

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	2 November 2020
Executive Member:	Cllr Ryan, Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)
Reporting Officer:	Jayne Traverse – Director of Growth
Subject:	FORMER TWO TREES SCHOOL, DENTON - DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS AND SITE CLEARANCE
Report Summary:	To seek approval and funding to proceed with the proposed demolition of the former Two Tress School buildings and associated site clearance in preparation for disposal or redevelopment.
Recommendations:	<p>That Executive Cabinet be recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Authorise in principle the demolition and site clearance of the buildings at the former Two Trees High School subject to detailed surveys and planning approval noting that the removal of asbestos and mechanical and electrical installations can proceed in advance of planning approval to demolish; (ii) Procure the demolition and site clearance through the LEP Additional Services Contract; (iii) Recommend to Council that the approved capital programme is varied to allocate an indicative budget of £0.800m to fund demolition and site clearance on the basis of urgent Health and safety works. (iv) Agree that in the event that the detailed surveys indicate that additional budget is required that the whole project cost be subject to scrutiny and approval of the Executive.
Corporate Plan:	Supports the objectives of the Corporate Plan specifically creating a modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations.
Policy Implications:	In accordance with Council policy.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>Demolition and site clearance costs would normally be funded from either existing revenue budgets or additional revenue budget approvals, which will result in additional financial pressures in the short to medium term. If site preparation activity is deemed to enhance the future value of the site, then such additional costs may be financed from capital resources. No budget has previously been identified to fund this demolition and this report is requesting approval for £0.8m of capital resources for this purpose. This will minimise the short term revenue budget pressures but places further demands on the financing requirements of the Capital Programme. The Growth directorate is continuing to pursue other funding contributions such a grant funding where such opportunities are available. As part of the procurement of the demolition of the site, a full value for money assessment will be required before the entering into of any contracts for the works.</p> <p>The Council's capital programme ambition is currently in excess of the funding identified as available making it unsustainable in its current form. The committed programme at 1 April 2020 (which</p>

does not include any approved budget for demolition costs at the former Two Trees Schools site) requires £19.5m of corporate resources, with only £14.6m available in reserves, leaving a £4.9m shortfall which needs to be met from the proceeds from the sale of surplus assets. If the costs of demolition for the former Two Trees Schools site are to be met by the Council, then this shortfall in available resources will increase further to £5.7m.

In September, Executive Cabinet approved the phase one of a disposals plan. The first £5.7m of capital sales receipts will be required to fund this gap before any new capital expenditure on additional schemes can take place.

The broader ambition of the Council, as first established in October 2017, points to a further requirement of £33.2m of corporate funding to pay for schemes identified as a priority and subject to future business cases. Clearly these will be unable to progress until additional capital receipts are generated. The Growth Directorate are reviewing the estate and developing a pipeline of surplus sites for disposal.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough
Solicitor)**

As set out in this report the delivery of the contract will be via the additional services contract with the LEP. The Council has a policy of having all risks contracts with the LEP unless any risks can be better managed by the Council. The vfm report (Appendix 2) that the Council's obtains to protect its interest and ensure that the LEP undertakes it role states:

"From reviewing the information available it can be considered that the scheme is acceptable from a Value for Money point of view.

It should be noted that no work should commence until the surveys are complete so that we can be assured we have a certain fixed costs and there are no unknown liabilities.

Longer term once the demolition has been completed various other steps need to be taken especially in relation to the permanent decommissioning of the pitches and planning and environmental requirements in relation to the demolition.

Risk Management:

See risk section within report

Background Information:

Appendix 1	Exempt vfm report
Appendix 2	Cost plan
Appendix 3	Programme

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Roger Greenwood



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Two Trees High School on Two Trees Lane, Denton ceased to operate as a community high school in 2012 and together with the closure of the Egerton Park High School a new PFI school was created called Denton Community College under the then Government's Building Schools for the Future Programme on the site previously occupied by Egerton Park. The Two Trees school buildings date from 1950's. Under the BSF programme the planned intention was to demolish the school buildings which dated from the 1950s and sell the site for alternative use to fund the Capital/BSF programme.
- 1.2 The Council has used the site for temporary accommodation since its closure in 2012, however it is now unoccupied other than the onsite security presence and is surplus to requirements.
- 1.3 Sports facilities that previously existed on the site consisting of three adult pitches and a cricket pitch were re-provided in agreement with Sport England at the Denton Community College.

