

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 21 May 2020  
**Title of report:** The Huddersfield Blueprint – Land Assembly

**Purpose of report:** The report requests that Cabinet considers the options available to the council for the acquisition of property to help deliver regeneration of one of six key areas in The Huddersfield Blueprint, and sets out a proposed course of action to achieve that.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	Yes - Is it likely to result in spending exceeding £250k
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</a></b>	Key Decision – Yes  Public report and private report/ appendices
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	Yes
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	Karl Battersby (Strategic Director Economy and Infrastructure) – 06/05/2020  Eamonn Croston – 12/05/2020  Julie Muscroft – 12/05/2020
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	Cllr Peter McBride - Economy Cllr Graham Turner - Corporate

**Electoral wards affected:** Newsome

**Ward councillors consulted:** No

**Public or private:** Public report and private report with appendices

Exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. It was considered that the disclosure of the information would be contrary to confidential terms and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness and transparency in relation to public expenditure in the council's decision making.

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes. No personal or sensitive data, or other information covered by GDPR, is included in this report.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Huddersfield Blueprint sets out a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day town centre. It aims to deliver five key objectives: a vibrant culture, art, leisure and nightlife offer; thriving businesses; a great place to live; improved access; and enhanced public spaces. The Blueprint focusses on regenerating six key areas: Station Gateway; St Peter's; Kingsgate and King Street; the Civic Quarter; and a new Cultural Heart in the Queensgate and Piazza area.
- 1.2 The proposed property acquisition will help meet Blueprint objectives and help deliver regeneration of one of its six key areas.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the council acquires a strategic property in Huddersfield town centre. In the private part of today's agenda is a detailed report with appendices, containing information that is exempt in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Working with People**

- 3.1.1 Public consultation on a draft Huddersfield Blueprint document has taken place through:
  - Place Standard interviews – around 1,000 responses were received through town centre interviews and Place Standard focus groups, 12 August to 20 September 2019; and
  - Huddersfield Blueprint on-line questionnaire and a staffed exhibition for 12 weeks, between 15 July and 6 October 2019.

### **3.2 Working with Partners**

- 3.2.1 The draft Blueprint was subject to early engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including council Members, from 9 August 2018 to 6 September 2019 including a launch event in June 2019.
- 3.2.2 Following the consultation and engagement, Cabinet on 25 February 2020 gave approval to a revised Huddersfield Blueprint and to proceed with the statutory planning process to convert the Blueprint to a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). To comply with planning legislation, it was subject to a formal consultation process between 2 March and 30 March 2020, including on-line during the period of lockdown for Covid-19. Planning officers have analysed the comments received and amended the document where required, preparing a report for Cabinet (on 26 May 2020) to seek approval to adopt the Huddersfield Town Centre Blueprint SPD.

### **3.3 Place Based Working**

- 3.3.1 It is recognised that one size does not fit all and whilst Huddersfield is a principal centre for the district, it has its own distinctiveness which needs to be harnessed and built upon. The use of the Place standard tool provided a valuable tool to shape and inform the

Blueprint. This seeks to bring new uses to the town centre and act as a catalyst for regeneration making it a place that people want to use for a variety of uses helping the vitality and vibrancy of the area.

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

- 3.4.1 The Huddersfield Blueprint contains a strong focus on improving public transport, walking and cycling including high quality public spaces and better connections across Huddersfield to improve active/ sustainable travel. This will contribute to reducing emissions and improved air quality.
- 3.4.2 The Blueprint will also celebrate Huddersfield's heritage by bringing historic buildings back into re-use, which will also contribute to the climate change agenda through reducing the need for new build.

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

- 3.5.1 The Blueprint has families and young people at its heart. The vision includes Huddersfield as a busy family-friendly town centre that stays open for longer with a unique culture, arts and leisure offer and thriving businesses.

### **3.6 Covid-19**

- 3.6.1 The potential impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the proposed property acquisition are considered in detail within the private report as this is exempt information. Irrespective of Covid-19 and its impacts, there is a need to bring the property into public ownership as it is in a key location in the town centre and its development in the medium term will help deliver the vision in The Blueprint.

