



Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 24 May 2022 at 18:00

PRESENT:-

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, Jeal, Smith, Wainwright, B Walker, Wells, Williamson & T Wright.

Councillor Hanton attended as a substitute for Councillor P Hammond.

Councillor Candon attended as a substitute for Councillor Plant.

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Mr L Webster (Executive Officer, Equinox), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mr J Wedon (Senior Performance & Data Protection Officer), Ms C Ingram (Communications & Media Officer), Mr M Brett (IT Support) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Officer).

Councillor Plant (Chairman of Equinox Enterprises Ltd & Equinox Property Holdings).

Mr C Kitchen (City Fibre).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Hammond. Councillor Hanton attended as a substitute for Councillor P Hammond.

Councillor Candon attended as a substitute for Councillor Plant. The Chairman reported that His Worship, The Mayor, Councillor Plant had been incorrectly assigned to the Committee but that he would be replaced by Councillor Candon and this change would be ratified at the next Council meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Wells & Williamson declared a personal interest in item number 9 as they both served on the GYPT Board.

Councillor Candon declared a personal interest as he had dealt with Mr Kitchen, City Fibre, as part of his employment.

However, in line with the Council's Constitution, they were allowed to both speak and vote on the items.

3 PRESENTATION BY CITY FIBRE

Charles Kitchen, City Fibre, gave a presentation to the Committee. A copy of the presentation slides would be sent to all members for information following the meeting.

The Chairman asked whether City Fibre would take on local apprentices. Mr Kitchen informed the meeting that City Fibre had taken part in the Kickstart initiative and would take on its own apprentices.

Councillor Wells highlighted the difference in broadband speeds available to the northern and southern parishes and that it would be in the borough's best interests to roll this upgrade out as quickly as possible.

Councillor Grant remarked that Virgin Media had dug the majority of pavements up three years ago to install their infrastructure and he wondered whether City Fibre could piggy back on this. Mr Kitchen informed the Committee that City Fibre could use BT Open Reach infrastructure but would install their own.

Councillor Jeal asked how long the programme would take from start to finish. Mr Kitchen reported that 30,000 homes would be connected to faster broadband in 2 years.

Councillor Wainwright asked if local contractors would be used wherever possible to create employment for the borough. Mr Kitchen reported that it was highly likely that the workforce currently working in Lowestoft would move to Great Yarmouth.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor reported that she lived in a new build property which had a box outside. Mr Kitchen reported that City Fibre would be able to connect to this existing duct.

Councillor P Carpenter stressed that communication would be the key linchpin to the success of this initiative, especially the use of social media channels.

Mr Kitchen reported that City Fibre did not sell broadband packages to the public, they just installed the infrastructure.

The Chairman thanked Mr Kitchen for his informative presentation.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were confirmed.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

6 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Senior Performance & Data Protection Officer.

The Senior Performance & Data Protection Officer gave an update on the Council's annual performance for the financial year 2021/22. The report was broken down into two sections;

Progress of key projects as at Quarter 4 2021/22 (Appendix 1) and Annual performance report of key performance measures 2021/22 (Appendix 2).

Councillor Wainwright asked for clarification on HN02. The Chairman informed him that there would be a Member Briefing on Thursday which would cover this query.

Councillor Williamson asked for clarification regarding PR10 as he assumed that this statistic had been affected by the pandemic. The Senior Performance & Data Protection Officer explained that a spike had been forecast as staff were brought back into the office and ailments such as colds and flu and stomach bugs had circulated amongst staff, however, this was a national trend and the target was in line with DWP.

Councillor Jeal reported that he was concerned as there had not been a meeting of the Middlegate Regeneration Member Working Group since the pandemic had struck. The Chairman reported that a meeting of the Working Group had been arranged for September 2022.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee review and approve the Annual Performance report for 2021/22; and

agree that all key projects will continue to be monitored over the financial year with

the aim of maintaining a green status (on target) and where possible attaining a green status for those key projects which are currently amber.

7 NEW LOCAL PLAN – REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ‘CALL FOR SITES’

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Planning Manager.

The Strategic Planning Manager recommended the adoption of a revised Local Development Scheme which sets out the content of Local Plan documents and timescales for preparation. The report also recommended the adoption of a new Statement of Community Involvement to support the new Local Plan. Finally, the report recommended issuing a call for sites to help inform the new Local Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) Adopt the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix 1)
- (ii) Adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 2); and
- (iii) Approve commencement of a ‘call for sites’ to inform the new Local Plan.

8 TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 5 - RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE REPURPOSING OF THREE VACANT HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The Committee received and considered the report from the Project Manager.

