

Otterpool Park Working Group

Held at: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Date: Thursday, 25 June 2020

Present: Councillors Gary Fuller, Michelle Keutenius, Jim Martin, David Monk (Chairman) and Terence Mullard

Apologies for Absence

Officers Present: Andy Jarrett (Chief Strategic Development Officer), John Bunnett (Development Director), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Julia Wallace (Masterplanning Project Manager) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)

Others Present: Evelyn Wong and Sue Rowlands, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design Ltd

Councillors Nicola Keen, Lesley Whybrow, Ms Susan Carey, Douglas Wade, Ian Meyers, Georgina Treloar, Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee, John Wing, Tim Prater, John Collier, Patricia Rolfe, David Godfrey, Ray Field, Rebecca Shoob, Philip Martin and Ann Berry

28. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

29. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2020 were approved and electronically signed by the Chairman.

30. **Design Code**

Julia Wallace, Masterplanning Project Manager introduced the item informing members that the Design Code is an important tool which will be a rolling guide for the Otterpool design. It is a unique opportunity for the Council as the landowner and planning authority to get it right.

The work around the Design Code will take place in stages, the first on the strategic code with the other phases to follow.

Sue Rowlands and Evelyn Wong, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design Ltd presented members with the following:

- what makes a good Design Code – design quality, co-ordinated development, streets and site-wide issues. All of which form a tool for developers and officers.
- examples of what works and what doesn't work – Northstowe and Chilmington Green
- key lessons on what works well within these examples and what can be taken from them.

The importance of this design code is that it has clear instructions, clear and concise information through design, colour and tables and not too wordy.

Comments related to the design code were answered by Tibbalds; several comments noted below related to wider matters associated with the planning application and will be for the planning committee to consider.

Members commented on the following:

- Will the code adapt to changes along the way in respect of climate change issues, heating/energy efficiencies and be flexible to make the necessary changes and not set things in stone at the start.
- Transport links with the M20
- Railway station on site.
- Look at other sites which are already completed for inspiration and ideas ie Kingshill, Poundbury.
- Net Zero Carbon – must be made clear from the start. Members noted that the best sustainable standards should be met following specialist advice which is being sought. A briefing note will be presented to members in due course.
- Need to ensure that the local community needs are met ie medical, schools, roads and skyline.
- Need to achieve a sustainable development.
- Bio-diversity – achieve and encourage as much as possible within the site. Produce a strategy for how this can be delivered.
- House designs – good local models, materials and design. Farrells have undertaken a study into local building designing which will be referred to in the design code.

Sue Rowlands advised members that there are 4 steps to develop a Design Code:

1. Develop character
2. Develop rules

3. Test the rules
4. Produce the final Design Code.

Within these 4 steps officers will look at the topography of the site, characteristics of the site, heritage features, transport links, flora and fauna, housing and what is the public face of Otterpool.

Officers must look closely at the transport links already there and how they will become part of the development, particularly in respect of the A20 which is already heavily used. Creating a network of streets, not only for cars but cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Additional comments made by members as follows:

- Community engagement – must continue throughout the process
- Wetlands – as above must provide this
- Railway station – a positive to the site
- Ancient woodland/Roman villa – keep sight of heritage already there
- Infrastructure/digital infrastructure/housing waiting lists
- Employment land within the site – this will be covered through each stage of the design
- Attractive environment to live and work in
- Energy Strategy – identified ground source heat pumps important for Otterpool Park

The next steps:

1. Finalise the Design Code structure.
2. Tibbalds to produce a draft Code for members and officers to discuss through a number of workshops. (September)
3. Update the draft Code in consultation with officers which will then form the final strategic design and phase 1 detailed code. (End of the year)