

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

8 MARCH 2022

Title:

Fairground Car Park Development Project

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services

Head of Service: Peter Vickers, Head of Finance and Property

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

1.1 This report seeks to inform the Executive of the proposal to redevelop the Fairground Car Park site in Haslemere and the high-level timeline to take the project forward.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that a budget of up to £50,000 be approved to be met from the Property Investment Reserve to progress due diligence, including title reports, contamination assessment and external professional assistance with tender specification and evaluation.

3. Reason for the recommendation

3.1. The Fairground Wey Hill site has been identified as an opportunity for development of a council owned asset under the Asset Investment Strategy, in support of the corporate priorities. The site is currently a free unmade car park in the centre of Haslemere and is used by local shoppers and commuters. The draft local Plan part 2 (LPP2) designates the site as brownfield, to yield at least 20 dwellings, as a mixed-use development and identifies the need to retain parking spaces where possible.

3.2. Initial consultation was done in September 2021 with a site visit attended by Ward Members, officers and supported by HLM Architects. Progression of the development plans for the site will include further consultation with Haslemere Town Council and the Haslemere Hub to ensure it is appropriately accommodated within the development plans.

- 3.3. An Option appraisal has been undertaken to assess the wider development potential of the site and specifically, the viability of a mixed used development scheme. This has demonstrated that a scheme is achievable, including at least the required LPP2 20 dwelling and retained car parking capacity. A Project Initiation Document (PID) for the project has been drawn up to provide a governance framework to progress the project.
- 3.4. The next stage of the project is to develop a tender specification incorporating the LPP2 and asset investment compliant criteria to seek bids from interested parties to acquire a long lease of the commercial, provide site development and delivery proposals (i.e. a development partner). The evaluation of the tender process will inform the optimal scheme for the site and will determine the funding strategy.
- 3.5. Timeline to date:

December 2020	An Alternative Use Appraisal was completed as a high-level assessment of the development potential of the site, concluding that a mixed-use scheme on the site is viable.
September 2021	A contingent of Members and Officers walked several sites in Haslemere to understand the opportunities and constraints of the sites
December 2021	Local Plan Part 2 – Addendum for Haslemere Fairground Car Park site allocated 20 dwellings as part of a mixed-use development and retention of car parking.
January 2022	Meeting with Planners to understand options/constraints of site from a planning perspective
February 2022	Project Initiation Document developed to detail the objectives of the project. A detailed appraisal completed incorporating the LLP2 requirements.
March 2022	Inform Executive of project progress to date and proposals on how the project will be taken forward. Work with the Haslemere Hub on reprovision of facilities provided in the Wey Centre - either onsite or at an alternative suitable location
March/April 2022	Determine appropriate tender route and develop tender specification documentation. Consult with stakeholders prior to agreeing tender specification.
May 2022	Tender for development partner. Likely six-week tender period.
June/July 2022	Evaluate tender returns
July/August 2022	Bring outcome of tender process back to Executive.

- 3.6. The outcome of the tender process will be brought back to Executive to agree the next steps as appropriate.

4. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 4.1. Asset management in the Public Sector is about delivering public and community benefits such as regeneration of local economies and new housing as well as supporting the corporate priorities.
- 4.2. Development of the site aligns directly with several the corporate strategy priorities, namely, affordable housing and economic regeneration. It also aligns to the Government guidelines around 'Investment for Service Purposes' being expenditure on assets that form part of the Council's public service which also support the corporate priorities.
- 4.3. Under the Local Plan Part 2 the site has been allocated for 20 dwellings as part of a mixed used development. Therefore, the scheme for the site will focus mixed use housing and supermarket provision in support of the Local Plan Part 2 as supported by service and planning demand. It should be noted that it is likely the scheme can achieve more than the numbers allocated in the Local Plan.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

To assess the development opportunity, initial due diligence is required to assess contamination and obtain land title reports. External professional advice will be sought to assist with the tender specification and evaluation. Therefore, a budget of up to £50,000 is sought, to be met from the Property Investment Reserve.

The funding of the development will be assessed as part of the outcome of the development proposal and will be brought back to Executive at the appropriate time.

5.2 Risk management

Risk will be managed in line with the requirements in the Asset Investment Strategy through the governance framework and robust due diligence.

Options appraisals have been undertaken by external property advisors to assess the viability of the site.

As with all spend on Council owned assets the risks associated with the investment spend will be mitigated through careful scheme design and financial analysis in considering risk and return and the Council's financial capacity to absorb losses without unmanageable detriment to local services, this will include appropriate decision gateways.

5.3 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report, but the project will require direct legal support and advice in relating to any development proposals.

5.4 Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary, across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

5.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no direct climate emergency declaration implications in this report. However, the council's environmental and sustainability objectives will be considered in the development specification.

6. Consultation and engagement

6.1 This proposal has been to the Property Investment Advisory Board on the 16 December 2021 as part of the wider Wey Hill Development PID.

7. Other options considered

7.1 This investment gives the Council an opportunity to invest in the Borough in support of the corporate priorities. The alternative options are to do nothing, a housing only development, make the car park and charge or sell the land for development. These alternatives do not support the LPP2 designation for mixed use development.

8. Governance journey

8.1 This proposal has been to the Property Investment Advisory Board on the 16 December 2021 and Executive Briefing on the 22 February 2022.

Background Papers

There are / are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Vicki Basley
Position: Corporate Asset Manager
Telephone: 0148 3523250
Email: Victoria.basley@waverley.gov.uk

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 24 February 2022

Head of Finance: 24/02/2022

Strategic Director: date

Portfolio Holder: date