

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 8 FEBRUARY 2023 FROM THE REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2023

RD88: HUNSTANTON MULTI USER HUB AND TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

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The Assistant Director presented the Cabinet report which provided the background to the project and the issues that were now being faced. A copy of the presentation is attached. It was explained that issues with Planning Permission Regulatory changes, unforeseen rises in construction costs following the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently forecast falling house prices, have had a material impact on the financial viability of this scheme.

Alternative options for the site were being considered, but the conclusion was that the site had become unviable for a variety of reasons as a location for housing, the availability of other government grants for transport and NCC prepared to fund their own library and to invest in the site as an Active Travel Hub, officers are instead recommending that the Council pursues this option.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for his report and invited question and comments from Members of the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question from Councillor Beal, the Assistant Director explained that recommendation two included details of the TIC provision.

Councillor Beal referred to the bus stops outside the Princess Theatre and Spinney and felt that these were no longer needed and should be reverted back to much needed car parking spaces. The Assistant Director explained that this would be a matter for the Highways Authority.

In response to a question from Councillor Beal regarding the Camper Van trial, the Assistant Director explained that no sites had been identified presently.

Councillor Beal referred to the Hunstanton Oasis and commented that it needed to be retained on the Seafront and not moved to a car park. He also suggested use of the school site. The Assistant Director explained that consultations and discussions had taken place with Hunstanton Town Council and Hunstanton Advisory Group on the school site, but it would involve a loss of playing fields. The Assistant Director explained that the next steps for the Oasis were being looked at and feedback on the unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund application was awaited.

Councillor Beal raised concerns on the charges and subsidies of the Oasis.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Gidney made reference to access to the development and storage for cycles. He also asked if it was possible to see an interior ground floor plan of the development to see if there was potential for expansion in the future. Councillor Gidney also commented that solar panels should be used alongside things that were beneficial for wildlife, such as bird boxes. The Assistant Director explained that he could feedback Councillor Gidneys comments to the Norfolk County Council proposal. The Assistant Director confirmed that the development would be fully DDA compliant and would provide cycle parking and storage provisions.

Councillor de Whalley asked for clarification on the management of the TIC and if this area would also serve as a waiting room and for detail on how this development would link in with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The Assistant Director explained that the

TIC would not be manned, but would be an information point and could also be used as a waiting area. It was noted that there was also dedicated waiting areas and shelters included as part of the development. The Panel was informed that Norfolk County Council would ensure that the plans linked up with the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the Active Travel Hub proposed for King's Lynn.

Councillor Bone commented that he was disappointed that the whole scheme was not going forward, but acknowledged the issues that had prohibited this.

The Portfolio Holder for Development, Councillor Blunt agreed that it was disappointing, but unforeseen circumstances had resulted in the original development being unviable. Lots of discussions had been held on how to take the project forward and he felt that this scheme was a positive for the area.

Councillor Morley referred to the recommendations within the report and felt that these needed simplifying and detailed design work was needed.

The Chair, Councillor Collingham asked about the implications of changes to the development in terms of the ACP and the Portfolio Holder explained that the Council was working with ACP to look at other sites to transfer the funding to.

In response to a question from the Chair it was explained that the cost of safety measures were high because of the mixed use of the site. The Assistant Director provided detail of the mixed use suppression systems for residential and commercial development.

Councillor Morley proposed revised recommendations as set out below:

1. This Council recognises the existing plans for Hunstanton bus Station and Library have been frustrated due to changes in Regulations and now cannot be achieved.
2. In consultation with Norfolk County Council this Council will forward a revised plan, excluding residential development, but caters for; bus station, library hub, TIC, facilities for cycles and welfare facilities.
3. The outline design will be agreed with Norfolk County Council and Hunstanton Advisory Group to proceed to secure sufficient grants including bus back better and ACP funding.

The Chair commented that recommendations contained within the original report, including the recommendation on removing the project from the Capital Programme and the delegated authorities within the report, were pertinent to moving the project forward.

The Panel supported the original recommendations as set out within the report and that these be recommended to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

That Cabinet approve the following:

1. The Council will not proceed with housing on the bus station site in view of external factors affecting the viability of the scheme and the opportunity to pursue a viable alternative, and will remove the project from the Capital Programme.
2. NCC will continue to proceed with the improved library / adult education facility (including the library, toilets, and changing places toilet) on the site enabled with the addition of land owned by the Borough which will include the provision of an area for West Norfolk tourism information (subject to further negotiation);

3. NCC will proceed with the Bus Back Better Grant to improve coastal travel, cycle facilities and sustainability, invest to improve the bus station as a transport interchange and to agree terms with Borough Council for the land;
4. The Borough Council, supported by Norfolk County Council, to negotiate with Homes England in respect of the ACP funding originally allocated to development of this site.
5. The Borough Council will work with all parties on developing a joint strategic approach to regeneration and growth in the wider Hunstanton area through an agreed Masterplan;
6. That the Assistant Director for Property and Projects, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Property and Finance, S151 officer and Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to finalise the legal arrangements for the land.