

GROVE ROAD RIVERSIDE RESIDENTIAL QUARTER

SUPPORTING BUSINESS RELOCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, is looking to deliver the Grove Road Riverside Residential Quarter in Northfleet, Gravesend. The scheme is a residential-led, mixed use development situated around Grove Road, College Road and bordered by the River Thames to the north. It will include up to 320 new homes, two parks, community facilities, improved heritage buildings and a new Fastrack highway. Delivery of the scheme includes the acquisition of several freeholds and leaseholds.
- 1.2. The purpose of this strategy document is to set out our proposals to support business relocations required for delivery of the Scheme. This policy supports the Grove Road Regeneration Acquisition Strategy and the Fees Policy.
- 1.3. The Grove Road site includes an area of mixed industrial land with a range of units, workshops, yards, and storage facilities of vary sizes and age. The site is in multiple ownership and occupation with a number of freehold owner occupiers as well as leaseholders operating businesses from the area. Land referencing investigations undertaken in August 2019 indicate there are 10 businesses around the Grove Road area that will be directly impacted by the Grove Road Regeneration.
- 1.4. EDC are continuing, and will continue, to use reasonable efforts to reach agreement with the remaining parties to acquire the outstanding land interests, or third party rights in land, required to enable delivery of the Scheme. EDC's preference is to reach an agreement with each landowner (which for the purpose of this strategy document, includes those with an interest in the Site and owners of relevant third party rights) rather than relying on CPO powers. CBRE Limited have been appointed as agent to undertake negotiations on behalf of EDC.
- 1.5. Negotiations are being carried out, and are intended to continue to be carried out, in such a way that complies with the guidance to acquiring authorities set out in "*Guidance on Compulsory purchase process and the Crichel Down Rules*" (published in July 2019).

2. PROPOSED ACTION

Communications

- 2.1. EDC will continue to use reasonable efforts to contact every party whose property, or rights in property are required, to provide those parties with details of the Scheme and of the proposed CPO. This will include information on the Scheme's status; timetable; and anticipated impact on their property and/or rights. All parties have been invited to discuss their concerns and to enter into negotiations with EDC. Finally, it should be note that the that EDC (as applicant) will be required to formally notify all landowners prior to submission of the planning application. This is a necessary step where the applicant does not own all land within their planning red line boundary.

- 2.2. EDC will maintain a continuing dialogue, where practicable, with all parties holding an interest in properties at the Site potentially subject to a CPO.
- 2.3. EDC will ensure, where practicable, that affected parties are regularly updated as to progress, any proposed alterations to the Scheme and the likely impact of the Scheme on their properties as the Scheme evolves. Those who have not yet taken up EDC's invitation to enter into discussions and negotiations with EDC will be regularly reminded of that continuing invitation.

Compensation

- 2.4 Businesses displaced by the proposed Scheme will be compensated under the Compensation Code.
- 2.5 Where businesses are displaced from their premises by compulsory purchase EDC recognises the importance to those businesses of being able to relocate to another site. In addition to payment of the open market value of the interest in the land acquired compulsorily, the Compensation Code normally provides for the cost of such relocation to be taken into account under the heading of disturbance compensation.
- 2.6 We recommend that affected parties take professional advice on their entitlement to compensation. The costs of such advice are considered further in this document.

Assistance with relocation

- 2.7 We envisage in the majority of cases that businesses will be able to use their compensation payment to relocate their operations. The compulsory purchase process places a duty on affected parties to take steps to mitigate their losses and steps should be taken by businesses to achieve this. However, in addition to the statutory requirements of compensation EDC are also providing the following support:
 - I. Property Availability Schedule
Based on information provided by businesses, EDC are working to identify properties available on the market in the local area that be suitable for relocation options. This schedule is updated and shared with relevant businesses on a periodic basis.
 - II. Off Market Opportunities
In the event that individual property requirements may be more challenging to fulfil from the pool of actively marketed properties, EDC will look to identify 'off market' opportunities in the local area.
 - III. Early Funding Arrangements - Relocation Costs
The EDC are willing to consider early compensation payments arrangements were this will enable a business to successfully relocate in a timely fashion.

Agreements to support relocation

2.8 Depending on the specific circumstances of the individual business in question, a range of potential agreements can be explored, to include (for example):

- Agreeing a purchase price, or a minimum sum of compensation, to enable the business to vacate at a pre-agreed time.
- Agreeing an acquisition so the business is able to relocate. This would either be on the basis that a price is agreed at the time the agreement is signed, or that a mechanism is agreed for reaching that price.
- Agreeing to allow a lease to be surrendered (either when the agreement is signed, or at a defined point in the future).
- Agreeing an arrangement for an extended notice period before the occupier's relevant unit is acquired.
- Agreeing to acquire, conditionally on occurrence/satisfaction of conditions precedent or compliance with other obligations (which are matters to be agreed).
- Agreeing to acquire the occupier's interest, upon acquisition by EDC, of the landlord's interest in the part of the site in question (if separate).

Professional Costs

2.9 EDC have a Land and Property Acquisition Fee Policy in place. This is designed to provide funding for professional advice when trying to reach an agreement. That document identifies the most likely advice required would be from a surveyor, solicitor, or accountant, when negotiating with EDC.

2.10 EDC recognise that, when looking to relocate a business, it may be necessary to instruct other advisors. This could include those searching for premises, technical advisers (such as planning or fit out), or others specifically relevant to business needs. EDC will, at its discretion, consider reimbursing such costs in a manner similar to the Acquisitions Strategy and the Fees Policy .

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