



Report to Cabinet

Date: 13 October 2020

Title: Winslow Centre Development

Relevant councillor(s): J Chilver, Sir B Stanier, L Monger, S Renshell, S Raven

Author and/or contact officer: Martin Connor, Head of Major Projects

Ward(s) affected: Winslow

Recommendations:

- Approve the release of £800k from the Winslow capital project budgets to complete the initial concept design stage for the Winslow Centre Development (a One Public Estate funded feasibility project).
- Authorise the Director of Property and Assets in consultation with the agreed Cabinet Member, the S151/Head of Finance delegated authority to take the project through to the end of RIBA Stage 3. This will see completion of the initial concept design stage including:
 1. Seeking pre-planning advice, public consultation and submission of the relevant planning application(s); including the development of a planning strategy and a full local member and stakeholder consultation plan;
 2. Continuing negotiations with specialist housing providers and public sector partners to inform the business case decision to be brought back to Cabinet;
 3. Appointment of Professional Teams and commissioning of further required surveys;
 4. The exploration of a property company for the management, rent and or sale of housing units (residential and independent living);
 5. Arranging the provision of a temporary library facility to prepare for the existing library decant whilst it is re-provisioned in a new facility.

Estimated Costs:

Discipline/Service	Cost (£k)
Design Guardian (2)	322500
Commercial Team (2)	77500
Planning Consultancy	180000
Surveys (Topography/Ecology/GI etc.)	100000
Appraisal advice	50000
Contract Negotiations	70000
	800000

These costs for taking the project through to the end of RIBA Stage 3 have been estimated using recent costs from similar projects and assumes the need for separate Commercial and Design Guardian teams for Plots (1&3) and the Sports Hub. Plots (1 & 3) and the Sports Hub are shown on the plans in the appendices.

An End of RIBA Stage 3 Report and business case will be brought back to Cabinet seeking approval to proceed to RIBA Stage 4 with options whether to proceed with the project on one of the following:

1. Do nothing
2. Part sale of sites with Planning and part development with retention of certain assets which could be directly owned by the Council or through Consilio e.g. affordable and keyworker housing, sports facilities and the library
3. Redevelopment and sale by a third party with retention of sports facilities by the Council.
4. Alternative mix based on the second option

Reason for decision:

Significant due diligence has been undertaken which demonstrates the scheme is viable and that the recommendation to proceed to a Planning Application is well founded. However further work needs to be done regarding the delivery of the development which needs to take into account;

- the market at the time if Planning consent is obtained
- Options to financially de risk the project by undertaking a mixture of land sales and direct development.
- Post Covid-19 the opportunity for Sport England, RFU and FA funding to become available to support the development.

Options for the development have been analysed alongside a “do-nothing” option. The headline figures suggest that a positive net capital receipt might be in the order of £5.5m and £9m depending on the development delivery method chosen. A net capital receipt would support the Councils capital receipts target.

All three options will be re-evaluated and financial viability tested to ensure the most advantageous option (if appropriate) is recommended for approval when the End of RIBA Stage 3 report is brought back to Cabinet.

Executive summary

1.1 Significant amounts of due diligence and engagement with the Local Community has already been undertaken and the proposed scheme of a mixture of housing and community/ sports facilities are deemed viable. An analysis of these findings is set out in Part 2 of this report. It is therefore recommended the Council proceeds with the next phase of work on the project which is to promote a Planning Application for the scheme. The Council has successfully completed or have planned the first phases of the project which include demolition of the School, surrender and re grant of a lease at Redfield Farm to enable re-located sports facilities, and early master planning, Town Council engagement, soft market testing and viability testing. All these work streams have reached a stage where further investment is needed to progress the scheme, secure Planning and thereby create further value.

Content of report

1.2 Buckinghamshire Council have undertaken a significant amount of due diligence to identify the preferred way forward for the Winslow Centre Development.

1.3 The existing Winslow Centre Site is currently occupied by a number of different structures:

- Rugby Pitch
- Multi-Use Games Area
- Tennis Courts
- Community Library
- Old School Site – used to host Bucks Adult Learning groups on an ad-hoc basis
- Youth Centre

1.4 All structures, including the tennis courts and multi-use games area are outdated and not fit-for-purpose. These existing buildings are currently being demolished as part of

the demolition and clearance programme approved in January 2019 to enable redevelopment of the site. The tennis courts, rugby pitch and football pitch will remain in use until they are re-provisioned at the Redfield Farm site.

