

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 10 June 2019

Present: Councillor Chris Woodward (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Soyke (Vice-Chairman), Bailey, Bruneau, Chapelard, Hayward, Morton, Ms Palmer, Pound, Reilly and Stanyer

Officers in Attendance: Stephen Baughen (Head of Planning Services), David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager) and Finbar Gibbons (Head of Policy and Governance)

Other Members in Attendance: None

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

OSC1/19 The chairman noted several procedural items.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

OSC2/19 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thomson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

OSC3/19 There were no declarations of interest made, within the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 01 APRIL 2019

OSC4/19 The minutes were carried over to the next meeting.

ITEMS CALLED-IN UNDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 13

OSC5/19 There were no items which had been called-in under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

OSC6/19 Councillor McDermott, Leader of the Council, introduced the report set out on the agenda and updated Members on the progress made in his portfolio.

Discussion included the following issues:

- The Local Plan, Transport and Cycling Strategies and improvements to infrastructure would be key parts of his areas of responsibility in terms of Planning and Transportation.
- The challenges in retaining planning staff were well known, but the Council had taken a proactive approach to retaining staff by offering things such as flexible working and opportunities for career progression.
- The Planning Department continually looked for ways to increase income.
- The Leader was focussed on resolving Calverley Square and subsequently the Council's Five Year Plan.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

CALVERLEY SQUARE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

OSC7/19 David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Property, introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Discussion included the following issues:

- The project can be broken down into three parts; carpark, offices and theatre. The social impact of the theatre part of the project must be considered not just the financial aspects.
- The economic benefits of the project will be seen when tenants move into the office space. Likely to take 2-3 years longer for economic benefits of the theatre to be realised. The economic benefits were not just in the borough of Tunbridge Wells, but outside of it as well, via employment etc.
- Changes to funding have meant that councils must diversify income streams, such as office space and market testing showed this. Research also considered 'displacement', i.e. taking into account a business who might move into new offices but who are already based in Tunbridge Wells.
- Mace are the project's Construction Partner; Mace will go to market to tender to subcontractors at RIBA Stage 5.
- The public should know the expected final cost of the development and this will become apparent once RIBA Stage 4 report comes back.
- No final outcome has been made on grant funding application from South East Local Enterprise Partnership, it is incorrect to say that funding from SELEP has been refused.
- The Council is contracted with Mace to up to and including the design stage, not necessarily contracted with Mace beyond this current stage.
- Expect on-site work to commence in January 2021.
- Legal costs from the Calverley Square Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry were taken from the Calverley Square Reserve.
- Council will look into ongoing liabilities should the project be stopped at the end of RIBA Stage 4.

RESOLVED – That the update on the Calverley Square Development, specifically that the development remained on time and within the construction cost envelope (£90m), be noted.

WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20

OSC8/19 Finbar Gibbons, Head of Policy and Governance, introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Discussion included the following issues:

- Allocation of land for building of social housing; council reserves; private and public sector accommodation for elderly people; and the Council's project management framework, be given consideration at a later date.
- The purpose and structure of Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Ltd; the RAG system for project management; and effective public consultation be given consideration in the immediate future.

- Councillor Ms Palmer declared an interest with regard to being a director of Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Ltd.
- Consultation and Engagement was a key issue identified at the New Member Induction.

RESOLVED –

1. That Tunbridge Wells Property Holdings Ltd be considered at a future meeting via a presentation in the first instance;
2. That the process for determining a RAG status be considered at a future meeting via a presentation in the first instance; and
3. That a Consultation and Engagement Task and Finish Group be established which will consist of Councillors Bruneau, Pound and Reilly.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP(S) UPDATE

OSC9/19 The chairman provided an update on the work of existing Task and Finish Groups.

Discussion included the following issues:

- The Parks and Gardens Contract Task and Finish Group will continue, with Councillors Morton and Stanyer to join.
- Transparency Task and Finish Group was put on hold due in order to wait for the new website to be completed – this will remain on hold until the new website progresses.
- Single Use Plastics Task and Finish Group may wish to continue at a later date.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

URGENT BUSINESS

OSC10/19 There was no urgent business.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

OSC11/19 The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 12 August 2019.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

An audio recording of this meeting is available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.