

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 October 2018

Present: Councillor Tom Dawlings (Chair)
Councillors Hannam, Hill, Huggett, Lidstone, Mackonochie (Vice-Chairman),
Ms Palmer, Uddin, Scott, Mrs Soyke and Woodward

Officers in Attendance: David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Lee Colyer (Director of Finance, Policy and Development (Section 151 Officer)), Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities) and Denise Haylett (Head of Facilities and Community Hubs)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Moore

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

OSC22/18 Apologies were received from Councillor Thomson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OSC23/18 There were no declarations of interest made, within the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

OSC24/18 The minutes of the meetings dated 13 August 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Committee meeting dated 13 August 2018 be agreed.

ITEMS CALLED IN UNDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 13

OSC25/18 There were no items which had been called-in under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

OSC26/18 The chairman confirmed the order of the agenda.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER PLANS AND PROGRESS - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

OSC27/18 The Portfolio Holder for Economic development and Communications, Councillor Tracy Moore, presented her portfolio holder update for 2018/19. During discussion the following matters were highlighted:

British Land had ownership of Royal Victoria Place (RVP) with the Council retaining the freehold and continuing to receive an annual income. British Land's business was to acquire and invest in shopping centres, providing a higher degree of credibility to the market and the company had sanctioned a £100 million investment to acquire RVP, and as long-term investors, they would be looking to make significant further investment.

A number of the stores had been deliberately decanted under the previous

ownership of the RVP and British Land would be looking at this area and consideration could be given to short term re-letting of those units. The Council had acquired a number of freehold properties around the perimeter of RVP and these would be incorporated in a long-leasehold interest with British Land to allow a more comprehensive development to be brought forward.

It was important that the needs of local businesses were considered and that they were allowed a strong voice in areas such as development and transport, allowing greater growth.

The council was promoting the use of pull-up banners in leisure centres and the Gateway. The use of hoardings was a good opportunity to provide positive messages and the Assembly Hall Theatre was already moving towards the use of digital screens to promote its offer.

One of the biggest challenges was attracting and retaining talent in the business sector and promoting Tunbridge Wells as a town and a borough, as a vibrant, thriving and attractive place to live was key to this.

The number of Farmer's Market stalls had decreased and with the work ahead on the Culture and Learning Hub and phase 2 of the public realm works, consideration would need to be given to the location of the market.

There were concerns over the effectiveness of the search engine on the current website and it was hoped that work being done on the new site would improve this function.

The Council's Cultural and Creative Industries Framework study was an update on the previous version and elements of it would be provided to Leadership Board in the coming month.

The new version of Local magazine was an improvement but there was room for further improvement. A balance between the cost of the paper and the quality of the final product needed to be considered.

RESOLVED to note the portfolio holder's update.

COMMUNITY HUBS - VERBAL UPDATE

OSC28/18 Paul Taylor, Director of Change and Communities, and Denise Haylett, Head of Facilities and Community Hubs, updated Members on the community hubs schemes in the borough. During discussion the following matters were highlighted:

Dowding House was temporary accommodation and it was not envisaged that residents would stay longer than two years at the most. The tenants in Dowding House had been moved from bed and breakfast accommodation and had not had an impact on rough sleeper numbers – this group were being supported separately.

It was requested that the disabled community be included when identifying the type of facilities within the schemes that would promote access and that the members of the community be consulted on how services should be delivered. Input from the Disabled Access Group would be looked at and the activity plan for the Cultural and Learning Hub and its ability to reach a broad

and diverse demographic and engage with hard to reach groups was key to receiving the funding.

A key theme from the businesses in Southborough was that they wanted a higher degree of communication on the progress of the Southborough Hub aimed at the businesses.

RESOLVED to note the update.

CALVERLEY SQUARE UPDATE

OSC29/18 The Head of Economic Development and Property, David Candlin, presented a report which updated Members on the Council's progress towards the Calverley Square development. During discussion the following matters were highlighted:

It was expected that Members would have an early and adequate ability to input into the overall programme for the civic complex including the social, educational and economic areas. Uses other than private residential were being considered.

The level of local contractors/suppliers/providers who would be involved in the scheme was not yet known. Mace held 'meet the buyer' events and had indicated that were two local suppliers who could be providing up to a sixth of the overall development. Mace would provide sub-contractors with a list of local suppliers. A number of suppliers had already provided services for the Assembly Hall Theatre.

The Public Works Loan Board was a guaranteed source of funding for the scheme. However, the size and nature of the development meant that a number of financial institutions had contacted the Council to discuss funding.

A public enquiry on the CPO element of the development would have to continue past June 2019 to impact on the projected timelines; however it was not expected that this would be an issue.

The opt-in charge for garden waste collection was a one of a number of options (including enhancements to the service) that formed part of an overall package for the new waste and recycling contract. Once the tender prices were received back they formed part of that overall package. £700,000 of savings was part of a funding strategy that came out of the Waste and Recycling Procurement exercise.

It was intended that the new offices would be occupied by the first quarter of 2022 and the Council would be looking to the market for the civic complex in the first quarter of 2020. There were other areas that would enhance the cultural scene leading up to any future decision on the civic complex such as the Culture and Learning Hub, the programme for the Assembly Hall Theatre which would expand the Council's outreach programme.

There was a potential growth fund of £47 million that Kent and Medway would be submitting to the Local Enterprise Partnership. Tunbridge Wells would be bidding for £5 million of that amount.

The obtaining of a number of rights on Grove Hill House was included in the

original business case and had been budgeted for.

Resolved to note the report.

REDUCING SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN THE TOWN HALL AND WIDER COMMUNITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

OSC30/18 Members noted the interim report and were provided with a brief update on the work of the two task and finish groups.

RESOLVED to note the interim report and the update.

WORK PROGRAMME

OSC31/18 Members noted the update on the Committee's work programme. The two potential topics highlighted for future consideration were:

All out elections

The transport infrastructure in Tunbridge Wells.

RESOLVED to note the work programme.

URGENT BUSINESS

OSC32/18 There was no urgent business.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

OSC33/18 The next scheduled meeting of the Committee would take place on Monday 19 November 2018.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm.