

CABINET

13 April 2022

Present:-

Councillors R Croad, A Davis, R Gilbert, J Hart (Chair), S Hughes, A Leadbetter, J McInnes (Vice-Chair), A Saywell and P Twiss

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors H Gent, R Hannaford, S Randall-Johnson and C Whitton attended in person

Councillors A Connett and A Dewhirst attended remotely

KEY DECISIONS

- * 146 **South West Exeter Housing Infrastructure Fund: Update on project including approval for submission of planning application and to award tenders**

(Councillors Connett, Gent, Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/22/16) which provided an update on the project as well as requesting approval for some elements to allow for the continual progression of the project. The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

South West Exeter was a strategic allocation of 2,500 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment within the administrative areas of Teignbridge District Council and Exeter City Council. It was a complex site, with various constraints. The Council had been successful with its bid of £55.14 million to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), which would enable the early delivery of the infrastructure to support the planned housing development. The infrastructure to be delivered included:

- Delivery of four signal junctions on the A379
- Realignment of Chudleigh Road
- Southern Spine Road

- Devon Hotel Roundabout upgrade
- Alphington Village enhancements
- School access road
- Pedestrian / cycle bridge
- Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)
- New electricity substation
- Community building which is intended to include a GP surgery.

Previously included had been a new roundabout at Peamore and an upgrade to the foul drainage system, but both of these schemes were proposed to be delivered by developers without HIF funding.

A plan identifying the development location and infrastructure to be delivered was included in Appendix 1.

Section three of the Report gave the detail on each of the proposals;

- Electricity Substation - expected to provide sufficient capacity for development at South-West Exeter as well as additional future development – details of the consultation were available at www.devon.gov.uk/swexeter.
- Devon Hotel Roundabout and Trood Lane improvements - including an extra lane on the western A379 entry arm, pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities and toucan crossing and in relation to Trood Lane a new signal junction, pedestrian and cycle connections and new bus laybys on the A379 - a plan of the scheme included in Appendix 2).
- Alphington Village Enhancements – the options explored and the scheme that would be developed based on the options was shown in Appendix 3.
- A379 Junctions – the detailed design for the remaining junctions on the A379 was progressing with a plan of the scheme included in Appendix 4.
- Community Building – the initial design for the community building, which included a GP surgery, had been undertaken, but the cost estimate was significantly over the budget allowed for in the HIF funding. However, it remained the intention to deliver a community building through revised designs and or phased works. Appendix 5 showed the site layout for the costed scheme.
- Southern Spine Road – which would connect the three development parcels to the south of the A379 together. Plans showing the expected alignment of the Spine Road were in Appendix 6.
- Recovered funding - funding would be recovered as development was delivered and would be in accordance with terms within legal agreements.

An Impact Assessment is also attached for the attention of Members at the meeting and can be viewed online at -

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/south-west-exeter-housing-infrastructure-fund-hif/>. This highlighted that the HIF project would support the development of a new urban extension to Exeter and the delivery of the community infrastructure and school would support the creation of a community. Consideration had been, and would continue to be, given to safe and sustainable access for all.

The Cabinet noted that the proposal had been assessed and all necessary safeguards taken to safeguard the Council's position. A risk register was in place for the project which was reviewed and updated monthly.

The Local Member expressed his disappointment that money was being re-allocated to other areas of Devon and also that the recommendations didn't specifically mention consultation with the Local Member. The Head of Service explained some of the conditions of the HIF funding in terms of reinvestment of recouped funding from developments and the Leader further highlighted the Council's usual practice on consulting Local Members on matters that impacted on their ward.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Davis, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated authority to progress the proposals for;

- i. Devon Hotel roundabout and Trood Lane signal-controlled junction
- ii. Alphington village enhancements
- iii. Southern spine road
- iv. A379 junctions

including going out to tender and to award contracts for the schemes within the project budget;

(b) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated powers to make any necessary changes to the design and progress the proposals for the community building and GP surgery and that this includes the submission of a planning application, going out to tender and to award contracts, subject to available project budget and necessary legal agreements to facilitate delivery;

(c) that the proposals in relation to the allocation of funding recovered from developers be conditionally approved including up to

- i. £5.5 million towards the electricity substation
- ii. £2 million towards Cranbrook community building;

(d) that the allocation of part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund grant towards the purchase of land and undergrounding of electricity cables associated with the delivery of the electricity substation and the proposal to enter into a contract with Western Power Distribution for the undergrounding of the cables be approved.