- 1.5 The Business Case has identified that the delivery of a community facility, sports facility, extra-care housing and residential housing will address the significant under-utilisation of the site, alongside meeting increased demand in the area and enabling a significant capital receipt to be realised by the Council.
- 1.6 The Strategic Case has investigated the national, regional and local strategic context, alongside the rationale and objectives of the project, to ensure a compelling case for change. In particular, demographics and local strategic priorities underpin the recommendations made in this document, and the strategic investment objectives outline the key priorities with which the Council is pursuing this change project.
- 1.7 The potential options available to the Council in regards to the site, including a “do-nothing” option. Through comparisons of qualitative and quantitative data, the preliminary Business Case has identified a preferred option for moving forward, which constitutes:
 - The provision of a new, fit-for-purpose community facility which will include a library and office space at Plot 1. The library will allow us to offer essential local services through one front door.
 - Residential units on Plot 1, both above the library complex and in a new residential block. Discussions will continue with specialist providers of accommodation for people with learning disability and dementia.
 - Extra Care provision on site 2
 - Significant residential delivery on Plot 3
 - The re-provision of sports pitches through a purpose built, state-of-the-art sports facility on the adjacent Redfield Farm, including rugby, football and tennis facilities.
- 1.8 The Commercial Case will ensure relevant options have been identified and assessed for value for money. Using this investigation, this report outlines the first step in the process which is to promote and endeavour to secure a suitable Planning consent.
- 1.9 The Preliminary Financial Case has ensured capital and revenue affordability of the scheme, comparing estimated project costs against total estimated capital and revenue income. The Preliminary Management Case provides a template for managing the project through to completion, identifying, among other things, key project governance structures, project management methodologies, benefits realisation strategies and key stage sign off. The next key stage sign off is how the scheme will be delivered post planning which will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

- 1.10 The Preliminary Business Case (securing Planning Consent) concludes by assessing the viability of the preferred option and sets out the next steps to be taken in order to progress the project further.

Other options considered

- 1.11 “Do nothing”

Continuation of Business-As-Usual on the site, with buildings in poor condition, a cost inefficient estate, alongside significant opportunity cost to not develop the valuable land, does not stack up either qualitatively or quantitatively.

Doing nothing on the Winslow Centre Site would create significant risks to the Council in achieving its Strategic Investment Objectives, and would become a significant financial burden as there would be limited ability to meet the costs of the site with any rental income.

- 1.12 Consider an alternative development to the one proposed in this report

Significant local community engagement with the Parish Council has already been undertaken and they continue to be involved in the project moving forward. Another scheme would be a set back to the progress already made on this development.

Legal and financial implications

- 1.13 Winslow centre redevelopment has 3 funded capital budgets within the Capital programme capital budget; In 20/21: £537k for demolition works, £148k for redevelopment and in 2021-23 £10m for re-tasking of Winslow Centre. We would look to repurpose uncommitted budget from those projects first, and then look to bring forward budget from the £10m retasking project to meet any shortfall. This analysis will be worked through for the Key Decision report.
- 1.14 As with many projects at this feasibility stage, some of the costs are likely to be revenue rather than capital (e.g. £50k appraisal advice); given that no revenue funding is available for this, we will need to use the RCCR reserve at the end of the year to fund any revenue spend from the capital budget.
- 1.15 The project needs further financial investment outlined in this report to proceed with Planning. The subsequent delivery of the development scope, potential capital investment and the mix of sales and direct development is to be decided and will be provided in a subsequent report if Planning is secured.
- 1.16 If Planning is not secured the capital investment set out in this report would be lost. However, the site is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan evolution and therefore the risks of not securing Planning are considered to be limited.
- 1.17 There are a number of legal implications, particularly around the delivery of housing. The appropriate property development vehicle for the development needs to be

agreed. This includes the ownership, management and maintenance of all property arising from the scheme. The sports hub will be managed separately by a specialist leisure provider. These details and the business case will be brought forward for a further Cabinet decision after the Planning process has been concluded.

