

## Asset management decisions and updates

To: Strategy & Resources Committee

Meeting Date: 30 September 2022

From: Service Director: Finance & Procurement

Electoral division(s): All; Abbey (recommendation a) Warboys & the Stukeleys (recommendation b), and Histon & Impington (Section 4)

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2022/091 (recommendation c) and 2022/092 (recommendation a)

Outcome: Proactive estate management decisions that bring forward regeneration and redevelopment of community facilities in East Barnwell, confirm the venue for Full Council meetings and improve ventilation across 64 buildings.

Recommendation: Strategy & Resources Committee is invited to:

- a) Approve collaboration with Cambridge City Council and its joint venture for the promotion and negotiation of a combined scheme at East Barnwell including the reprovision of community space, library and early years provision, delegating authority to agree land transactions to this effect to the section 151 officer, as set out in section 1.
- b) Approve the continuing use of the Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall as the usual venue for convening the full County Council, subject to ongoing awareness of accessibility needs for specific meetings in future.
- c) Approve the ventilation improvements to Council buildings, delegating authority to the Section 151 officer to procure and award contract(s) as set out in section 3.

### Officer contact:

Name: Tom Kelly & Tony Cooper  
Post: Service Director & Assistant Director  
Email: [tony.cooper@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:tony.cooper@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07825 722525

### Member contacts:

Names: Councillors Nethsingha and Meschini  
Post: Chair/Vice-Chair  
Email: [lucy.nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
[elisa.meschini@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:elisa.meschini@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398

## 1. East Barnwell redevelopment

- 1.1 At the meeting of this committee on 29 March 2022, the East Barnwell community hub redevelopment was considered. There have been various proposals for replacement of this asset over several years and frustration from local stakeholders that a viable scheme had not come to fruition was recognised. Complications and delays have arisen from changes to the County Council's specification (initially widened to include housing, and more recently the nursery location aspect), multi-stakeholder liaison, seeking and responding to planning advice and the dependencies/facilitation with adjacent landowners.
- 1.2 In March, the Committee formally resolved to revise the scope of the scheme to include early years provision, following a recommendation from the Children & Young People Committee, reversing a decision that had been made in 2021. The Committee heard from community representatives who were strongly in support of this proposal. This committed the County Council to the re-provision of library, early years and community space in this vicinity as well as new housing accommodation. The Committee also resolved that there should be further development of the plans and highlighted the opportunities to collaborate with Cambridge City Council, one of the adjacent landowners.
- 1.3 The existing capital budget for this scheme is £1.53m; work by the property consultancy, Carter Jonas, on behalf of the Council suggested the addition of early years provision would increase the capital cost estimate by up to £625k (prices as at Spring 2022) on top of the authorised budget.
- 1.4 Since March, the County and City Council have progressed collaboration to explore a wider redevelopment scheme comprising both the County Council asset and the City Council owned nearby land along Newmarket Road. These discussions have been positive: through a combined approach there are opportunities to see benefits for the local community through a wider and more comprehensive regeneration, improved financial viability and a clearer/firmer delivery path and timeframes.
- 1.5 The Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP), which is a joint venture between Cambridge City Council and a commercial construction company, that has developed similar projects elsewhere in the City, was instructed to prepare masterplan proposals. These have been used as a basis for considering the advantages and disadvantages for the two Councils to work in collaboration and combining land, incorporate the required community, library and early years facilities, deliver a greater number of new homes (and in so doing subsidise the cost to taxpayers), inform a strategy for relocation of leisure facilities operated by the City Council to elsewhere in the division and provide the basis for the pre-application discussions with planning and urban design authorities.
- 1.6 The Committee is asked to consider whether the County Council should support the scheme outlined as its preferred option and collaborate further with the City Council on its development. There will be further decisions for the Council in due course, through Business Planning to revise the capital budget (likely reducing the amount of prudential borrowing) and to agree to the land transactions once heads of terms are in place and the detailed shape of the commercial arrangements worked up.
- 1.7 Architects have prepared a masterplan which provides, across the whole scheme, for up to 154 new homes, a new community centre, early years provision, library and commercial space. In the diagrams shown below, the land currently in the County Council's ownership is the area within the red line to the right-hand side. The two other red boxed areas are land owned by the City Council. The development plans shown in the second diagram would

locate the County Council related facilities in the red box to the left-hand side, the first phase of the scheme to be brought forward. These proposals suggest the area shaded yellow would be the community centre (377m<sup>2</sup>), the area shaded purple indicates the library (190m<sup>2</sup>) and the area shaded cyan the early years provision (176m<sup>2</sup>)

