

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L17 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Industrial Strategy Zone Site Accelerator Grant
2	Decision maker: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE, Leader of The Council
3	Report author and contact details: Cath Parnall catherine.parnall@plymouth.gov.uk
4	<p>Decision to be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree to accept £255,000 funding, from the Industrial Strategy Zone Sites Accelerator Grant Fund, to accelerate Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Planning Support 2. To authorise the S151 Office to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MCHLG. 2. To authorise the Strategic Director for Growth to sign the Grant Funding Agreement, if any and to approve relevant funding claims up to the total amount of £255,000.
5	<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plymouth City Council is the Accountable Body for Plymouth and South Devon Freeport (Freeport) and will receive and allocate the funding to support the Planning Programme 2. The decision is necessary in order to meet timelines set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to deliver the proposed activities and spend the funds accordingly and on time. 3. The core objective of the project is to commission a rapid review of planning obstacles and resource Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to accelerate solutions. Public funding is justified as no single developer or authority can deliver a multi-site approach within the tight timelines. The grant will de-risk development, attract private sector match funding and secure retained rates for long-term economic growth. <p>With the evolution of the Freeport since the original Full Business Case there is now an increase in demand for further industrial and waterside space for our defence and marine autonomy clusters, who are looking to test, trial and deploy within Plymouth. There are 3 sites where we are looking to increase space, the Langage tax Site – 48.5 hectares, the Sherford Tax Site – 7.9 hectares and Turnchapel Mk 2 – 4 hectares (currently not a tax site but a request has been made to MHCLG to include this as part of the Freeport Tax Site expansion proposal).</p> <p>All three sites ideally need to move forward at pace so clearly there is a need to work closely with the Local Authorities around planning capacity. The Langage and Sherford sites are within South Hams District Council which has a dedicated Urban Fringe Team that has recently lost much of its core funding. The LPA for Turnchapel is Plymouth City Council and Yacht Havens would like to accelerate their preliminary discussions around the further development of that site.</p> <p>The Freeport Team would work closely with the LPA's and end users to assist with the planning</p>

	<p>applications that will in turn enable the much needed site expansions that will fill the increase in demand for space from the defence and marine autonomy cluster, thus bringing in more private sector match funding, jobs and secure retained rates for long-term economic growth.</p> <p>The funding to be made available as a grant for the Freeport team to accelerate planning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning a rapid review to better understand the specific planning requirements for each developer and the required performance commitments that would be needed to deliver the Freeport vision and secure much needed retained rates. Resourcing the relevant teams to kick-start LPA solutions in respect of the above. <p><u>Better Collaboration.</u></p> <p>This activity will enable a better collaboration within all parties in the first instance as a clear output, working with the developers and relevant LPAs in each case, and importantly, taking a holistic cross site view. It will also provide resource to kick-start solutions to de-risk development which we would expect the private sector to then fund through PPAs moving forward.</p> <p><u>Rationale for public funding</u></p> <p>No single developer or Local Authority currently has the capacity or resources to deliver a multi-site solution, especially over a compressed window of three months (Q4 2025/6). This modest request will significantly accelerate delivery and therefore generate retained rates. Further, by granting the funding to the Freeport itself, the award can be used strategically and holistically across the sites. The private sector will effectively match fund the longer-term solution.</p>
6	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <p>Do nothing - This would severely impact on the ability to accept and spend the allocated amount for this financial year but also would impact on the ability to expand space and thus attract more inward investment into the defence and marine autonomy clusters. The Freeport offering is also a major attraction to these clusters.</p>
7	<p>Financial implications and risks: MHCLG launched the Site Accelerator Grant, available between November 2025 and end December 2025, which is focused on removing barriers to the development of key, strategic sites within Industrial Strategy Zones (ISZs). The funding is received from them for the purpose of delivering the aforementioned programme of planning works and is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding and further funding agreements that bind Plymouth City Council and the Freeport Company into an agreement with MHCLG and further funding agreements between the Accountable Body and projects outlining that the funds are shouldered by the applicant as such is contractually obliged to deliver and spend according to the Fund parameters and requirements. Projects are subject to Accountable Body processes involving but not limited to procurement regulations, monitoring and governance, as such, failure to follow requirements from either the Accountable Body or MHCLG runs the risk of remedial action. We will maintain robust programme management protocols through regular monitoring and review to ensure that the projects are delivered within the grant terms and conditions. Remedial action will be taken where necessary.</p>
8	<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>Entering into this MOU is lawful and within the Council's powers. Although the MoU itself is not legally binding, it establishes the framework for a Section 31 Local Government Act 2003 grant, the conditions of which will be legally enforceable once the Grant Determination is issued. The Council must therefore ensure compliance with all associated obligations, including procurement law, subsidy control, equalities duties, fraud prevention requirements, data protection, and monitoring and reporting commitments set by MHCLG.</p>

9	Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			x	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
			x	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million annually
		x	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.	
	If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions	N/A		
10	Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	This decision can be linked to the Plymouth Plan Growing City and International City as well as Plymouth being a National Centre for Marine Autonomy and linked to the wider Defence Plan and Team Plymouth. This decision and will be managed and monitored in accordance with Plymouth City Council processes.		
11	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	These planning works will contribute towards a larger solution, and will target BREEAM Excellence standards and / or Net Zero Carbon outcomes.		

Urgent decisions

12a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	X	(If no, go to section 13a)
12b	Reason for urgency:			
12c	Scrutiny Chair Signature:		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			

Consultation

13a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes		
		No	X	(If no go to section 14)
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?			
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted			
14	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No		
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Glenn Caplin-Grey	
		Job title	Strategic Director for Growth.	
		Date consulted	26 January 2026	
Sign-off				
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DS73 25/26	
		Finance (mandatory)	OW.25.26.120	
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/00001312/3/AC/26/1/26.	
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A	
		Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)	N/A	
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A	
Appendices				
17	Ref.	Title of appendix		
	A	Briefing report for publication (<i>mandatory</i>)		
	B	Equalities Impact Assessment (<i>where required</i>)		
Confidential/exempt information				
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?	Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)
		No	x	

		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:							
Background Papers								
19	<p>Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below.</p> <p>Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</p>							
Title of background paper(s)		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cabinet Member Signature								
20	<p>I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.</p>							
Signature				Date of decision	4 February 2026			
Print Name	Councillor Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council							