

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Friday, 12 March 2021

**Present: Councillor Chris Woodward (Chairman)**

**Councillors Thomson (Vice-Chairman), Atwood, Bland, Hayward, Pound and Stanyer**

**Officers in Attendance:** William Benson (Chief Executive), David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Lee Colyer (Director of Finance, Policy and Development (Section 151 Officer)), Katie Exon (Corporate Property Manager), Patricia Narebor (Head of Legal Partnership), Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities), Jonathan White (Project Surveyor) and Mark O'Callaghan (Scrutiny and Engagement Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors Dawlings, March and McDermott

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

OSC79/20 Apologies for absence received from Councillors Chapelard, Morton, Neve, Ms Palmer and Scholes.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OSC80/20 There were no disclosable pecuniary or significant other interests declared at the meeting.

### NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK

OSC81/20 There were no Visiting Members or members of the public registered to speak. Councillor March, as the Portfolio Holder, was in attendance to present under OSC84/20.

### URGENT BUSINESS

OSC82/20 There was no urgent business to be considered.

### DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

OSC83/20 The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 29 March 2021.

### AMELIA SCOTT CONSTRUCTION DELAY

OSC84/20 The Chairman, Councillor Woodward noted that the main report was exempt and the meeting would move to private session following advice from the Monitoring Officer and an opening statement from the Portfolio Holder.

Patricia Narebor (Head of Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer) advised that the report contained commercially sensitive details and should be considered in private session. Any inadvertent disclosure in public must be avoided.

Councillor March (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) introduced the public part of the report, comments included:

- Project commenced in 2013 and benefited from partnership working with Kent County Council and cross-party support.

- The Council was proud of the good reception the project had had and it was committed to completing the project.
- The Portfolio Holder provided member oversight of the project and officers managed day-to-day operation.
- Prior to the lockdown, all papers of the Amelia Scott Member Oversight Panel were available in the Members' Room and since by email.
- Regular member updates have been given. All publicly available documents have been published through the Cabinet papers.
- The information set out in the report was made available to all members from 11 March.
- The construction delays are explained and have come about relatively recently. Until December the Amelia Scott project had been the only National Lotteries Heritage Fund (NLHF) scheme to remain on target throughout lockdown. NLHF had been supportive of the reasons for delay and granted a further £675k to help.
- Projects involving heritage buildings would likely always come with unwelcome surprises.
- The project was still on target to open in 2022 and continued support from members was sought.

#### **AMELIA SCOTT CONSTRUCTION DELAY (EXEMPT)**

OSC85/20     **RESOLVED** – That, pursuant to section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Act, by virtue of the particular paragraph shown on the agenda and on the attached report.

Paul Taylor (Director for Change and Communities) gave a presentation which included:

- Background to the establishment of the project
- Governance structure of the project and management reporting systems
- Project costings
- Details of the delays to the project.

Discussion included:

- Resolution procedures and possible options
- Changes to the project and the related context
- Fundraising options
- The nature of the construction contract and its implications for the allocation of responsibilities
- External factors impacting on the project
- The Council's decision making processes.

The Chairman undertook to pursue several items raised by the Committee.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm.