

Brownfield Land Residential Development Opportunity

Land at Evelyn Avenue, St Helens, WA9 1SR

Guidance and instructions on completing the Expression of Interest

This document provides information on the following:

1. Instructions on how to complete the Expression of Interest and explanation of the process that the Council is following to identify a development partner for the site.
2. Process and guidelines for assessing the Expressions of Interest.
3. Council vision and aims for the site.
4. Background to the site.
5. Brownfield Land Release Funding.
6. Development Planning Brief.
7. Site Investigation Report.

These instructions should also be read in conjunction with the following documents that are also available on the following webpage <https://sthelens.gov.uk/EvelynAvenue>

- Site Plan
- Development Planning Brief
- Site Investigation Report
- Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and Housing Strategy

1. Instructions and Guidance on completing an Expression of Interest

Please read the document through and if you feel that your company can respond please complete the questionnaire and return to EvelynAvenueBLRF@sthelens.gov.uk no later than 5pm 31 January 2025. There is a maximum word limit of 500 words per question and we would appreciate clear and concise responses.

Please note that this is not a call for competition or any form of bidding, and this questionnaire will not formally begin a disposal process or constitute any commitment by St. Helens Council to dispose of the site for housing development.

This exercise is intended to help shape the Council's next steps in taking forward this brownfield site. Any decision relating to disposal of the site will be subject to further formal decision making that will be undertaken in accordance with our statutory duties.

Potential developers will not be prejudiced by their response or failure to respond to this questionnaire. Potential developers must also note that a response to this request does not guarantee an invitation to participate in any future housing development opportunities offered by the Council. Participants responding to this questionnaire may be invited to meet with the Council to discuss questionnaire responses.

The Council is subject to the disclosure requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) and that potentially any information we hold is liable to disclosure under that Act. For this reason, we would strongly advise that any information you consider to be confidential should also be labelled as such. If a request is subsequently made for disclosure under the FoIA that request will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation

2. Process and guidelines for assessing the Expressions of Interest

Expression of Interest submissions will be assessed on whether they meet the following **minimum criteria**, to ensure their credibility and alignment to council objectives. Submissions received will shape the Council's next steps in taking forward this site.

Questions on the Expression of Interest form will identify if:

- The organisation demonstrates that they are able enter into a partnership with St Helens Borough Council to satisfy the prevailing requirements of the Brownfield Land Release Fund conditions as outlined.
- There is evidence of previous experience of the successful remediation and development of similar brownfield land.
- There is evidence of an outline project vision / concept for this development opportunity that places an emphasis on high quality design, sustainability, social value, and/or other innovations, whilst demonstrating the ability to successfully deliver this project at pace.
- Financial ability to deliver the requirements of the project, with suitable evidence to be provided as described in Question 6.

Questions 1 to 7 will each be scored on the following basis

On the basis of information in the answers on the Expression of Interest	Score
Applicant has fully demonstrated ability to meet the council's requirements	5
Applicant has partially demonstrated ability to meet the council's requirements	3
Applicant has demonstrated only limited ability to meet the council's requirements	1
Applicant has not demonstrated an ability to meet the council's requirements	0

3. Council Vision

St Helens Borough Council is seeking Expressions of Interest pursuant to the future appointment of an experienced delivery partner to create a high-quality neighbourhood development for this exciting prime brownfield site redevelopment opportunity, which includes over £1million secured funding to support its remediation prior to redevelopment.

The Council owns approximately 1.83 hectares of land at Evelyn Avenue, which provides an outstanding opportunity for the development of approximately 80 new homes in an existing residential neighbourhood, with the aim being to create an attractive and sustainable development that positively responds to the local setting whilst providing a quality environment that can be enjoyed by all. The full potential of this site is illustrated in the Development Brief provided. These objectives are supported through the One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund with an award of funding to St. Helens Council of over £1 million to undertake remediation works on this site prior to development.

The Council is seeking to identify a development partner who has a track record of high quality development and efficient delivery on brownfield sites. Under the current terms of the

One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund, the contract for sale / remediation should be signed by 31 March 2025; however, the Council is awaiting the outcome of a request to the funders for an extension to 30 September 2025 with all subsequent dates unaltered. This includes a commitment to full completion of remediation of the site by 1 January 2028.

Given the nature of the site, there is an expectation that a start on housing development can commence alongside remediation activity, with development of the whole site progressing by 31 March 2028.

The site at Evelyn Avenue is located to the east of St Helens town centre in the neighbourhood of Parr. The location has excellent public transport links to the town centre and beyond. The future occupants will have easy access to several schools, medical facilities, shops and recreation areas. The site has huge potential to deliver a sustainable residential development that forms a natural extension to the existing neighbourhood. The site is a long-standing regeneration priority and the area also stands to benefit from, and support, major strategic growth opportunities in the Borough of St Helens.

The Council's vision for quality and accessible housing for all is presented in its Housing Strategy 2022-27. The borough wishes to increase the delivery of a mix of both affordable and executive homes. The council will encourage suitable modern methods of construction to accelerate delivery where possible.

Specific aims for this site development are as follows:

- Density towards the higher end of 35 to 45 dwellings per hectare with an expectation of houses which in keeping with the character of existing homes in the area.
- Use of green infrastructure to provide a high quality setting for the homes and to provide links to the nearby public parks.
- Accessible and permeable layout.
- Achievement of a high level of environmental sustainability in terms of design and energy use.
- Types of homes which contribute to the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy, with a preference for a mix which would provide both market and affordable housing.

4. Background

This development opportunity forms part of the former Parr High School site that was closed in August 2002 following the public consultation. Since that time, a new school (Mill Green) has been constructed on the eastern portion of the site, whilst the remaining area has remained undeveloped due to known ground conditions in this area.

5. Brownfield Land Release Funding

The potential of this site for development has been constrained by the known presence of former mine workings and associated spoil alongside land contamination. The Council has recently applied for competitive funding from the governments Brownfield Land Release Fund (2) and was successful in securing funding for costs of bringing the land up to developable standard. The funding is for eligible costs, including, but not exclusively:

- site levelling, groundworks, demolition, remediation
- provision of small-scale infrastructure
- highways works or other access challenges
- addressing environmental constraints
- external works, substructure and piling

- asbestos removal
- sewer diversions

Key milestones are as follows:

- The Council must sign a contract with the development partner by 31 March 2025. However as explained above, a decision to the funding body on a request to defer this date to 31 September 2025 is awaited.
- All eligible works delivered by the funding must be completed by 1 January 2028 so that the land is fully released for commencement of house building by 31 March 2028.
- Housing development is expected to take place between 2028 and 2030 and may commence alongside remediation.

6. Development Planning Brief

A Development Brief has been prepared for this site that seeks to promote this opportunity and provide a summary of the planning policy considerations and design principles that the Council would be seeking from its development partner. The Development Brief has been provided to help create a responsive and distinctive development for this area of the Borough. This document is not prescriptive and assumes that the resultant development will meet or exceed the relevant regulations and standards.

7. Site Investigations

A Site Investigation document is included on the following webpage <https://sthelens.gov.uk/EvelynAvenue> that provides details of a geo-environmental assessment of the site.

NB. The site investigation report was commissioned to support previous proposed development at the site. Developers interested in this site should ensure they make their own investigations to verify findings in the report.