

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 15TH MAY 2013**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF PLANNING**

SUBJECT: **GENERAL MATTERS - PHASE 1: ERECTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL, CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ROAD, CAR PARK AND HARD AND SOFT PLAY AREAS PHASE 2 DEMOLITION OF EXISTING FORMATION OF REPLACEMENT PLAYING FIELD, SECOND CAR PARK, HARD PLAY AREA AND HABITAT AREA AT CUSTOM HOUSE SCHOOL, MOLD ROAD, CONNAH'S QUAY**

1.00 APPLICATION NUMBER

1.01 047415

2.00 APPLICANT

2.01 Flintshire County Council

3.00 SITE

3.01 Mold Road, Connah's Quay, Deeside.

4.00 APPLICATION VALID DATE

4.01 23/04/2010

5.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

5.01 Members will recall that at the Planning & Development Control Committee held on 18th April 2012, that consideration was given to a feasibility study/development brief submitted to justify the demolition of the Custom House Lane Junior CP School following it and the existing Dee Road Infants CP School being replaced by the new "All Through" school at Dee Road, Connah's Quay.

5.02 It was resolved by Members at that time that "the development brief

be refused to allow further consideration of socio-economic factors in relation to future uses of the historic part of the school building but that the demolition of the annexe, canteen blocks and lean-tos be approved.

- 5.03 A further feasibility study has now been prepared to take account of the April 12th. resolution and exploring the scope and feasibility of alternative re-uses of the old school building.

6.00 REPORT

- 6.01 Members will recall that planning permission was granted for the erection of a new school on land between Dee Road and Mold Road, Connah's Quay in August, 2010 (under ref. 47415). This was to replace the existing schools at Dee Road and Custom House Lane respectively and the application site included both school buildings, indicating that they were to be demolished once the new school was available. Part of the land was to provide a new playing field, hard play area, car parking, etc. whilst a portion of the site was identified as being surplus and therefore as an asset which would be disposed of for redevelopment.

- 6.02 The Custom House Lane school incorporates (on the Mold Road frontage) the former Northop Board School, built in 1881, and Members felt that its retention and its incorporation in any redevelopment proposals should be investigated. Consequently, the planning permission for the new school incorporated a condition (4) which requires (*inter alia*) "...details of a feasibility study to assess the scope for the retention of the historic part of the Custom House Lane CP School within any future redevelopment proposals." The feasibility study prepared at that stage showed that on a financial basis it was not viable to retain the historic part of the former school. However, members felt that more work needed to be done in relation to the socio-economic benefits of keeping and reusing the old building and consequently, committee resolved not to accept the feasibility study presented at that stage.

- 6.03 A further feasibility study has now been completed (Appendix A) from which it can be seen that nine alternative uses have now been considered :-

- Commercial office use.
- Office use by the third and voluntary sector.
- Business premises for Kindness in Mind (KIM).
- Inclusion in Renewal Development Package.
- Disposal for private residential development.
- Flintshire connects centre.
- Combined Flintshire connects and library/museum.
- Combined library/museum.
- Nursery/play centre.

- 6.04 In addition to the above the Head of Assets & Transportation has advised that whilst the building has been secured and is generally in a wind and weather sound condition it remains unoccupied and has suffered from water ingress. This has caused internal damage and the building is incurring on-going security and maintenance costs along with a liability for rates of £14,000 per annum.
- 6.05 In my report to Committee in April 2012 I advised Members that the planning condition is satisfied through the submission of the feasibility study (regardless of its conclusions) and that any decision as to the retention or otherwise of the former Northop Board School building lies outside any planning control.
- 6.06 The earlier report advised that it was then the intention to demolish the Custom House Lane CP School in its entirety (in accordance with the original proposal), to allow the marketing and eventual redevelopment of the land. This further information on feasibility strengthens the case for demolition as indeed does the deterioration of the fabric of the building and the ongoing costs of its retention.

7.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.01 That the submission, content and conclusions of the feasibility study regarding the intended demolition of the Custom House Lane CP school be noted.

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