

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FROM CABINET ON 17 OCTOBER 2024

CAB59

HUNSTANTON BUS STATION AND LIBRARY PROPOSALS

The Housing Services Manager presented a report which set out proposals for the Borough Council to deliver 21-24 affordable housing units as well as a library on behalf of Norfolk County Council (NCC) on the Hunstanton Bus Station site alongside the NCC transport interchange improvements.

The Borough Council obtained capital funding from Homes England under the Accelerated Construction Programme (ACP) in 2018. This was a fund to accelerate housing delivery on sites in public ownership. The Hunstanton Bus Station site was one of 7 council owned sites funded through the programme. In February 2023 the Council's Cabinet resolved not to proceed with housing on the Bus Station site but would continue to support Norfolk County Council in delivering an improved library and improve the current bus station as a transport interchange. The Council now had an opportunity to revisit the 2023 Cabinet decision. The report presented an option to achieve both the interchange along with 21-24 affordable homes and a new library.

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval to designate the Hunstanton Bus Station site as a strategic site for affordable housing delivery. This would involve designing and costing a housing scheme of 21-24 affordable housing units at the Bus Station Site in Hunstanton plus NCC delivering a library in concert with the NCC Transport Interchange scheme and to amend the Capital Programme to include this new housing scheme funded from a combination of funds ring-fenced for affordable housing which were already held by the Council and some funds as supported by the Council through the Capital Programme. A decision on whether to enter into a contract to deliver the housing scheme would be taken by Cabinet once the scheme had been designed and costed. If it was determined to enter the contract, it would be classed as one of the Council's Major Projects.

Under standing order 34, Councillor T Parish attended the meeting and addressed the Cabinet seeking the extension of the affordable homes element of the scheme to be further than just Hunstanton, or the provision of private rented properties which were difficult to find all along the coast as most rentals were for holiday homes.

Assistant Director, D Hall explained that the scheme was in the early stages of housing design. An assessment would need to be made of local need for the area, and a decision on tenure made at that point.

The Chair drew attention to the fact that the scheme ensured that £800,000 which was due to be returned was being utilised jointly by the Borough and County Councils, with both sides being pragmatic on the scheme to be delivered. He drew attention to the improved toilet facilities in the scheme. He highlighted the good working relationship the council had with Homes England as it had a record of delivering affordable homes in its schemes.

Councillor Morley asked if there was a contingency sum included in the scheme, to which it was confirmed there was.

RESOLVED: 1) That a housing scheme of 21-24 affordable housing units at the Bus Station Site in Hunstanton plus a library in partnership with Norfolk County Council and in consort with the NCC Transport Interchange Scheme (the “Hunstanton Bus Station Proposed Housing Scheme”) shall be designed and costed up to RIBA Stage 4 with an approved budget of £250,000.

2) The Bus Station Site in Hunstanton is deemed a strategic site for affordable housing delivery.

This section is the recommendation to Council:

RECOMMENDED: 3) That the Capital Programme be amended to include Hunstanton Bus Station Proposed Housing Scheme based on the initial cost estimate of £4m to be funded from affordable housing funding held and ringfenced by the Council of £2.2m and internal borrowing against the capital receipts from the eventual sale of the affordable housing units estimated to be £1.8m.

Reason for Decision

The decision to designate the site for Affordable Housing creates an opportunity to deliver much needed affordable housing in Hunstanton to meet identified need; it will see the delivery of a new library by NCC; and the development will sit alongside a planned refreshed bus station with modern accessible facilities