

## **CABINET 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

### **DESIGN BRIEF FORMER HEALTH AUTHORITY OFFICES, PRIMROSE LANE, HUNTINGDON (Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the cabinet to consider the representations made during the public consultation on the design brief and adopt this document as interim policy guidance.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This Design Brief examines the redevelopment opportunities on the former health authority office site to the south of Primrose Lane, Huntingdon. It presents the planning policy context for the redevelopment of this site.
- 2.2 The site has been recently vacated by the local Primary Care Trust after having been used first as an isolation hospital, and then for other medical uses since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.3 The current owners, the NHS, are in the process of marketing the site for residential development.
- 2.4 The site is now within the Huntingdon Conservation Area, enlarged late last year.
- 2.5 A Tree Preservation Order was confirmed last year protecting all the trees within the site.

#### **3.0 THE DESIGN BRIEF**

- 3.1 The purpose of this document is to ensure that a well planned and appropriate development can take place on site, something which contributes to improving the built environment of the town.
- 3.2 The Design Brief sets design parameters for the successful development of the site, ensuring that future proposals achieve imaginative and distinctive solutions. Indicative layouts are shown that illustrate what could be achieved.
- 3.3 A period of public consultation was undertaken between 8<sup>th</sup> April and 22<sup>nd</sup> May. This has included consultation with neighbours, a public exhibition held in All Saints Church in April, a presentation to the Town Council, and discussion with relevant bodies such as the Civic Society. The document was also discussed at Development Control Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008.
- 3.4 The major issue that needed to be addressed was whether any of the buildings on the site should be retained. The options were to keep both the Primrose Centre (also known as the North building) and the South Building, to keep just the Primrose Centre, or to keep neither.

Both these buildings are attractive late Victorian / Edwardian, but the South Building had been altered and amended more over the decades. It is also considered that the Primrose Centre contributes the most to the character of the conservation area, and also provides an attractive backdrop to the cemetery.

- 3.5 Most of those that attended the public exhibition want to keep at least one of the buildings, to keep some of the historic fabric of the town. The CPRE want to keep both buildings, and the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Civic Society would like to keep the Primrose Centre building. The Town Council would like to see the Primrose Centre building retained (please see schedule of comments). Development Control Panel suggested the following:- **'Preference of the panel to retain The Primrose Centre as part of the future development of the site but that consideration should be given to its demolition in the event of the submission of a scheme of high quality.'**
- 3.6 The agent for the landowner has provided a report stating the case why the buildings should not be retained (see appendix 1).

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 As a way forward it is suggested that the Primrose Centre building is retained, unless a scheme which involves its demolition makes a significantly greater positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, and outweighs the historic contribution that the existing building makes. The document will be amended to reflect this suggestion.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPG October 2007

Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment SPG October 2007

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