

**Written statement of a non-key officer decision**  
**Director of Economy and Place**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Preparation of the land to the south of Station Approach (Essex Arms site) for development</b>
Decision maker	Director of Economy and Place
Date of decision	29 January 2019
Report exemption class	Open
Purpose	<p>Approve works necessary for the preparation of the land to the south of Station Approach (Essex Arms site) for development.</p> <p>The Essex Arms site (appendix 1) lies to the south of the Station Approach (City Link Road CLR) which forms the northern boundary of the site. The site has been opened up for development as a result of the construction of the CLR which has enabled access to the site.</p> <p>However the site in its current form cannot be developed as it is subject to flooding due to its low laying topography, and throughout the master planning for the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) regeneration area, it was known that part of the site would need to be raised so the ground level was equal to its neighbours to allow it to be redeveloped as part of the Urban Village.</p> <p>Highways access to the site is achieved from Station Approach (the CLR), and a final phase of the CLR scheme will be the physical works required to realign Widemarsh Brook, and create an attenuation pond as part of the drainage strategy for the CLR. The scope of these works is limited to diverting the watercourse from the eastern boundary over to the west and includes constructing a new bank to retain and define the new route of the watercourse.</p> <p>Therefore consideration now needs to be paid to the necessity to raise the net developable area in order to realise the economic benefits of the CLR. This report seeks approval for a package of survey work and technical design to inform the form of the ground raising works, to enable future development of the site. The proposal is that the works are brought forward promptly to enable an early start of the development of this site, to support the university or other potential occupiers.</p> <p>The budget for these design and investigatory works are £45,000 which includes contingency to allow for additional survey work should initial investigations reveal issues around contamination and/or ecology beyond those already assumed and planned for.</p>

	A further report will be brought forward to seek approval for the physical ground raising works once these initial investigation and design works have been completed as they will define what is required including target costs.
<b>Decision</b>	<b>That:</b> <b>(a) Site investigations and design work for a scheme of flood alleviation works that would raise the ground level of part of the Essex Arms site to make it suitable for development be undertaken at a cost of not more than £45,000.</b>
Reason for the decision	As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at <a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50028790">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50028790</a>
Consultation	
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The site preparation work is not commissioned now as a concurrent works package (as proposed in this report) and is instead commissioned later on in the overall programme for the development of the site. This is not recommended as it is unlikely to give the council the opportunity to use the site within the timescales which are currently required to support the development of the new university in line with the Cabinet decision of 21st July 2016.</li> <li>2. The site preparation work is not done. This is not recommended as the site is not capable of development in its current state. The site if left undeveloped serves no useful purpose for the city, whereas, in view of its location along Station Approach, it could be developed to meet the objectives of the Council's Economic Vision.</li> <li>3. The site could be sold outright to a developer for them to do the work. However, if sold, the site is only likely to realise a low price from a speculator willing to take the risk that a development can ultimately be brought forward and an end user for the site can be identified. To sell on that basis the Council would lose control of the timing of any development and would have to rely on the planning process to control future uses which may result in the site remaining in its current condition for a long time.</li> </ol>
Declarations of interest	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	4 February 2019

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Officer:	.....	Date	29 January 2019
	Director of Economy and Place (Richard Ball)		