

Council – 10 July, 2018
Recommendation from Cabinet
10th April 2018

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 10 April 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor A Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor F Abbott
Councillor K Caan
Councillor J Innes
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor E Ruane

Deputy Cabinet Members Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor R Ali
Councillor C Thomas

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor A Andrews
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillor S Bains
Councillor R Brown
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor M Mutton

Employees (by Directorate):

People K Lees, D O'Shaughnessy

Place M Yardley (Deputy Chief Executive (Place)), L Knight,
R Moon, J Newman, A West

Apologies: Councillors L Bigham, B Kaur, R Lakha, D Welsh

RECOMMENDATION

154. Replacement of Administration Building at Whitley Depot and ICT Data Centre at Jackson Road

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which sought approval for the replacement of the administration building at Whitley Depot and the ICT Data Centre at Jackson Road.

The Place Directorate continued to review the use and effectiveness of the City Council's operational property. It was clear that the current arrangement of two separate satellite sites for an operational depot and CCTV / data centre are tired, unfit for purpose. Including period repairs, they were also expensive to operate, averaging in excess of £0.5m per year.

The Cabinet noted that Whitley Depot dated back to the 1960's and comprised 14 different buildings; 2 submerged fuelling stations; a weigh bridge and a concealed pond on a sloping site, immediately adjacent to the River Sowe on the Western boundary.

Jackson Road, whilst newer than Whitley, comprised a secure CCTV and alarm monitoring area, ICT hub, a collection of small offices, a poison store and kennelling for stray dogs. The site had constrained access from Holbrook Lane and very limited operational parking. Originally the site formed part of the adjacent St Paul's cemetery, and had limited commercial appeal.

It was proposed that a new building be constructed on the Whitley Depot site, comprising an open plan office; welfare and deployment building on a greatly reduced footprint towards the south of the site, close to the London Road entrance. The new office building would house all back-office staff currently based on site and would create a purpose-built deployment space for the Streetscene and Greenspace, Building Services and Highways teams. The office would mirror the Council's new accommodation standards that were in place at the new Customer Service Centre in Broadgate, the Democratic Centre within the Council House and the new office facility at Friargate.

The report indicated that the main entrance from London Road would be redesigned to create a more fluid movement of staff and commercial vehicles in and out of the site. It would also look to contain visitor parking in a safer and more controlled environment. A neighbouring property had been acquired to make way for the entrance redesign and an area of land to the front of the site cleared. An indicative masterplan sketch of what the site could look like was provided at Appendix A of the report submitted. In addition the scheme would look to provide space for basic parking provision for the remaining neighbouring residents.

All other buildings on site would be demolished with the exception of the grit store and vehicle workshop. The scheme would also de-clutter the site and vastly improve general movement of staff, visitors and commercial traffic. The existing waste transfer station could potentially be relocated within the confines of the site in the future. However, it was not part of the proposed project and would be subject to additional funding.

It was acknowledged that perimeter security would need to be improved (CCTV, fencing, gates etc.) so that the externally contracted security that currently patrolled the site could be cancelled. Instead, the security staff in the Council's Monitoring & Response Service, which would by default be based on site 24/7, would be utilised to carry out deterrent patrols and provide an on-site security presence. The Council's Insurance team had confirmed that this was acceptable from a liability perspective.

The co-location of staff in to one building would improve efficiencies; introduce agile and flexible working arrangements; re-engineer business process and drive out further operational efficiencies moving forward.

In addition, the transfer of facilities from Jackson Road to Whitley Depot would allow the Jackson Road site to be brought into use for burials as an extension to St Paul's cemetery, thus deferring capital spend on provision of burial space in the area.

The total cost of the proposed scheme was £5.1m, £4.6m of which was additional spend which would drive revenue savings. £0.5m related to existing approved resources within the ICT capital programme of 2018/19. The redevelopment of the depot and co-location of services currently based at Jackson Road would produce a net revenue saving from operating one building on one site instead of several buildings on two sites. Future capital expenditure would also be deferred as a result of the creation of additional burial space by incorporating the Jackson Road site as an extension to St Paul's cemetery.

Alternative security measures in the form of the internal Monitoring & Response service would allow the cancellation of the external contract for security guards. There would also be much reduced costs to run the building (heating, cooling, maintenance etc.), These savings would free up revenue budget to afford the cost of financing the proposed building investment cost, and make a significant contribution toward existing Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings targets in the process.

In addition, re-provision of an ICT hub on a small part of the existing Jackson Road Site would incur a one off capital cost of £0.75m. This would provide the ICT service with the opportunity to review resilience of the ICT infrastructure in light of the recent network outage on 23rd May 2017. This was part of a wider ICT network re-development programme. £0.5m of the costs were funded from the existing ICT capital programme with the additional £0.25m being funded from within the £4.6m scheme cost.

The Cabinet agreed to:-

1. Approve the replacement of all office buildings at Whitley Depot with a smaller, open plan and more efficient administration and deployment facility, and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) to submit any necessary applications for permission or consents to deliver this facility.
2. Approve the replacement of facilities at Jackson Road and the demolition of the existing building to allow land to be brought back into use as additional burial ground at St Paul's cemetery and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) to submit any necessary applications for consents required to demolish and appropriate the use as additional burial space.
3. Approve the overall affordability strategy for the Projects as set out in this report and subject to final scheme proposals being in line with the costs identified within this report.

4. Approves the allocation of £0.5m existing ICT capital resources against the ICT Data Centre scheme.
5. Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), Deputy Chief Executive (People), and the Legal Services Manager as appropriate, to negotiate, finalise and award contracts required to deliver the Projects within the affordability parameters detailed in this report.
6. Consult with the Cabinet Member for City Services prior to the finalising of the design of the building and submission of any planning application.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that Council approve the addition of the replacement administration depot scheme at a cost of £4.6m to the Council's capital programme for 2018/19 onwards and uses its prudential borrowing powers under the Local Government Act 2003 to fund the project as required.