

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 5th July 2022

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 19th July 2022

Report of: Director Finance

Title: Former Exeter Bus Station

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

This report seeks funding to advance the demolition of the former Exeter Bus Station building in preparation for interim uses to be brought forward before the wider regeneration of the CityPoint site.

2. Recommendations:

That Executive recommends and Council approves:

2.1 The provision of the sum of £900,000 for the purpose of funding the demolition of the former Exeter Bus Station.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

A number of schemes for the interim use of the building and the surrounding areas have been considered but not substantively advanced. It is felt that it will be easier to deliver positive interim uses of the land once the existing building have been removed. This course of action will also remove a significant constraint on future redevelopment of the wider CityPoint site and should accelerate delivery of the Liveable Exeter aspirations for the site.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources?

A new budget will need to be put in place to deliver a demolition project. Ongoing spending on hoardings and security would, however, not be required.

Demolition should have the effect of increasing the value of the Council's site as part of the overall CityPoint site so the potential will be created to enhance the returns from the redevelopment scheme as a whole.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

Whether an alternative asset is delivered in conjunction with the demolition will determine whether this is a capital or revenue scheme. As such therefore, there are two options being developed to fund the scheme. A bid is being made to the Government's Levelling Up Fund to demolish and replace the Bus Station with some "meanwhile" uses until the longer-term scheme can be delivered. If this bid is successful then the demolition will be funded from Capital Grant. Alternatively, the demolition will be funded from the excess income generate from our recent acquisition of the Guildhall Shopping Centre. As this is a regeneration project it falls under the permitted uses of this income.

6. What are the legal aspects?

There are no identified legal issues to raise at this stage.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

(Simon Copper – Deputy Monitoring Officer)

8. Report details:

Members will be aware that the new bus station has now been operational for some time and that bus and coach operations have now been fully relocated from the former Bus Station site. The temporary use of the upper and lower aprons during the construction of St. Sidwell's Point have also come to an end. The opportunity has therefore arisen to bring forward demolition of the redundant facility. This will allow the City Council to have a cleared site on which to introduce a range of "meanwhile" uses to animate the area adjoining the new leisure centre and will deliver the removal of a significant constraint to the future redevelopment of the wider CityPoint site.

The alternative approach will be to hoard and mothball the site. This is estimated to cost around £150,000 as an upfront hoarding and CCTV costs with ongoing security costs of £20,000 per annum and the continuing rates liability. This would also prevent our being able to explore the full range of meanwhile uses whilst the CityPoint scheme moves forward.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

The demolition of the existing buildings will bring forward possibilities for increasing the range of activities in the city centre and adjoining the new leisure centre as well as taking a significant step towards preparing the CityPoint site for redevelopment.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

In the current construction industry climate it is difficult to confidently estimate costs so we might find the estimated cost to be insufficient. This risk cannot at this stage be mitigated fully but we will need to engage proactively with the market to seek to deliver the project within budget.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the operational transport function of the facility has been accommodated in new facilities in the city centre. The redundant building therefore no longer serves the community.

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There are no direct implications resulting from the recommendation to fund the demolition project. However, there are opportunities to mitigate carbon impact during the demolition process and we will look to maximise those where possible.

13. Are there any other options?

The alternative of hoarding the site is considered in the report.

Director Finance, Dave Hodgson

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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