

**Report to:** Leader of the Council

**Date:** 2 April 2020

**Title:** Seaford Health Hub – project update

**Report of:** Ian Fitzpatrick, Director of Regeneration and Planning and Deputy Chief Executive

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for finance

**Ward(s):** Seaford North, Seaford South, Seaford East, Seaford West and Seaford Central

**Purpose of report:** This report sets out recommendations for the Seaford Health Hub project moving forward.

**Decision type:** Non-Key

**Scrutiny Committee** The matters addressed in this report were considered by Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The relevant minute and recommendations of Scrutiny Committee are contained in Appendix A.

**Officer recommendation(s):**

- (1) That, at this time, the Council does not progress the proposed development on the Downs Site of a Health Hub, unless and until all the following conditions have been satisfied:
  - (i) It is established within a reasonable timescale (i.e.12 months) by the NHS that there is no practical prospect of new GP premises being provided in Seaford through the redevelopment of the Seaford Medical Practice’s existing Dane Road site, together with the Richmond Road car park. For this purpose the Cabinet should be satisfied that the NHS has diligently carried out a full analysis of the viability of this option which should include all necessary surveys.
  - (ii) Any revised design for the Downs Site excludes the residential and retail elements.
  - (iii) The financial model for the revised design specified at point b) above must clearly demonstrate that the Council will make a suitable financial return commensurate with the risks involved, and that the

**required investment will not prevent the Council from investing in higher priority capital projects to the benefit of the whole of the District, due to the impact of that investment on the Council's borrowing limits.**

**Reasons for recommendations:**

- (1) (i) The Council cannot be satisfied, at this time, that there is no opportunity to retain GP practices in the town centre by providing new GP premises on the site of the existing Seaford Medical Practice at Dane Road, together with the Richmond Road car park.**
- (i) The proposed residential element is not an essential part of the scheme and would not be commercially viable without value-engineering, which is likely to reduce sustainability. The retail element does not meet any obvious need in the community and has been met with concerns from local residents. The combined effect of removing these two elements may serve to reduce the amount of green space lost at the Downs, in particular existing trees on the site.**
- (ii) The Council's financial return from the scheme must be commensurate with the risks involved and must not prevent investment in higher priority capital projects, with District wide benefits.**

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## **1 Introduction / Background**

- 1.1 In 2017, the Council was approached by the two GP practices in Seaford (the Old School Surgery and Seaford Medical Practice) which are need of larger, modern premises and facilities. At the time, the Council identified an opportunity, on land that it owns at The Downs Leisure Centre site, to develop a new 'Health Hub'. Project feasibility and a capital allocation were approved at previous Cabinets, along with delegated authority for officers to progress the procurement of the scheme through the Council's Energy and Sustainability joint venture - Clear Sustainable Futures (CSF) to further test the feasibility and scheme business case. The scheme was intended to deliver new premises for the two GP practices and East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT), new and shared space with the Downs (Wave) Leisure Centre, a pharmacy and new facilities for the 60s Plus Club which is currently located at The Downs site.

- 1.2 Early design work was carried out to develop high level ideas for the scheme in 2018 and public exhibitions on draft site layouts were held in January 2019 at the Downs Leisure Centre. These proposals included a new residential block and retail development as part of the scheme. Residents expressed concerns about the proposals including whether enough car parking would be provided, bus links to the site, the potential negative impact on footfall of the GPs moving from their existing Seaford Town Centre premises, concerns around possible traffic congestion, questioning the need for a retail unit at the site and loss of green space. Residents welcomed the opportunity for better spaces for the GPs and health services as well as opportunities to ‘future proof’ local health services and for the two practices to work together with the leisure centre to promote better health.
- 1.3 The Council subsequently worked to develop more detailed draft proposals for a new Health Hub at The Downs site (to RIBA 2), taking into account the consultation feedback, at the same time as working through the economic case for the scheme. The Council’s design / technical team worked with the two GP practices, ESHT, the NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group, Wave Leisure Trust and 60s Plus Cub to understand and respond to their requirements, and to develop a more detailed understanding of the constraints and technical matters which needed to be taken into consideration as part of the scheme.

