

IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020 commencing at 5.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Bayley (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Clayton, Esler, Eyre, Hogarth, Maskell, McGregor, Nelson and Waterton

An apology for absence was received from Cllrs. Andrews

Cllr. Dickins was also present.

46. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee held on 25 June 2020, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

48. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

49. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, gave an update on the Community and Economy recovery plans, which included speaking with the 4 Towns across the District to support them through the Christmas and New Year period. Plans were also being put together to ensure that as an authority, the Council was prepared if there was a significant second wave and subsequent lock down, following plans put in place by Public Health.

Members were updated on the progress of some of the projects that had been taking place including starting work on the White Oak Leisure Centre. Surveyors had been able to go to the current White Oak Leisure Centre and carry out investigative work for the future demolition of the site. Funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership had been received for 27-37 High Street, Swanley and discussions were continuing on the Meeting Point site. There had been more interest in the Burlington Mews properties and some had now been sold or were being rented.

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50. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

There were none.

51. Annual Complaints Report 2019/20

The Corporate Customer Services & Delivery Manager introduced the Annual Complaints Report for 2019/20, which updated Members of customer complaints and feedback monitoring for the past year, compared to 2018/19. Members' questions of clarification were responded to.

In response to questions, Members were advised that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) could be contacted at any point during a complaint. The LGSCO would record any contact made and as a result this may appear that the number of complaints were higher than the number of complaints upheld.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

52. 27 - 37 High Street, Swanley Redevelopment

The Chairman and Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance and Trading introduced the report. The Chairman explained that this was an exciting project for the Council to be taking forward with setting a standard for the quality of development. Following the granting of planning permission, the building would be high quality in its environmental credentials and building materials. The space would provide be a flexible business hub, as well as 17 residential units.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer- Finance & Trading explained the scheme, which was to be funded by capital receipts and Government funding which should make the scheme financially viable. It was hoped that the development would help set the tone for future developments in Swanley, such as Bevan Place. The report provided details of the wider scheme, including time scales, detailed funding and the delivery of the project, following Cabinet's initial approval in August 2020.

Members expressed their support for the business hub space and for the regeneration in Swanley. In response to questions, Members were advised that there was a functional space outside the building and that heat and air flow in the building had been fully investigated. Further details on access to the rear of the building would be circulated.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that Council

- a) agrees the redevelopment of 27-37 High Street, Swanley, as outlined in the report to provide a new business hub and 17 residential units at an estimated total project cost of £5,624,039 as set out in Table 1;
- b) approve that the project is funded by:

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- i) capital receipts from the sale of units in the scheme, estimated to be c. £4,134,039; and
 - ii) £1,490,000 from the Getting Building Fund (GBF) administered by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), and notes that the SELEP Accountability Board will only make a decision on this match funding on the 20 November 2020, and thus approval to proceed with the project is conditional on SELEP finally awarding the GBF grant.
 - iii) Agree to the £375,000 vired in August 2020 to be transferred back to the Property Investment Strategy from this project.
- c) delegate authority to the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Chief Officer Finance and Trading to enter into necessary contracts to facilitate the development and construction of the proposed scheme in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules.

53. Budget 2021/22: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading, presented the report which set out updates to the 2021/22 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presented growth and savings items that had been identified which needed to be considered, and requested further suggestions from Members, before finalising the budget for 2021/22.

Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it was proposed that the Council continued to set a revenue budget that assumed no direct funding from Government through the Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus. This would result in the Council continuing to be financially self-sufficient. To achieve this aim and to ensure a balanced budget position over the next 10-year period would be more challenging this year due to the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The budget process would be shorter with the Council's budget set at the November Council meeting instead of the February Council meeting. This should enable any changes to be implemented before 1 April 2021 and minimise the period of uncertainty for staff.

The annual budget gap included in the report was £826,000 which was largely due to Covid-19. Growth and savings proposals had been identified in the report for this Committee but Members were asked for their suggestions in order to contribute to reducing the budget gap, and their recommendations would be considered by Cabinet as part of the process to set a balanced 10-year budget. By addressing the issues this year, the Council would once again be in a strong financial position that other councils would aspire to.

Members discussed the growth and saving proposals, in particular SCIA 24: Property Services new fees and charges it was requested additional information on what the

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charges would relate to. It was discussed whether there were services that the Council could do on behalf of the County Council and recharge the County for the costs.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the growth and saving proposals identified in Appendices F & G to the report (SCIAs 21 - 24) applicable to this Advisory Committee, be considered;
- b) consideration be given to asking Officers to explore the following further suggestion for growth and income
 - i) providing services on behalf of the County Council and recharging the costs to the County.

54. Work plan

The work plan was noted, with customer redesign being added to the 26 November 2020 meeting. Broadband and charging for services were agreed to be added to a future meeting.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.20 PM

CHAIRMAN