

## **ASSETS AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

Date: Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Venue: Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Time: 10.00am – 12.55pm

Present: Councillors Boden, Bullen (Vice-Chairman), Dent, Harford, Hickford (Chairman), Jenkins and Sales

In attendance: Councillors Bywater, Chapman and Schumann

Apologies: None

### **82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dent declared a non-statutory interest as Local Member in agenda item 6

Councillor Sales declared a non-statutory interest as Local Member in agenda item 4

### **83. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG OF THE ASSETS AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE HELD 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

The Committee resolved to approve the public and confidential minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017, and note the Action Log.

### **84. POLICY REVIEW FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT HOSTING ON COUNTY COUNCIL LAND AND BUILDINGS**

Members considered a report that proposed a revised policy for the hosting of mobile telecommunications equipment on Council owned land and buildings, excluding school properties.

In presenting the report the Chief Finance Officer explained that the impacts of mobile communications masts were now better understood. Impacts on public health are now better understood and the revised policy was designed to improve communications coverage across the county. The policy did not propose changes with regard schools due to implications with third parties, the revised policy focussed on buildings that were under the direct control of Cambridgeshire County Council.

In welcoming the report Members noted the considerable public concern regarding the location of mobile communications equipment, the considerable areas that suffered poor mobile phone network coverage in Cambridgeshire and that the technology of telecommunications equipment had evolved considerably over the last 15 years.

Officers explained that the income projections contained within the officer report were predicated without caveats regarding the location of communications equipment.

The importance of the requirement for effective communication regarding the policy and the installation of communications equipment was emphasised by Members.

Members highlighted the importance of widening the scope of the policy to include all County Council owned land and buildings and it was therefore proposed by the Chairman with the unanimous agreement of the Committee to amend recommendation 1 to include all County Council owned buildings and land.

Members, in recognising that control regarding the location of communications equipment would remain with the Council and public concern it was proposed by the Chairman with the unanimous agreement of the Committee that recommendation 3 be altered to include “in consultation with the Chair of Assets and Investments Committee”.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- 1) Approve the revision of the Council’s policy to allow mobile telecommunications equipment to be hosted on all County Council owned land and buildings in order to facilitate improved mobile voice and data coverage across Cambridgeshire and to provide a rental income stream to the Council.
- 2) Delegate responsibility to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair of Assets and Investments Committee for the wording of the revised telecommunications hosting equipment policy in a manner which balances the risks and opportunities in relation to increased mobile coverage and income generation for the Council.
- 3) Direct the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair of Assets and Investments Committee to undertake negotiations and enter into rental agreements for equipment hosting with mobile telecommunications operators or their representatives on behalf of the Council in line with the Health and Safety Executive and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines.

**85. CAPITAL PROJECT – CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT IN ARTS, TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION (CREATE)**

The Committee received a report that advised on work to date, sought to obtain views and the confirmation of the release of the site to support the decision of General Purposes Committee for a project that converted a Council owned community arts building in North Cambridge into a state-of-the-art National Centre for Research and Engagement in Arts, Technology and Education (CREATE) facility from which innovation in arts education, arts therapy, talent development, research and community participation could be developed and promoted.

Members noted that the report should have been presented to Assets and Investments Committee prior to its presentation to General Purposes Committee.

Members noted the comments of Councillor Sales, Local Member for the Arbury division where the site was located. Councillor Sales drew attention to the issues regarding access to the site and the need for the cultural resource within Cambridge. The building was in a state of poor repair and due to its location, the site would be of limited use and appeal to the open market.

During discussion of the report some Members:

- Expressed concern regarding the lack of a full and complete evaluation of the site highlighting that if the project could be located elsewhere then the asset (St Luke's Barn) could be realised. Officer informed Members that the Council's Estates Team had advised that the asset had not been declared surplus to requirements, highlighted issues with regard to site access as it was located within the site of St Luke's Primary School and drew attention to Cambridge City Council's planning policy that did not approve of the loss of community assets.
- Expressed concern that the report had been presented to General Purposes Committee in advance of its presentation to Assets and Investments Committee.
- Requested further information regarding grant funding for the project and the associated timelines. Officers advised that General Purposes Committee has approved £500k funding and a further £1m was being sought from the Arts Council and £1m from leading corporations. A further contingency loan of £500k

- and third sector funding of £600K was being sought. The Arts Council would reach a decision on the project in July 2017 at which point design funding would also become available. Members noted that the project would not proceed without all the necessary funding in place.

Members while agreeing with the principles of the project; requested that a full site evaluation be completed and be presented at the May meeting of Assets and Committee in order for a decision to be made.

It was unanimously resolved to defer the decision to the May meeting of the Assets and Investments Committee following the completion of an independent evaluation of the site.

## **86. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report on the financial and performance information relating to the areas within the Assets & Investment Committee's remit.

Officers drew attention to the major variation in the Buildings Maintenance budget of 100k from the previous month. Since estates and property had returned from management by LGSS, the Council had continued to use a helpdesk located in Northampton which had resulted in issues regarding the management of the service. The helpdesk was therefore being returned to Cambridgeshire County Council.

Members noted and welcomed the level of information provided in the report but requested work be carried out to improve the presentation of the figures and improve the relationship between the narrative of the report and the figures provided. **ACTION**

Further information was requested and concern expressed regarding the condition survey works at Wisbech Castle that totalled £146k. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to review, note and comment upon the report.

## **87. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

Members considered the forward agenda plan for Assets & Investment Committee and noted the addition of the CREATE Capital Project to the May meeting of the Committee.

Members agreed to the cancellation of 28<sup>th</sup> April Assets and Investments Committee meeting and Working Group.

It was resolved unanimously to note the agenda plan.

**88. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following reports on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

**89. PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

Members considered a number of information/update papers on the following items:

**Proposed acquisition of site at 6 Station Road, St Neots:**

It was resolved to decline to proceed with the freehold acquisition.

**Sawtry Library Relocation options:**

It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the process to acquire detailed costs and develop a project plan for the relocation of Sawtry Library to the Sawtry Youth Centre by April 2018; and
- b) Determine the process for approving the cost of relocating the library and fitting Sawtry Youth Centre building.

**Soham Easter Gateway Update:**

It was resolved to note the update provided to the Committee.

Chairman