(NB: The Impact Assessment referred to above may be viewed alongside Minutes of this meeting and may also be available on the [Impact Assessment Webpages](#)).

* **147** **Construction of a community facilities building in Cranbrook Town Centre providing flexible space for County Council services including children's, youth, and libraries**

(Councillors Connett, Gent, Hannaford and Randall-Johnson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/22/17) which sought approval for the construction of a community facilities building in Cranbrook Town Centre to provide flexible space for Council services, such as children's, youth, and libraries. The report had been circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

At its meeting on 9 October 2019, Cabinet considered Report PTE/19/38 relating to a community facilities building - [Construction of a community facilities building in Cranbrook Town Centre providing flexible space for County Council services including children's, youth and libraries](#)

Members will note the key issues from the 2019 Report which highlighted the development and future expansion of Cranbrook. However, the provision of facilities within the town centre had stalled and it remained the case that the only building in the town centre is the public house.

The original plan for the town centre was based on a 'traditional' model with numerous retail units and food store with these being delivered by the private sector. The Cranbrook New Community Partners (NCP) was seeking to revise the approved town centre plans with a reduced commercial / retail element and provision of additional residential dwellings instead.

However, some progress had been made with the Council securing outline planning permission in July 2020 on a 0.4-hectare site in the town centre.

The NCP was proposing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which, if approved, would facilitate the revisions of the section 106 planning agreement. The MoU looked to agree the variation of the s106 in a number of areas and details of the offer letter from the NCP was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report. Other aspects included the agreement of the uses of parcels of land in the town centre; transfer of land for Town Council facilities; contribution to costs of the Town Council offices; provision of blue lights facility land; delivery of a town square; delivery of a supermarket; and offer of town centre land for East Devon District Council to purchase to deliver commercial uses in the town centre.

If Members accepted the NCP offer it was anticipated that work would restart on the preparation of a reserved matter planning application with a view to submitting the application in the autumn of 2022. It was envisaged that the building would be a well-designed two storey building facing into the town centre. As well as offering space for library, youth and children's services there was an ambition to provide flexible space for other uses such as public health nursing, hall space, meeting rooms and external multi-use games area.

The estimated costs of the provision of the building and ancillary external works was in the region of £4.5 to £5 million. The offer from the NCP totalled £3 million leaving a funding gap of £1.5 to £2 million. Approval was therefore sought to use the funds recovered from the SW Exeter HIF grant to bridge the funding gap, subject to approval from Homes England.

Whilst there was a funding gap it was considered that the provision of a single multi-purpose building represented the optimum way forward. The provision of an integrated flexible building aligned with the priorities of the Devon County Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and would assist in improving health and wellbeing in Cranbrook, provide opportunities for children and young people and provide appropriate support for the community of Cranbrook.

Cabinet noted that following the relevant approvals to progress the scheme, an Impact Assessment would be undertaken alongside development of detailed scheme design.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Gilbert, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the Cranbrook New Community Partners offer of a £3 million phased contribution towards the construction of a single building to provide flexible space for County Council services including children's, youth, and libraries be accepted;

(b) that the offer of a single 0.4ha of serviced land in a town centre location at Cranbrook to construct the building also be accepted;

(c) that a reserved matter planning application be prepared and submitted for the provision of the building;

(d) that approval be given to use up to £2 million of funds recovered from the South West Exeter Housing Infrastructure Fund grant to make up any shortfall between the developer contribution and the cost of the building; and

(e) that in the event that all of the funding is not secured a further report be presented to Cabinet to consider the financial implications of providing the building.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.32 pm