



Operational Officer Decision Record

Where the decision has a financial value of between £100k - £350k and does not have a **significant** impact on two or more wards

1. Subject and details of the matter (to include reasons for the decision and detail of any previous cabinet decision)

To provide a capital grant of £200,000 to the Grimsby Renewables Exploratorium (GRE) scheme, utilising an element of the Town Fund monies awarded to North East Lincolnshire Council, which was approved at Cabinet on 16th June 2021.

GRE will be a new educational and cultural facility situated at Alexandra Dock, adjacent to the Fishing Heritage Centre.

GRE will showcase both the technological & environmental achievements of North East Lincolnshire's burgeoning Low Carbon & Renewables sector and promote the various career opportunities available within it.

The aim of GRE is to inspire young minds, the local community, and visitors of the opportunities being created by the Low Carbon & Renewables sector, within a visible town centre location. This will involve a mixture of on-site visits and production of digital content that will enhance GRE's geographical coverage significantly.

This will be achieved by linking in with the education sector within North East Lincolnshire and further afield to promote GRE's learning products, including the Council's Looked After Children, to it is accessible to as many young people as possible.

The GRE facility itself will be a modular construction that enhances the Alexandra Dock area and work in partnership with the Fishing Heritage Centre, showcasing the history of Grimsby & North East Lincolnshire alongside it's future economic opportunities.

The GRE scheme will be operated by a Community Interest Company (CIC) aimed specifically at promoting the opportunities outlined above, and Grimsby/North East Lincolnshire. The CIC's Trustees include experts in the fields of modular construction and events/visitor attractions. Funding of the project will be achieved by a combination of public funding and private sponsorship, with private commitments already agreed to match the public funding contribution. The GRE will operate in partnership with many of the area's key Low Carbon & Renewables sector's key businesses, who will provide a mixture of funding, equipment, and expertise to support the development, operation, and promotion of the facility. It is not anticipated that the project becomes reliable on public funding for its operation.

2. Decision being taken

To award a grant of £200,000 to Grimsby Renewables Exploratorium CIC to support the development of the GRE facility on Alexandra Dock.

An initial amount of £50,000 would be released immediately to support professional fees expended on design and planning.

The remaining £150,000 would be released using a phased approach once key milestones have been achieved by GRE regarding development of the Alexandra Dock facility. Agreement regarding achievement of the milestones would be provided by senior Council Officers, including the Monitoring Officer. The grant would be allocated from the Council's existing Towns Fund grant.

3. Is it an Urgent Decision? If yes, specify the reasons for urgency. Urgent decisions will require sign off by the relevant scrutiny chair(s) as not subject to call in.

Yes. The payment of first instalment will enable planning to be progressed immediately, which will enable project to progress to delivery before next academic year. Delays in progressing planning will lead to project delivery delays.

In addition, ordering materials immediately will ensure that prices quoted in the tender document are locked in.

4. Anticipated outcome(s)/benefits

The GRE development will provide an opportunity to create a learning experience for children and young people across North East Lincolnshire and further afield via digital learning opportunities emanating from it.

GRE will also enhance the links between industry and education within North East Lincolnshire, providing an exciting, visual, and stimulating learning experience that will:

- promote the scientific and environmental technologies within the low carbon & renewables sector within North East Lincolnshire; and,
- enhance the area's careers, skills advice and guidance opportunities, arising from the sector.

In addition, the GRE will supplement the Council's wider ambition for Grimsby town centre, including the Towns Fund projects underway, or about to commence. GRE would enhance the existing Alexandra Dock area of Grimsby town centre and aligns with the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan for the dock, by creating: more diverse uses into the town centre; reconnecting the town centre with the waterfront; promoting and support community ownership & participation; and enhancing opportunities for employment, skills and enterprise.

5. Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision

The alternative option is not to provide a grant to GRE.

This has been rejected because without the Council's contribution, GRE would not be able to achieve its ambition to create a facility that will support the area, its industry, and young people.

6. Background documents considered (web link to be included or copies of documents for publishing)

Cabinet Report – Towns Fund – 16th June 2021

7. Does the taking of the decision include consideration of Exempt information? If yes, specify the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A and the reasons

No.

8. Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Cabinet Member who was consulted by the officer which relates to the decision (in respect of any declared conflict of interest, please provide a note of dispensation granted by the Council's Chief Executive)

N/A

9. Monitoring Officer Comments (Monitoring Officer or nominee)

The award of the grant is consistent with the will of Cabinet and delegations. It is also in line with the overall Town Investment Plan and aligns with other town centre projects, contributing to the Council's priorities. The funding terms suggested are sensible for a grant of this nature.

10. Section 151 Officer Comments (Deputy S151 Officer or nominee)

The capital grant will be funded entirely from the Council's Town Fund allocation so there is no direct impact upon the Council's revenue position.

11. Human Resource Comments (Head of People and Culture or nominee)

There are no direct HR implications

12. Risk Assessment (in accordance with the Report Writing Guide)

The risks associated with this project are:

- planning permission not permitted
- private sector support & funding not secured
- development not viable

The key personnel behind the GRE are experienced in the development of modular build schemes and activities such as that proposed within this document.

Consequently, they have produced a full planning application based on their previous experience and submitted this for consideration. Early-stage discussions

with NELC planners hasn't caused any fundamental concerns with the scheme, but further consultation, etc, will ensue, as per the normal process. However, given the staged payment proposed above, even should planning permission not be permitted, the Council's funding allocation would not be at risk.

The GRE team has carried out extensive engagement with key private sector organisations across the North East Lincolnshire area and secured backing accordingly. The support offered to GRE includes financial backing (sponsorship & patronage), gifting of equipment to put in the GRE, and in-kind support. GRE has secured sufficient support (alongside the NELC grant) to develop the facility as outlined in this report.

As outlined above, the key personnel behind the GRE are experienced in the development of schemes such as this, having developed a variety of facilities across the UK. Consequently, a business plan and cost estimate has been produced for the GRE, based on this experience and extensive knowledge of the supply chain involved in the development, which shows it's viability.

In addition, to cost viability, the consultation conducted with industry, alongside engagement with organisations that support young people, has indicated that the concept is viable. Further consultation will ensue as the facility is developed and feedback will be sought when operational, to ensure the content of the GRE remains valued.

13. If the decision links to a previous one taken by Cabinet, has the Cabinet Tracker been updated?

Town Deal – Cabinet – 1st June 2021

14. Decision Maker(s):

Name: Carolina Borgstrom

Title: Director of Economy,
Environment and Infrastructure

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 08/02/2023

**15. Consultation carried out with
Leader of the Council :**

Name: Cllr Philip Jackson

Title: Leader

Dated: 8th February 2023

Signed: REDACTED

**16. If the decision is urgent then
consultation should be carried out
with the relevant Scrutiny
Chair/Mayor/Deputy Mayor**

Name: Cllr Oliver Freeston

Title: Economy Scrutiny Chair

Signed: REDACTED

Dated: 8th February 2023