

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORTHSTOWE HERITAGE FACILITY

To: Commercial & Investment Committee

Meeting Date: 21 February 2020

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place & Economy

Electoral division(s): Longstanton, Northstowe & Over

Forward Plan ref: N/a **Key decision:** No

Purpose: The construction of a heritage facility at Northstowe new town in partnership with Homes England and Highways England.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) to support the construction of the facility and its intended purposes
- b) to recognise the possible need for contingency and revenue as set out in para 2.5 & 2.6.
- c) to support the long term strategy for the facility in para 2.7

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Historic Environment Team has been successful in securing funding from the A14 Legacy Fund and the Highways England Designated Funds for a 'heritage centre' at Northstowe. The total grant is £680,000. The site is adjacent to the new regional offices of Homes England with the new town. These were completed in summer 2019.
- 1.2 The project is a partnership initiative between the Council, Highways England and Homes England, plus the local Longstanton & District Heritage Society (LDHS). It came about from the following factors:
 - 1.2.1 Both Northstowe and the A14 project have had significant programmes of archaeological fieldwork with significant discoveries; both Highways England & Homes England wish to promote this.
 - 1.2.2 Homes England have S106 commitments relating to the LDHS for storage and display of their collections.
 - 1.2.3 The new Homes England offices provided an opportunity for co-location and to provide a unique community space in Northstowe; the project is supported as a community as well as a heritage facility.
- 1.3 A feasibility project was funded by Highways England during summer 2017 that met with stakeholders for design ideas and produced and costed a proposal that has found universal favour. This was subject to applications to Highways England and funding was awarded in November 2018 and March 2019.
- 1.4 A programme of exhibitions and themes has been drafted that focus on the archaeology of the A14 and Northstowe, local studies/stories and the military history of RAF Oakington. Audience development work undertaken that identified a possible audience of c.10,000 visitors per annum plus extensive schools engagement by connecting with the national curriculum.
- 1.5 Currently the project is entering technical design stage (RIBA Stage 4). Details and visuals are in **Appendix 1**.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Issues with the project fall into the following categories: procurement, planning, design and build, capital budget, revenue support and long term ownership. These will be addressed in turn.
- 2.2 **Procurement.** As the building shares a site with Homes England, expediency recommends that the same design and project team that delivered that office also do this one. This allows for efficiencies in planning and delivery. Hence the team of Tibbalds (planning), Proctor Matthew (architects) and Attol Blue (project management and QS) have been appointed. This has resulted in the need for procurement exemptions and more are anticipated for professional services but construction is expected to make use of Council or other frameworks.

- 2.3 **Planning.** The site for this and Homes England's office is in an area identified as residential in the Northstowe Masterplan. Homes England applied for a temporary planning permission for their office, initially for five years (the maximum SCDC will allow at a time), and used modular construction, so theoretically their building can be relocated. This requirement has passed to the heritage facility that will also be 'dismantleable' and subject to temporary planning permission. However practically, immediate relocation is unlikely and we anticipate an extension of the temporary permission in 2023. Assessment of this by Tibbalds indicate this is a low risk situation in planning terms
- 2.4 **Design.** Detailed design has confirmed the project is deliverable in budget, albeit it with some modifications to the design as proposed in the feasibility study. Nevertheless the core principles and design cues sourced from the aviation heritage of the site remain. Pre-application discussions with SCDC have met with favourable reactions. The building has been provisionally assessed with an EPC rating of 'A'.
- 2.5 **Build.** Creating a 'dismantleable' structure does increase complexity and to a certain extent cost, but Highways England have been clear that they will not consider a variation from this. The original design called for construction in cross laminate timber (CLT), which has appearance and sustainability advantages. However detailed costing has shown it is not possible to deliver the facility as proposed in CLT so steel frame will be used. Using CLT on a small facility like this also causes procurement problems as most contractors skilled in CLT methods would not normally tender for a small job like this; reverting to traditional steel removes this complication.
- 2.6 **Capital Budget.** The grant funding from Highways England is for design and build, plus fit out. Homes England have agreed to lease the site (plus parking) to the Council and share some services/facilities (e.g. security). The cost plan is tightly monitored by the Project Managers to keep within budget, but there is a risk as the budget is tight, with only a small amount of contingency (£32,000). Details are in Appendix 2.
- 2.7 **Revenue Support.** The Council will operate the facility using S106 Community and Heritage funding already secured from Phase 2 that will cover revenue costs for the duration of the initial lease. Homes England have indicated they will support further applications from the Phase 3 S106. In addition staff at the facility will pursue grant funding (e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund). A longer term sustainable financial strategy will need to be developed.
- 2.8 **Long Term Ownership.** Although the intention is for the council to manage and operate the facility there is a longer term intention to transfer responsibility at a later stage. An additional piece of work is to be undertaken in 2020 to assess the wider heritage options for Northstowe; part of this will include the need to manage heritage assets and look at governance structures, including the option of a "Northstowe Heritage Trust" or similar. Should such a body be established it is recommended that the facility be transferred across to form a focal point for its activities.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

