

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Head of Planning Services

TO: Planning Committee

3/9/2014

WARDS: All

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF 'THE MARQUE' SCHEME, CHERRY
HINTON ROAD/HILLS ROAD JUNCTION CAMBRIDGE**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Leader of the Council has asked the Head of Planning Services to commission an independent review of the Marque scheme. The Marque is a prominent new development on a very visible road junction to the south of the City.
- 1.2 The Marque scheme is a 10 storey, mixed use development consisting of 132 residential units, retail and business space. The scheme has a long and complex planning history and the quality of its final form and construction has been subject to criticism locally and now nationally.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the draft brief for the independent review be approved subject to any amendments by the Planning Committee and officers procure the services of an appropriate consultant to undertake this work as soon as practicable.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members may be familiar with the background to the new Marque development on the junction of Cherry Hinton Road and Hills Road. The mixed use redevelopment of this site (previously the Tim Brinton car showrooms and petrol filling station) was identified in the 2006 Local Plan and various schemes dating from early 2006 were considered by the Planning Committee.
- 3.2 The approved and now constructed scheme consists of an apex block of ten storeys at the junction of Hills Road and Cherry Hinton

Road, with wings at five-storey level along the two road frontages. A further residential block of three storeys extends down Cherry Hinton Road with a four storey block in the centre of the site. The Apex block is enclosed in a screen of stone cladding panels. The wings and additional blocks are finished in brick. Retail/business space occupies the ground floor on the Hills Road frontage and at the apex end of the Cherry Hinton Road

- 3.3 The scheme (previously known as Living Screens) involved a number of novel design and construction aspects. Over time, responsibility for the delivery of the scheme has passed through a number of contractors. The scheme has had a complex planning history, with requests for changes and development of the original design concepts spanning a number of years.
- 3.4 The local planning authority is not aware of any breach of planning control however local residents and others have raised sustained concerns about the quality of the final scheme. The scheme has been delivered over a number of years and many of the individual members and officers involved at various stages have now changed.
- 3.5 Competent local planning authorities use post-hoc review as part of on-going learning and development. Often this is through local review processes such as site tours and case studies. Whilst independent review is not something the local planning authority does regularly, it can offer an objective assessment of a particular case where for a variety of reasons use of an external reviewer would be beneficial. Your officers feel this would be appropriate here.

4.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The draft brief for this work has been subject to limited consultation outside of the Planning Service and with Leader/Executive Councillor and Opposition Spokesperson. Planning Committee is asked to provide feedback on the scope and content of the draft brief.

5.0 **OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Reviews of this nature can be undertaken in a number of ways. In this case use of an external, independent consultant who is familiar with the planning and development process and who is experienced in design review would appear to offer the most appropriate, objective approach for undertaking this work.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Financial Implications** – The costs of the review are estimated at £3,000 – £5,000 and this will be met from the Planning Service consultants' budget.
- (b) **Staffing Implications** – none, some support will be needed for the consultant undertaking the review.
- (c) **Equalities and poverty Implications** - none
- (d) **Environmental Implications** – nil climate change impact
- (e) **Procurement** – none, the Council's normal procurement rules would apply to this commission.
- (f) **Consultation and communication** – The consultant will need to speak with a range of parties and individuals in undertaking this work.
- (g) **Community Safety** – there are no Community Safety implications

BACKGROUND PAPERS: The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report:

Appendix A: Draft Brief for the review

To inspect these documents contact Patsy Dell on extension 7103

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Patsy Dell on extension 7103

Report file: pd/planning committee

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Appendix A:

D R A F T

BRIEF FOR THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE MARQUE SCHEME, HILLS ROAD CHERRY HINTON ROAD JUNCTION, CAMBRIDGE

1 Objectives for the review:

- 1.1 That the review of the final construction of the Marque scheme identifies learning and lessons and addresses the following questions:

- a - What can be learnt from the processes and decisions that led to the final design and construction of the Marque
- b - How have improved processes implemented since the first Marque application in 2005 addressed (i) improved delivery on major development particularly tall buildings, and (ii) how will such improved processes support delivery after Local Plan adoption
- c - Are the circumstances of this case unique (in comparison to other similar schemes in the city) or are further measures needed to assist the council in delivering successful major developments and tall buildings in future.

It is recommended that an independent but experienced expert in design review be appointed to lead the review.

2 Content of the review:

2.1 The review will need to address these key questions:

- the processes that led in between 2005 and 2008 to the original approval for the screen and building design, and what was actually agreed, including given the different views about whether the final building is consistent to that approval
- the role of the Conservation and Design Panel, the planning case officer and the Urban Design Team in such applications
- technical advice on innovative construction options, in this case the screen design and planned material and support
- management of multi-year applications including when developers undertake major renegotiation and value engineering, and where sites with planning applications are sold on
- delegation and delivery on 'non material amendments', including in this case the Judicial Review and the impact of multiple NMAs eg on the east facing side of the building
- impact of the design on future residents of the Marque including those with restricted views, and future screen upkeep costs
- s106 delivery of public art to ensure value for money public benefit from developer-controlled 1% schemes
- difficulties in delivering 'Management Agreement' conditions including public access
- Member involvement transparency and scrutiny from 2005 to 2014.

3 Outcomes from the review

3.1 The Council is looking for a final written report structured to address the review objectives set out in 1 above, covering the investigation of the issues set out in 2 above. The reviewer will be asked to present the review findings to the Planning Committee and answer questions from Members on their conclusions.

4. Schedule of the review

- 4.1 The review shall be completed within 3 months of the commission being accepted.