## **2 Scrutiny Committee – Seaford Health Hub Panel**

- 2.1 In July 2019, Full Council received a petition titled ‘Petition to stop the Development on the Downs Leisure Centre site. Save our Recreation Grounds, keep Doctors in Seaford Town’. The petition was discussed at the Full Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The Council’s Scrutiny Committee established a Panel to look at the proposals for the development of a Seaford Health Hub and the issues raised by members of the Council, and to acknowledge and consider the petition received by Full Council.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Seaford Health Hub Panel reported its findings to a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The Panel’s report can be found in Appendix B, with exempt items contained in Appendix C.
- 2.3 The Panel’s remit was to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed development at The Downs site (to provide a Health Hub and other leisure, retail and residential facilities) and to provide a recommendation to Cabinet as to whether or not the project should be progressed. The Panel considered evidence and representations, in person and in writing, from the following stakeholders and advisers:
- Seaford Medical Centre
  - Seaford Old School Surgery

- Wave Leisure Trust Limited
- Downs Development Neighbourhood Voice
- Seaford 60s Plus Club Steering Group
- Seaford Chamber of Commerce
- Seaford Town Councillors
- East Sussex County Councillor Carolyn Lambert
- Seaford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Local residents and businesses in Seaford
- East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
- The Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Property Services Limited
- Lewes District Council Officers
- Lewes District Council Consultants (Vail Williams LLP and FMG Consulting)

2.4 The Panel considered issues including those that had been identified by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019, namely:

- The impact on the movement of GPs and the Council's role in provision of the services.
- Demonstrating that other sites have been considered for viability
- The impact on green spaces in Seaford
- The impact on the wider economy in Seaford
- The form of tenure within the proposals and the business plan
- The financial viability of the scheme from the Council's perspective
- The consequences of not proceeding with the project.

The Panel also considered matters contained in the petition that was presented to Council in July 2019 opposing the proposed redevelopment of The Downs site, namely:

- The relocation of two NHS doctors' surgeries away from the town centre without promise of additional medical services
- The loss of a public recreation ground and wildlife habitat
- Increased traffic, pollution and accident risk
- Reduced footfall within the town centre and likely impact on the town centre

2.5 As part of its considerations, the Panel received presentations on the outcomes of the detailed design work and proposals for The Downs site, along with the updated economic case: business case and financial viability of these draft proposals.

### **3 Recommendations and next steps**

3.1 In accordance with the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, it is recommended that a scheme involving redevelopment of The Downs site for new health premises is not progressed until the Council can be satisfied that there is no prospect of accommodating new GP premises at the site of the Seaford Medical Centre on Dane Road. Further, that the Council approves the potential inclusion

of the Richmond Road Car Park in any detailed viability work carried out by health partners in respect of the Dane Road site. Officers will continue to liaise with health bodies to provide any assistance they can with viability work. Should the Council be fully satisfied that this option is not viable, then it is recommended that any Health Hub scheme at The Downs excludes the proposed residential block and retail unit. It is also recommended that the economic case for redeveloping The Downs must clearly demonstrate that the Council's financial return will be commensurate with the risks involved, and that investment in the scheme would not prevent higher priority capital projects, with District wide benefits, from coming forwards.

#### **4 Outcome expected and performance management**

4.1 Performance of the Seaford Health Hub project is monitored via the Council's corporate project monitoring programme, with additional oversight carried out by the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

#### **5 Consultation**

5.1 Public exhibitions on draft layouts for the new Health Hub were held in January 2019. Feedback from the exhibitions has been summarised in a report which is available from the Council's website at [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/SeafordHealthHub](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/SeafordHealthHub) Scrutiny Committee's review of the project (via its Scrutiny Seaford Health Hub Panel) has involved consultation with a range of stakeholders, including residents and businesses.

#### **6 Corporate plan and Council policies**

6.1 A new Seaford Health Hub / health facilities could support the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan and other Council policies by securing infrastructure improvements to support new and existing homes in the District, promoting the health and well-being of residents and improving access to health services.

#### **7 Financial appraisal**

7.1 On completion of Stage 1 of the CSF procurement process, total scheme costs have been identified as being £438,710 over the budget cap accepted by CSF at the New Project Request (NPR) Stage. Sustainability features included in the scheme design and costs are, at this stage, limited. Securing additional, substantive sustainability features would require more design work and involve additional capital costs.

#### **8 Legal implications**

8.1 The Council is not under any legally binding commitment to develop the health hub on the Downs Site and there is no other legal consideration which would prevent the Council from stopping progress of the development. Should the

development progress again in the future, further legal advice would need to be obtained.

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## **9 Risk management implications**

- 8.1 The Council has continued to work with health bodies, and the Wave Leisure Trust, to develop the proposals for a new Seaford Health Hub at The Downs site. A project risk register has been developed.

## **10 Equality analysis**

- 10.1 An Equality and Fairness Screening document has been completed and has concluded that an Analysis is not required in this instance. Should the project progress at a later stage, an Equality Analysis would be completed at this time.

## **11 Sustainability implications**

- 11.1 Any proposals for a new Seaford Health Hub would need to respond to the Council's Sustainability Policy 2018 and sustainability checklist for new projects, as well as demonstrating how they would help to meet the Council's commitment to achieving zero carbon by 2030, and meeting the requirements set out in the Lewes District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2010-2030.