

# **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



**Date of meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**Portfolio: Finance, Qualis and Economic Development –  
Cllr J. Philip**

**Subject: Sale of Pyrles Lane to Qualis**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To discuss the outline proposals put forward by Qualis for the redevelopment of the Pyrles Lane site and make any comments or observations that they would wish Cabinet to consider when a detailed acquisition proposal is put forward by Qualis.**

### **1. Detailed Report**

- 1.1. When Qualis was created at the end of 2019 it was with the intention of taking forward a number of potential redevelopment sites that the Council had been holding on to for some time as the market was unable or unwilling to respond, due to local conditions or site challenges.
- 1.2. The Council agreed to transfer to Qualis the sites in Epping and at Roundhills in Waltham Abbey last year. Pyrles Lane site was held back for more detailed consideration by Qualis, because of access and site issues that made this site more complex and challenging to redevelop.
- 1.3. With the progression of the Epping sites, Qualis has now started to focus on potential uses for Pyrles Lane and has set out early thinking as to how the site might be developed taking into account the challenges it presents.
- 1.4. Qualis has supplied a recent report presented to their Board and has copied this to Epping Forest District Council in light of members' wishes to have the opportunity to consider and have a say on the initial proposals before the Cabinet considers any application by Qualis to acquire the site.
- 1.5. At this stage there is no detailed business case for the Council to consider and this will follow on from the crystallisation of design, but when it is presented Epping Forest District Council, as shareholder, will want to see the financial model and risk register associated with this site before Cabinet considers any application for acquisition.
- 1.6. It is expected that any disposal would need to take place at fair market value and that Qualis will also need to apply to the Council for acquisition and development finance to enable them to complete the transaction and to develop the site.

- 1.7. Scrutiny is asked to consider the intended use and outlined design proposals for the site and consider whether this is an appropriate use of the opportunity this site affords. Issues around detail design would be Planning considerations and for the Planner's to advise on through the pre-application process and ultimately through Planning application consideration, should this come forward, and so members of the Committee are advised to avoid a discussion around detailed planning matters.

## **2. Resource Implications**

- 2.1. It is a requirement that every council obtains best consideration (Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972) for disposals of land and property, including to council owned companies. If Qualis wishes to proceed then the disposal will need to be at fair market value, and in line with the other development sites Qualis will need to seek loan finance from the Council to complete the transaction and develop the site.

## **3. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 3.1. None contained within this report.

## **4. Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications**

- 4.1. None.

## **5. Consultation Undertaken**

- 5.1. None

## **Background Papers**

Group Company Governance Document – Cabinet 6 February 2020