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From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business strategy, performance and Health Reform & Barbara Cooper, Director of Economic Development

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Subject: Redevelopment of Toilet Block – Central Area

Classification: Unrestricted

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**Summary:** The transfer of land to facilitate the repositioning and redevelopment of the public toilets within the Central Area. The proposal will facilitate improved circulation arrangements and facilities essential to the enhancement and future of Kings Hill's centre.

**Recommendations:** Members of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee are asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations on the Cabinet Member decision to authorise the transfer/disposal of part of the Central Area land and the footprint of the proposed new toilet building to McLagan Investments Ltd (Asda) and lease land to Liberty Property Limited Partnership.

## 1. Introduction

Kent County Council owns the freehold of land within the Central Area adjacent to the Asda store and the car park adjacent to the Central Area. The land parcels extends to a total approximate area of m2, is within the Kings Hill development area and falls within the domain of the Development Partnership between KCC and Liberty Property Trust UK.

The site already forms part of the public pedestrian circulation area where it is intended to allow the pedestrian flow and improved views of key buildings and areas to be far more evident to visitors and everyday users. The existing toilets currently obscure and frustrate the latest development arrangements and prevent the required connectivity between different main retailers.

## 2. Financial Implications

The decision to implement the proposals will not have any detrimental impact on the Council's capital and revenue budgets and spending plans, due to the forward planning and inclusion of the building costs within the Kings Hill Central area funding arrangements. The toilets are in essential need of replacement and the advantages the proposals bring will form part of plans to significantly enhance the visitor's experience to Kings Hill centre.

Each party is responsible for its own legal fees.

### **3 Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework**

The decision directly links to the Council's Medium Term Plan (Bold Steps for Kent) in that it aligns with:

Priority 8 - Responding to key regeneration challenges working with our partners by unlocking a key site within a growth point and which contributes to providing new homes and commercial opportunities in the Kings Hill Central Area.

Priority 9 - Support new housing growth that is affordable, sustainable and with the appropriate infrastructure; and

Priority 11 - Improving access to public services.

The proposed decision relates to the long term agreed master plan and strategy for Kings Hill and as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

### **4. The proposals**

The proposed new toilet building has detailed planning permission and the layout and form of the proposals have been sensitively designed to reflect and compliment the setting and appearance of the existing Control Tower, a Grade 2 listed building and a major landmark feature within the Central Area of Kings Hill.

The construction works and associated demolition are scheduled to take place simultaneously with the ongoing restoration and the completion of the conversion of the Control Tower.

In order to create the new toilets in the Central Area, Liberty Property Limited Partnership need to surrender part of their existing lease of Block 5, being the bin store area back to Kent County Council.

Once the new toilets have been developed and the works are complete, Kent County Council will then need to transfer the freehold of footprint of the new toilets to Asda. This arrangement forms the basis of a legal settlement agreement Asda.

Kent County Council will also need to grant Liberty Property Limited Partnership a new lease on the new bin store area for Block 5.

On transfer of the new toilets to Asda, Asda will need to transfer back the freehold of the land, the footprint of the old toilets, back to Kent County Council and so that Liberty as Kent County Council's development partners can demolish them.

As part of the land rationalisation a small area (Area 1) directly adjacent to the Asda store will also be transferred to McLagan Investments Ltd (Asda).

Asda are to own and control and maintain the new toilets as with the current facilities.

Local Member consultation has taken place.

## **5. Conclusion**

The various land transactions are necessary to provide the new toilets and form an important integral part of the new Kings Hill Central Area layout. The latest reconfiguration of the Central Area has been necessary to take account of other recent and ongoing developments which collectively rejuvenate the range and quality of facilities provided, making provisions for the continued growth of Kings Hill as a successful mixed use development. The current proposals have come about after extensive and detailed evaluation by the Development Partnership. All other alternative options have been considered, including the retention of the existing toilets, but none of the alternative options are capable of delivering the same range and level of benefits.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform recommends the Cabinet Committee to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Business Strategy and Support, on behalf of Kent County Council, to enter into the appropriate contracts for the transfer/disposal of part of the Central Area and the transfer back of the

Members are requested to agree and endorse the recommendations as set out above on page 1 of the report.

## **7. Background Documents**

A location plan showing the respective parcels is attached for reference and location purposes.

## **8. Contact details**

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