

<b>Key Decision Required:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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## CABINET

**13 SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **JOINT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FOR BUSINESS & ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

#### **A.3 STARLINGS SITE AND MILTON ROAD REDEVELOPMENT** (Report prepared by Tom Gardiner, Head of Regeneration)

#### **PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION**

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report seeks Cabinet agreement to deliver two key regeneration projects within Dovercourt Town Centre: the redevelopment of the Starlings site in Dovercourt Town Centre and the demolition of the Milton Road Car Park

Agreement is sought to allocate £1.595m from existing Council budgets to deliver these projects, including the appointment of a technical team. The delivery of the projects is also subject to the approval of the Business Case detailed in a related **Part B** report.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At its meeting in July 2019 Cabinet approved The Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan (Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited), which articulates a vision for the regeneration and transformation of the town. The Masterplan is a prospectus for change and promotes a targeted range of development and public realm improvements to support the regeneration, transformation and renaissance required.

The Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan seeks to improve the economic performance and vitality of the town by creating a more appealing environment through targeted interventions focussed on vacant, derelict and rundown sites, and by securing improvements in the quality of the public realm.

Cabinet also approved the preparation of a detailed business case for the redevelopment of the Starlings site and the Milton Road Car Park. Outline project proposals for these sites provide the focus of this report. The Business Case for these projects is set out in the related **Part B** report.

The Starlings site is located on Dovercourt High Street and has been derelict for some years. Despite being hoarded the site is a blight on the town centre. The Milton Road Car Park is a two storey steel and concrete structure located adjacent to the Starlings site. The Car Park (which incorporates public toilets), is in the Council's ownership, and is now in need of significant improvement works if the facility is to retain any long term operational use.

The Dovercourt Masterplan advocates that the Starlings site be redeveloped to provide new animated public space, public toilets, and a surface car park with the capacity to accommodate 59 car parking spaces (six of which being designated for disabled use). The Masterplan also advocates the demolition of the Milton Road Car Park and for the vacant site to be redeveloped for housing (this could take the form of nine, three storey town

houses above a shared under-croft car park). The redevelopment of the site would incorporate provision for an additional fifteen public car parking spaces on Bagshaw Road.

Works to demolish the Milton Road Car Park is an investment that will create a development site in Council ownership with the potential to generate a future capital value. There exist a range of scenarios through which the site might be brought forward for development, the detail of which will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

The redevelopment of the Starlings site and the Milton Road Car Park, in line with the concept designs provided in the Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan, would provide a net gain in public car parking provision of six additional spaces (from 68 spaces to 74 spaces).

The acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition and subsequent redevelopment of the Milton Road Car Park are identified as being critical components in the Masterplan to securing a successful transformation and vibrant future for Dovercourt Town Centre.

The projects deliver the aims and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan, linking directly with the Council's Community Leadership role and commitment to supporting vibrant town centres through targeted 'place shaping' investment. They will have a positive regeneration impact on Dovercourt Town Centre and the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area by:

- a) Bringing back into productive use a vacant and derelict site, which currently blights the town and has a negative impact on Dovercourt High Street;
- b) Creating town centre assets for the Council which will have positive uses now and in the future;
- c) Supporting wider 'place shaping' objectives through the delivery of new housing;
- d) Creating a more accessible public car park, and improving footfall in the town;
- e) Creating new public realm and amenity space, providing the opportunity for greater animation thereby creating a more vibrant town centre;
- f) Providing the potential for a multi-use 'event space' in the town centre, through the creative use of the proposed new surface car park;
- g) Reducing the opportunities for crime and disorder through improved urban design;
- h) Creating confidence in the development market, and encouraging private sector investment;
- i) Giving the town's existing traders the confidence to invest in their businesses and in their property; and
- j) Providing a high quality meeting place in the town centre and improving the opportunities for positive social engagement, helping to build civic pride and community cohesion.

Subject to Cabinet approval and the Council's ability to secure control over the Starlings site, the two projects (which are inextricably linked and mutually dependent), would be phased to accommodate the Starlings site development first, thereby ensuring the availability of public car parking space at the time works to demolish the Milton Road Car Park are initiated.

