

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	6 March 2024
Subject:	Contract Award – Whitefriars Phase 2 Land Remediation		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment		
Wards Affected:	Westgate		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to award a contract for site remediation works at **Plot 3c** Market Parade, Gloucester (referred to as Whitefriars Phase 2) following the successful grant award of £477,903 from the One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 (BLRF2) announced in October 2023.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:
- The grant funding of £477,903 from One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 (BLRF2) associated with Whitefriars Apartments Phase 2, Gloucester is accepted.
 - That the contract for works be awarded to Reef Estates through a contract variation to the Forum Development Agreement to enable Brownfield Land remediation to be undertaken at Whitefriars Phase 2.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 As part of the council's Forum Development, the council has acquired land at 8-11 Market Parade for residential use. This land has planning permission for 24 homes (apartments) and is referred to as Whitefriars Phase 2. The planning permission has been 'implemented' through the delivery of Whitefriars Phase 1, although construction on Whitefriars Phase 2 has yet to commence.
- 3.2 Council officers have been reviewing the plans for this land and believe that the site can accommodate 32 new homes (apartments). Concept plans have been drafted, but revised planning permission has not yet been sought.
- 3.3 In March 2023 officers made a One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 (BLRF2) bid for c.£477,000 to assist in the remediation of the land. In August 2023 grant funding was awarded. This is based on the development of 32 new homes.

- 3.4 In order to satisfy the grant funding conditions, the council is required to enter into a contract for land remediation by March 2024. Officers have sought legal advice on the award of a contract and have been advised that the most expedient way in which to award a contract and comply with the grant funding requirements is to vary the existing agreement with Reef Development to incorporate additional works.
- 3.5 As Cabinet will be aware, we have a Development Funding Agreement (DFA) with Reef Development for the development of the wider Forum development. This agreement provided Reef with first refusal of the construction of the Whitefriars Phase 2 project. Officers are working on a Deed of Variation to include the demolition and land remediation at Whitefriars within the wider Kings Quarter development contract. This will ensure that there is a contract in place by 31st March 2024 as required by the BLRF2 funding agreement timeline.
- 3.6 As previously stated this approach adheres to the wider Kings Quarter Reef DFA and allows us to proceed within the tight timeline for the acceptance of the funding. A Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency notice or (VEAT) notice is being issued. This notice will publicise GCC's intentions and project procurement methodology. The Project legal team, Trowers & Hamblins have been consulted on this matter.
- 3.7 This approval does not commit the council to redevelopment of the site beyond remediation. A revised planning application will be made in due course to increase the number of apartments proposed from 24 to 32. Subject to that being granted, a full procurement process will be followed in order to identify a developer for the new apartment development.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 Social value has not been factored into this project as yet as the funding amount is already at the lower end of what is needed to complete the land remediation.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 This scheme would continue the regeneration of the Kings Quarter regeneration area of Gloucester. The site is located on previously developed land and is in a city centre location enabling the end residents to benefit from public transport and all the amenities of a city centre location.
- 5.2 The proposal does include the demolition of existing buildings on site. Their retention has been considered, but their condition renders this unviable.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing. The council could do nothing and not award a contract for remediation. Doing so would require either a variation to the funding agreement with One Public Estate or the handing back of grant funding.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The acceptance and spend of the BLRF grant funding will facilitate the redevelopment of the Whitefriars Phase 2 development, as part of the ongoing Kings Square redevelopment.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the aforementioned contract will be awarded and remediation works will commence in spring 2024.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The remediation works will be funded through the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 grant received in October 2023 and there is no additional budgetary ask of the Council provided:

- a. The contract of works is signed by 31st March 2024.
- b. The Council ensures that 32 apartments are constructed by 31st March 2027.

A failure to achieve either of these requirements could result in the BLRF2 funding being required to be returned.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 This Cabinet Report has been reviewed by our external solicitors Trowers & Hamblins for accuracy.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 Key risks:

1. Financial contingency
2. Health and safety
3. Contract of works not being signed by the 31st of March
4. Not building out by 2027

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed as part of the Kings Quarter development and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 There are no community safety implications at this stage.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 There are no staffing or trade union implications.