*Aerial photograph of in-scope land (bounded red) at Newmarket Road/Barnwell Road junction*



*Outline plan of building use and elevations*



- 1.8 The timescales for delivery of the County Council elements of the combined scheme, contingent on a supportive steer to continue at this meeting and through the City Council's Housing Scrutiny, is for a planning application submission in early 2023, construction to start on site by the end of 2023 and the opening of facilities in the first half of 2025.
- 1.9 A key issue for the County Council is the financial benefits of progressing on its own land separately versus an overall masterplan approach, and a range of appraisals have been carried out to make this comparative assessment.
- To deliver the East Barnwell centre alone to specification, the estimated County Council subsidy is in excess of the currently agreed capital budget of

£1.53m. This takes account of a capital receipt from the current library site, which would be released, the revenue generated from the 29 residential units envisaged within the County Council only residential scheme and the construction and development costs of delivering the replacement community, early years and library provision.

- The proposition from the City Council/CIP is that the County Council contribution / further capital costs could be reduced below £0.7m. This is achieved by delivering 100% residential provision on the current county council site, and the reprovision of library, early years and community facilities on the City Council's land, relocating the current leisure facilities. The cost for the Council is a fixed fee on completion of the County related assets, in return for foregoing any profit-share from the scheme.

1.10 The initial terms offered by City Council/CIP are that the County Council transfers its land at East Barnwell and surrenders its interest in the current Barnwell library. CIP would deliver the new facilities, for which the County Council would commit the reduced capital sum and receive a 999 year long leasehold in the library, early years provision and community centre at a peppercorn rent. There is further detailed work to undertake to structure the land transactions if this Committee is supportive of the scheme in principle. The County Council has received advice from Avison Young, the property consultancy, as to the detailed assumptions submitted by City Council/CIP in its appraisal.

1.11 The advantages of the joint proposals include:

- Regeneration that combines community, library, preschool and commercial uses into a central hub, making them accessible and inviting to the wider community
- CIP proposals likely offer accelerated delivery through track record of similar schemes in terms of engagement with local planning authority, and construction delivery including technical and construction specialist involvement at early stage
- Prioritised delivery of new community centre, library and pre-school without the need to close existing facilities
- Improved financial viability through economies of scale of larger scheme, single planning application and higher densities achievable through wider masterplan
- Significant new public open spaces delivered for wider community, directly accessible from new community centre, library, preschool and commercial uses
- Cohesive design across the regeneration area – consistent high quality, low carbon approach
- Delivery and cost overrun risks to the Council are minimised, with the Council paying a fixed price for the delivery of the scheme.

1.12 The disadvantages of a joint proposal include:

- Both Councils would be reliant on each other's cooperation to deliver the regeneration scheme. This would require each Council to commit to joint working at an early stage and to enter into a sale and development agreement.
- Both Councils would be reliant on CIP achieving planning permission for a more complex scheme and delivering the project in line with agreed timescales.
- For the County Council, a loss of control may be perceived. This would be important to address through joint attendance at design team meetings and pre-application meetings to the appropriate and desired extent.
- Some gateway decisions will need to happen jointly or in tandem.
- CIP operate on a commercial basis and will expect to make a commercial return on the development.

- 1.13 Community engagement on these detailed proposals has begun with a series of consultation events held locally. This included two drop-in sessions at the location, attendance/stand at two broader community events, two online webinar events and a meeting with the local stakeholder group. 77 people have responded to the linked survey on the proposals: 55% were strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal, 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% were neutral. There were many detailed comments received which will be taken in account if the scheme progresses. Issues included potential changes to the highways network, urban design principles in relation to access, height and massing and relocation of the bowls club. These are issues to resolve in accordance with the programme outlined above but considerable progress has been made in generating a shared understanding of the issues and identifying the outline of potential solutions
- 1.14 The appraisals undertaken assume a BREEAM excellent library, pre-school, community facility and commercial space, a 20% biodiversity gain, gas free development with air source heat pumps and highly efficient building fabric, improved water efficiency and provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- 1.15 The masterplanned proposals extend across the current roundabout junction between Newmarket Road and Barnwell Road. Improvements to this junction, which are in prospect and under consideration by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, will be enabling to accessibility and join up of the development as a whole.