Key Risks

1.18 The initial key risks relating to the delivery of development on this site are highlighted below:

- Market Values of sales and renting houses, rental values for commercial office space and leisure facility may be affected by the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences.
- The plot of land designated for the extra care facility may not achieve the value that was anticipated.
- Clinical Commissioning Group and Thames Valley Police no longer involved in the project. A loss of stakeholders and possible loss of funds from stakeholders could mean the project becomes less viable.
- Badgers on the site creating programme delays due to ecological mitigations and potential redesigns
- COVID-19 pandemic increasing the construction programme length and cost as well as affecting the supply chain.

Corporate implications

1.19 This report is based on a number of key strategic priorities set out through:

- The Council's Property Asset Strategy
- The Council's Capital Investment Strategy
- Buckinghamshire's Strategic Economic Plan
- The Legacy Aylesbury Vale Local Plan
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy

1.20 The project represents a significant investment opportunity, which will have implications across a number of service lines. It will enable the realisation of capital receipts, alongside the service transformation of library provision, community facilities and sport and leisure facility provision in Winslow.

Consultation and communication

1.21 Throughout this feasibility work and completion of the Business Case we have continued to regular report progress updates to Buckinghamshire Public Estate Board and provided briefings for the local Ward Members and Winslow Town Council.

1.22 The consultation period has been programmed into the high-level delivery programme, and is expected to take place through to Autumn 2020 and beyond. Public consultations have taken place already to support the Sports Hub provision included within the project.

Next steps and review

1.23 The following are next steps for the project:

- The Project Team will continue to work with stakeholders and move towards developing an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant parties where appropriate.
- The tender documents including brief will be developed and Design Team and Commercial Team appointed to progress the designs for plots 1, 3 and 4
- Development of the delivery model and business case.
- A review of the specialist housing offer for Plot 2 will be undertaken to confirm interest and viability.
- A further report to Cabinet will be submitted for approval to proceed to RIBA Stage 4.

Background papers

1.24 Winslow Re-development Site plans and drawings:

Appendix 1: Existing Site

Appendix 2: Plot Layout

Appendix 3: Proposed Master Plan

Appendix 4: Sports Hub Base Master Plan

Your questions and views (for key decisions)

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephoning Martin Connor Tel: 07860 181310 or email martin.connor@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Existing Site



Key:

-  Hard Standing
-  Green Space
-  Allocated Green Space
-  Wildlife Habitat (potential badgers + great crested newts)
-  Site Boundary
-  Residential Boundary
-  Primary Routes
-  Secondary Routes
-  Pedestrian Routes
-  Noise Pollution - Train Line
-  Noise Pollution Zone - 120m from rail corridor
-  Ecology Corridor
-  Main Entrance (s)
-  Bus Stop
-  Existing Trees
-  Sun Path

Appendix 2: Plot Layout



Appendix 3: Proposed Master Plan



KEY:

- 1 Plot 3 Residential Development
- 2 Independent Living Housing
- 3 Extra Care Accommodation
- 4 Library Hub and Apartments
- 5 Residential Block
- 6 Potential Bin / Cycle store
- A Category A Tree to be removed (High Quality)
- B Category B Tree to be removed (Moderate Quality)
- C Category C Tree to be removed (Low Quality)

NOTE:

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION BASED ON OS SURVEY DATA & TOPOGRAPHICAL DATA PROVIDED BY BCC.

2. TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH FEASIBILITY REPORT BCC/WC_ADP-00-RP-A-00001_S2 P05

3. UPDATED TO ACCOMMODATE MEDICAL CENTRE CHANGE TO RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT BLOCK

4. PRINT IN COLOUR

5. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

6. CAR PARKING:

PLOT 1 & 2

38 NO. 1/2 BED APARTMENTS (Buildings 4 & 5)	68
LIBRARY HUB (Ground floor inc office)	18
EXTRA CARE (1 Space per 3 units)	20
INDEPENDENT LIVING (1 Space per unit)	23
STAFF/VISITOR TBD	6

TOTAL SPACES 135

FINAL ALLOCATION TO BE AGREED WITH LPA

PLOT 3

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARKING TO BE AGREED WITH LPA

Appendix 4: Sports Hub Base Master Plan