The Strategic Director reported that at the Town Deal Board on the 16 March 2022, nine Investment Priorities were agreed for submission to Government constituting a Town Investment Plan totalling £20.1 million including Intervention 5: Restoration and sustainable repurposing of three vacant historic buildings.

This report sets out the proposal to grant fund the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust (GYPT), as the Council's delivery partner of Intervention 5, to undertake the redevelopment of the three historic buildings as part of the Town Deal programme; namely: (i) St. John's Church (ii) the North West Tower and (iii) 160 King Street.

The Strategic Director reported that there had been a change to the recommendation and that the Committee could resolve to agree the funding and this did not have to go to Full Council.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) Agree the release of £626,000 Town Deal funding subject to compliance with funding conditions and the parameters set out in this report.

(ii) Resolve (subject to Council's agreement to the release of funds) to grant the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust £626,000 to re-purpose St. John's Church, the North West Tower and 160 King Street into visitor accommodation as set out in the report and deliver the outcomes contained in the Strategic Business Case, subject to Government confirming their acceptance of the Full Business Case Summary Documents submitted for inspection on 24 March 2022; and

(iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director to agree and sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Council with Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust.

9 TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 6 - RESTORATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE HISTORIC ICE HOUSE AS A NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARTS AND CIRCUS

The Committee received and considered the report from the Project Manager.

The Strategic Director reported that at the Town Deal Board on the 16 March 2022, nine Investment Priorities were agreed for submission to Government constituting a Town Investment Plan totalling £20.1 million including Intervention 6 which is the restoration and adaptation of the historic Ice House in Great Yarmouth as a performance venue and National Centre for Arts and Circus.

The report sets out the proposal to grant fund Out There Arts as the Council's delivery partner of Intervention 6, to undertake the redevelopment of the Ice House building and convert it into a public performance venue and training space.

The Strategic Director reported that there had been a change to the recommendation and that the Committee could resolve to agree the funding and this did not have to go to Full Council.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

(i) Agree the release of £500,000 comprising £450,000 Town Deal funding and £50,000 Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Business Rates Pool allocation subject to compliance with funding conditions and the parameters set out in this Report.

(ii) Resolve (subject to Council's agreement to the release of funds) to grant Out There Arts (SeaChange Trust) £500,000 to re-purpose the Ice House as a performance venue and National Centre for Outdoor Arts & Circus as set out in the Report and deliver the associated outcomes, subject to Government confirming their acceptance of the Full Business Case Summary Documents submitted for inspection on 24 March 2022; and

(iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director to agree and sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Council with Out There Arts (SeaChange Trust).

10 HERITAGE CENTRE PROJECT - GRANT FUNDING

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Chief Executive Officer outlined to Members a proposal to deliver a Heritage Centre and residential units in the former Greenwoods building in the Town Centre, owned by Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, by grant funding monies allocated as part of the Council's Future High Streets Fund award.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee grant fund Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust £232,229 to convert the Greenwoods building into a Heritage Centre and residential units from the Council's Future High Streets Fund award, subject to the award funding conditions and other conditions referred to in this report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

13 CONFIDENTIAL - EQUINOX PROPERTY HOLDINGS LIMITED - SHAREHOLDER'S REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN (2ND EDITION) (Confidential Minute on this Item)

14 EQUINOX PROPERTY HOLDINGS - FINANCING

The Committee received and considered the report from the Finance Director.

The Finance Director provided an update to Members on the current financing provided to the wholly owned company trading as Equinox Property Holdings Limited (EPH) and made recommendations for an increased level of loan financing for the company in order to fulfil EPH's Business Plan.

Councillor Grant reported that he fully supported the recommendation but questioned whether £4m was enough funding and asked that if he was to make an amendment to the proposition that up to £10m funding be made available; what would the views of the officers be.

The Finance Director reported that up to £4m should be sufficient at this time, as it is in line with the Council's Investment Strategy, and the Council could monitor the situation and EPH could always come back for more funding if required.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee :-

(i) Recommend to Council approval of the financing for Equinox Property Holdings of £4m, from a £3m loan facility and £1m initial share capital and that this be included in the updated capital programme; and

(ii) Delegate the draw down of the financing facility to the S151 Officer.

- 15 CONFIDENTIAL MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS DELIVERY REPORT**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)
- 16 CONFIDENTIAL - SALE OF SITE 24 BEACON PARK**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)
- 17 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)
- 18 CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX - TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 5 -
RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE REPURPOSING OF THREE VACANT
HISTORIC BUILDINGS**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)
- 19 CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX - TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 6 - RE-
PURPOSING OF THE ICE HOUSE**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)
- 20 CONFIDENTIAL - APPENDIX 1 - HERITAGE CENTRE PROJECT - GRANT
FUNDING**
(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:00