



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at: Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone

Date: Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Present: Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Peter Gane (Chairman), Clive Goddard, Ms Janet Holben, Mrs Claire Jeffrey (Vice-Chair), Mrs Mary Lawes, Michael Lyons, Ian Meyers, Russell Tillson and Mrs Rodica Wheeler

Apologies for Absence

Officers Present: Andy Blaszkowicz (Head of Commercial and Technical Services), Andy Jarrett (Head of Strategic Development Project), Jyotsna Leney (Community Services Manager), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Susan Priest (Corporate Director - Strategic Development), Charlotte Spendley (Head of Finance), Lee Walker (Group Accountant) and Julia Wallace (Masterplanning Project Manager)

Others Present: Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee (Cabinet Member for Communities), Councillor Alan Ewart-James (Cabinet Member for Housing), Councillor Mrs Ann Berry (Cabinet Member for Transport) and Councillor Dick Pascoe (Cabinet Member for Property Management and Environmental)

85. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey declared a voluntary announcement in respect of minutes and as she is Chairman of Oportunitas. As she has a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer she remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Mrs Susan Carey declared a voluntary announcement in respect of minute as she is a customer of Oportunitas. She remained in the meeting during discussion and voting on this item.

86. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 30 January and 27 February 2018 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman following an amendment to the meeting of the 27 February correcting Councillor Russell Tillson's name in minute 80.

87. **Otterpool Park draft Framework Masterplan**

Report C/17/89 brings to Cabinet for its consideration the draft Framework Masterplan for Otterpool Park prepared by the landowners' consultant team, and seeks its endorsement to allow it to be used to make representations to the Local Planning Authority on its Regulation 18 draft Core Strategy Local Plan and to inform a planning application currently under preparation. It also provides an update on the role of Homes England as a landowner in the project and sets out the Collaboration Board's proposed Unique Selling Points on which to base future promotion of the garden town.

Julia Wallace, Masterplanning, Urban Design and Viability Manager noted that the masterplan is now at a stage that it can be shared with residents and developers to promote the site for employment and leisure. It is also a time to promote what other partners can do.

Following consultations with local residents and statutory agencies further works have been done which has resulted in a number of changes as follows:

- West of the site has seen changes to the internal boundaries.
- The High Street has been moved to a more central position.
- Buffer zones and landscaping for residents of Lympe and Barrow Hill with provision for open space has been included.
- Westenhanger Castle will have a more prominent setting with green space next to it.

Works are ongoing in respect of bus routes, cycle ways and the station connection with further talks taking place. Bus routes must be a priority to ensure that the correct routes are in place and it was suggested that talks take place with KCC to provide additional routes rather than add to old ones.

Andy Jarrett, Head of Strategic Development Projects informed that if the masterplan is endorsed by Cabinet on 28 March then further consultations will take place over the summer with exhibitions and workshops.

The submission of the planning application will take place in September following further works on the technical aspects.

Mr Jarrett made it clear that the masterplan is not a blue print and can be changed as the works progress.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Relocation of the station – there is no intention to move the station, this would be costly and it was decided that changing the direction of the High Street was more of a priority.
- Employment – the site will attract new businesses, and aim to encourage skilled people to the area while providing for local people.
- Buffer zones – members were pleased to see that resident's views had been heard in respect of buffer zones as commented on above.
- Stone Street – concern was raised in respect of traffic flow from Stone Street and it needs to be made clear that this is not the main access route to be used and signage must be clear.
- Mapping – members asked that any future settlement names are indicated on maps and plans they reflect the scale of the villages and towns.
- Affordable Housing – this will be fully compliant with planning policy.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/89.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

88. **Grounds Maintenance Management Solution - Potential Collaboration with Dover District Council**

The Grounds Maintenance Manager is leaving the Council at the end of April this year. Due to the Transformation Project the future shape of the Grounds Maintenance (GM) management team is uncertain. Report C/17/86 puts forward a temporary solution working with Dover District Council's Open Spaces Team to cover the management of SDC's grounds maintenance service through this interim period.

Andy Blaszkowicz, Head of Commercial and Technical Services said that during this temporary period there will be a salary saving of £26k. The management of the service will be undertaken by Dover, who will support line management, budget monitoring and other tasks associated with the role as detailed in the report. Some other tasks that need to be undertaken will be spread across the service area. This arrangement will be constantly reviewed throughout the 6 month period.

Standards to Shepway residents will not drop and if, at any time they do then the arrangement will be reviewed.

Once the 6 months are up and the new structures are clear under the transformation process the management of the service area will be reviewed.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

Resolved: To support the recommendations in Report C/17/86.

(Voting: For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

89. **Princes Parade Pay and Display Parking**

Report C/17/94 summarises the actions taken by officers following the Cabinet Member decision to proceed with the scheme. It notes public concern over the positioning of the parking machines and considers options and external health and safety advice to mitigate and minimise any potential risk.

