

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-037-2015/16  
**Date of meeting:** 8 October 2015



**Portfolio:** Asset Management and Economic Development  
**Subject:** Epping Forest Shopping Park – Progress Report  
**Responsible Officer:** Chris Pasterfield (01992 564124).  
**Democratic Services:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That Cabinet considers and notes general progress on the Epping Forest Shopping Park project, and**
- (2) Agree that the Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee should undertake more detailed future monitoring of the project, in addition to ongoing regular reports to Cabinet.**

### **Executive Summary:**

This report advises Members on progress with respect to the development of the new Epping Forest Shopping Park in Langston Road, Loughton.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The Council having acquired the interest of their development partner Polofind Ltd, is now the sole owner, developer and future operator. The project represents a major capital investment on behalf of the Council. Bringing forward the development is not only complex but has an element of risk. As such, Cabinet has requested general progress reports at each cycle of meetings.

### **Other Options for Action:**

None as this is in accordance with a specific request of the Cabinet.

### **Report:**

#### Project Management

1. From the inception of the Shopping Park Development, external consultancy advice has been obtained, with respect to the various technical roles and responsibilities involved in managing a project of this scale and complexity. These consultants have been working collaborately in a Project Team, with co-ordination provided by a specialist project manager from White Young and Green. A number of the consultants were originally engaged by Polofind. However, all costs have been split evenly up until the time that the Council acquired the sole interest. The Council's external solicitors, DAC Beachcroft have been transferring the consultant's appointments to the Council. A number of the revised contacts

are now completed, with the remainder to be concluded by the end of October 2015.

2. Whilst Council officers and the consultant project team are working effectively together, given the importance of the success of the project to the Council and the sums of expenditure involved, appropriate governance arrangements need to be in place. This is to oversee the construction of the retail park and mitigate risk. To date, Cabinet have received monitoring reports on general progress and key decisions have been taken by both the Cabinet and Council. Going forward, it is proposed that the Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee take responsibility for more detailed monitoring of the scheme. A report will be presented to their next meeting on the 15 October, suggesting how this can be achieved in practice.

#### Highways Tender

3. The tender for the Section 278 Highways Improvement Works has been posted onto the Government's Contracts Finder Website. The closing date for submissions is 5.00 p.m. on the 14 October.

4. Essex County Highways have been slow to provide final technical approval to S278 works. However, due to the amount of detailed design and technical discussions that have already taken place it has been decided to progress the tender process as the risk is deemed to be low that any major alterations will be required.

5. As part of the Highways Scheme, revised access to the BP garage was included within the design, which received full planning approval in 2012. However, recently BP have expressed concern that there is an alternative egress from the petrol station that they might prefer. A meeting was arranged on the 28<sup>th</sup> September to discuss this in more detail. The Portfolio Holder will give a verbal update on the outcome of this meeting.

6. The programme and completion date of the S278 works will not be known until the tender process has been completed and a main contractor appointed. It is a planning condition requirement that these works are completed before the EFSP is able to open for trading. Until these dates are available it will not be possible to confirm the opening date of the shopping park.

#### Planning

7. The Reserved Matters Planning Application was approved on the 10 June 2015. Condition information requirements have now all been satisfied.

#### Architectural

8. The shopping park is to be constructed under a design and build contract arrangement of an estimated cost to fall within the OJEU procurement processes. Drawings have been completed to a detailed stage and will be included in the tender package for the main contract, which is being again uploaded onto the Contracts Finder Website. There will however be alterations required to comply with unit lettings as different tenants will have different requirements. As such, unit sizes may change which will be achieved by moving party walls.

#### Utilities

9. Utilities divisionary works have been commissioned and no further progress at this time.

## Marketing/Letting

10. Strong interest in the Shopping Park continues and unsolicited bids are being received from major retailers despite anchor lettings not being completed yet. Work has continued on Heads of Terms and tenants fit out specification requirements and these are now moving forward in legal hands to be documented by the Council's solicitors DAC Beachcroft. A verbal update on Marketing and lettings activity will be provided by the Portfolio Holder.

## Relocation of Other Users

11. T J Evers, the building contractor has begun on site clearance and piling for the new Depot at Oakwood Hill. A positive first Progress Meeting was held on site on 22 September and second meeting will be on 20 October, by which time it is hoped the steel frame of the buildings will be appearing. The Museum store has relocated to temporary provision at Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate, in accordance with previous decisions.

### **Resource Implications:**

Funding for the development of the retail park has previously been agreed in accordance with the development appraisal considered by the Extraordinary Council Meeting in June 2015.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council has engaged legal advisors to support the procurement process. Although Cabinet will continue to receive regular progress reports, it is intended that the Asset Management Cabinet Committee take on the role of more detailed scrutiny of the project to ensure that good governance continues to be achieved.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Highways improvements will reduce congestion and emissions. Security at the shopping park will involve the use of ANPR and CCTV

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

Essex County Council Highways.

### **Background Papers:**

Report to Cabinet 20 July 2015.

Report to Council 23 June 2015.

### **Risk Management:**

The project is subject to constant risk management with a formal Risk Assessment Register reviewed regularly at Project Team Meetings.

# Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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The new shopping park will be fully accessible with facilities for people with disabilities and young children.