



RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

Local Government (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)
(England) Regulations 2012.

Type of decision: Material decision

Decision Date: 08 June 2023

Decision Maker: Executive director of development and city services

Decision status: Is Key Decision?: Yes

Is subject to call in? No

Decision details:

1. The council's brownfield sites Revolving Fund is funded via Norwich's Towns Fund programme, and seeks to acquire stalled and derelict sites and enable their development in cases where the market fails to do so. Where a negotiated acquisition proves unsuccessful and there is no reasonable prospect of the market delivering the site, CPO may be pursued.
2. In February 2022 Cabinet agreed to delegate acquisition of sites to the Executive director of development and city services (in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Resources and the council's Section 151 Officer).
3. Avison Young were appointed in 2022 to provide expert advice on property valuation, delivery options and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for sites identified by the Revolving Fund. They are acting on the council's behalf in engagement with the site owners and commencing negotiation on acquisitions for an initial tranche of sites (the phase 1 sites).
4. Accordingly, in 2022 land to the north of Windmill Rd, NR3 was identified as a candidate for acquisition. This had lain undeveloped for some years, and benefits from an extant planning consent for construction of 17 homes.
5. The council's property advisor undertook detailed development appraisal work on the land during 2022 in order to understand its value in the prevailing market, and examined recent transactions on similar sites in the area. This confirmed that development in line with the extant planning consent was indeed viable and deliverable.

6. Negotiation with the owner commenced in 2022, in February 2023 the council made an offer including land north of Windmill Rd and an adjoining title to ensure unencumbered access to the development land. This offer was accepted.
7. The Executive director of development and city services, following consultation with relevant people, has taken the following decision:
To approve the purchase of land to the north of Windmill Rd and the adjoining title.

Reason for decision:

8. The decision to acquire by the Revolving Fund was taken following a process of due diligence to ensure that no insurmountable barriers existed to development of the site, and that a viable disposal / development route could be identified. Disposal of the site is to be appropriately conditioned to ensure that to ensure site development can indeed take place within a reasonable timeframe.

Alternative Options:

9. The council had limited confidence that the site would be developed by its previous owner within a reasonable timeframe, despite a valid planning consent being in place. Had the council failed to purchase, the site would therefore have continued to lie undeveloped, delivering no benefit to Norwich and potentially becoming an eyesore and a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

Declarations of Interest:

None

Reports considered by the decision maker:

Windmill Road Valuation Briefing Note (*Avison Young, May 2023*)
This paper is not appended for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Any background documents considered:

None

Publication date:

16 June 2023