

EXETER CITY COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE
30 SEPTEMBER 2008****REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BUS STATION****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is advise Members of recent studies which have been commissioned in connection with the future redevelopment of the Bus Station site and to agree funding for a programme of further assessments.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The City Council is the freehold owner of the block of land between Sidwell Street, Paris Street and Cheeke Street that includes the Bus Station. It is also the freehold owner of the Bus Depot site that is on the opposite side of Cheeke Street between Belgrave Road and Bampfylde Street.
- 2.2 The adopted Exeter First Review Local Plan allocates the block of land including the Bus Station for comprehensive redevelopment that includes retail floorspace, short-stay car parking an enhanced bus station and other uses. The local plan states that the amount of retail floorspace shall be determined following an assessment of capacity and demand after the impact of the Princesshay development has been assessed (Policy KP3).
- 2.3 Stagecoach's lease of the Bus Station expires in 2012. The Council needs to have secured planning permission to coincide with the site becoming available. Any scheme might then be expected to take 2-3 years from start of construction to opening, or longer if there are significant precursor works.
- 2.4 The sites represent the most significant redevelopment opportunity in the city centre, with a development potential greater than that of Princesshay (£225 million). In the case of Princesshay, a significant number of background studies were prepared by the Council and commissioned from specialist consultants to inform the design of the scheme prior to and during preparation of the planning applications. It is essential that investment is made in appropriate studies to inform the development of proposals.

3 CONTRIBUTING STUDIES

- 3.1 The following studies are required to inform the preparation of a redevelopment proposal to help determine the mix of uses layout and design:

Completed or committed

- An architectural analysis of the Sidwell Street area. This was commissioned from Jeremy and Caroline Gould Architects and reported to Executive in March 2007.

- An urban analysis by Turley associates of how the Sidwell Street area works functionally and in urban design terms. This was commissioned from Turley Associates and reported to Executive in March 2007.
- A detailed topographic analysis of the levels on the site.
- Provisional geotechnical analysis of ground conditions.
- Contamination and unexploded ordnance desk studies and site inspections have been completed.
- Height & massing study of the design constraints to potential new buildings to identify the scale and disposition of potential building blocks. This was commissioned from Alan Baxter Associates and a final report is due imminently.
- A retail assessment after the trading and shopping patterns created by the opening of Princesshay have stabilised to assess the extent of the shopping catchment area and degree of penetration enabling the future potential for further comparison and convenience (food) retail floorspace to be assessed. This has been commissioned from DTZ, with shopper surveys taking place this month; the report should be concluded in the Autumn.

Outstanding:

- While a desk top archaeological study has been completed by Exeter Archaeology, initial trial trenching is required to identify potential archaeological issues and constraints. The cost for the work by Exeter Archaeology is estimated at £35,000-£45,000, which includes significant reinstatement costs. There may be an opportunity to combine this exercise with further geotechnical assessments.
- A transport assessment, modelling the capacity of the surrounding road network to support various mixes and quanta of development, looking at the future role of highways surrounding and within the site. It will also consider the wider transport strategy for the site. The estimated cost is about £50,000.
- Study of the quantity, quality and location of car parking to support the City Centre. This will involve detailed surveys of users and capacity surveys of all the major car parks. The output from this work is also a key input for the preparation of the City's Core Strategy in terms of establishing the long term pattern of car parking provision for the City. The cost is estimated at about £50,000.
- Once reasonable progress has been made on the various detailed studies, specialist master planning will be needed to identify options for the future development of the site. The cost is estimated at about £30,000.

- 3.2 The total cost of the further studies identified is up to £175,000. It is intended to meet these costs from the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant reserve.

4 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP

- 4.1 Planning Member Working Group considered a report on the situation with respect to Housing and Planning Delivery Grant on 19 August. It was informed that the Council's provisional allocation of revenue grant for 2008/9 was £140,000 more than had been budgeted for and that it was intended to invest this windfall in studies contributing to the bus station redevelopment and the Local Development Framework. After allowing for this additional expenditure, the reserve should still exceed £200,000 at the end of 2008/9.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Executive agrees the investment of a further £175,000 in studies to inform the redevelopment of the Bus Station and adjoining areas.

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**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended):
Background Papers used in compiling this report:
PMWG report and circulated note.**