

CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration & Economic Development, Councillor Donna Jones, at the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 July 2016 at 9.30 am in Conference Room A - Civic Offices

Present

Councillor Donna Jones (in the chair)

Councillor Ben Dowling
Councillor Colin Galloway

11. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Donna Jones, Leader of the Council with responsibilities for PRED welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Chowdhury.

12. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

13. Victoria Park Action Plan (AI 3)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Assistant Director of Culture and City Development introduced the report stating that it was a framework/guidance document not a hard and fast plan. The Action Plan was being brought to PRED as Victoria Park is seen as an important part of the city. The document would form part of a larger plan going forward which would go to the full Cabinet with recommendations.

Written representations had been received from Janice Burkinshaw and Martin Chalk. Deputation requests had been made by Ms Hilary Reed, Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson and Councillor Lee Hunt.

Ms Hilary Reed made her deputation which included the following points;

- A request that the item be withdrawn
- An assertion that the Equality Impact Assessment was defective and non-compliant

- That community involvement and consultation should be carried out before any decision was taken
- Requested an explanation of why this had been separated from the Public Realm Strategy.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson made his deputation which included the following points:

- that the item should not be decided today so that consultation could take place as happened for the Seafront Strategy
- Failing that, he requested that the paragraph entitled Project Description on page 13 of the report and the paragraph headed "Aviary Removal/Band stand Facility" be deleted
- That Art & Soul Traders be offered a renewal of their lease.

Councillor Lee Hunt made his deputation which included the following points:

- He supported all the points made by Councillor Vernon-Jackson.
- He said it would be helpful if the letter sent to Mr Lewis was withdrawn
- He suggested that perhaps students could help with the consultation as they had with the Seafront Strategy
- He thought the paper was premature and hoped it would be withdrawn

Councillor Donna Jones thanked those making deputations and invited questions from opposition spokespersons.

In response to a query about why the original Equality Impact Assessment had been withdrawn, the Assistant Director of Culture and City Development said that because this was a guidance/framework document, it was not possible to assess the impact. If this was taken forward today, the next step would be to seek authority from Cabinet to go out for public consultation - usually 6-8 weeks. The process would be similar to that used for Supplementary Planning Documents and once the results of the consultation were known, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) would be done at that stage.

The legal adviser, Mr Robert Parkin, said that although the Council has a public sector equality duty, he explained that the law does not require an EIA on every occasion. The decision today is to adopt a framework so there are no consequences yet that would enable an EIA to be carried out at this stage. The original EIA distributed with the papers had therefore been withdrawn. The Assistant Director of Culture and City Development said that the document was intended to set out ideas that would help developers in the future.

Councillor Jones said that she recognised this was an emotive subject and said that full consultation would take place. She thanked all those who were in attendance in the public gallery. She referred to a written representation received from Janice Burkinshaw concerning the importance of retaining the hedges around the park for several reasons including for birds. Councillor Jones wanted to reassure people that the document is not stating what the Council will do, it is just a springboard for consultation. She said the birds and animals will stay, but it may be that the aviary will be re-sited but there were no details as yet. The Council has been working with the University and Shaping Portsmouth Partnership in relation to the site.

With regard to the Lodge, Councillor Jones said that she had found the comments made by Mr Lewis at Council on 12 July pragmatic and useful. She advised that she had met with him to discuss options. In summary Councillor Jones said that the decision today was not about detail. Victoria Park is a very important site and it was important to keep all options open.

DECISION:

That the Leader of the Council with responsibilities for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development approved the Victoria Park Action Plan.

14. Update on Building Control Partnership (AI 4)

A verbal update was provided by the Assistant Director of Culture and City Development, Claire Upton-Brown. She reported that the Council Building Control team joined the Gosport and Fareham Borough Council Partnership last Summer.

The Partnership is working well though there have been some problems around recruitment and retention. The Partnership management team are now looking at a revised staffing structure to address these issues. Initial discussions about expanding the Partnership are taking place and the possibility of setting up a Trading Company is being considered.

15. Exclusion of Press and Public (AI 5)

Councillor Jones said that although there is provision to move the meeting into exempt session, she hoped to keep proceedings in open for as long as possible which could be achieved if Members did not need to refer to the exempt appendix to the report.

16. Northern Quarter: Termination of Development Agreement (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Tom Southall, Property & Investment Manager introduced the report which provides background to the recommendation to terminate the development agreement and agreement for lease between Portsmouth City Council and Centros Portsmouth Limited Partnership (CPLP).

Councillor Vernon-Jackson was invited to make his deputation which he then did including the following points

- the delays in developing the Northern Quarter caused by a number of factors (including from one protestor who significantly delayed the compulsory purchase order), then the economic downturn
- it would be useful to have clarification on the ownership of the land and also how others owning property in Commercial Road will be affected.

- He advocated the City Council should look at investing in a scheme to move the development forward as part of the Council's investment portfolio as that may generate a profit and also would lead to more business rates being received by the Council.

Tom Southall explained the land ownership and said that public documents were available that detail the ownership.

Councillor Jones said that matters had moved on since the Northern Quarter development had first been considered. The scheme had effectively been dead for at least five years and there was now a need to formalise the situation. A good relationship between the Council and the Land Agents had now been established with the intention of formulating a cohesive plan going forward. She said that the recovery of costs mentioned in s 6 of the report will be the subject of a further report for the s151 officer and Deputy Chief Executive for action in consultation with the Leader of the Council with responsibilities for PRED.

DECISION:

- (1) To terminate the development agreement and agreement for lease.**
- (2) That a report is prepared for the S151 Officer and Deputy Chief Executive for action in consultation with the Leader of the Council with responsibilities for PRED on:**
 - i. Any sums outstanding between the parties and the rights of recovery,**
 - ii. property implications regarding the transfer of titles or otherwise of the properties currently held in trust on behalf of Centros Portsmouth Partnership Limited.**

The meeting concluded at 10.30am.

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 Councillor Donna Jones
 Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration & Economic
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