

Economic Development Committee

Minutes

Monday, 11 September 2017 at 18:30

Present :

Councillor Hammond (in the Chair); Councillors Grant, K Grey, Hanton, Jeal, Pratt, Reynolds, Stenhouse, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch and Walker

Councillor Plant attended as substitute for Councillor B Coleman

Also in attendance :-

Mrs S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer) Mrs K Watts (Strategic Director), Ms K Sly (Finance Director) and Mr D Helsdon (Tourism Events Project Manager) and Mrs S Wintle (Senior Member Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Coleman.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hammond declared his Personal Interest in both items 6 and 7.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 July 2017 were confirmed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and noted the contents within the Forward Plan for the Economic Development Committee. The Strategic Director advised the Committee that an item entitled Annual Market Place Policy would be brought to the next meeting of the Economic Development Committee.

Councillor Wainwright sought clarification in relation to the following items :-

- Beacon Park Delegations - The Finance Director advised that these would be discussed at a future Economic Development Committee
- Harfreys Activity Hoarding

6 TOWN CENTRE RESERVE - FUNDING REQUEST

The Committee received and considered the Strategic Director's report which recommended to the Committee the allocation of £25,000 from the Town Centre Initiative Reserve to support the procurement process for an architect and design team to progress proposals for the Marketplace redevelopment, as identified in the Town Centre Masterplan, and to commission studies in relation to the site such as Topographical Survey, Underground Services / Public Utilities, Protected Species and Contamination. The Committee were also asked to allocate a maximum of £44,081 to complete a development brief in relation to King Street / Regent Street leisure based anchor as also identified within the Town Centre Masterplan.

The Strategic Director reported that an application for 50% match funding had been submitted as part of a Norfolk Business rates pool and if successful the funding request of £44,081 would be reduced to £22,040.

RESOLVED :

(1) That the Committee agree to the allocation of £25,000 from the Town Centre Initiative Reserve.

(2) That the Committee agree to allocate a maximum of £44,081 to complete a development brief in relation to the King Street / Regent Street leisure based

anchor also identified within the Town Centre Masterplan.

7 ICE RINK INSTALLATION FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2017-18

The Committee received and considered the Strategic Director's report which provided Members with an overview of both the costs for the hire of a ice rink and also the costs for the purchase of a rink.

The Strategic Director reminded Members that the Economic Development Committee at it's meeting on the 7 July 2017 had asked Officers to look at the financial costings for both the purchase and hire of an Ice Rink.

Members were advised that it was clear that the installation of an Ice Rink in the Town Centre in 2015 had provided the headline statement it was intended for and footfall figures had shown an increase in the number of people visiting the Town Centre. However the rink had come at a significant cost and Officer resource.

Members attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which detailed the financial business case, costs and income for the provision of the Ice Rink for both hire and purchase over a five year period.

The Strategic Director advised that a procurement process in respect of the Ice Rink had already commenced and would be finalised on the 2 October 2017, she reported that there would be a need to hold a special meeting of the Council to enable a finalisation of the Business Case should Members be minded to make a recommendation to Council, she stated that if Members were of the decision that no further action be taken then the procurement process would be stopped.

In debating the report the following matters were discussed:-

- Councillor Thirtle that in his opinion option 2 of purchasing the rink seemed most beneficial, however he stated that he felt there was further detailed work required in respect of the figures tabled in Appendix 1.
- Councillor Wainwright raised his concerns in relation to the proposals, he made reference to a survey that Councillor Walch had undertaken of the Market Traders which had shown that no financial gain had been seen whilst the ice rink was in situe in 2015. He stated that in his opinion there had been a lot of assumptions made in relation to figures shown within Appendix 1.
- Councillor Jeal expressed concern in relation to the proposed price increase for tickets should the proposal be approved, he stated that he it was unfair on residents who would be unable to afford to purchase tickets.
- Clarification was sought in relation to sponsorship, the Strategic Director reported that discussions had been undertaken with the previous 2015

sponsors, but to date there had been no formal agreements signed.

- Councillor Walch asked in relation to diesel, equipment and repairs costings, he was advised that these costs had been taken into consideration and were detailed on Appendix 1 as Site Logistics.
- Councillor Plant expressed his support for the proposals to purchase an ice rink for the Town Centre, however also highlighted a number of issues in relation to the costings and agreed that further work was required to finalise costings as he felt the estimated costs could be reduced considerably. He suggested the opportunity of alternative traders being invited to trade on the market during the event such as a hot chestnut stall or goods that could be sold of an evening. The Strategic Director provided clarification as to a number of the issues in relation to constings.
- Councillor Reynolds also expressed his support in respect of the proposals and stated that in his opinion the proposals to purchase or hire an ice rink although at cost to the Council was a positive investment for the Town Centre.
- Clarification was sought in relation to whether a tendering process had been undertaken, the Strategic Director advised that a tendering process had not been undertaken following the succesful procurement of a contractor in 2015, this contractor would be undertaking costings work and if succesful a finalised business plan with actul costings would be taken to Council.
- Councillor Walker asked whether free parking in the Town Centre would be offered during the event, The Strategic Director confirmed that this had not been considered as part of the proposal. Councillor Walker raised concern in respect of the amount it had cost ratepayers within the Borough during the 2015 event.

RESOLVED :

That Council be recommended to purchase an ice rink, and to consider the options for purchase as detailed within the Strategic Director's report, and that the Business Case be revised following the outcome of the procurement exercise including a review of some of the assumptions detailed within the report.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business determined by the Chairman of the meeting as being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

The meeting ended at: 20:30