
Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration

25 November 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Property Services and Development

Ward(s) affected:

St. Michael's

Title: Response to Petition Requesting "Save the Coventry Elephant"

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition bearing 876 signatures which was submitted to the Council. The petition requests that the Council "save the Coventry Elephant and keep it under public ownership". The report also provides relevant information regarding the decommissioning of Coventry Sports Centre ("The Elephant") and current work to establish options for its future use.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is recommended to:

- (1) Note the issues raised in the petition
- (2) Note that officers will continue with existing work streams in relation to Coventry Sports Centre in order to establish options for its future use
- (3) That officers be requested to inform the petitioners of the situation

List of Appendices included:

N/A

Background papers:

N/A

Other useful documents

Cabinet Report 12th February 2019 - Acceptance of Sport England Grant Funding towards 50m Swimming Pool at Alan Higgs Centre and future of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s42701/Acceptance%20of%20Sport%20England%20Grant%20Funding%20towards%2050m%20Swimming%20Pool%20at%20Alan%20Higgs%20Centre%20and%20future%20.pdf>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Response to Petition Requesting “Save the Coventry Elephant”

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 A petition bearing 876 signatures has been received asking for the Council to “save the Coventry Elephant and keep it under public ownership” and also to consider the Coventry Elephant to become a popular tourist destination as well as a new cultural and business centre.
- 1.2 On the 12th February 2019, Cabinet approved the managed decommissioning and closure of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre which includes the swimming baths and the Elephant, as well as its potential disposal as a surplus property.
- 1.3 Following these Cabinet Decisions, the Council ran an expression of interest process for interested parties to come forward with proposals for the site and buildings.
- 1.4 This has resulted in an identified developer entering into an Exclusivity Agreement with the Council which requires them to come forward with proposals and a business case for the site and buildings by May 2021 which needs to meet certain prescribed criteria for the buildings.
- 1.5 Once these proposals and business case are received, the Council will consider and take forward any viable proposals for the site and buildings that meet the said criteria in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities, including Cabinet and Full Council approvals where appropriate.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Council and the proposed developer are working within the parameters of an Exclusivity Agreement agreed between the parties in relation to the Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member notes that work streams are continuing under the terms of the Exclusivity Agreement and proposals will be brought forward in due course to identify sustainable uses and options for the buildings and the wider site.
- 2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, no decisions have yet been made on future uses and options for the Sports and Leisure Centre buildings and site.
- 2.3 The alternative to the above course of action would be to seek to negotiate an end to the Exclusivity Agreement with the proposed developer. This is not considered an option due to the legal terms contained within the Exclusivity Agreement and would result in the Council potentially missing an opportunity to have proposals brought forward, for further consideration, in relation to a key area of the city centre.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 No consultation has taken place at this time.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The recommendation to continue with existing work streams, if approved, will be implemented immediately.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 There are no financial implications within the recommendations above. Once options are considered and identified, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 In line with the Council's procedure for dealing and responding to petitions, the Council is required to inform the public on how it plans to deal with the petition.

5.2.2 There are no legal implications within the recommendations above. Once options are developed, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

6. Other implications

6.1 There are no other implications within the recommendations above. Once current work is concluded, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

7. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

7.1 The delivery of the work outlined in this report can deliver a range of placemaking and economic development objectives that will help to realise the Council's strategic ambitions for a more vibrant and economically prosperous city.

8. How is risk being managed?

8.1 There is no risk within the recommendations above. Once current work is concluded, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

9. What is the impact on the organisation?

9.1 There is no impact upon the organisation within the recommendations above. Once current work is concluded, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

10. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

10.1 There are no specific impacts on equalities resulting from the recommendations contained within this report.

11. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

11.1 There are no other implications or impact on the environment within the recommendations above. Once current work is concluded, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

12. Implications for partner organisations?

- 12.1 There are no other implications for partner organisations within the recommendations above. Once current work is concluded, the Council will take forward any proposals for the site and buildings in line with its usual governance procedures and statutory responsibilities.

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