

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Norwich Depot Hub – Project Initiation
Date of meeting:	10 November 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact A potential co-location of three service areas providing benefits through shared land negotiations, construction and shared facilities, with the additional potential for further services to be included in the development subject to land negotiations and any planning restrictions/approvals.	

Executive summary

There is an opportunity to develop a joint depot hub for:

- The County Council's Highways service.
- Broadland District Council's waste collection services.
- A Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Business cases have been prepared for the individual projects and a preferred option identified that meets the needs of three service areas in one location.

A contingency option has been identified that allows co-location of a new Highways service depot and Household Waste Recycling Centre if land agreements cannot be reached.

A Norwich Depot Hub bid has been prepared for submission as part of Norfolk's One Public Estate programme, which provides revenue funding to deliver ambitious property-focused projects with public sector partners.

This report outlines progress to date on the scheme and seeks approval to continue work on the project under the guidance of an officer project board.

Recommendations:

1. **Members note progress on the scheme to date and agree that the scheme can be taken forward, subject to development of a full business case.**
2. **Members approve the establishment of a project board to oversee the delivery of the scheme.**
3. **Members agree that the board can oversee the delivery of a communications and consultation plan.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. A new household waste recycling centre for Norwich is needed by 2021 as the contract expires at Mile Cross Recycling Centre. This necessity has brought forward the potential to integrate a number of depot related properties around the Norwich area covering a range of services including highway maintenance, fleet, vehicle storage, park and ride and strategic salt store. A new household

waste recycling centre will still be required notwithstanding the delivery of a new joint depot.

- 1.2. In the search for potential suitable sites a preferred site close to Norwich Airport has been identified for the co-location of depots, which could bring wider benefits to partners and the public.
- 1.3. The proposal seeks to co-locate the County Council's Highways service and Broadland District Council's refuse, recycling and street cleansing services alongside a Household Waste Recycling Centre in a joint depot hub. Additionally, phase 2 of the scheme allows for development of a new park and ride site.
- 1.4. A preferred site has been identified off the Norwich Northern Distributor Road on land at Norwich Airport and discussions are ongoing with Norwich Airport and officers at both Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council.
- 1.5. Approval is sought from this committee to take the scheme forward and establish an officer project board to provide governance. The board will oversee the feasibility work, land acquisition, design, planning, delivery and a communications and consultation scheme. Should the project go forward, decisions on land acquisition will be referred to the Business and Property Committee.
- 1.6. An outline communications and consultation plan has been developed to support the project including a public consultation around the development of a new Household Waste Recycling Centre. It is proposed the project board would oversee delivery of the plan.

2. Evidence

2.1. Feasibility Study

Consultants WSP were commissioned to carry out a feasibility study to assess the viability and potential of the proposed location. This included reviewing environmental constraints, risks and traffic modelling.

The study identified no major issues for the scheme based on the initial desktop review. The preliminary traffic analysis shows that the development of the site will not significantly impact the surrounding road network. The site is at low risk of flooding and the Environmental Risk Assessment highlighted that the project poses low environmental risk for air quality, landscape, biodiversity and geology. There are some areas that require further study including ecology, drainage and the potential for existing ground contamination. A detailed assessment of costs will be required to feed into a business case for the proposal.

Following completion of a business case the next steps will include public consultation, land negotiation and commencement of the initial design work.

2.2. One Public Estate

A 'Norwich Depot Hub' bid has been prepared for submission as part of Norfolk's One Public Estate programme. The project's main focus is co-location of:

- The County Council's Highways service.
- Broadland District Council's waste collection services.
- A Household Waste Recycling Centre.

The One Public Estate will provide the opportunity to explore additional

development such as a new park and ride, school, fire station and laboratory as part of a wider scheme.

The proposal includes assessing the potential to utilise renewable and low carbon energy sources and investigating the opportunities to include renewable energy schemes such as a solar array and battery storage.

The One Public Estate funding would allow partners to jointly procure a consultant to carry out a master plan of the site(s) looking at the feasibility of addressing all the service requirements.

Should the funding bid be unsuccessful or significantly delayed the partners will need to contribute revenue funding towards feasibility and design work with a strong focus on delivering the joint depot hub and Household Waste Recycling Centre.

2.3. Project Initiation and Governance

The project covers a number of partners, internally and externally. It is proposed that the project sponsor is the 'Assistant Director Planning and Economy' and that the project team should include officers from the County Council's Corporate Property, Finance, Waste and Highways services plus representatives from Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council.

The project sponsor will report to this Committee and Business and Property Committee as required and partners at Broadland District Council will report to their relevant committee.

If the One Public Estate funding bid is successful the project sponsor would be required to provide regular reports to the One Public Estate Norfolk Programme Manager for submission to the Cabinet Office.

2.4. Communications and Consultation

An outline communications and consultation plan has been prepared for the project. The plan has a strong focus on consultation around the proposed Household Waste Recycling Centre. It will allow for several stages of consultation at relevant points of the scheme including consultation on the proposed design and further consultation as part of the planning process.