### **3.7 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

- 3.7.1 Legal: The Council's Disposals and Acquisitions Policy sets out the general principles that govern strategic acquisitions, including having regard to prudent commercial practices. External consultants have been appointed to provide a valuation for the proposed acquisition, and a draft valuation is contained within the private report as it is exempt information.
- 3.7.2 Financial: On the agenda for today's Cabinet agenda (21 May 2020) is a report on the high-level impact of Covid-19 that has significant short- and medium-term implications across the council's currently approved revenue and capital budget plans.
- 3.7.3 Officers are seeking external funding to cover the costs of the proposed acquisition. It would be beneficial to have planning permission by the time of final grant approval, and it is therefore proposed to appoint a specialist planning consultancy to prepare and submit an application. Cabinet is requested to consider that the council underwrites the costs of acquisition and planning consultancy if external funding is not forthcoming or is delayed. Funding is currently available under the Strategic Acquisition Fund in the council's approved Capital Plan for 2020/21. The capital and revenue implications of acquisition are contained within the private report as this is exempt information.
- 3.7.4 Officers are exploring the potential for a joint venture/ partnership with private investors/ developers for developing the property following acquisition, and a further report will be brought to Cabinet in due course.

3.7.5 Human Resources: The HR implications of the proposed acquisition are contained within the private report as this is exempt information.

#### **4. Consultees and their opinions**

4.1 Officers in Disposals & Acquisitions, Legal Services and Strategic Finance have been consulted and their opinions are reflected in this report.

#### **5. Next steps and timelines**

5.1 If the officer recommendations are approved, officers will seek to appoint a planning consultancy and to acquire the property as soon as possible. This will allow the council to meet Blueprint objectives and help deliver regeneration of one of its six key areas.

#### **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

6.1 Acquisition of the property will provide an opportunity for the council to control ownership in a key part of the town centre and support the implementation of The Huddersfield Blueprint.

6.2 The rationale for council acquisition of the property is that:

- i) The development of the property is a key strategic priority for the council (irrespective of The Huddersfield Blueprint being adopted as an SPD); and
- ii) It is only commercially feasible for the property to be developed if the council acquires it, for the reasons set out in the private report.

6.3 A decision on the proposed acquisition is sought at today's meeting in order to meet the timescales for external funding applications.

6.4 Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Consider the content of the public report and the private report at appendix A and other information in appendices B to D;
- b) Approve acquisition of the property as shown in the location plan in private appendix B and detailed in the site plan red line boundary in appendix C, for up to a purchase price as stated in the private report at appendix A, paragraph 3.6.3;
- c) Approve the required capital funding for the property acquisition and the planning consultancy from the Strategic Acquisition Fund in the council's approved Capital Plan for 2020/21, if external funding is either delayed or is not forthcoming;
- d) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Economy and Infrastructure and Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning to negotiate and agree terms for acquisition of the property identified in the private report appendix A and appendix C, subject to contract, clean and marketable title free from any encumbrances, structural / condition surveys of the property, and vacant possession;
- e) Delegate authority to the Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning to enter into and execute any agreements or instruments relating to the acquisition of the property identified in the private report A and appendix C;

- f) Delegate authority to the Service Director - Economy and Skills to undertake the strategic and operational management of the property following acquisition, working with the Service Director - Legal, Governance and Commissioning; and
- g) Delegate authority to the Service Director - Economy and Skills to apply for planning permission and any other statutory consents that may be required to develop the property in line with the feasibility report at private appendix D.

## **7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Economy and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate support the officer recommendations.

## **8. Contact officers**

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## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- 9.1 Background paper: The Huddersfield Blueprint – Next Steps, report to Cabinet 25 February 2020.
- 9.2 The history of decisions relating to the property to be acquired is contained within the private report as this is exempt information.

## **10. Service Director responsible**

Angela Blake, Service Director - Economy and Skills  
[angela.blake@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:angela.blake@kirklees.gov.uk) 01484 221000 ext. 71076

## **11. Attachments**

Private Appendix A – Private report on the proposed property acquisition  
Private Appendix B – Location plan  
Private Appendix C – Site plan with red line boundary plan for the proposed acquisition  
Private Appendix D – Feasibility report