

Trading and Enterprise Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trading and Enterprise Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, on the **22nd February 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman)

Cllrs. Feacey, Pickering, Shorter

Cllr. Ovenden (Observer).

Also Present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Finance and IT (in her Capacity as Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Accountancy Manager, Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd), Member Services Manager.

285 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 28th September 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

286 Commercialisation Strategy Update

The Head of Finance and IT gave a verbal update advising that this strand of work had been transferred to her from the Head of Environment and Land Management. It was intended to bring commercialisation and digitalisation closer together and she would bring update reports to this Board every quarter.

In response to a question about results so far, the Head of Finance and IT advised that many of the projects had been held up due to the pandemic but were expected to accelerate in the coming months. Garden waste had begun and was already generating a return which was pleasing. The projects would be about generating income but also savings and efficiencies and it would be important to devise a strategy for measuring those.

A Member referred to the savings generated by the adoption of Parking RINGO as referred to in the previously circulated report (November 2021). It was confirmed that these related to the removal of machines and reduction in cash handling costs. These savings would continue to be reflected in Financial Monitoring reports.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

287 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

288 A Better Choice for Property Limited – Request for Funding

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the confidential report which gave an update on a project the Company was working on including a request for the release of additional funding to facilitate the development

After a lengthy debate the Board agreed to delegate approval of the release of funding to the Chairman, subject to the receipt of a satisfactory timetable, with input from ABC Planning and Legal Services, detailing all of the necessary steps through to the deadline for the commencement of construction in June 2023. It was requested that such a timetable be received within a week and could then be used to help manage and monitor this particular project as it developed and provide assurance to this Board before agreeing the release of further funding.

The Chairman made it clear that he would consult with other TEB Members before taking the final decision, either by email or at a Virtual Meeting.

Resolved:

That approval of the release of funding be delegated to the Chairman of this Board, subject to the receipt of a satisfactory timetable as detailed above.

289 Previously Agreed Papers

The Board noted the papers that had been previously agreed by e-mail to avoid the need for a physical meeting during a peak in the Coronavirus pandemic last November. They had been subsequently endorsed by the Cabinet on the 16th December 2021.

The Commercial Development Manager (A Better Choice for Property Ltd) gave a verbal management update on the portfolio and performance of the Company. Going forward, he would bring update reports to this Board every quarter. The Board said they were heartened by the update and thanked him and his staff for their efforts.

Resolved:

That the updates be received and noted.

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