

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Jobs, Regeneration and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 19th October, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Weston (Vice-Chairman in the chair)

Councillors D Bebbington, S Brookfield, L Durham and B Roberts

Apologies

Councillors H Wells-Bradshaw and C Browne

8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Ainsley Arnold – Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder
Councillor Don Stockton – Regeneration and Assets

10 OFFICERS PRESENT

Julian Cobley – Head of Investment
John Willis - Inward Investment and Business Engagement Manager
Jo Wise - Principal Planner - Major Projects

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

13 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

14 MACCLESFIELD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

Jo Wise provided presentation on the latest position in connection with proposals for the redevelopment Macclesfield Town Centre.

A long standing redevelopment scheme started by the former Macclesfield Borough Council was abandoned in April of this year when the proposed anchor tenant Debenhams withdrew from the scheme.

The current proposal involved two potential sites at Churchill Way and Duke Street for a new leisure led proposal. A process regarding the potential development of these two sites was currently for which submissions had to be made by 2 November 2015. .

Jo explained that there had been considerable interest expressed from a variety of potential developers in respect of both sites but due to commercial confidentiality, the identity of the potential developers could not be divulged at this point in time.

There were arrangements in place to consult widely on the proposals and Jo described the make-up of a stakeholder panel comprising representatives of local business, banks, retailers, civic society, brewery, members of the public etc. which had been set up following the abandonment of the Silk Street proposals.

In addition to the two proposals outlined above, there were also 4 public realm initiatives at Sparrow Park, the Gas Road underpass, the Bus station and Lower Mill Street.

Members sought assurances about the land sale method that the Council was pursuing and questioned whether the Council could maintain control of the development to ensure completion through this method.

Jo explained that although there was less control through this mechanism there would be a number of covenants included within the legal agreements between the Council and developer to ensure that the development would be completed in a timely manner.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted

15 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Julian Cobley gave an update on the progress of the Council's Asset Management plan which was approved by Cabinet in May 2015.

The Council's portfolio of land and buildings was currently valued at approximately £500 million and included buildings such as the Council's headquarters at Westfields, investment buildings, farms, business hubs and various land holdings.

The plan provided an overview as to the Council's reason for retaining each asset, and included a programme for disposal of assets no longer required by the Council. This was achieved under a rolling programme which helped to support the Council's capital programme through the generation of capital receipts and in the long term, reduced the Council's overheads.

In addition, the Council also acquired assets, where strategic development opportunities were available such as the Royal arcade at Crewe which was purchased for £6 million twelve months ago.

The Council co-ordinated its activity with colleagues across the public sector including health providers, police and fire and was increasingly using shared assets where possible.

In respect of this committee's involvement in the process to Manage the Council's assets, Julian suggested that there was a role for the committee to review progress by utilising an existing performance framework which identified key performance indicators to review the action plans in respect of acquisitions and disposals to ensure that the Council was delivering against its strategic targets.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That Julian Cobley be requested to circulate a copy of the acquisition and disposal plan to all members of the committee as soon as possible to provide background information on the scale of the plan before the committee commits itself to adding a piece of work in its work programme;
- (b) That the Director of... be invited to provide a briefing to the committee in November on proposals for the redevelopment of Crewe town centre;
- (c) That the Director be requested to also provide a briefing on the proposed Skills and Enterprise ASDV at the November meeting;

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16 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Prosperity informing members of the Council's recent activity to support 'Cheshire East's top 100 Investors.' This report followed on from a report on the same matter considered by the Committee on the 19th of December 2014.

Cheshire East's Top 100 Investors were defined as those existing companies that 'had the most significant impact on the boroughs economic prosperity.'

Cheshire East's Top 100 was determined by the number of employees (at site), company function and activity, turnover and recent growth. The composition of the Top 100 was reviewed on an annual basis. The top 100 companies employed 23% of the work force in Cheshire East.

The business engagement team co-ordinated the council's relationship with the companies and provided a single point of contact for the companies. At the present time, the Council had an active relationship with 39 of the top 100 companies.

The Committee was informed that the business engagement team was keen to increase the number of active relationships the Council had and was interested in exploring the possibilities of greater Member involvement in that process.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That John Willis be invited back to the committee in 6 months' time to update the Committee with a further progress report to enable Members to assess how successful the new initiatives have been to improve the council's business engagement with the top 100 companies.

17 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED – That a presentation be provided on EON

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.50 pm

Councillor (none)