

NOTES OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION & INVESTMENT BOARD

4th August 2017

Attending: Cllr Clarkson (Chairman)
Cllr Galpin
Cllr Ovenden
Cllr Shorter

Tracey Kerly (TK)
Andrew Osborne (AO)
Paul McKenner (PMcK)
Dean Spurrell (DS)
Stewart Smith (SS)
Steve Parish (SP)
Sarah Hartles (SH)
Maria Seddon (MS)
Rosie Reid (RR) – minutes

Also present: Cllr Hicks

<p>1. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd.</p> <p>Cllr Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director for A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd and Kent Play Clubs. He also made a Voluntary Announcement that he used to be a tenant farmer of the land at Pound Lane, as well as a tenant farmer of a site adjacent to the land at Pound Lane. He declared that the current owner of the Pound Lane site lived in Magpie Hall Road, but he had no association with him.</p> <p>TK made a Voluntary Announcement as she was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd and A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd.</p> <p>PMcK and MS made Voluntary Announcements as they were Directors of A Better Choice for Property Ltd.</p> <p>Cllr Galpin made a Voluntary Announcement as one of the tenants of the Island Site was his neighbour.</p>	
<p>2. Notes of the previous Meeting</p> <p>The Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment</p>	

<p>Board on 25th May 2017 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>3. Signing of Project Initiation Document for Freehold interest in 1 Victoria Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 7HE</p> <p>PMcK advised that the Council had made an offer for the land, which had been rejected, and the Council was no longer proceeding with the purchase.</p> <p>The Board noted the above advice and decision.</p>	
<p>4. Signing of Project Initiation Document for Purchase of 112 Beaver Road</p> <p>PMcK advised that there were delays on the part of the seller with regard to legal paperwork. In the meantime, the Council was proceeding with design work. The Council had offered £446K, in line with Members' views at the previous Board meeting. It had been agreed that this was a sound investment, as it provided good quality accommodation for homeless families, whilst reducing provision of Bed and Breakfast costs for the Council. SH advised that the Head of Housing would need to make a formal report to Cabinet to request authority to undertake the necessary internal alterations. Members agreed that it was vital to provide a good standard of accommodation, but consideration should also be given to value for money and costs. PMcK advised that the expected completion date would be around the end of 2018. He also said that it would be vital to instal a sprinkler system, similar to the one at Christchurch House, to prevent the spread of any fires. Members agreed that the Council should not accept tenders above the commercial market rate. TK advised that as part of the Council's procurement policy, internal quantity surveyors would analyse the values for parts of tenders, and, where unrealistic, these could be challenged. Cllr Shorter assured Members that the Council's procurement process was robust, with a commercial slant, and he invited Board Members to attend a tender opening process to observe the diligence of the procedure. Members agreed that this was an ideal property and situation, and gave their approval to the scheme.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the proposal to purchase 112 Beaver Road.</p>	
<p>5. Commercial Quarter</p> <p>SS introduced this item and highlighted the key points of the report. He said the rental market was slow at present, but interest had been shown by two parties and discussions with them were underway.</p> <p><u>Island Site</u> SS advised that there was an error in the report, which stated that the capital spend of £500,000 had previously been approved by the Board. He clarified that this figure should be £650,000. He said it was imperative to take forward the proposed interim development proposals in this area for the benefit of the whole Commercial Quarter. This would involve the Council conducting a competitive design event in respect of The Hub and Ashford's Goods Yard, as explained in Paragraphs 2.1 to</p>	

<p>2.5 of the report. Members agreed that the longer term ambitions for the Island Site should be considered further, although they agreed that the site should be activated in the short term as suggested. Members discussed the possibility of acquiring key property within the Island Site area, and it was agreed that SS would report back to the next meeting with further information on options.</p> <p>Members discussed the Council organising and carrying out a Developer Workshop Event, as referred to at paragraph 3.2 of the report. They agreed that any new development arrangements entered into by the Council regarding the Commercial Quarter would be on a commercial basis only, and that the Council would adhere to the Procurement Policy with regard to future development arrangements in this area.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the removal of property and goods remaining within the Island Site. It was agreed that the Council would arrange and fund the movement of six containers to an appropriate temporary location. Members agreed that the containers must be cleared from the Island Site within 21 days.</p> <p>There was also discussion about land to the rear of the former Youth Theatre, as referenced under item 4 of the report, and it was agreed that TK would move this matter forward.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Recommendations as set out in the Officer's report.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
<p>6. Pound Lane Kingsnorth Land Acquisition</p> <p>PMcK said this was a key parcel of land which may provide a possible access for a link road between Pound Lane and the Park Farm roundabout in the future. He clarified that Option 3, as laid out in the report, was the preferred site for the link road. Members were in agreement that it was desirable for the Council to own this land. SH advised that PMcK had delegated authority to purchase, in consultation with Members. It was agreed that PMcK should make an offer up to the value agreed.</p> <p>The Board agreed that PMcK should make an offer up to the value agreed for the land on behalf of the Council.</p>	<p>PMcK</p>
<p>6a. Land at Blind Grooms Lane Acquisition</p> <p>PMcK tabled this item and advised that this acquisition had been discussed by Board Members outside the meeting and the land had been purchased on 13th June for £430K. There may be further opportunities to buy land in close proximity in due course. Cllr Hicks said she was disappointed not to have been consulted as Ward Member. She drew Board Members' attention to the forthcoming Separation of Villages Policy and said this may prevent potential for future development, although it may not be a problem in the long term. It was agreed that PMcK would bring this back to a future meeting of the Board.</p>	<p>PMcK</p>

<p>The Board agreed that this item would be revisited at a future meeting.</p>	
<p>7. Town Centre Framework</p> <p>AO introduced this item. He said progress on the Big 8 projects was well underway and there was now a need to deliver a Town Centre Framework to attract new visitors. This would be a project to win hearts and minds and capture enthusiasm for visiting the Town Centre. Cllr Galpin said he was very pleased with the report. Members discussed the best means to gather data on public opinion and AO said it would be critical to pose appropriate survey questions. The results must be meaningful and useful.</p> <p>The Board agreed that it was important to move on with the proposed next steps as soon as possible.</p>	<p>AO</p>
<p>8. Elwick Place Update Report</p> <p>Cllr Galpin reported that the project was making excellent progress and there were currently no risks to the programme. He recommended continued support from the Board. Cllr Clarkson suggested that a Visitors' Book should be provided and asked Member Services to make the necessary arrangements. Cllr Clarkson also advised that an artist had been commissioned to design a coat of arms for the Council Chamber. He was pleased with the new layout of the offices on the second floor of the Civic Centre, which had a commercial and business-like appearance.</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>	<p>Member Services</p>
<p>9. Newtown Works</p> <p>SS advised that the Council could make a bid for funding under the DCLG Housing Infrastructure Fund. If successful, this could unlock plans for the site. The deadline for the bid was 28th September, and SS confirmed that he would prepare a multi-agency business case, in consultation with key stakeholders. The DCLG decision would be announced around January 2018. It was suggested that Damian Green should be consulted, and that the Chair of LEP should be approached to provide a letter of support. Cllr Shorter expressed concern over whether there were enough staff resources to prepare such a comprehensive bid in time, and TK said that the bid would be submitted via an online application system, and therefore only a limited amount of information could be provided.</p> <p>Members questioned whether there were enough resources generally within the Property and Projects team, and whether a structural review should be carried out to assess resources. PMcK confirmed that an appraisal would be undertaken to consider how best to allocate resources within the team. Cllr Shorter expressed concern over whether there were enough staff resources to prepare such a comprehensive bid in time, and TK said that the bid would be submitted with support from</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>PMcK</p>

external appointments to be confirmed.	
10. Dates of Next Meetings 22 nd September 10am Board Room 26 th October 2pm Council Chamber 21 st November 10am Board Room	

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Rosie Reid:
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