

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 18 April 2019

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 - 7.20 pm

Members Present: Councillors A Grigg (Chairman), H Kane, S Kane, G Mohindra and C Whitbread

Other Councillors: None present

Officers Present: J Nolan (Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services)), J Chandler (Service Director (Community & Partnership Services)), J Houston (Strategic Partnership Specialist and Economic Lead) and J Leither (Democratic Services Officer)

28. 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.

29. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor C Whitbread substituted for Councillor N Avey.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor G Mohindra declared an interest in agenda item 7 Asset Management Development Projects – Progress Report, item 7, Hillhouse Development, by virtue of being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

31. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32. CHANGE OF ORDER

The Chairman advised the Cabinet Committee that she would like to change the order of the agenda and that Item 7, Asset Management Development Projects – Progress Report would be heard last on the Agenda in private session.

33. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor S Kane presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and stated that the report published was to update Members of the current projects. He stated that he would like to report on item 1. Economic Strategy and if Members had any questions he would take them after.

1. Economic Strategy

The Economic Strategy document is ready to go out for consultation. The document has been produced to encourage debate and discussion on how the Council can best support the developments of the local economy.

The Strategy puts forward proposals to deliver a long-term vision and plan to future proof out economic success and was looking for feedback from various stakeholders in the district and outside of the district.

Therefore, Members would you agree for this document to move forward.

The Chairman commented that it would be helpful for the photographs in the document to be identified, as it would help to identify where they were taken.

The Strategic Partnership Specialist and Economic Lead stated that there were a couple of photographs that they were awaiting permission to use and then it would be possible to caption all of the pictures.

The Chairman stated that she was very pleased with the presentation of the document and the fact that it was not very bulky and thought this would encourage people to read it more easily and therefore make comments.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Committee noted the current position of the Economic Development issues; and
- (2) That Members agreed for the Strategic Economy document to be circulated.

Reasons for Decision:

To appraise the Cabinet Committee on a number of projects, themes and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report was for information only, not action.

34. ST JOHN'S ROAD, EPPING - PROGRESS REPORT

The Service Director, Commercial and Regulatory presented a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the current progress on the St John's Road Development. He advised that following the decision to locate the new district Leisure Centre to the St John's Road site a report was made to Cabinet on 11 April 2019 which proposed a series of initial steps namely:

- that formal negotiations were entered into with Places Leisure to vary the Leisure Management Contract for the development of a new

Leisure Centre at the St John's Road Site, on a Design, Build, Operate and Manage basis;

- that in order to construct the new Leisure Centre in the optimum location on the site, that the District Council enter into formal discussions with Epping Town Council to acquire Epping Hall, to include the potential relocation of the Town Council to 323 House at the Civic Offices;
- that expressions of Interest were sought for suitable qualified Cinema operators to establish the viability of the conversion of the Centrepont Building;
- that the Council adopt a similar approach as utilised in the development of the Epping Forest Shopping Park, namely that a specialist project team be appointed to procure the construction and letting of the units on the site;
- that a future report be received on the most viable option to deliver the residential element of the project.

On the 21 March 2019 Members of the District Council met Members of the Town Council together with district officers and the Town Clerk. At that meeting the question of the relocation of the Town Council was discussed and that an in-principle decision to relocate (subject to terms) would be put to the Town Council Members on 9 April 2019.

The Town Council have now agreed in principle to relocate to 323 House at the Civic Offices, a letter had been received by the Chief Executive outlining some proposed terms which the Council were in the process of considering and would get back to the Town Council shortly.

In terms of the Cinema Operator the Council have had meetings with a particular cinema operator who have put a proposal forward to the Council but, this would go out by formal tender to invite all cinema operators to formally express their interests.

There had been some antisocial behaviour on the site and there were concerns regarding the power supply to the site, particularly children getting involved with live electrics. As of the 17 April all power supplies had now been terminated.

Councillor S Kane commented about cutting the power on the site and that this would disarm any CCTV on the site. The Strategic Director replied that there was no CCTV coverage on the St John's Road site and currently our security is provided by a mobile unit.

Councillor C Whitbread commented that he was glad to see that progress was being made on St John's site and a planning application would be coming forward soon and the site would then be made secure. This was a multimillion pound investment which would benefit the whole district and the Council must keep pushing ahead.

The Chairman commented that it was an excellent scheme and will be very popular with residents of Epping and the whole district. The protection of the historic buildings was also very important to the heritage of the district.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet Committee noted the current position of the St John's Road development project.

Reason for Decision:

To appraise the Cabinet Committee on the progress of the project.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report was for information only, not action.

35. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

36. COUNCILLOR A GRIGG

The Cabinet Committee noted that this was Councillor A Grigg's last meeting of the Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee, as she was standing down from her position as a District Councillor and Member of the Cabinet. Councillor S Kane expressed his thanks on behalf of the Cabinet Committee to Councillor Grigg for all her hard work and efforts over the years.

37. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</u>
7	Asset Management Development Projects – Progress Report	3

38. ASSET MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT

The Service Director, Commercial and Regulatory presented a report to the Cabinet Committee he advised that some of the items on this report were commercially sensitive. He had since taken advice from Democratic Services and going forward the report would not be in private session and if there was anything commercially sensitive, this would go on a separate report and be heard in private session.

1. Epping Forest Shopping Park

The Epping Forest Shopping Park was now fully let and trading. The Park was still proving extremely popular with customers. Following close to two years since the development was completed and the second winter of operation, it was envisaged

that the remaining financial retentions held would shortly be released to the various contractors. A Stage 4 Road Safety Audit was also due to be undertaken on the main carriageway.

2. Oakwood Hill Depot

All feasibility work on the relocation of the Housing Repairs Service to the site had now been largely completed. The planning application for the additional car parking had been withdrawn while mitigation measures asked for by Natural England were being agreed with respect to visitor pressures on the nearby Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

7. Hillhouse / Roundhills Developments

The new Leisure Centre at Hillhouse opened on 17 November 2018 and was achieving membership take up well beyond forecasts. The centre is now in its contractual six-month bedding in period.

The Roundhills Swimming Pool site had been physically secured pending redevelopment. Essex Housing were arranging demolition within the next few weeks.

Councillor S Kane was concerned with the increased traffic pressure and parking the success of the new Leisure Centre was having on the area and asked the Strategic Director if he could put pressure on Essex Highways to get a full review of the overspill.

The Strategic Director advised that he would contact Essex Highways to see where they were at with the review.

Councillor C Whitbread stated that he welcomed the approach to this report being in private and open session thereby protecting the commercially sensitive issues.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet Committee noted the current progress on the Council's Asset Management and Economic Development Projects.

Reason for Decision:

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's previous request to monitor the development of the Council's property assets on a regular basis.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report was for information only, not action.

CHAIRMAN

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