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TO: Cabinet – 16 July 2007

SUBJECT: THE BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT DARTFORD

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) is developing an innovative new Cross-Directorate Learning Campus to form part of The Bridge Development. This report seeks agreement to proceeding with the Development.

Background

1. (1) The Bridge Development is a partnership between Dartford Borough Council (the landowners) and Pro Logis Developments Ltd (the developers). It will transform a 264 acre brownfield site (formerly the site of Dartford's Joyce Green Hospital and Little Brook Lakes), into an advanced sustainable community.

[2] KCC is a partner to the existing signed Section 106 Agreement between Dartford District Council, ProLogis Developments Ltd and Kent County Council. This was signed in October 2003. During early 2006 all the parties involved (KCC, DDC, ProLogis and Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd) agreed that the most appropriate way to deliver the community infrastructure would be within a hub on one site. This has resulted in the negotiation of a S106 Variation which has been agreed in principle. The finer details are being ironed out and finalised and will be signed off shortly. Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd will also be a partner to the 106 Variation.

[3] An inter-Directorate Team of KCC officers, led by Vicky Thistlewood in Regeneration and Economy has been working for some time on the design of the Learning Campus which forms part of the Bridge Development. This is a completely new approach and brings together all Directorates willingly to deliver an integrated County Council facility. The Campus includes:

- A new Primary School and nursery (phased development, eventually 2FE, but built in one "hit" with the unused 2nd FE being leased to Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd until required for the school)
- Facilities for Health
- Facilities for Adult Education
- Multi-Agency Social Care Facility for CFE
- Adult Social Service Community Resource Centre
- Community meeting room
- Youth Centre
- Library and Archives Access point
- Facilities for the Police

- Café

(3) A report was submitted to the School Organisation Advisory Board on 7 September 2006, requesting a Public Notice be issued to allow the new school to open. This request was agreed. A subsequent variation to the original Public Notice on 20 February 2007, altered the date of the opening to September 2009, to which there were no objections.

[4] KCC is working in partnership with Dartford Borough Council and the Developers to provide a truly integrated community facility, which is iconic, aspirational, eco friendly and creates a sense of place. It will play a pivotal role in creating a community that does not yet exist. This is KCC's first "School of the Future", bringing together a whole host of community facilities under one roof. Space is shared to maximise its use. It is intended that one facilities management team will look after the whole building. The design work has now reached RIBA Stage C.

[5] The cross-Directorate approach to the development at The Bridge is a fore-runner for other key developments e.g., Eastern Quarry etc., and has set the standard for both cross-Directorate working and partnership working.

Financial Implications

2. (1) The County Council has secured a developers contribution which, with index linking, equates to approximately £8.5m to meet the capital cost of this innovative development. Indications from all of the Directorates involved are that, with the possible exception of the new school, the available funding should be sufficient to deliver all of the facilities. In the case of the primary school, our existing primary brief is above the statutory minimum and the developer is unwilling to fund.

(2) In the event that the primary school element of the project costs in excess of notional funding, the addition will be met from within the Education and School Improvement Capital Budget. At that time any required variation to that Capital Programme will be addressed through the appropriate approvals process.

(3) The developer (Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd) have elected not to build the facility but to make the funding available to KCC. They are, however, the developers of the residential element. This transfers the risk of any budget over-run to the County Council, but does put us in control of the schemes development and delivery with Corporate Property managing the scheme on the Authority's behalf.

(4) In the event of any potential over-run the Directorates involved will either have to scale down their requirements, or produce additional funding. Any such variations will be addressed through the appropriate approvals process.

[5] For simplicity purposes it is proposed that this scheme, in totality, is added to the Education and School Improvement Capital Programme rather than being split across all the portfolios involved.

(6) Any revenue budget implications will be contained within the revenue budgets of the appropriate Directorates.

Recommendation

3. Cabinet is asked TO:
- (a) APPROVE the continuing development of The Bridge Development;
 - (b) AGREE to this scheme, valued at £8.5m, at this point in time, being formally added into the Education and School Improvement Capital Programme and to be shown as being fully funded by Developer Contributions. In the event that the contribution is at a different level, the programme being amended accordingly. This will be incorporated into the September Monitoring report;
 - (c) GIVE approval to spend and authority to negotiate and enter such agreements as are necessary to give effect to the scheme to the Director, Resources (CFE) and the Head of Corporate Property, in consultation with the other Managing Directors and Cabinet Members, subject to the Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Finance being satisfied with all the financial arrangements, both Revenue and Capital;
 - (d) NOTE that new Bridge Primary School will open in September 2009.

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Background Documents:

School Organisation Advisory Board Report – 7 September 2006
Directorate files