

From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Trading Services

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 28th March 2022

Subject: 22/00031 - Strategic options for Langton Field, Canterbury:
Land adjacent to Kent and Canterbury Hospital

Key decision: Yes - Expenditure or savings of over £1m

Classification: Unrestricted with Exempt Appendix – not for publication.
Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, refers)

Past Pathway of report:

Property Board (update), March 2022

Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, July 2021 (Decision No. 21/00060)

Policy and Resources Property Sub-Committee (update paper), July 2018

Policy and Resources Property Sub-Committee, July 2014 (Decision No:14/00080)

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: Canterbury City South

Summary: This report considers the strategic options to optimise Council owned land at Langton Field, Langton Lane, Canterbury, Kent in order to satisfy its commercial and S.123 interests.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse or make comments on the proposed decision to agree for the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to finalise and enter into all necessary legal and other documentation with one or more parties to optimise Kent County Council's land holdings position at Langton Land, Canterbury.

1. Background

- 1.1 The freehold land owned by the Kent County Council (KCC) known as Langton Field, outlined in red on the attached site plan at Appendix A, is located in Canterbury adjoining the southern extent of the urban area including the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. It comprises of a relatively flat and open agricultural field extending to approximately 5.75 hectares (c.14.2 acres).
- 1.2 Canterbury City Council (CCC) own the adjacent farmland to the northwest, extending to approximately 9.5 hectares (c.23.5 acres) known as Ridlands Farm.

- 1.3 Both parcels form a site allocated within Canterbury's adopted 2017 Local Plan known as "Ridlands Farm and Langton Field" allocated for 310 dwellings, together with an indicative health element. The allocation includes a policy stating that a new fast track bus route must run through both sites from Nackington Road to South Canterbury Road to the Northwest. This is to mitigate traffic congestion impact anticipated from any new development in the town centre and Dover Road (A2).
- 1.4 East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) has been exploring options at its Canterbury, Margate and Ashford hospitals for a number of years, in terms of its service delivery and estates transformation strategy.
- 1.5 The final recommended hospital configuration option to be progressed will be determined following further consultation and requires the approval by the NHS including the allocation of funding. KCC are not part of this decision-making process.
- 1.6 As a result, a Key Decision was taken (Decision number: 21/00060) in August 2021, committing the Council's land to the Hospital Trust's public procurement process to secure a development partner within the next 3 years.
- 1.7 It is possible that the NHS consultation and approval process may conclude that there is no priority for hospital development at Canterbury.
- 1.8 In order to meet the Council's best value duties and maximise the value of the land, it is necessary to take steps to optimise KCC land holdings.

2. Planning

- 2.1 The KCC and CCC land, together known as Ridlands Farm and Langton Field, is allocated in the 2017 adopted Local Plan for 310 homes plus a health element, which includes a policy stating that a new fast track bus route must run through both sites from Nackington Road to the South Canterbury Road to the Northwest via the Canterbury land.
- 2.2 A joint KCC/CCC "Call for Sites" Submission was made in June 2020 to protect current residential allocation.

3. Options Considered and Financial Considerations

- 3.1 A range of options were considered and are set out in more detail in an exempt appendix B along with the confidential financial considerations. These options have been informed by advice from Savills and Cushman and Wakefield with Montagu Evans appointed to provide specialist property advice moving forward.

4. Equalities implications

- 4.1 There are no equalities implications.

5. Governance

- 5.1 The site has been declared surplus to KCC's requirements with a key decision being sought in line with the Council's governance processes. External legal advice has been sought from Pinsents following discussion with General Counsel and will continue to be the case during any commercial discussions with third party landowners.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This KCC site has been considered surplus to the Council's requirements
- 6.2 In order to maximise the return to the Council it is necessary to further optimise the site. The exempt appendix B consider the options and it is proposed to progress in accordance with the exempt appendix recommendations.

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse or make comments on the proposed decision to agree for the Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services to finalise and enter into all necessary legal and other documentation with one or more parties to optimise Kent County Council's land holdings position at Langton Land, Canterbury.

8. Background Documents

Appendix A - Langton Field, Canterbury site plan
EXEMPT Appendix B
EXEMPT Appendix C - Site Plan 1
EXEMPT Appendix D - Site Plan 2

9. Contact Details

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