

Special Urgency Form

(The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000) (Regulation 16)

The Leader of the Council seeks the approval of the Chairman of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or if they are unwilling or unable to act, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the County Council) to the decision being exempt from Call-in as delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would mean that the delay in exchanging contracts with the prospective purchaser of plot 2 i54 Western Extension, who is primed to enter into a building contract for a substantial manufacturing facility.

Subject: i54 Western Extension – Sale of part of Plot 2

Background: The County Council has been working under a Joint Venture Agreement with the City of Wolverhampton (CoW) since 2012 completing the infrastructure and servicing works on i54, following the demise of Advantage West Midlands. Backed by that JV the County Council acquired the legal title of the original i54 site, and all subsequent disposals of plots on the original i54 were made having been formally approved through the SCC Governance Structure at the time – latterly the Property Sub Committee.

Following the success of i54, in 2019 the Joint Venture partners looked to bring forward an extension to i54 to the west of the original business park on to 60 acres of land already in the ownership of the CoW. Infrastructure has been laid into the extension area, and a large development plateau formed. Heads of Terms have been agreed with two occupiers to develop out the whole plateau, and this form relates to the sale of plot no.2.

As the land within the Western Extension was considered to be all within the ownership the CoW the sales of the two plots were formally approved through CoW's governance structure. At the County Council the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Skills, Cllr Philip White, was fully briefed on the disposals, as was the Leader Cllr Alan White.

External solicitors were appointed by CoW to act for the JV partners and the proposed purchasers of plots advised that the sales had been approved.

With regards to plot 2, during the course of the legal contractual dialogue with the purchasers it became clear that c. 1.49 acres of the 16.8 acre plot was in fact in the ownership of the County Council – being an outcrop within the original i54 title. Approval to the sale of this small area of land is being sought through an emergency Property Sub-Committee.

Reasons why the making of the decision is urgent and would be exempt from Call-in:

Contracts have now been agreed by all parties to the overall sale of plot 2, and the purchaser is anxious to exchange contracts to allow the appointment of a construction contractor. It was hope that contracts could be exchanged this week, but the necessity of the emergency PSC makes that unlikely.

Signed: John Tradewell

Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Corporate Services

Signed: Alan White

Leader of the Council

Signed: Tina Clements

Chairman of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17 August 2022

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