

## Ashford Borough Council - Decisions taken by the Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Minute No	Topic	Decision
372	Redevelopment of the Mecca Building and the Vicarage Lane Car Park	<p>The report sought Cabinet approval for the delivery of the proposed scheme by way of the delivery route described within the report. The scheme would, if planning permission was obtained, deliver a mix of commercial and residential uses, together with improved public realm, outdoor performance space and community facilities. The project was aligned with the Council's strategic objectives and priorities to create a new vibrant town centre with the aim of supporting wider economic benefits, attracting investment, increasing town centre footfall and creating jobs.</p> <p>The Leader said the proposals were a blueprint for the future but in no way definitive. He proposed the addition of a further recommendation regarding continuing consultation because ultimately he wanted the Council to refine and deliver a scheme that could command a good degree of general support.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Property said that, as mentioned in the previous agenda item, town centres were changing and there was a need to change to keep Ashford's town centre sustainable. He wanted to express his gratitude to Ash Sakula Architects for their exciting design concepts and said that he supported plans to pursue a Development Management Partner in order to take forward the process under Council control. He did take note of residents' concerns and said he therefore supported a full and meaningful public consultation.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT said that, in principle, these proposals would transform this part of the town. He did not want to talk too much about the design as he knew that would evolve through the planning process, but retaining control of the process through a Development Manager model would allow the Council to pursue its principles of good design rather than letting the process out to a third party who may focus more on profit than quality.</p> <p>One of the Ward Members for the Godinton Ward said that this was a very important</p>

site and whilst he did support the re-development of the Mecca building, he did have concern over the density of the indicative plans for residential and the proliferation of one bedroomed flats and asked if larger dwellings could be considered. He was also concerned over the loss of car parking so close to the town centre and wondered if there were options to retain some of the existing car park for disabled parking, rather than forcing them in to a new multi storey car park further out. The Leader thanked the Member for his comments and said that this was one of the reasons he had suggested the additional recommendation for continued consultation. Nothing was currently set in 'tablets of stone'. With regard to the disabled, he was keen to make Ashford as accessible as possible and would continue to pursue all possibilities. Other Members advised that blue badge holders did have the option to park in a number of locations even closer to the town centre and the shopping areas.

**Recommended:**

**That**

- (i) the advice contained within this report be noted.**
- (ii) the planning application for the Scheme be progressed and submitted in accordance with the Indicative Delivery Programme.**
- (iii) the Head of Corporate Property and Projects be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Property, to negotiate and secure the ownership of Third Party Land required for the delivery of the Scheme.**
- (iv) a tender and procurement exercise be carried out with a view to the Council making the external appointments required to submit the planning application and deliver the Scheme, including a Development Management Partner to deliver the Scheme in accordance with the Indicative Delivery Programme optimising both the financial and social**

		<p>value returns for the benefit of the Council.</p> <p>(v) the Head of Corporate Property and Projects be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the relevant Portfolio Holders, the Director of Law and Governance and the Head of Finance, to negotiate and agree the commercial terms of the Development Management Agreement .</p> <p>(vi) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the relevant Portfolio Holders, the Director of Law and Governance, the Head of Finance and the Head of Corporate Property and Projects, to take the necessary steps to finalise and complete the legal documentation as it relates to the appointments and the delivery of the Scheme including the Development Management Agreement.</p> <p>(vii) funding be allocated in accordance with the Scheme Financial Appraisal to ensure the delivery of the Scheme with such funding to be met from the use of reserves and borrowing, the extent of which is to be determined by the Director of Finance and Economy in conjunction with the Chief Executive.</p> <p>(viii) discussions should continue with local residents and businesses to help refine and deliver a scheme that could command a good degree of general support.</p>
--	--	---