Delivery will be led by the Council's Regeneration Team with technical specialists being appointed as required (to progress the design of the proposed Starlings scheme and the demolition methodology for the Milton Road Car Park; secure all necessary approvals; and oversee the phasing, construction, and delivery of these projects).

## RECOMMENDATION(S)

### It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees proposals for the acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition of the Milton Road Car Park;
- b) Agrees that £1.595m funding be allocated to the project from existing budgets; and
- c) Notes that the above will be progressed subject to approval of the Business Case and Recommendations set out in the related **Part B** report.

## PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

### DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The redevelopment of the Starlings site and Milton Road Car Park respond directly to the Corporate Goals identified within the Council's Corporate Plan and to the objectives of the Council's Economic Development Strategy (EDS). The Starlings site and Milton Road projects also accord with the Council's Community Leadership Role and with the aims and objectives of the Council's Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan, which was approved by Cabinet in July 2019.

Specifically the Starlings site and Milton Road projects respond to the following Corporate Goals:

#### Health & Housing

- Promote healthier lifestyles and wellbeing
- Deliver a quality living Environment
- Local regeneration

#### Employment & Enjoyment

- To support business growth
- To enable better job prospects
- Attractive events programme

#### Our Priorities 2018/19, Corporate Director (Planning & Regeneration)

- Strategy and plan for Harwich and Dovercourt public realm
- Economic growth

The proposed redevelopment projects respond to the following objectives of the Council's Economic Development Strategy:

- Objective 1 Supporting Tendring's growth locations by intervening in areas where the potential for economic growth is highest, and where there is a strong case for intervention particularly (but not exclusively) in Harwich, Clacton, and West Tendring.

Finally the proposed projects also respond directly to the vision and to the site development and public realm objectives set out in the Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan (Dovercourt Masterplan Revisited). Specifically the proposed interventions align with Projects 1 and 2 of the "Dovercourt Twenty" as identified in the Masterplan.

## FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

### Finance and other Resources

There are a number of Financial and associated Resourcing implications linked to the recommendations identified in this report. Specifically the financial implications relate to the acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition and of the Milton Road Car Park. In total overall costs (including land acquisition professional fees, project management and contingencies) are estimated at £1.595m.

Funding of £1.595m is currently available in the Council's Budget for the project:

Harwich Regeneration	£1,000,000
Milton Road Car Park	£250,000
Regeneration Capital Projects	£345,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,595,000</b>

It should be noted that the overall budget includes a contingency at circa 15%. This is a higher than average contingency figure but is considered prudent given the scope of the project (i.e. addressing derelict and challenging sites).

Works to demolish the Milton Road Car Park is an investment that will create a development site in Council ownership with the potential to generate a future capital value. There exist a range of scenarios through which the site might be brought forward for development, the detail of which will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

### Risks

The successful delivery of these projects is subject to a number of potential risks. These are outlined below together with the mitigation measures and will be recorded in a dedicated risk register.

Corporate Risks	Mitigation Measures
Capacity (financial/human) within the Council to effectively manage The redevelopment of the Starlings site & Milton Road Car Park.	Appointment by the Council of a Project Manager to work with the Project Team to manage the project from inception to completion.
An inability to secure external professional support within the project timetable.	Adjust project timetable.
Reputational damage arising from Councils inability to deliver any noticeable regenerative benefit from the proposals.	Explain and stress Business Case (bringing a vacant and derelict site back into use, demolishing an aesthetically unpleasant building with high refurbishment costs and developing new housing in Dovercourt town centre).
Reputational damage arising from Council's inability to delivery proposed projects.	Appointment of an in-house Project Manager & Project Team and the procurement of a Professional Team.

<p>A shift in Corporate Priorities and Policy Objectives following political Change (National/Local).</p> <p>An inability to engage with and/or to secure the support of public &amp; private sector partners or the Dovercourt community.</p> <p><b>Site Specific Risks</b></p> <p>The Councils inability to secure control over the Starlings site.</p> <p>The Councils ability to secure control over the Starlings site at a cost within its expectations and within the projected financial envelope.</p> <p>Unexpected extraordinary costs arising from detailed site analysis (eg Environmental Impact Assessment , Subterranean Site Investigations , Land Contamination</p> <p>Unexpected extraordinary costs arising from demolition of the Milton Rd Car Park and associated deep excavation on a confined town centre site.</p> <p>Deleterious structural impact on neighbouring property (existing buildings , footways and Highways.</p> <p>Deleterious impact on subterranean Services.</p> <p>Councils ability to obtain Planning Permissions for the developments particularly for Milton Rd Change of Use.</p>	<p>Project objectives enshrined within Corporate Plan and other policy documentation. Ensure members briefed and in support of project interventions.</p> <p>Focus on additional partner/community consultation and engagement during inception phase by Project Manager, and Project Team.</p> <p><b>Mitigation Measures</b></p> <p>Specialist Council land negotiation team.</p> <p>Specialist Council land negotiation team.</p> <p>Hold final land purchase until site investigations and studies are complete.</p> <p>Council and Contractors Insurances, Project Management by Method Statement control and CDM procedures.</p> <p>Council &amp; Contractors Insurances &amp; Project Management by Method Statement Control and CDM Procedures.</p> <p>Detailed site investigation trial holes &amp; Method Statement Control &amp; CDM Procedures.</p> <p>Consultation and Engagement at inception by Project Team with the Council's Planning and Regeneration Department.</p>
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Working with the Council's appointed Professional Team and CDM Coordinator the Council's Project Team will control and mitigate these risks as part of its administrative and managerial function and will identify, track, and report on identified risks in line with the Council's established programme and project management protocols.

**LEGAL**

The legal power for the acquisition of land for planning purposes by agreement is set out in Section 227 of the town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Where the Council believes that the development, re-development or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects:

- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
- (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area;
- (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.

Demonstration of these objects are set out within the body of this report.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed recommendation in this report with respect of: Crime and Disorder; Equality and Diversity; Health Inequalities; Area or Ward Affected; Consultation and Public Engagement, and any significant issues are set out below:

Evidence suggests that there is a direct link between economic prosperity and social inequality. The Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan seeks to improve the economic performance and vitality of the town by creating a more appealing environment through targeted interventions focussed on vacant and rundown sites, and by securing improvements in the quality of the public realm. The acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition and subsequent redevelopment of the Milton Road Car Park are identified as being critical components to securing the successful transformation and renaissance of Dovercourt Town Centre.

### Area or Ward Affected

The Starlings site and Milton Road Car Park are located within the District's Harwich and Kingsway Ward.

### Consultation and Public Engagement

In refreshing the Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan the Council's professional team (Urban Initiatives Studio) undertook two consultation events. These sought to secure the views, thoughts, aspirations and comments of:

- The Council's Cabinet;
- Ward Councillors;
- The Harwich and Dovercourt Coastal Communities Team;
- The Harwich and Dovercourt Tourism Group;
- Essex County Council (Localities and Highways Teams);
- The Council's Corporate Team; and
- Relevant Heads of Service.

The proposed Starlings site and Milton Road projects were discussed and endorsed as part of this process, and in July 2019 these redevelopment propositions were approved by Cabinet as part of the Dovercourt Town Centre Masterplan.

Subject to Cabinet's approval of these proposed projects, the Council's Project Team in tandem with its Professional Team (when procured and operational), will initiate a publicity campaign, utilising interpretation boards, newsletters and social media (as necessary) to

inform residents and businesses in Dovercourt of the Council's plans to redevelop the Starlings site and Milton Road Car Park.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Dovercourt has suffered from the generic decline in the popularity of English seaside towns and as a consequence of this and other local factors (such as the transformation of working practices at Harwich International Port), and the decline of other industry, the town's economy has contracted. The condition of the built environment and the quality of the public realm has seen a commensurate decline. Dovercourt High Street has lost its pre-war (WW2) zest and vitality, and this is demonstrated by the number of derelict residential and commercial premises that are located in close proximity to the town centre.

By the beginning of 2018 it had become increasingly apparent that market conditions in Dovercourt were such that its social and economic stability was becoming progressively fragile and that these conditions would negatively impact the town's medium and longer term sustainability. As a consequence the Council resolved to prepare a masterplan for the town centre in which the opportunities to halt the town's terminal decline would be researched, and project proposals identified that together would help rediscover Dovercourt's former glory, and secure a renaissance in the town's social vibrancy and economic prosperity.

