

Forward Plan reference number: FP/413/04/19

Report title: Drawdown from Transformation Reserve: Land for development in Shenfield (Shenfield Library in Brentwood District):(BRE006)	
Report to: Councillor Gagan Mohindra, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Housing.	
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Date: October 2019	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Brentwood North	

Confidential Appendix

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This paper seeks approval to draw down funding from the transformation reserve to cover the costs of detailed design and planning work and secure planning permission for a development on the current Shenfield Library site including a new library.
- 1.2. A further decision will be brought once detailed design is complete and planning permission has been achieved to seek approval to embark on development of the Site.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Housing:

- 2.1. To agree to invest £260,817 capital to cover the costs of detailed design, planning, technical design, site preparatory works and ECC internal costs. No new capital will be required; it will be taken from the existing capital programme.
- 2.2. To agree the drawdown revenue costs of £2,564 in 2019/2020 and £6,695 in 2020/21 from the Transformation reserve for the purposes outlined at 2.1

3. Background and proposal

- 3.1 The Site is an Essex County Council (ECC) owned site of 0.142ha, the Shenfield Library site. It is located in Shenfield at Hutton Road, to the north

east of Shenfield town centre in a primarily residential area. The condition of the building and close proximity to both Shenfield and Brentwood town and stations, make this site ideal for redevelopment. The recommended option is to demolish the existing building, re-provide the library on the existing site, alongside an additional commercial space such as a café/crèche or similar plus ten apartments.

- 3.2 On 15th July 2019, Cllr David Finch announced the outcome of the public consultation on the Future Libraries Strategy. No libraries will close. This was ratified at ECC Cabinet on 23rd July 2019. The Council proposes a package of investment to modernise the service. This comprises an investment programme for County run libraries to radically transform the experience of using these library services by refurbishing them to deliver a consistent high-quality look and feel across the network. It aims to transform the service to make it more relevant to the way we live now and ensure we have a service fit for a modern age. The investment requested in this decision will fund detailed design and planning work for a new library which meets the requirements of this strategy in consultation with the library service.
- 3.4 The scheme will also reduce future maintenance liabilities and operating costs. The current library has planned maintenance liabilities of £300k over the next 3 - 5 years.
- 3.4 ECC's Essex Housing team, on the basis of advice from consultants, has carried out a feasibility assessment that has assessed the suitability of the site for development and the likelihood of obtaining planning permission for the Scheme. The proposed, officer recommended, scheme is based upon this advice.
- 3.5 MEPK Architects have been engaged by the Essex Housing team to undertake an initial assessment of the Site's capacity. Professional advice has also been sought from Phase 2 Planning (Planning Advice), Oxbury (build costs) and financial appraisals and marketing advice from Savills.
- 3.5 Due diligence referenced above has not indicated any issues with the development of the Site other than those specifically set out in the confidential appendix. More detailed due diligence will be undertaken as part of the design and planning phase and detailed in the final business case.
- 3.6 ECC's Essex Housing team will manage the project. The key milestones as follows:

Milestone Description	Target Date
Design Team Appointed	November 2019
Planning submission	April 2020
Planning permission secured (Inc. s106 negotiations)	August 2020
Technical design complete	December 2020
CMA to determine development approach	January 2021

4. Options

4.1 A number of options have been considered in detail:

- **Recommended Option 1:** This option proposes the total demolition of the existing building, the provision of temporary library space and the subsequent re-provision of library space alongside additional commercial space such as a crèche / café or similar plus ten apartments. The library space would be retained by ECC and the additional space and apartments rented or sold.
- **Option 2:** This option highlights for comparison what we anticipate the market would do with the site. It is based on a D1 use on the ground floor due to likely planning restrictions. It assumes the development of a health centre facility (on advice from Savills), an additional facility and ten apartments. All would be sold.
- **Option 3:** This option proposes 1) a new library or community facility (to retain in ECC's ownership). 2) an additional facility and ten apartments which would be leased from practical completion until year 9 and then sold at half way through year 10.
- **Option 4:** Proposes disposal of the site
- **Option 5:** Proposes leaving site as it.

4.2 The financial implications of each of these options can be found in the confidential appendix. As highlighted above while at this stage officers are recommending option 1, a final decision on construction and disposal options is not required until Final Business Case stage.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Essex Housing will continue to work with the Site and progress its planning application. Once planning has been obtained, a further report will be brought to consider whether ECC wish to embark on the development of the Site and therefore seek to appoint a contractor.

6. Consideration of Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1 £127,078 capital will be required in 2019/20. This will be taken from the existing 19/20 capital programme.

6.1.2 £133,740 capital will be required in 2020/21. This will be taken from the existing 2020/21 capital programme.

6.1.3 £2,564 of revenue costs will be drawn down from the transformation reserve in 2019/2020 and £6,695 in 2020/21.

6.1.4 Given commercial sensitivity, the financial implications associated with this project are set out in the confidential appendix.

6.2 Legal Implications

- 6.2. ECC has the power under the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land and power under the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 to develop land for the improvement or development of its area. The aim of this scheme relate principally to ensuring that housing is available to meet the needs of Essex residents.
- 6.2. Any future building contract will be the subject of Expected completion date is most likely to lag at least 18 months behind 14 unit private scheme due to dependencies on infrastructure works on that scheme (6 months) and a longer build programme (12 Months). Procurement governance approved and ready to launch. additional internal governance within ECC and be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

7 Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 7.3 An initial equality impact assessment carried out in May 2019, indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic and a section 2 Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

8 List of Appendices

- 8.1 Confidential Appendix
- 8.2 Equality Impact Assessment

9 List of background papers

- 9.1 Libraries consultation Cabinet paper

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
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Land for Housing Development in Brentwood

Councillor Gagan Mohindra, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Housing	14.10.2019
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In consultation with:

Role	Date
Cllr Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	03.10.2019
Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)	22.08.2019
Nicole Wood Monitoring Officer	03.10.2019
Paul Turner	