

28 March 2018**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL****PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF SIR JOHN ROBINSON HOUSE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek agreement, subject to the findings of the second phase of the feasibility study, to recommendations relating to the proposed commercial use of Sir John Robinson House (SJRH).

Information

2. As reported to Policy Committee (24 January 2018) the Council is reviewing its office accommodation and modelling future portfolio options. This work identified an opportunity relating to Sir John Robinson House (SJRH), which could result in this building being surplus to operational requirements. In the event of this occurring, an alternative and appropriate use for the building needs to be secured. This provides a potential opportunity for the Council to deliver one of the Council Plan 2017-2021 commitments of creating the best conditions for business investment and growth.
3. Policy Committee (24 January 2018) approved the commissioning of up to £50,000 of additional technical expertise to undertake a feasibility study (that will not tie the Council into any particular funding stream) for the commercial use of SJRH.
4. Further to the committee approval, a supplier was appointed to guide the strategic future of SJRH and has been producing a number of detailed assessments and supportive evidence over two phases.
5. The first phase report provided a rigorous market assessment of the current demand and supply for office and workspace, potential clients for the whole of the building, a full building feasibility study and an options appraisal for the future management of the building, which included options for income generation for the Council. This phase considered the potential of the whole of SJRH for commercial uses as well as the potential for the conversion of one floor via an EU funding contribution. At the time of writing this report details of this first phase findings were not available. An update will be provided to this Policy Committee by the Corporate Director of Place. Subject, to a favourable report being received the supplier will move forward to the second phase of the feasibility and EU funding detailed submission work.

6. The second phase report, will see the development of a detailed operational business case, firming up of capital costs and the revenue model, with the aim of culminating in the submission of an EU Full Application on Friday 20th April 2018.
7. The EU fund a percentage of up to 50% of eligible costs up to a threshold that was established at the Outline Application Stage where the Council were successful in proving the potential of its proposals to convert SJRH. The EU funding is for no more than 50% towards the conversion of one floor and the reception only and not towards the conversion costs for the entire building. The outcome of the second phase will be available to support the Full Application; however, the next available Policy Committee is not until 16 May 2018.
8. The window of opportunity to attract this oversubscribed external funding poses a challenge in the sequencing of decision-making. Therefore, in order to be able to meet the EU deadline, which falls before the next time this Committee meets, Policy Committee is asked to consider that, subject to the findings of the feasibility study into the commercial use of SJRH concluding that an EU bid for funding is appropriate, authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Chair of Policy Committee, to consider and finalise any such bid.

Other Options Considered

9. The Council could choose not to take forward the commissioning of additional technical expertise or support the further development of SJRH. However, this would miss the opportunity to secure the funding currently available to support the development.

Reasons for the Recommendations

10. Whilst our plans for growth are vital in providing for identified needs now and in the future, these must be achieved whilst preserving and protecting local character and distinctiveness in a well-planned and lasting way. Work to revitalise a high profile building and securing new investment will help create quality jobs, safeguard local character and add to the value of our economy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. As indicated in paragraph 3, Policy Committee approved the £50,000 would be met from 2017/2018 Growth and Economic Development base budget.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That, subject to the findings of the feasibility study into the commercial use of SJRH concluding that an EU bid for funding is appropriate, authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Chair of Policy Committee, to consider and finalise any such bid.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE
Leader of the County Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments [SSR 08/03/2018]

13. The decision falls within the scope of decisions which may be approved by Policy Committee.

Financial Comments [GB 07/03/2018]

14. Any County Council capital funding required to match fund the proposed bid for EU funding will be required to go through the usual decision route and approval process. Other financial implications are set out in the report.

Background papers and Published documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Sustainable Urban Development Strategy Funding Proposal Briefing (Digital Technology Hub, Nottinghamshire County Council), 30th November 2017
- 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme (Call opened 20th September 2017) – available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/59c282e140f0b65db9b9each/PA2_3_4_D2N2_Updated_Final.pdf
- *Proposal for the Future of Sir John Robinson House*, report to Policy Committee, 24th January 2018, published

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) affected

All