Urban Initiatives Studio Limited were commissioned by the Council in early 2018 to prepare a masterplan for the town centre, and their draft proposals were considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

The Masterplan has a vision which seeks to secure Dovercourt as: a thriving town with an attractive High Street, a range of shops and cafes and regular street markets: a town which is proud of its heritage but also able to respond to new opportunities. A town with a high quality public realm and open spaces, stunning beaches and good connections – an attractive place to live, work, shop and visit.

The Masterplan identifies nine principal objectives which together establish a Town Centre Strategy for the renaissance of Dovercourt. The Strategy seeks to:

- Reinforce the town centre as a place for local facilities and services;
- Intensify the town's role as a place to live and work;
- Enhance the town's character and strengthen its distinctiveness;
- Enhance the town's accessibility by all modes of transport;
- Provide high quality public realm;
- Offer quality public spaces that invite people to stay;
- Support small interventions that animate the town centre and deliver quick improvements to catalyse change;
- Effectively promote and market the town; and
- Proactively manage the town centre to ensure that it is fresh, safe, well maintained and welcoming.

The Masterplan details a wide range of site development and public realm interventions, which are presented in the document as the 'Dovercourt Twenty'.

The acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition and

redevelopment of the Milton Road Car Park feature as priority projects (Projects 1 and 2) within the Dovercourt Twenty. These projects seek to secure positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for Dovercourt by:

- a) Bringing back into productive use a vacant and derelict site, which currently blights the town and has a negative impact on Dovercourt High Street;
- b) Creating town centre assets for the Council which will have positive uses now and in the future;
- c) Supporting wider 'place shaping' objectives through the delivery of new housing;
- d) Creating a more accessible public car park, and improving footfall in the town;
- e) Creating new public realm and amenity space, providing the opportunity for greater animation thereby creating a more vibrant town centre;
- f) Providing the potential for a multi-use 'event space' in the town centre, through the creative use of the proposed new surface car park;
- g) Reducing the opportunities for crime and disorder through improved urban design;
- h) Creating confidence in the market, and encouraging private sector investment;
- i) Giving the towns existing traders the confidence to invest in their businesses and in their property; and
- j) Providing a high quality meeting place in the town centre improving the opportunities for positive social engagement.

#### Project 1 - Starlings Site Redevelopment

The Masterplan advocates the development of a surface car park on the vacant Starlings site to replace the Milton Road public car park (which has provision for 68 spaces). The concept design for the proposed new car park has a capacity of 59 parking spaces. In addition, the redevelopment of the Milton Road Car Park (Project 2) provides 15 public parking spaces on Bagshaw Road, providing a total provision of 74 parking spaces (the proposed redevelopment therefore results in the provision of 6 additional parking spaces in the town).

The Masterplan proposes that access and egress to the new Starling's public car park would be via Orwell Road. The car park would be level with the High Street and due to the level difference across the site, a retaining wall and balustrade would be required along Orwell Road and Milton Road. Access stairs to the car park would be located on Milton Road. Between the surface car park and the High Street it is proposed that a new public space be provided. This would incorporate benches, tree planting, landscaping and a children's play area. A public toilet facility is proposed at the western end of this space adjacent to existing buildings.

A green pocket space with another feature tree and timber bench is proposed at the corner of Milton Road with Bath Road to enhance the quality of the street scene. A green wall is proposed along the western edge of the new car park to visually enhance the outlook from the car park towards the party wall of the existing building.

