

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd April, 2019 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr A.R. Newell (Chairman)
Cllr Sophia Choudhary (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Marina Munro (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr P.F. Rust
Cllr J.E. Woolley

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr R.L.G. Dibbs and Cllr Mara Makunura.

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January, 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman. The Chairman reported that in response to the action from the January meeting, relating to the views of the Friends of Aldershot Lido being considered by the Leisure Facilities and Contracts Task and Finish Group, it was agreed that Cllr A.H. Crawford would be invited to attend the Task and Finish Group when the Aldershot Pools Complex was being discussed.

26. ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The Board considered the Head of Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH1923 which provided an update on the developments in Aldershot and identified the key elements that would be addressed in the Aldershot Town Centre Strategy. The Aldershot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document had been published in early 2016 and identified key sites which were important in the regeneration of Aldershot. The Council had since been proactive in buying a number of key properties to move the regeneration forward. Work had also been carried out to bring forward a number of other sites. Projects were expected to move forward significantly during 2019 with consultation and submission of planning applications expected for the Galleries and Union Street East. The Aldershot Town Hall building works were due to commence shortly with the opening of the Digital Games Development Hub expected in the second half of 2019. A transitional plan had been drafted which would be used to direct the short-medium term activity to sustain the Town Centre during the redevelopment work.

Work had been carried out to identify the key challenges for Aldershot and how best to sustain the town centre. It was identified that there needed to be a strategic approach to diversify uses within the centre beyond the traditional retail base. Opportunities to increase footfall through utilising the Town's heritage and focussed leisure and tourism were also identified. In order to respond to the challenges identified, the Council had submitted an Expression of Interest for Future High Street Funding.

The Report highlighted the governance and engagement issues relating to the development of the Aldershot Town Centre Strategy. An Aldershot Taskforce had been established to shape the Strategy and help enable consultation with the wider Aldershot residents and stakeholders. The types of engagement proposed included regular meetings with existing town centre businesses and views of residents being sought through meetings and social media. A wider programme of engagement would be developed by the Regenerating Rushmoor Team.

The Board discussed the Report and provided their views on the proposed focus of the Aldershot Town Centre Strategy and approach to governance and engagement. The Board agreed that there was a need to diversify uses in the town to make it more viable and attract visitors. It was agreed that residents needed to be kept informed with clear explanations provided on what was being proposed. The Board supported the suggested focus for the Aldershot Town Centre Strategy.

27. CONSERVATION AREA REVIEWS

The Board considered the Head of Economy, Planning & Strategic Housing's Report No. EPSH1924 which set out a proposal for a programme of appraisals for the eight designated Conservation Areas in the Borough. Work on the review and appraisal of six of the Conservation Areas had started in 2005 but the work had not been completed. There was a need to complete the work to assist in the determination of planning applications. Historic England had recently published detailed guidance on carrying out conservation area appraisals which recognised that change was inevitable and set out ways in which it could be managed to conserve and enhance historic areas. The guidance emphasised that the focus should be on buildings that positively enhanced the conservation area and that elements that do not should be removed. This was likely to be applicable to parts of Rushmoor's Conservation Areas and there could well be recommendations to remove parts of the Conservation Areas.

A 'pilot' appraisal had been carried out on Cargate Avenue to establish the level of resourcing required. The options available to carry out the appraisals was to either employ external consultants or take a more bespoke approach. It was proposed that an initial scoping review should be carried out of all the designated Conservation Areas to establish whether certain parts should be added or removed or whether some Conservation Areas should be de-designated. A priority list could then be drawn up to establish which areas should be considered first. Once a priority list had been produced a character appraisal would be carried out. It was suggested that a maximum of two character appraisals could be undertaken per year 'in house'. The scoping exercise would provide further detail on the resources needed to complete

the programme and whether a balance between in-house and external resources was required.

The Strategic Housing and Local Plan Group had discussed the proposal and following discussion with the Board, the proposed approach for a scoping review would be reported to Cabinet in May. The Board discussed the Report and agreed with the proposal to prepare a scoping report as recommended.

28. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Board considered the Head of Regeneration and Property's Report No. RP1907 which reported on the high-level Asset Management Plan (AMP) and set out the context and issues to be addressed in order to manage the Council's assets. Cllr M.J. Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder, joined the meeting for the AMP item.

A new Property and Estates Manager had been appointed and would lead on the AMP work. The development of the AMP highlighted that there were a number of areas of work that needed to be addressed. It was proposed that the priority areas of work should include:

- A review of the acquisition process;
- A review of the investment portfolio;
- A review of the rent arrears process;
- An audit of property ownership; and,
- Procurement of an asset management system to digitise records in one place.

The Board was asked to consider any other areas of asset management work that needed to be prioritised. The Board discussed the AMP and agreed it provided a good framework complemented the priorities proposed.

29. FARNBOROUGH CIVIC QUARTER

The Board considered the Executive Director's Report No. ED1905 which presented the draft findings from the public engagement carried out around the Civic Quarter site. The Board also received a copy of the draft Masterplan briefing document. The public engagement exercise had resulted in 600 responses with additional responses received regarding the skate park. There had also been over 70 people that participated in the vision workshops. As part of the engagement, participants had been invited to join a residents group and an initial meeting of a 'Heart of Farnborough' residents group had been held on 6th March with 34 attendees.

The initial observations from the public engagement showed that there was a good alignment between the opportunities for improvement identified at the vision workshop and the public consultation. There was also some alignment with the Regeneration Programme vision for Farnborough. However, there were also a number of competing preferences. The Board would need to consider the wider policy context and balance the public desires against the regeneration aims.

The Board discussed the draft findings from the engagement work. It was suggested that the site should be renamed as Civic Quarter would lead residents to think it related to another local authority building. It was suggested there should be links to aerospace and high-tech business. The need for the site to complement the existing town centre was highlighted with improved access from the business park area to the town centre.

The next stage in the regeneration of the Civic Quarter was the preparation of the Masterplan. The work would commence in April and progress would be reported back to the Board in the Summer.

30. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board **NOTED** the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CLLR A.R. NEWELL (CHAIRMAN)