## 2. New Shire Hall (Red Kite Room – formerly the Multi-Function Room)

- 2.1 A report was brought to the Strategy & Resources Committee in March 2022 identifying potential issues in respect of the use of the Multi Function Room at New Shire Hall (now renamed as the Red Kite Room (RKR)). It was agreed that an update on those issues would be brought back to Committee in September 2022.
- 2.2 Subsequent to this the RKR was successfully used for Full Council on 19 July 2022. This section updates the responses to the issues raised in the original report, taking into account the experience of the Full Council meeting.
- 2.3 The previous report identified four issues:
- Security and safety of Members and Officers
  - Limited space for Members
  - Limited space for the media and public attendees
  - Accessibility (Part M of the Building Regulations) & Fire Safety (Evacuation)

### Security and safety of Members and Officers

- 2.4 The proximity of the public to Members near the public gallery and the lack of physical demarcation between Member and public areas was considered to pose risks to personnel and the running of meetings in the event of disruptive behaviour. Security reviews and risk assessment, including liaison with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, was undertaken.
- 2.5 In order to create a physical and psychological ‘gap’ between Members (who were sat with their backs to the Public Gallery) screens have been purchased and installed. These were used at Full Council on 19 July and are judged to provide suitable separation for Full Council meetings.



- 2.6 In accordance with existing Council protocols all public meetings are risk assessed and if a meeting is deemed to be contentious and/or may result in, for example, high numbers of public attendees beyond the room's capacity or potential for protest or disruption, the Democratic Services and Property teams will make recommendations in respect of the suitability and operation of the venue for that specific event. Where the risk profile means that the RKR is not suitable alternative venues will be considered.

### Limited space for Members

- 2.7 Prior to the use of the RKR for Full Council, concerns were raised regarding the amount of space in the room when laid out for Full Council, based upon the demonstration of the layout. During Full Council on the 19 July no problems were identified or adverse feedback received with regard to the space and accommodation for Members in the room. As a result of pre-planned absences/leave and unplanned self-isolations, the July meeting had fewer than all 61 Members in attendance. The room has been previously set up to accommodate all members of the Council and there will be sufficient space on that basis, as designed. We will continue to keep this under review for subsequent meetings of the Council with different attendance levels

### Limited space for the media and public attendees

- 2.8 The limitation on seating for the media and public remains as per the earlier report in that it is smaller than Shire Hall. The practical impact of this can be considered as public attendance at Full Council evolves over future meetings. With live streaming of meetings, it is assumed that the requirement for in-person attendance may be lower than previously, however this will continue to be monitored.

### Accessibility (Part M of the Building Regulations) & Fire Safety (Evacuation)

- 2.9 A detailed review of accessibility requirements for the RKR has been undertaken. Due to the building configuration, there is currently a limit of 4 wheelchair users in the RKR during public meetings. This is irrespective of whether a councillor or member of the public, and reflects the requirements for an effective evacuation of the room, if required.
- 2.10 Where numbers exceed this then the Council will manage the requirements and facilitate in accordance with democratic and statutory requirements. The Council may not be aware of specific requirements for members of the public attending if they do not provide prior notification (and there is no requirement for prior notification to be given), and these will be managed by the on-site team at that time. Where there are mobility or other matters not involving a wheelchair but affecting the ability to evacuate, these will be dynamically risk assessed and suitable provision made within the available resources.
- 2.11 Were the number of councillors or officers using wheelchairs likely to exceed 4 then this would become challenging and any continued use of the RKR would require further risk assessment and development and evaluation of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) to determine if a Full Council meeting could be run compliantly. The Council must ensure it is in compliance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings & Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, and does not expose itself to a claim of discrimination in doing so. The regulations require decision making meetings to be open to the public unless it has been resolved to exclude the public to avoid the disclosure of confidential information or to maintain the orderly conduct of the meeting. Arrangements can be made elsewhere on site for the meeting to be live streamed.

