

NOTES OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION & INVESTMENT BOARD

6th December 2018

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

Also Present: Cllr. Farrell
Cllr. Heyes
Cllr. Suddards

Chief Executive
Director of Place and Space
Director of Finance and Economy
Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications
Head of Environment and Land Management
Head of Corporate Property and Projects
Head of Planning and Development
Head of Culture
Economic Development Manager
Senior Commercial Development Manager
Development and Regeneration Manager
Senior Communications Officer
National Management Trainee
Member Services Manager (Operational).

Apologies: Cllr Bell

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Notes of the Meeting of 6th July 2018</p> <p>The Notes of the Meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Board on 6th July 2018 were agreed as a correct record.</p> | |
| <p>2. Mecca Bingo/Vicarage Lane Site – Delivery Options and Next Steps</p> <p>The Senior Commercial Development Manager introduced the item which followed on from the discussion at the Ashford Town Centre Place Making Board meeting previously that same afternoon.</p> <p>Following the presentation and the short video shown at that meeting, this Board meeting considered the issue as the landowner for the site,</p> | |

including the four proposed delivery options, proposed timescales and the commissioning of resources identified in the report.

Following considerable debate over the delivery options, there was support for the Council appointing a Joint Venture (JV) development partner. The advantages of this were considered to be passing a larger share of the resources needed to the JV partner, access to a higher level of construction ability, as well as de-risking and being able to move ahead at pace. There was also some support for a 'Development Manager' model because of the potential for more hands on project management and quality control. It was therefore agreed, so as not to delay the process, that further work on the two options and the issues surrounding both would be carried out so this could be reconsidered before a Cabinet decision in the spring. The most important consideration would be to obtain a quality partner who would deliver a quality place and a fantastic scheme.

The Board again expressed its support for the principle of progressing the scheme and, subject to the outcome of the debate on the petition surrounding the future use of the site at the following weeks Full Council meeting, and the satisfactory conclusion of initial site and building due diligence, endorsed the commission of the resources identified at Paragraph 7.2 of the report and for this to be funded as suggested in Paragraph 7.3, to prepare for the report to the Cabinet meeting in March.

Action:

The Board agrees that the scheme should be progressed and endorsed and further work on the two delivery options and the issues surrounding both be carried out so this could be reconsidered before a Cabinet decision in the spring.

The Board also agrees the commission of the resources identified at Paragraph 7.2 of the report and for this to be funded as suggested in Paragraph 7.3, in order to prepare for the report to the Cabinet meeting in March.

SS

3. Solar Park Project

The Development and Regeneration Manager introduced a confidential report which proposed a potential solar farm on a plot of land owned by the Council. Whilst the longer term intentions for the land would be considered as part of future local plan deliberations, this proposal would realise the land's current optimal use and had revealed a potential income stream with sufficient return to consider expanding the original single project to a ground based solar PV programme in the future. He gave details of the financial assessment as outlined in the report, including the Internal Rate of Return (IRR). The sensitivities and contentious nature of such proposals were recognised and it was accepted that it would have to be dealt with properly and considered

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>through the planning process.</p> <p>Board Members were supportive in principle of the proposals for a solar farm on the first site identified in the report and the additional measures that would be necessary to give effect to the recommendations in the report.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>As an income generator, the Board gives its approval to proceed with the proposed solar farm proposal; following support from all consultees (fees included in development costs).</p> <p>The Board also supports the prudential borrowing to enable the delivery of this scheme with the knowledge of an estimated payback period and IRR as detailed in the report. This will all be included within a Cabinet report for February.</p> <p>The next stage of the project would be to mitigate the risks identified in the report and to submit a planning application for the solar farm subject to Cabinet approval . Further expertise to be sought at planning and procurement stage from APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence).</p> <p>There should also be a renewable strategy for existing assets, new acquisitions and new buildings constructed by the Council.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">GH</p> |
| <p>4. Dates of Next Meetings</p> <p>31st January 10am Council Chamber</p> <p>28th March 10am Council Chamber</p> | |

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk