

Title of Report:	Item Called-in following an Executive Decision
	London Road Development Options
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	26 January 2021
Forward Plan Ref:	EX3978

Purpose of Report: To detail the objectives of development on the London Road Industrial Estate and request funding to help achieve these objectives through successful development of the site.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission reviews the decision.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Alan Law – Tel (01491) 873614
E-mail Address:	alan.law@westberks.gov.uk

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Ross Mackinnon – Tel (0118) 9833567
E-mail Address:	ross.mackinnon1@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Gordon Oliver
Job Title:	Principal Policy Officer (Corporate Policy Support)
Tel. No.:	01635 519486
E-mail Address:	gordon.oliver1@westberks.gov.uk

Supporting Information

1. Executive Decision

- 1.1 The London Road Development Options report was presented for consideration by the Executive on 17 December 2021. The report recommended that the Executive resolve to approve as follows:
- (a) a phased approach option to the development of the site within an overall vision for the development as a whole;
 - (b) the objectives of the development as per paragraph 5.14;
 - (c) commissioning a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help better align development proposals with Planning Policy, to set out estate wide design criteria and infrastructure requirements and for the cost of this work to be found out of annual funding requested in this report;
 - (d) a one-off budget of £45,000 to provide funding for feasibility services in the 2020- 21 financial year including, as appropriate, negotiations with estate stakeholders with commercial interests;
 - (e) the renaming of the London Road Industrial Estate working in consultation with the public.
- 1.2 The report also asked Executive to resolve to recommend, for inclusion on the budget papers, a revenue budget of £100,000 per annum over the next three years to provide for consultancy support during the project development where the Council does not have internal resources to provide the specific project resources.
- 1.3 Executive resolved to approve the above recommendations.

2. Call-In of the Decision

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution five Elected Members (Councillors Lee Dillon, Alan Macro, Jeff Brooks, Tony Vickers and Erik Pattendon) called in the Executive Decision (EX3978) on the basis of:
- (1) Significant concern regarding the Council's project management expertise and capacity to undertake this development;
 - (2) A lack of confidence in the management structure of the development which fails to place a "*Chinese wall*" between the Council as landowner and its planning authority;
 - (3) The question of whether a phased approach is the most appropriate rather than waiting for a full environmental assessment of the whole site to be undertaken;
 - (4) A lack of clarity of the market for both office space and flats as the longer-term ramifications of the pandemic are not yet understood.

- 2.2 The Members of the Council who submitted the call-in request proposed that the following alternative course of action should be followed:
- That a decision on the options should be paused until an environmental assessment of the entire site has been carried out, the fall-out of the pandemic is more fully understood, and the appropriate project management structure and expertise is in place.
- 2.3 This decision is not considered to be contrary to the policy framework, neither is it considered to be contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.
- 3. Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission**
- 3.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny and Management Commission is to review the Executive's decision.
- 3.2 The Commission will produce a report with its findings to the next meeting of the Executive (i.e. the meeting following the call-in request) unless there are exceptional circumstances why this cannot be achieved. In these circumstances the Chairman of the Commission and the Leader of the Council will agree a revised timetable.
- 3.3 The report will either confirm that it concurs with the original decision or propose amendments to it in any way it thinks fit and shall give reasons for its final decision. If the Commission upholds the Executive decision, that decision shall take immediate effect.
- 3.4 It should be noted that any matter which has been the subject of a call-in request may not be the subject of a further call-in request

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission review the Executive's decision (EX3978) of 17 December 2020 concerning London Road Development Options, in accordance with the call-in request dated 21 December 2020.
- 4.2 Having reviewed the Executive decision, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission should either:
- (a) Confirm that it concurs with the Executive decision (in which case it will be implemented with immediate effect); or
 - (b) Propose amendments and refer the matter back to the Executive for further consideration

Appendix A: London Road Development Options Report.

Appendix B: Draft Minutes from the Executive Meeting on 17 December 2020

Appendix C: Written Responses from the Executive Portfolio Holders for Finance and Economic Development, and Planning and Housing

