

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**LEADER DECISION 20th DECEMBER 2018****NEW COLLEGE, WELLINGTON****REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT****LEAD CABINET MEMBER - CLLR SHAUN DAVIES****PART A - SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

In January 2018 Cabinet approved a Report proposing that the Council acquire the site of the former New College in College Ward, Wellington. This was with a view to using the site to expand special school provision in the light of key findings of an efficiency assessment which indicated a need to expand existing provision to meet demand in the borough.

Specific reference was made to the site providing a more flexible solution to the expansion of Haughton School as well as providing opportunities for more efficient special school provision across the Borough.

While when the Heads of Terms for the acquisition were agreed a Sport England restriction on the site which had been breached by the College was known, it has taken some time to fully understand the requirements of Sport England and to cost these. It was also not until July 2018 that the College ceased to be operational allowing the necessary invasive survey work necessary to fully cost the scheme to be undertaken.

The result of the Sport England restriction and detailed survey work of the existing buildings proposed to be used to accommodate Haughton, has shown that, with this new information, the sole use of the site for the relocation of Haughton School is neither the best solution nor does it represent best value. However the opportunity remains to consider a campus style development including special school provision alongside other uses.

New College sits within College Ward, an area ranked within the 10% most deprived nationally. The Ward has particularly high deprivation indices in relation to employment deprivation, education, skills and training. College also includes one of the Borough's largest BME populations.

This is a large and as such key site where there is the potential to make a significant contribution to regeneration of the Ward e.g. through the provision of housing including supported accommodation, office or small business use alongside continued consideration for education use. Were the site to be sold by Telford College to another party a development that does not consider the context of the local area could come forward ultimately risking a detrimental impact on the local community.

It is therefore proposed that the Council continue with the acquisition of the site on the basis of bringing forward a masterplan and subsequent mixed use development that will support the regeneration of the local area. This accords with previous interventions made in other priority Wards including South Telford and a number of local centres to support regeneration. The process would include consultation with the local community to ensure that the use of the site makes a positive contribution to the local area.

As negotiations with the College have been ongoing for some time, the College are pressing for a commitment by the Authority before the end of December 2018. At this point they have confirmed that the site will otherwise be placed onto the open market. An urgent Strong Leader decision is therefore sought to enable the final negotiation of the site acquisition within this timescale to enable consideration to be given to delivering a wider regeneration scheme.

The site would be incorporated into the Council's Property Investment Portfolio with revenue costs to manage and maintain the site pending completion of the masterplan and scheme delivery, met from existing PIP budgets.

Undertaking a detailed masterplan, achieving planning approval, further survey work etc will incur additional revenue costs, estimated at up to £200k over 18/19 and 19/20. These will be met from an allocation of part of the unused revenue contingency available in the current financial year.

A further Report will be brought back to Cabinet setting out proposals and any requirement for further investment following completion of the site masterplan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Leader delegates authority to the Assistant Director Business, Development & Employment and Assistant Director for Finance & HR in consultation with the Leader to negotiate and complete the acquisition of the New College and its masterplanning for a mix of uses on the basis of supporting the regeneration of College Ward
2. That the Leader approves an allocation of £200k from the Council's 2018/19 revenue contingency to cover the additional costs relating to undertaking a detailed masterplan, achieving planning approval, further survey work etc. as outlined above.
3. That the Leader delegates authority to the Assistant Director Business, Development & Employment in consultation with the Leader to negotiate and complete the disposal of appropriate interests in the assets_which are deemed surplus to requirements
4. That the Leader delegates authority to the Assistant Director Business, Development & Employment and Assistant Director for Finance & HR to complete any required processes and enter into any required agreements, transfers or other documentation to give effect to the recommendations in this report
5. That the Leader delegates authority to the Assistant Director Governance, Procurement & Commissioning so seal or sign any documents required to give effect to the recommendations contained in this report

2.SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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| COMMUNITY IMPACT | Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)? | |
| | Yes | <p>Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing.</p> <p>Put our children and young people first</p> <p>Improve local prospects through education and skills training</p> <p>Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults</p> |
| | Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people? | |
| | Yes | <p>Residents of College Ward</p> <p>Pupils aged 3- 11 with SEND</p> |
| TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE | Acquisition of New College Site by Feb/March 2019 Masterplan — Autumn 2019 | |
| FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT | Yes | <p>The cost of undertaking a detailed masterplan, achieving planning approval, further survey work and other actions necessary to bring the masterplan forward is estimated to be up to £200k. This can be covered by allocating part of the unused revenue budget contingency available in the current year.</p> <p>As the site will be held within the PIP any revenue costs arising relating to security, business rates etc. will be covered from the existing over-achievement against PIP targets.</p> |

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| | | <p>It is anticipated that now that further information about the condition of the buildings and the Sport England requirements is available that the purchase price will be re-negotiated if a quick sale can be agreed provided that the restrictions to education use only imposed in the original Heads of Terms is removed.</p> <p>It is now apparent that the whole site is not required for use as a special school. This presents the opportunity to undertake a wider regeneration project. It will therefore only be possible to assess the potential capital and revenue implications of potential options once the master planning exercise referred to in the report has been completed at which point a further report identifying costs and funding options will need to be considered by Cabinet. KC 12/12/18</p> |
| LEGAL ISSUES | Yes | <p>Property</p> <p>The acquisition of the site would be subject to the Council's Legal Services Property Team carrying out a report on title and searches and progress will be dependent upon any required planning approvals and other necessary consents being obtained JE 12/12/18</p> |
| OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES | Yes | <p>Opportunity to develop proposals for a key site in College Ward that incorporate a range of uses that will support the regeneration of an area with high levels of deprivation.</p> <p>The development of the masterplan would include meaningful local engagement and an Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Opportunity for additional pupil places both now and in the future for vulnerable children</p> <p>While consideration has been given to the mix of uses that could be accommodated on the site alongside education provision, full master planning</p> |

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| | | <p>and market testing has not been completed at this stage, so full costs of delivery are not known.</p> <p>The masterplanning may identify viability constraints on the mix of uses that can be delivered on the site and may require additional investment for the scheme to be delivered. This would be subject to further Reports to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Council (PIP) will incur costs for managing and maintaining the site while the masterplan is being prepared and delivered.</p> |
| IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS | Yes | College Ward plus Borough wide impact specifically for children with SEND |

Appendix A (not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 Part 1 Schedule 12 A Local Government Act 1972) identifies the Council's offer for the site while still subject to negotiation.

Report prepared by Katherine Kynaston, Assistant Director, Business, Development & Employment