- 2.12 The Equalities Act 2010 requires a Council to make reasonable adjustments to meet needs of members of the public who are disabled, for instance, and who would otherwise be placed at disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person. The Council will need to closely monitor its compliance with the Equalities Act and Regulations. Owing to the wider facilities available at New Shire Hall, staffing resources and expertise available at the building and familiarity with the accommodation, it is assessed that the Council will be well placed to make reasonable adjustments to ensure the necessary public access or foresee where alternative arrangements or one-off venues might be required for particular contingencies.
- 2.13 The need to comply with and potentially overcome conflicts between multiple legislative requirements as described above, will require additional work to ensure that the RKR can meet the potential demand. This work, including a new Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) aligned to Building Regulations and ensuring public access to democratic processes has been commenced. The EqIA process will take some time and involve detailed review of the building and RKR, taking into account developments in the understanding of equalities matters.
- 2.14 Under the evacuation process there is a requirement for a Council Site Facilities Officer or other suitably trained staff member to be on site to facilitate an emergency evacuation. In the absence of this support meetings are not able to take place. Protocols are in place to ensure meetings are conducted with the appropriate support in place.
- 2.15 The RKR is capable of being used for Full Council subject to the limitations above and the ongoing EqIA and review process. A number of alternative venues have either previously been used before for Full Council during the COVID pandemic or have been investigated for use. None of these has offered any significant advantage in terms of either accessibility or capacity. All of the alternative venues considered would incur additional costs to the Council to hire and install necessary equipment as well as to deploy staff time to set up the meetings away from New Shire Hall, the usual base for Democratic Services and the property facilities and IT teams, and a potentially adverse carbon impact.

### 3. Ventilation improvements to civic buildings

- 3.1 Following survey activity, the Council has identified opportunities to enhance ventilation and airflow at sixty-four buildings within its operational estate. Responding to the need to re-open buildings to customers and the general public, as well as enabling greater occupation by staff, during 2021 the Council prioritised the most urgent ventilation works and installed CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring where appropriate. The Council has kept carefully in step with national guidance promulgated as a result of the pandemic and interpreted this alongside local risk assessment to ensure our property estate could be used safely and in-line with the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive in providing a safe working environment.
- 3.2 There have now been several months of stability in national guidelines coinciding with the summer, which has enabled assessment of further stages of ventilation works as well as experience of buildings where CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring has evidenced poorer airflow or triggering a need for reduced levels of occupancy. The proposals now put forward recognise that living with covid is the new reality, that airflow and ventilation risks will be heightened during the winter months, that in these cases occupation levels of certain buildings can be improved enabling a better service to the public and that good ventilation is an important and ongoing requirement on the Council as a building custodian and employer. The proposals are strongly supported by managers responsible for frontline teams especially where these will enable greater occupation levels and more capacity for essential services for vulnerable

people, such as learning disability day opportunities, or delivery of face-to-face statutory functions such as supervised contact for children.

- 3.3 The Council has identified time-limited pandemic-related grant funding that it assesses can fund the majority of the cost of implementing these ventilation works, where they are eligible under the grant conditions, alongside general funds within the Council's budget that it has allocated for building maintenance. The estimated cost of the works to be procured is £725k - £960k, contingent on determining the final list of buildings in scope and subject to a competitive procurement exercise. The majority of the enhancements are to mechanical ventilation with a minority focused on mechanical air extraction. The mechanical ventilation works proposed depend on the survey assessment of the building and solutions include installing mechanical ventilation heat recovery, central air handling units, extraction and automated fans. Assets in scope for the ventilation enhancements to take place in 2022 and 2023 include adult social care day services, community and education centres, libraries, child and family centres, residential/respite accommodation and offices and civic buildings. At the large majority of buildings, the individual works required are minor, however the accumulated value amounts to a key decision for this Committee.
- 3.4 The Council is supplementing its in-house Mechanical and Electrical Surveyor capacity in order to oversee and manage the works by approaching our current Building Consultants framework to provide a competitive cost for this service. Enhancements at the highest priority buildings are already in progress where there was scope to do this under an existing contract with the property services term contractor, and the intention is that the procurement for the remainder, where permission to commence is requested through this paper, will be through a formal competitive process utilising an existing public sector construction and property services framework. This is essential to ensure the appropriate technical expertise is provided and the solutions provide the authority with confidence in future proofing its ventilation giving a safe working environment for employees and clients. This procurement will also provide the authority with best value in a very challenging and difficult market place. The ventilation enhancements would be implemented this Winter and Spring.