Andy Blaszkowicz, Head of Commercial and Technical Services presented the report informing members that following public concern over the location of the parking meters, officers have looked at the perceived risks and options and have recommended option 3 in the report to relocate the meters to the south side promenade.

If this is approved at Cabinet on 28 March then works will take approximately 3 weeks to complete and the scheme can open on 1st May.

The meters will be protected with perspex shrouds which should help to maintain them against sea spray/salt and weather. Officers are confident that this will be a sufficient form of protection.

Proposed by Councillor Michael Lyons
Seconded by Councillor Rodica Wheeler and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/94.

(Voting: For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

90. **General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring - 4th Quarter 2017/18**

Report C/17/91 provides a projection of the end of year financial position of the General Fund revenue budget, based on expenditure to the 31 January 2018.

Charlotte Spendley, Head of Finance presented members with the report informing that a net saving of £90k was projected and noted the summary of variances shown at 2.3 in the report and the reasons for these shown at 2.4 onwards.

Members asked why the delay with implementing Universal Credit had a financial impact and were informed that it was due to a higher than budgeted number of residents remaining eligible for Housing Benefit.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Russell Tillson and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/91.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

91. **General Fund Capital Programme Budget Monitoring - 4th Quarter 2017/18**

Report C/17/87 provides a projection of the latest financial position for the 2017/18 General Fund capital programme, based on expenditure to 28 February 2018. The report identifies projected variances to the approved capital programme to 31 March 2018 including slippage on schemes from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

Lee Walker, Group Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management highlighted the position across the service units as shown in 2.1 in the report, together with the variances at 2.2.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Ship Street site - why had the Council had been unsuccessful in its bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund and what this now means for the site.

Mr Walker did not fully know the reasons for the failure and would respond following the meeting. Although the scheme as it stands cannot go forward it is hoped that an option would be found in due course.

- Beach Maintenance – members were informed that the Hythe scheme had been delayed and would take place after Easter and is part of the twice yearly planned works.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/87.

(Voting: For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

92. **Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring 2017/18- 4th Quarter**

Report C/17/88 provides a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and HRA capital programme based on net expenditure to 31 January 2018.

Charlotte Spendley, Head of Finance presented the report highlighting the variances as shown at 2.2 and the reasons for the projected underspend at 3.2. It was noted that some works including new builds had been deferred but the overall programme has not changed.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/88.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

93. **Future funding for The Quarterhouse**

Report C/17/84 presents the case for the continuation of funding for The Quarterhouse (QH) in Folkestone, following the end of the five year funding agreement on 31 March 2018 whereby SDC provided £25,000 per annum.

Jyotsna Leney, Community Services Manager informed members that KCC has agreed to continue their funding and Cabinet, at its meeting on 28 March, are asked to continue SDC's funding for a further 3 years.

The venue is on the East side of Folkestone and has regular events which helps towards the local economy and is very well supported.

Most members agreed that the support should continue, as not only is the venue used for events but it offers a number of free use days and numerous school educational trips.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Ian Meyers and

Resolved: To support the recommendations in Report C/17/84.

(Voting: For 9; Against 1; Abstentions 0)
Councillor Mrs Mary Lawes recorded her vote Against.

94. **WW1 Centenary Memorial Fund**

Report C/17/90 sets out a proposal for a World War One Centenary Memorial Fund in 2018. Funding of £50,000 to support this grant scheme has been identified in the 2018/19 budget.

Jyotsna Leney, Community Services Manager informed that if Cabinet agree the recommendations at its meeting on 28 March then funding of £50,000 would be available for local community groups and others to apply to hold activities and events reflecting the First World War.

Each grant application can be in the region of £500 to £10,000, with those over £10,000 being assessed on merit.

Parish Councils have already been informed and if agreed at Cabinet details will be widely promoted.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler.

Seconded by Councillor Michael Lyons and

Resolved: To receive and note Report C/17/90.

(Voting: For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

95. **Oportunitas Progress Report and Business Plan 2018/19**

This report provides an update from the Board of Oportunitas Ltd (“the company”) covering activities undertaken in 2017/18 which includes a financial statement in-line with the requirement contained in the Shareholder’s Agreement between the company and the Council. It also proposes a Business Plan for the period 2018/19.

Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey presented members with an update from the Board informing that they have now invested in 1 commercial unit, 29 residential and that a further 12 units are being looked at.

She informed that further works had been done to improve promotion and quoting of works and a new website has been developed to reflect the changes, this will go live in April.

Members were informed that the Board’s ethos was to employ local firms to do the works.

Proposed by Councillor Russell Tillson
Seconded by Councillor Clive Goddard and

Resolved: To receive and note the report.

(Voting: For 10; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

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