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<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Director for economy, communities and corporate</b>
<b>Decision date:</b>	<b>17 May 2017</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Model Farm planning application and feasibility work</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Economic development officer</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key decision**

This is not a key decision.

## **Wards affected**

Penyard  
Ross East

## **Purpose**

Seek approval to commission external support to submit a new planning application for the Model Farm Enterprise Park and work to identify the key constraints to development in the council's land holdings that surround Model Farm.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

**A planning application for the Model Farm Enterprise Park is commissioned along with feasibility work to identify the best use of the council's assets east of Ross on Wye, at a cost of no more than £120k**

## Alternative options

1. Do nothing, do not submit an application and do not investigate the opportunities within the surrounding land: In this scenario, the planning consent on the Model Farm site would be lost in December. If funding was to become available, planning would then be a constraint and risk for both obtaining a funding award and developing the site. The road network capacity that was secured by the previous planning permission could be captured by other developments. This would then limit the development potential of the council's assets in this area. The council would also not understand the constraints and opportunities of its land holdings east of Ross-on-Wye.
2. **Do minimum:** resubmitting the planning application only and do not undertake feasibility work into wider development. As there are synergies between the transport and ecology aspects of the planning permission and the feasibility work, the cost savings will be low and the opportunity to understand the constraints and opportunities of its land holdings east of Ross-on-Wye would be lost.

## Reasons for recommendations

3. The council retains a planning consent for the Model Farm Enterprise Park so that the scheme can be developed when funding becomes available. The application will aim to make sure the transport network capacity for the development is retained and a valid permission remains in place. Through the feasibility work, the council will identify the constraints and opportunities affecting its land holdings east of Ross-on-Wye.

## Key considerations

4. On 10 December 2013, Herefordshire Council submitted an outline planning application for the Model Farm Enterprise Park. The application was for outline planning permission for 29,400sqm of employment floorspace and full details of the access, internal road infrastructure and circulation routes, landscaping (within a landscape buffer zone providing surface water attenuation) and planting. The application will lapse on 9 December 2017 unless another planning application is submitted and approved. If the application lapses, other developments could capture transport network capacity that was reserved for the scheme and if a funding opportunity arose, the lack of a valid consent would reduce the chance of success and delivery.
5. Since the date of the application, the council has been developing a business case to enable the build of site infrastructure on the Model Farm Enterprise Park. Principally, this has involved submitting business cases to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for funding to bridge the gap between the cost of site infrastructure and the receipts from sale of the land. Due to high levels of competition, funding has not been achieved to date. To build out the site, the council is evaluating other potential delivery mechanisms, including investigating the use of the council's assets within the area to create a mixed scheme.
6. To retain the current development proposals on the site beyond December 2017, including retaining the reserved network capacity, the planning authority have recommended that the most cost effective approach would be to submit a new planning application for the enterprise park. For the new proposed outline permission, the planning authority would structure the conditions so that the infrastructure reserved matters application can be discharged separately to that of the plot areas. This allows for the council to more easily implement the consent, if awarded.

7. As the Model Farm sits within a larger council land holding to the east of Ross on Wye, to support the delivery of employment land, the council is looking to explore what other development is possible in the area. Whilst undertaking work to revisit the Model Farm planning application, there are synergies in expanding the transport and ecology work to explore what is possible and viable within this area. This report proposes that transport and ecology constraints are identified and if these do not identify any significant constraints, initial master planning will also be commissioned.
8. The external support will be commissioned via an 'invitation to quote' process in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules. Responses will be assessed in line with the evaluation criteria which is based on 60% quality and 40% cost. The contract will be awarded to the highest scoring bidder providing the council's requirements can be met and the quoted price does not exceed £45k.

## **Community impact**

9. The planning application and feasibility within itself will have a limited community impact. Future implementation of the employment permission is modelled to generate over 450 new jobs. Any feasibility works will inform future planning applications which will require a separate decision. Ensuring the project is in a position to be implemented once funding is secured will assist in achieving the council's corporate plan priority to support the growth of our economy. The project is also part of the council's Economic Vision.

## **Equality duty**

10. The Equality Duty 2010 has 3 aims (general duty):

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that who do not.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying "due regard" in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

11. As this is a decision in regards to a planning application, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our Equality Duty.

## **Financial implications**

12. The project will cost £80,000 in phase one. This will include the planning application fee (approximately £35K), consultant's fee for planning and feasibility (approximately £45k). The second stage masterplanning will cost £40,000 and will be subject to a separate procurement.
13. Where appropriate, the expenditure will be funded from the Development and Regeneration Programme Capital Budget. Economy, communities and corporate

directorate revenue budgets will fund costs which cannot be capitalised.

## **Legal implications**

14. As the owner of this land the council is able to develop the land in accordance with planning requirements. To avoid any conflict of interests the feasibility study and planning application is dealt by external planning agents so that the council's planning department can consider the application when it is submitted.

## **Risk management**

15. The planning consent being declined is a risk of any application process and as timelines are short (the application needs to be determined while the existing application is a material consideration) there is a low to moderate risk with this application. This would have an impact on the development potential of the Model Farm scheme and any other development utilising the council's assets in the area. Mitigation of this risk includes an effective procurement process, an appropriately resourced commission and early engagement with statutory consultees.
16. If not proceeding to commission planning and feasibility works, there is an economic and financial risk to the council and its interest in the area to the east of Ross-on-Wye. Other developments could capture transport network capacity and the council would not be aware of the development opportunities to the east of Ross on Wye.

## **Consultees**

17. The cabinet member for contracts and assets and Ross-on-Wye local members have been consulted about this proposal.

## **Appendices**

None identified