

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 13 February 2014

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 6.30 - 7.35 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), W Breare-Hall, Ms S Stavrou, Mrs E Webster and C Whitbread

Other Councillors: Councillors K Angold-Stephens, L Girling, Ms J Hart and D Stallan

Apologies: Councillor R Bassett

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), A Hall (Director of Housing), C Pasterfield (Chief Estates & Valuation Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Assistant), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and P Tredgett (Information Assistant)

17. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor W Breare-Hall declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council and a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor C Whitbread declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. THE BROADWAY, LOUGHTON PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Housing was invited to present a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the progress of developments at The Broadway, Loughton. He explained that The Broadway developments were split into two categories, sites under and not under Council control.

Sites not under Council control

(a) Site 1 – Sir Winston Churchill Public House

At the Cabinet meeting on 9 September 2013 the proposed Heads of Terms were agreed for a Development Agreement between the District Council as the freeholder and the developer for the site.

On 11 December 2013 at the District Development Control Committee, planning permission was granted subject to S106 agreements being completed by the 31 March 2014. The legal documents, drafted by EFDC Legal Department have now been sent to the Solicitors, Sharpe Pritchard who were appointed as the Council's external solicitors and the Council's Legal Department were awaiting their comments.

(b) Site 2 – Sainsbury Supermarket, Shopping Precinct and BP Petrol Station

The Sainsbury's store was now closed as works were currently underway to make improvements to the store, which would include the demolition of the parade of vacant shops to the front of the store, to make way for additional parking. The store is due to re-open Spring 2014.

BP, who own the petrol station, indicated that they would like to renew their lease and the terms of a new lease were currently being negotiated by the Council's agents.

The Director of Housing advised that Alison Mitchell, Assistant Director, Legal put in a lot of work in a short period of time, into this legal agreement and it was completed before Christmas. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Ms Mitchell for her work.

(c) Sites 3 and 8 – Debden Station and Station Car Park

The site was owned by Transport for London (TFL). The adopted Design Brief for The Broadway included proposals for re-developing the area around Debden Station. TFL's initial proposals for the re-development of Debden Station and the Car Park had been presented to the Council in March 2012. Since that meeting, further contact with TFL had been hard to establish; it was understood that their Project Manager had left the organisation. The Director of Planning and Economic Development had recently written to TFL to try and establish what the current position was.

Sites under Council control

(a) Site 4 – Vere Road (North)

This site comprises 36 council garages that were difficult-to-let with high void rates and no waiting list. The site would seek to fulfil two functions:

- (i) that it would provide additional parking as part of the Sir Winston Churchill development; and
- (ii) that it would provide some affordable housing and discussions were on-going with Moat Housing about what could be provided and what payment could be made to the Council for the site. These discussions were at an early stage; the Director of Housing advised that he had a meeting scheduled with Moat Housing on the 14 February 2014 to discuss the options further.

(b) Site 4 – Vere Road (South)

This site comprised of surface car parking and 42 garages in two separate blocks. In September 2012 a Design Brief was proposed for a mews style development.

The Design Brief had proposed a mews style development. However, since the Design Brief the proposal for mews houses with underground parking, that would not be associated with the housing above, was no longer thought to be appropriate. The Committee had previously considered this issue and had agreed in principle to considering a scheme whereby one area of land for parking would provide parking and a separate area would provide housing; the size of the two areas had yet to be determined.

(c) Site 6 and 7 – Burton Road (South) and Burton Road (East)

Sites 6 and 7 were comprised of a former Council depot plus two large garage blocks and a large grassed area. As set out in the Design Brief, it was proposed that these sites become mainly residential accommodation. The Director of Housing had been having lengthy discussions with a representative for the Bishop of Barking exploring the possibility of some land in Burton Road being conveyed to the Church, to provide a small Church with a community facility in return for Church land elsewhere in Loughton which the Council could develop as affordable housing.

The Director of Housing advised, however, that following further discussions between the Anglican Parish of Loughton and the Methodist Church in Loughton (which had a Local Ecumenical Partnership), the Partnership had been unable to agree amongst its membership to such a proposal. Therefore, this option was no longer being pursued by the Council or the Church.

At the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee (CHBCC) on 4 February 2014 it had originally been proposed that 25 affordable rented homes could be provided on part of the site, which could become Year 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme. It was established at the meeting that 6 more homes could be provided on the land that would have been transferred to the Church and it had also identified that there was another area of land in the Council's ownership where 2 more homes could be provided.

The view of the CHBCC was that this was an appropriate site for affordable housing. The Cabinet Committee agreed that Officers should go forward and submit a planning application for residential accommodation on the land, although the combined land should now be looked at further to seek to increase the number of homes on the land. The Director reported that he was currently in discussions with the Council's Development Agent, East Thames, to see how the number of properties could be increased. A further report would be submitted to the CHBCC in the near future.

(d) Site 5 – Burton Road (North), Rear of shops

At its meeting in September 2012, the North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Cabinet Committee agreed that the land should be retained in the Council's ownership pending an upturn in the commercial market for consideration of its future use at a later date.

RESOLVED:

That this report was for noting.

21. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP REPORT**(1) Langston Road Retail Park**

The number of legal and project team meetings were becoming more frequent. The Council and the joint developer Polofind Limited had got to the point where a legal vehicle was required.

The Director of Finance and ICT would test to see if the legal vehicle was appropriate for the Council as the Council had different tax implications than private companies.

A report would be brought to this meeting in the future.

(2) Oakwood Hill Depot

The planning application had been withdrawn and further consultant reports were being prepared. The planning application would be re-submitted by the end of February 2014.

(3) Pyrles Lane Nursery

The Council had now completed the purchase of 79 Pyrles Lane, the property adjacent to the entrance of the site. A further planning application would be considered in the future for the development of this site.

(4) St John's Road

The agents for Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council and Epping Town Council had got together to examine the different proposals and they have recommended that there be a period of detailed negotiations with a mixed use developer. This would be proposed to members of each council to see if they wish to take that proposal forward.

(5) Waste Contractor's Depot

The Waste Contract negotiations were continuing and the final result would not be known until July 2014.

(6) North Weald Airfield

This had been examined as part of the Local Plan and was included within the Master Plan for North Weald. A meeting had been held with the Savills, the Consultants acting for the Council. Savills have produced a report with regard to the Council's land holdings which would be presented to Members in the future.

(7) Torrington Drive

The Director of Housing had presented a detailed report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the current situation.

(8) Winston Churchill Public House

Meetings were taking place with the developers solicitors with regards to drafting a legal development agreement.

(9) Broadway Car Parks/Burton Road Depot

The Director of Housing had presented a detailed report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the current situation.

(10) Lindsey House Epping

The lease had been surrendered back to the Council and a sum of £7,000 had been received in lieu of dilapidations.

(11) Town Mead Depot

At a recent meeting Waltham Abbey Town Council said that they would like to explore further the possibility of part of the depot to be included as a residential development. The proposal was not without difficulties as there were flooding issues. We are meeting with flood specialist consultants on Monday 17 February 2014 to discuss the likelihood of flooding to that area.

(12) Church Hill Former Car Park

Following a second round of final bids an offer had now been accepted. This was with Legal Services for completion.

(13) Leader Lodge

There was nothing further to report.

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring report on the development of the Council's property assets be noted.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration.

CHAIRMAN

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