

**Additional Information Supplied by the Director of Finance & Resources**

The Hangleton Bottom report taken to Central Services Cabinet Member Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan was an exploratory report giving early warning of our intention to test the property market to explore what interest is out in the open market for the development of this strategic council owned site. Once we have the results of this marketing exercise we will review and analyse the options, consult with the necessary parties as set out under our property protocol and prepare a detailed report for Cabinet to consider as clearly stated in recommendation 2.2 of the CS CMM report.

The information put on the forward plan in the Autumn of 2008 named the report “Hangleton Bottom – Land Use Options”. The words used were – “to seek agreement to the marketing approach and future use of the site.” The forward plan stated that the decision was to be taken by Cabinet. That remains the case and we are not proposing anything different. The CMM decision was dealing with an early exploratory process and, once we have undertaken the initial market testing, we will have a better idea of what the market believes it can deliver on the site. We will consult all Ward Councillors and other parties on the possible future options for the site at that stage (as set out in our property protocol on disposals) and will then prepare a much more detailed and informed report for Cabinet setting out the potential future options, land uses and implications so that Cabinet can decide on the route forward.

The assumptions behind the call in request do not accurately reflect the different stages of the process regarding the redevelopment of Hangleton Bottom site and are therefore based on a mistaken belief that the CMM was taking the substantive decision that was going to go to the cabinet. The CS CMM report was exploratory and not seeking a substantive decision. It does not commit the Council to use the site for any particular purpose and does not even commit the Council to dispose of the site. As such, it is not a key decision (it does not have a significant impact on 2 or more wards and it does not involve expenditure or saving of £500k or more.) In fact, the decision could have proceeded under officers’ delegated powers. It was simply seeking permission to test and explore the market to see what appetite there is in the market to develop this site.

The next stage of the process will eventually take us to the substantive decision to be taken by Cabinet alone and enable us to see and understand the possible future use of the site. The results received from the marketing exercise will form the basis of a further detailed report about the strategic potential uses on the site that the City may want to see in the future. We will need to consult all the relevant parties on the findings of the marketing exercise and possible future options for the site and part of this consultation will be under the property protocol for disposals. The planning team also have to do more analysis on the waste needs for the City and this is being explored in tandem under the Waste and Mineral Development Framework. There are a lot of unknowns, a lot more stages of the process to explore and it could take some time before we have the detailed Cabinet report ready. It is clear

that any substantive decision on the future of the Hangleton Bottom site can and will only be taken by Cabinet. This will be a key decision having significant effect on 2 or more wards and will have financial implications of over £500k. Only this further Cabinet report will have information and ask for a decision on the possible future use of the site. As such the original forward plan wording will be adhered to and the CS CMM report supports this plan of action.

Under the council's Asset Management Plan & Corporate Property Strategy the council regularly reviews its property holdings to ensure that they are being used to their best advantage, are fit for purpose and represent value for money. Market testing is part of how we challenge the reasons for continuing to hold our property and land assets. The call in request refers to paragraph 6.1 of the CS CMM report that explains the current planning status of the site under the Waste and Mineral Development Framework and seems to indicate that suggests that the work and evaluation of sites under this Framework should be completed and made known before we test the property market. The publication of the DPD is Feb March 2010 and submission to government June 2010. Timing wise we should know the results of the evaluation of alternative waste sites under the Framework before we go out and test the market on this site and the development of the informal planning brief for the marketing exercise would reflect and contain these findings.

There has been no deliberate attempt to mislead the public and evade the responsibility to have published the decision as no substantive or key decision is being made yet. In the interests of being open and transparent we took an early report giving notice of our intention to explore the market and test the interest on this site which could have been done under officers delegated powers.