**Delivery of the Starlings site surface car park and associated public space/utility including the cost of land acquisition and assembly is estimated to be in the order of £1.432m.**

#### Outline Proposals for the Starlings Site





Figure 4.3: Sketch of Starlings Block proposals

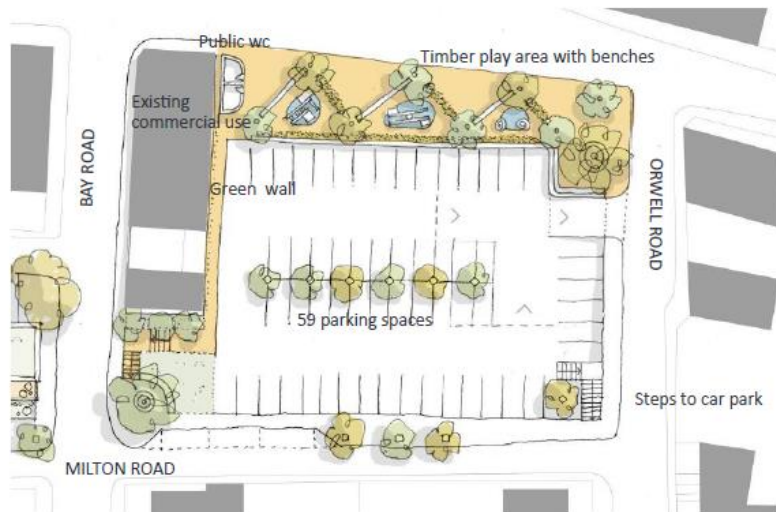


Figure 4.4: Plan of Starlings Block site proposal

**HOW IS IT DELIVERED?**

Requires land assembly by the council and delivery as a capital project.

**REGENERATIVE IMPACT:**  
VERY HIGH

## Project 2 – Milton Road Car Park

The Masterplan advocates that the Milton Road Car Park is demolished and the site redeveloped with a terrace of nine three bedroom town houses.

There exist a range of scenarios through which the Milton Road site might be brought forward for housing development, the detail of which will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet. In summary these include:

- Disposal of the site for private sector housing development via the open market;
- Council led housing development of the site for private sale;
- Council led development of the site for social/affordable/key worker housing;
- Development of the site for social/affordable/key worker housing by the Council in partnership with a housing association or other such registered landlord;
- Private sector development of the site incorporating a leaseback arrangement with the Council.

The proposed housing development would front onto Milton Road and offer a small garden between the footway and the entrance. The town houses would be of three storey construction with the top-floor set back, offering space for south facing roof terraces. The buildings would sit above a shared private under-croft car park providing 17 car parking spaces.

As part of this development 15 public parking spaces would be provided on Bagshaw Road. These parking spaces would be interspersed with tree planting, to enhance the quality of the street scene.

The cost of demolishing the Milton Road Car Park is estimated to be in the order of £163k.

Outline Proposals for the Milton Road Car Park



Outline Proposals for the Starlings Site and the Milton Road Car Park



Outline Site Layout (Starlings Site and Milton Road Car Park)



The Business Case in the **Part B** report provides information on the cost and viability of these projects.

## CURRENT POSITION

The Dovercourt Town Centre Master Plan was approved by Cabinet in July 2019. The Masterplan includes outline proposals (to RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design) for the redevelopment of the Starlings site and the Milton Road Car Park.

This information has been used to inform the business case for these projects, which is detailed in a related **Part B** report.

Cabinet is invited to review the two projects detailed in this report and, (subject to consideration satisfaction of the **Part B** report), give approval to proceed in line with the recommendations referenced above.

Should Cabinet determine to proceed with the acquisition and redevelopment of the Starlings site and the demolition of the Milton Road Car Park, officers would first seek to secure the required land and then procure a Coordinated Professional Team headed by a single firm, in a phased commission to work with the Council's Project Team to: refine and progress development proposals for the Starlings site and the demolition of the Milton Road Car Park; secure all necessary consents and approvals; procure appropriate contractors; and oversee the delivery of the specified works.

The selected Professional Team would be procured through a separate process prior to delivery, and would have the skills, experience and ability to progress the delivery of these projects, drawing on the following professional disciplines:

- Project Management
- Architecture
- Design and Space Planning
- Land & Building Surveying
- Quantity Surveying
- Structural Surveying
- Works Supervision
- Cost Control
- Electrical and Mechanical Engineering
- Procurement
- CDM Compliance

In addition it will be necessary to procure external land and property and legal support, providing expertise on land valuation, conveyancing and other legal matters which may arise in the course of delivery.

#### **FURTHER HEADINGS RELEVANT TO THE REPORT**

There are none.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION**

There are none.

#### **APPENDICES**

There are none.