


Agenda Item No:	<b>10</b>	
Committee:	<b>COUNCIL</b>	
Date:	13 September 2018	
Report Title:	<b>Property Acquisition and Regeneration, Wisbech</b>	

## Cover sheet:

### 1. Purpose / Summary

- The attached Cabinet report outlines options for Members' consideration related to an important derelict town centre site of 11/12 High Street Wisbech, which forms part of the Wisbech High Street Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project.
- Significant grant aid is available from HLF which is time limited and may be in jeopardy if the required major refurbishment cannot be taken forward within the requisite timeframe.
- The report explains the regeneration benefits aligned to the related delivery and financial risks and requests Members to decide whether the Council wish to consider acquiring the site and to determine the most appropriate way forward.

### 2. Key Issues

- The Council's Business Plan and its 'Economic' priority is committed to regeneration across the District and has supported the High Street HLF project to deliver an improved streetscape and associated activities related to the project.
- No 11/12 is located at the heart of the scheme and is identified as a 'high priority' site in the HLF programme with a significant grant allocation.
- The grant is time limited with the requirement for the property to be completed and funding drawn down by January 2021, although HLF has indicated a degree of flexibility should the works on site be near completion at that time.
- The site is completely dilapidated, and has been since the early 2000's, so the HLF grant is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to address the ongoing issues associated with the building.
- The current owner is unable to take forward the development and consequently, in order to meet the deadline for HLF funding, it will be necessary for the site to be acquired from them and an in principle agreement has been reached to that effect.
- Officers have procured draft designs, estimated development costs, valuation and viability assessments which are included in the attached confidential appendices and this information has been utilised to develop four possible options for Members to consider in their decision making.
- Additionally, Cabinet Members will consider a separate Cabinet report (attached for information purposes) following this meeting recommending that they approve a 'minded to grant' Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in order to aid the acquisition if required. Legally it is required that this is a Cabinet decision, which will follow this meeting if required.

- Whilst there are significant benefits and opportunities to be gained from this regeneration project it is complex and not without risks. In order to assist Members with their decision making, a detailed Risk Matrix has been included in the confidential **Appendix B** together with the financial implications of each option identified.
- In view of the urgency and importance of the decision to be taken, it is important that Members read and fully understand the risk and financial implications so that an informed and balanced decision can be taken.

### 3. Recommendations

- Council is hereby requested to note and endorse the Cabinet recommendations being made regarding the following decisions in relation to the potential redevelopment of no. 11/12 High Street, Wisbech:
  - Having regard to the particular risks and financial implications highlighted, to identify and approve, the preferred method of delivery from options 1,2,3 or 4
  - Subject to the above, where option 1, 2 or 3 is approved, that:
    - a decision is taken as to the timing of the acquisition and in particular either:
      - as soon as practicable; or
      - following a delay of 12 months (or less if possible) to enable the completion of design and costing works along with Planning and Conservation approval as appropriate.
    - If it is necessary, Council is requested to note the need for Cabinet to approve, in principle, to make a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
    - To delegate to the Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Growth & Infrastructure) and Corporate Director (Finance) in conjunction with the Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder and Growth, Heritage & Community Safety Portfolio Holder to implement the preferred option and in particular:
      - to enter into an agreement to purchase and subsequently acquire the site on the terms outlined in the report; and
      - to take all action necessary to enable the drawdown of the relevant HLF grant.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	Medworth Ward, Wisbech
<b>Forward Plan Reference</b>	
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Cllr Chris Seaton – Leader Cllr David Oliver – Portfolio Holder for Growth, Heritage and Community Safety Cllr Anne Hay – Finance Portfolio Holder

<b>Report Originator(s)</b>	<p>Gary Garford – Corporate Director (Growth &amp; Infrastructure)</p> <p>Taleyna Fletcher – Townscape Heritage Officer, Wisbech High St Project</p> <p>Justin Wingfield – Head of Business &amp; Economy</p> <p>Kamal Mehta – Corporate Director (Finance)</p> <p>Amy Brown – Acting Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer</p>
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	<p>Paul Medd – Chief Executive</p> <p>Gary Garford – Corporate Director (Growth &amp; Infrastructure)</p> <p>Kamal Mehta – Corporate Director (Finance)</p> <p>Justin Wingfield – Head of Business &amp; Economy</p> <p>Amy Brown – Acting Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer</p>
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	<p>Cabinet Report – <i>Property Acquisition &amp; Regeneration, Wisbech - 13 September 2018</i></p>