Subject to approval, the first stage of consultation is expected in early 2018 to understand the impact of the outline proposals for the household waste recycling centre on residents. Outcomes from this will feed into the design process later in 2018.

It is proposed that the project board oversee the development and delivery of a communications and consultation plan for the Norwich Depot Hub.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. Further work is required to refine the overall business case, including a detailed cost assessment, which will be overseen by the project board. Once undertaken, further detail from the business case will be reported back to this Committee. A bid for capital funding will need to be made for the joint depot subject to the outcome of the business case.
- 3.2. £2.75m capital funding has been allocated for a Household Waste Recycling Centre for the 2018-19 capital programme.

- 3.3. A joint highways and Broadland DC depot would look to deliver revenue savings across the two authorities.
- 3.4. An operating model for a joint depot with Broadland District Council will need to be agreed by the project team.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. This partnership project has the potential to bring operational and financial benefits to the County Council and Broadland District Council. There are a number of key risks identified including:
 - Agreement on land value and securing the land for development.
 - Potential for ground contamination and unexploded ordnances on the site requiring remedial work.
 - Failure of partners to agree costs for development or required remediation.
 - Failure to secure capital funding.
 - Failure to secure planning approval for the whole scheme and an Environmental permit for the Household Waste Recycling Centre.
 - Potential for negative perception of proposed activities.
 - Potential restrictions on land use including planning restrictions, existing covenants and a height restriction associated with radar.
 - Risk of reputational damage to authorities through failure to provide appropriate depot facilities.
- 4.2. Failure to secure funding through the One Public Estate programme for feasibility and master planning work means partners will need to agree an alternative funding strategy.

5. Background

5.1. Preferred Site

Following a search for a suitable site in the Greater Norwich area for a replacement household waste recycling centre, the preferred site was identified as a potentially suitable location. It is situated on land at Norwich Airport accessed via the Norwich Northern Distributor Road. The site is owned by Legislator 1657 Ltd., which is jointly owned by Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council. Currently the site forms part of Norwich Airport's land and discussions are ongoing regarding the potential to occupy an area for land side activity for the depot hub.

The size and location of the site provide an opportunity to consider a wider scheme including the joint depot hub. The site is well located to the major road network making it a suitable location as a base for highway maintenance vehicles, waste collection vehicles and for public access to the household waste recycling centre. The site would be designed with the capacity to deal with future housing growth and is well located to serve the proposed growth to the north east of Norwich.

5.2. Highways Depot

Norfolk County Council operate a highways maintenance depot at Aylsham. The depot is close to a residential area and relocation of the depot could free the current site for housing development. Additionally, there may be a requirement

to replace the existing salt store at the end of the current salt PFI contract in 2020. Relocation would allow for the development of a modern depot with space for office and welfare facilities, vehicle and material storage, wash down, refuelling area and a strategic salt store for the county.

5.3. **Broadland District Waste Depot**

Broadland District Council operates its refuse and recycling and street maintenance services from Brookside Depot at Frettenham, used for vehicle fleet storage, maintenance, wash down, bin storage and office space.

The current depot, owned by Broadland District Council, needs investment to bring it up to the required standard for use in a new contract meaning there is an opportunity to relocate the depot to a new site and free the current site up for alternative use.

5.4. **Household Waste Recycling Centre**

A household waste recycling centre is required to serve the Norwich area from September 2021 when the contract for the existing site at Swanton Road, Norwich ends. Failure to provide an alternative site will put surrounding sites at risk of onsite capacity issues, queuing, breach of planning conditions and potential breach of permit and is likely to have a reputational impact on the County Council.

A search for a suitable replacement site has been underway since early 2015 considering sites in the Greater Norwich area. Members of the County Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee have recognised the future requirement for a new site and a £2.75m capital funding allocation was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in February 2017. Provision of a new household waste recycling centre will be required irrespective of the potential delivery of a new depot hub.

5.5. **Park and Ride**

The north of Norwich is served by two park and ride sites at Norwich Airport and Sprowston. The existing Airport Park and Ride is operating at capacity and Sprowston Park and Ride has been earmarked as a preferred site for a new school. It is anticipated development of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road may put these park and rides under additional pressure due to expected associated housing growth. There is potential to relocate both sites to one, new and larger site with potential for additional spaces to be provided at Postwick. Relocating the park and ride to the junction by the NDR will allow it to intercept traffic from Cromer Road, the NDR and Fakenham Road and this has been included in the Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS). Reducing the park and ride network from 6 to 5 sites brings scope to renegotiate existing contract arrangements as well as the release of 2 sites owned by Norfolk County Council for disposal or alternative use. Development of a new park and ride site should look to include smart energy, for example a solar array and battery storage. This will be considered as phase 2 of the project.

5.6. **Background Papers:**

- [EDT Committee September 2015 – Recycling Centre Service Review](#)
- [P&R Committee February 2017 – Capital Strategy and Programme 2017-20](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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