2. BUILDING STATUS AND CONDITION

- 2.1 Following the school closure in 2012, a condition survey of the buildings was undertaken and identified that parts of the buildings on site were unsuitable for future occupation due to general condition and safety concerns. These areas were isolated from the main occupied areas and made inaccessible. No repairs or maintenance have been carried out on these areas since this decision.
- 2.2 In 2015 when the site was used as decant accommodation for Tameside One further investigations were carried out and other areas isolated due to further deterioration of the building fabric. During the decant occupation the building posed many challenges in maintaining safe and suitable office accommodation. Targeted expenditure was incurred to ensure that the building was suitable and safe to occupy, this expenditure focussed on statutory health and safety requirements and reactive maintenance. No money was spent on long-term refurbishment due to planned disposal of the site and intended demolition of the building.
- 2.3 The buildings on the site are in generally poor and in some areas unsafe condition. The construction method of buildings did not provide a long term (50 years +) occupation solution. Since the site vacation in 2019 works have been undertaken to ensure void site safety is maintained including gas service disconnection and boarding up of some lower ground areas to make secure.
- 2.4 The site and its buildings have recently become prone to increased levels of vandalism and other forms of anti social behaviour on a regular basis (Between September 2019 and March 2020 there have been 13 separate recorded repairs at a combined cost of approximately £30k). In order to keep the site safe and to reduce the risk of injury to trespassers 24 hour manned security has been procured resulting in additional revenue expenditure of approximately £2k per week (equivalent to £100k per annum).
- 2.5 The site is large with many access routes from neighbouring roads and pathways and is challenging to manage with the site security logs demonstrating regular trespass and break-ins resulting in vandalism and/or theft.
- 2.6 Asbestos surveys were carried out by specialists between October and December 2019. Locations of asbestos containing materials were confirmed or strongly presumed to be present throughout.

- 2.7 Whilst the site and its buildings remain at current status the Council remains at risk from unauthorised trespass into a potentially dangerous environment both structurally unsafe and also containing hazardous materials.
- 2.8 Consideration has been given to leaving the building in situ and to seek to dispose of the property and land, however this option has been dismissed due to increased financial and Health and Safety risks together with a likely protracted negative impact on the local neighbourhood. Therefore, the proposed option is to demolish the building and clear the site ready for disposal or redevelopment. Although this option places significant pressure on the approved Capital Programme, the immediate site clearance will deal with the current instances of anti-social behaviour, associated health & safety concerns and negative impact on the surrounding area and help optimise the regeneration value from the asset

3. PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS AND SITE CLEARANCE

- 3.1 A number of surveys have been carried out including asbestos and ecological bat survey and as previously stated services have been either isolated or disconnected. The LEP cost plan indicates that full asbestos removal, demolition costs and site clearance will be £763,480 and take 8 months to complete from the date of approval.
- 3.2 Prior to the start of demolition works planning and building control consent will be obtained.
- 3.3 In order to reduce the demolition programme it is proposed that a soft strip of the building be undertaken in advance of planning approval. The soft strip will include the removal of redundant mechanical and electrical installations and asbestos.

4. PROCUREMENT

- 4.1 The demolition procurement route is via the LEP through the Additional Services contract and plans to clear the site are at an advanced stage including a detailed cost plan necessary to inform this report, which has been developed through a robust procurement exercise through the LEP.
- 4.2 The scheme has a cost estimate of £763,480 this includes the value in the attached value for money cost plan **Appendix A** and the 2% LEP fee. The cost estimate will be fixed once the final surveys of the site have been concluded.

5. IMPACT ON THE APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The cost of demolishing the building and clearing the site £763,480 with a request to allow £0.800m in the Capital programme to allow for the findings of proposed surveys.
- 5.2 The Council's capital programme is currently over committed, which will need to be met from the capital receipts generated from the sale of surplus assets, and/or decisions made to reprioritise the capital programme. The Growth Directorate is reviewing the estate and developing a pipeline of surplus sites for disposal. In addition, the Growth Directorate will continue to apply for any grants that become available that could assist with the cost of site clearance and redevelopment. Due to the health and safety risks this is a priority project

6. RISK

- 6.1 The risks associated with anti-social behaviour in the locality will be reduced if the site is cleared at the earliest opportunity.

- 6.2 The final contract with the LEP will be based on a fix price to minimise financial risk.
- 6.3 The programme and costs will be monitored carefully and reported back to Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring'

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 While a robust consultation and communications strategy will need to be formulated to support any future proposals for the site, this is not required for the demolition approval requested in this report.

8. SITE CLEARANCE TIMESCALE

- 8.1 The demolition will take 8 months to complete from final approval to proceed subject to the necessary statutory consents and approvals. The key milestones are:
- Statutory consents and approvals
 - Instruct LEP and Project Start
 - Mobilisation and HSE Notifications
 - Asbestos Removal
 - Demolition and site clearance
 - Project Completion – July 2021
- 8.2 An indicative programme for the works is attached at **Appendix B** together with the site plan at **Appendix C**.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 As set out at the front of the report.