

ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillor Howells(Chairperson)
Councillors Henshaw, Gordon, Gavin Hill-John, Robson and Stubbs

31 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Lay and Parkhill.

32 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

33 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

34 : JAMES STREET, MERCHANT PLACE AND CORY'S BUILDING REGENERATION

The Chairperson advised Members that this item was to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of a report to Cabinet that seeks Cabinet authority to dispose of buildings on Merchant Place and Cory's Building as well as appropriate council-owned land to the Housing Revenue Account.

The scope of the scrutiny today was to examine the proposals, how they fit with the Council's aim to deliver high quality, mixed-use developments and improve the Royal Stuart and Douglas workshops, the financial implications for the Council including the impact on the Housing Revenue Account, whether there are any risks to the Council, and how the timelines for delivery fit with the wider Atlantic Wharf timescales, particularly the Indoor Arena. Any comments, observations and recommendations would be sent to the Cabinet ahead of Thursday's meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Goodway– Cabinet Member for Investment & Development; Neil Hanratty – Director of Economic Development; Chris Barnett – Operational Manager – Major Projects and Eirian Jones – Principal Surveyor to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Officers to provide their presentation on the open part of the item after which he invited questions and comments from Members;

Members referred to the soft marketing exercise which was a joint exercise for both sites. Members noted that they had not seen this approach previously and asked what the thoughts were behind it. Officers advised that soft market testing was undertaken as a joint exercise on both sites but it had been made clear that any proposals should not be linked, there was no commitment in a soft market exercise. Officers added that while the exercise was taking place, the Council's Housing team

were undertaking a feasibility study on the James Street site and it had been considered viable for them and they asked that it be appropriated into the HRA.

Members were pleased to see these sites being developed after being unused for such a long time but noted that both sites were surrounded by busy roads. Members asked about the access particularly in relation to the Merchant Place/Cory Buildings. Officers advised that Dukes College mainly catered for International Students aged 17+years old, most of whom would live on site as some accommodation was being built into the development; others may live on Pierhead Street. The entrance to the college would be through Merchants Place on James Street.

The Chairperson invited Officers to provide their presentation on the Confidential information and Members were reminded that Committee are required to consider this in a closed session to discuss information deemed exempt, in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED: to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

35 : REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members were advised that in relation to future scrutiny of the RLDP, Environmental Scrutiny Cttee would lead on a Task and Finish Group looking at the strategic options of the RLDP and the Environment Chair had invited a representative from each Scrutiny Committee to sit on the group. The Terms of Reference were currently being drawn up but it was likely that the meetings would run from November to February over three meetings. Expressions of interest were sought, initial interests were received from Cllrs Howells and Robson.

36 : CORRESPONDENCE

Members were advised that all correspondence was up to date apart from a response from Cllr Wild to the joint letter from all five Scrutiny Chairs on the RLDP.

37 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

38 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING-16 NOVEMBER 4.30PM

The meeting terminated at 4.15 pm