

Date *28/11/14*

Name of Decision Taker ... The Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Head of Members' Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: *3rd December 2014*

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: *11th December 2014*

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....~~YES~~ or NO.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

Date: November 2014

Report by: Assistant Director (Planning)

Subject: ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING – SITE DELIVERY FUND

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to request approval to accept funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the total value of £50,000 over the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **The Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services is requested to consider the report and, if satisfied, to approve the acceptance of the Section 31 grant funding from the Site Delivery Fund of £50,000 from the Department for Communities and Local Government.**

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The funding follows an invitation to express interest to DCLG and aims to help local planning authorities remove barriers to development starting on site and in particular where this will help to speed up the delivery of new homes which already have the benefit of planning permission.

4. Key Implications

Legal Issues

- 4.1 The funding is awarded by the DCLG under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Policy Issues

- 4.4 The Council's policy on receiving funds requires an Executive decision. There are no policy issues arising from the report's recommendations as the Council's obligations are set out in the appropriate legislation and regulations.

Resource Implications

- 4.5 The Council has been awarded a total of £50,000 over the current and next financial years. It is intended that this will go towards the fixed term funding of an additional officer within Planning Services. This award is particularly welcome in the context of the current proposals for restructuring the planning service with the consequent loss of several experienced officers.

Risk Implications

- 4.6 There are no risk implications from accepting this funding.

Environmental Implications

- 4.7 The funding will accelerate the start of new development on site after the grant of planning permission and any environmental implications will have been considered when granting planning permission.

Equalities Impact

- 4.8 In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. A relevance test for equality has been completed. The equality test determined that the recommendation contained within this report has no relevance to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, promote good relations, promote positive attitudes and eliminate unlawful discrimination. An equality impact assessment is not needed.

5. Details

- 5.1 The Government state that the time taken to deal with applications for reserved matters consent, complete section 106 agreements and discharge planning conditions can cause significant delays. It has set aside £3 million pounds over two years to help local authorities address these issues in order to accelerate new house building. A total award of £50,000 has been made to the Council by the DCLG for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The funding is designed to provide short term capacity support to enable fully implementable planning permissions to be delivered more quickly.
- 5.2 The Council's bid sought a total of £81,000 that would have funded a principal planner post for the remainder of this year and all of 2015/16. The grant offered will not meet this cost in full and the balance of fixed term funding will be met from known underspend of planning salaries that have temporarily arisen in the Unit following the retirement of two Heads of service posts.
- 5.3 The Council's bid document set out that the award could be used towards additional staff resource to improve the council's processes and offer local developers a more focussed project management service which would seek to:-

- Target, in order of priority, sites with Planning Performance Agreements in place, sites where submissions to discharge conditions have already commenced but not been finalised and sites where developers have indicated an intention to start soon but have not yet made submissions to discharge conditions.
- Deal expeditiously with the frequent requests for non-material amendments (usually to house types on large sites).
- Identify and categorise all current outstanding planning conditions relating to their sites (pre-commencement, pre-occupation, etc.).
- For each of the development sites, seek to agree a project plan to identify for the developer the time needed to prepare, submit and have determined, the information/details required by the planning condition so that they are “cleared” in time for work to commence in accordance with the developer’s intentions.
- Chase early responses from consultees (Environment Agency, Highways Authority, etc.) to ensure that they do not delay “sign off”.
- Sieve conditions to identify those which may be no longer necessary or where an alteration in wording could bring forward a start on site (e.g. change from “before development commences” to “before occupation” or “within a set period following commencement”, etc.

5.4 The Portfolio Holder is recommended to accept the grant to ensure that the Council can play its part in accelerating the delivery of new housing development. Detailed plans for the expenditure will be finalised at the conclusion of the current restructuring exercise within planning services.

6. Summary of Consultations and Outcome

6.1 The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Management Group

6.2 No adverse comments have been received.

<i>Report Contact Officer:</i>	<i>Paul Rowland Assistant Director (Planning)</i> <i>Telephone 01234 718535 ; e-mail: Paul.Rowland@bedford.gov.uk</i>
<i>File Reference:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Previous Relevant Minutes:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Background Papers:</i>	<i>Announcement from DCLG 10 October 2014</i>
<i>Appendices:</i>	<i>None</i>



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**Successful bidders under the
Site Delivery Fund**

10 October 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to inform you that your authority has been successful in securing funding under the Site Delivery Fund.

The attached document sets out the award being made to each successful local authority for 2014-15, and also provides an indicative amount for 2015-16, which will be subject to Treasury approval before it is confirmed early in the next financial year. A copy of the grant determination for 2014-15 is also attached. We expect payment of the 2014-15 funding to take place in early November.

The accompanying Q&A sets out more details about the assessment process, the calculation of funding awarded and payment.

If you require any further information about the funding, please contact Susan Anderson (susan.anderson@communities.gsi.gov.uk) / 0303 44 42768) or Michael Bingham (Michael.bingham@communities.gsi.gov.uk / 0303 44 44413).

Yours faithfully,

Ruth Stanier