This facility provides a heritage and cultural hub for the new community at Northstowe that will be a major community asset as the town develops.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

This facility provides a heritage and cultural hub for the new community at Northstowe that will be a major community asset as the town develops. The audience development work undertaken has identified the catchment for the facility and a set of priorities for developing the full potential in this area.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

This facility provides a heritage and cultural hub for the new community at Northstowe that will be a major community asset as the town develops. The audience development work undertaken has highlighted the potential for engagement with school groups and the national curriculum.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paras 2.5 & 2.6. Whereas the budget and planning provides for capital and revenue support, there is no margin in the current model.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paras 2.2. Jon Collyns from Procurement Team has been advising the project.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There is reputational risk to the council should the project fail.
All legal documentation to date has been drawn up or checked by LGSS Law. These include A Memorandum of Understanding between the Council, Homes England the Longstanton & District Heritage Society, and the grant agreement with Highways England. Details of the lease with Homes England still need to be clarified.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant issues under this heading. Consideration of fair access and use of the building is set out in the design and access statement submitted as part of planning.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The three main partners, the Council, Highways England and Homes England, have a Communications Strategy agreed that links to project milestones.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Councillor Hudson is aware of the scheme and supportive. The LDHS is a partner and have been kept informed; further briefings are planned for Longstanton Parish Council and the Northstowe Community Forum.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant issues under this heading.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Awaiting Comments Name of Officer: Gus da Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Monitoring Officer?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Elsa Evans
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Sarah Silk
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Quinton Carroll
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Kate Parker/Iain Green

Source Documents	Location
Planning Application Pack	Members' Lounge, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Appendix 1

DESIGN VISUALS AND FLOOR PLANS

These are as at 1 December 2019. The final version may have slight detail changes which can be amended later. All images are the property of Proctor Matthews Architects.



Overview. The Facility is to the left and Homes England's offices to the right.



Overview from the 'courtyard'



Visual from the road



Floor plan and layout. Homes England's office to the bottom of the image.

Appendix 2

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The project is funded by a grant from Highways England's designated funds, with ongoing revenue from S106 funding from Phases 2 and Phase 3 at Northstowe. Some facilities and services are shared with Homes England's offices to reduce revenue costs.

Funds are drawn down according to project milestones. An overview is presented below.

<u>MILESTONES</u>		
Amount Payable (£)	Payment Date	Milestone Evidence
20,000	Paid	
80,000	Paid	
10,000	Claimed	Submitted & part of Planning Period
25,000	28-Feb-20	Completion of display/design/curation - align with Stage 4
34,500	05-Mar-20	Completion of Stage 4 Design
56,500	13-May-20	Start of Construction - Groundworks etc.
145,000	13 May-20	Building Order
98,500	01-Jul-20	Delivery of Building to Site TBC on appointment of contractor
48,500	15-Jul-20	Completion of Framework TBC on appointment of contractor but assumed 2 weeks after delivery
45,500	08-Sep-20	Completion of interior fit out - assumed main contract works i.e. complete at Practical Completion
60,000	08-Sep-20	Practical Completion (Landscape Works Should Be Complete)
56,500	22-Sep-20	Display and Content Fit out
680,000		