## 4. Assignment of a lease

- 4.1 At Unit 13, Evolution Business Park, Impington the lease has been assigned from the current tenant to a new Assignee. A new lease of this value would require the approval of the Committee, however the under the terms of the lease the Council is obliged to agree to the assignment, and notifies the Committee through this report.

## 5. Alignment with corporate priorities

### 5.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 5.2 Health and Care

Providing the appropriate ventilation as per the governments Living with Covid guidelines currently 10 litres of fresh air in and out per person per second irrespective of age as identified in the Covid Building Risk Assessments supports public health for users of the Council's buildings.

Some of the buildings in scope for ventilation improvements will mean the Council can



increase the capacity/occupation of buildings used for adult social care.

### 5.3 Places and Communities

The redevelopment of the East Barnwell community hub, and the proposed collaboration with the City Council, illustrates the Council progressing its decentralisation agenda.

The Abbey Division is one of the most deprived areas of the City and the scheme proposed is a significant regeneration opportunity.

### 5.4 Children and Young People

Some of the buildings in scope for ventilation improvements will mean the Council can increase the capacity/occupation of buildings used for children's services.

The development at East Barnwell includes provision of early years childcare.

### 5.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 6. Significant Implications

### 6.1 Resource Implications

There are resource implications from this report set out in section 1 (capital) and section 3 (grant funded).

### 6.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The procurement implications for ventilation works are set out in section 3.4.

The Council's current view is that the regeneration and redevelopment at East Barnwell would be classified as a land transaction rather than a procurement.

### 6.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Statutory implications in relation to public meetings at New Shire Hall are set out at section 2.11. Legal advice will be obtained as part of the negotiation of the land transactions envisaged to enable the East Barnwell redevelopment.

Key risks have been identified in relation to the East Barnwell proposal and include agreement between the two Councils/collaboration and planning constraints. The approached proposed mitigates the County Council's exposure to development risk.

### 6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

A detailed review of Equality and Accessibility matters will be undertaken as part of the ongoing management of the Red Kite Room, including an Equality Impact Assessment. Assessments including Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the design of the new buildings at East Barnwell.

- 6.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
Cambridge City Council and CIP have arranged a number of engagement sessions with the local community in relation to the combined proposals for East Barnwell.
- 6.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
The East Barnwell scheme is focused on providing an important regeneration opportunity for the local community. The Local Member has been regularly updated on these proposals.
- 6.7 Public Health Implications  
The upgrading of ventilation systems in buildings will reduce the risk of infection from airborne viruses, not limited to COVID, for staff and public using council facilities.
- 6.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas
- 6.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.  
Neutral  
Explanation: Confirming New Shire Hall as the normal venue for Full Council, an energy efficient low carbon building. New buildings to be erected at East Barnwell will meet or exceed the latest energy standards.
- 6.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.  
Neutral  
Explanation: No changes specified in this report in relation to New Shire Hall or ventilation. The redevelopment at East Barnwell is designed as a scheme primarily facing the local community. It may coincide with transport improvements in the area of Newmarket Road but this is separate from this scheme. By retaining community services in the immediate locality will reduce the need to travel.
- 6.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: No changes specified in this report
- 6.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.  
Neutral  
Explanation: No changes specified in this report
- 6.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:  
Neutral  
Explanation: No changes specified in this report
- 6.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.  
Positive  
Explanation: Improved ventilation improves air quality for building users
- 6.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: No changes specified in this report

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes  
Name of Financial Officer: T Kelly

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes  
Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal? Yes  
Name of Legal Officer: F McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User? Yes  
Name of Officer: T Kelly

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes  
Name of Officer: C Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes  
Name of Officer: J McMillan

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes  
Name of Officer: J Atri

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes  
Name of Officer: S French

## 7. Source documents

### 7.1 Source documents

[Strategy and Resources Committee - 29 March 2022](#)

Avison Young East Barnwell Development Appraisal Analysis