

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 12 January 2017 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: P M Beresford
N J Collor
M D Conolly
P Walker
Mr P Ward

Also Present: Mr Daniel Brenchley (BAM)
Mr Stephen Jepson (Hadron Consulting)
Mr Dean Lucas (Faithful & Gould)
Mr Gary Thomason (GT3 Architects)

Officers: Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Corporate Architectural Project Officer
Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer
Principal Community and Leisure Officer
Democratic Support Officer

73 APOLOGIES

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

74 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members.

75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

76 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting of the Group held on 8 December 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Mr Thomason advised that the layout of the site was almost settled, although he was looking to make additional savings by reducing the footprint of the building. It was estimated that the number of car parking spaces would be 271. The Director of Environment and Corporate Assets (DECA) reported that the Council would be acquiring an additional area of land. The provision of more parking spaces within the site boundary could not be achieved efficiently and would require the building of costly retaining structures for little gain and was therefore best avoided. The proposed layout included space for a spa which would be used for parking in the event that the spa was not built (with the loss of around 20-25 spaces if the spa were built).

The Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) advised that the decision had been taken to provide two pool pods rather than a platform lift for disabled access. Not only were these cheaper than a lift but doubling up would allow access during maintenance or repairs.

Mr Thomason advised that it was the intention to remove some glazing from the Clip 'n' Climb area and add more glazing to the main elevation to give a lighter, more open feel. In respect of exterior finish, Members were advised that render was the cheapest option, with cladding twice as expensive and brickwork more costly still. Brickwork was low maintenance and would weather well, but would come with long-term maintenance issues. In response to Councillor P Walker who emphasised the importance of minimising running costs, Mr Jepson advised that all three options would achieve the same levels of thermal efficiency. Mr Lucas clarified that the amount of glazing used would affect insulation properties and potentially add to running costs. It was therefore important not to include excessive amounts of glazing.

Mr Thomason advised that it was his aim to achieve the best value for money for the Council, delivering the most cost effective and efficient building possible. He was working closely with Faithful & Gould to ensure that costings were achieved. In his view, the outside of the building should be as neutral as possible and finished in render. That said, there were key features which would give the building the wow factor, such as a steel and timber canopy on the front elevation and a curved reception desk. There would be a wide glazing element to the main entrance, as well as a glass and steel feature staircase.

Mr Jepson commented that GT3 would be exploring how the design of the front of the building could be replicated to other elevations. The report to September Cabinet would confirm the design and cost of the new leisure centre. In the meantime, Members would have an opportunity to comment and to confirm that they were content with the direction being followed. The DECA added that Member input was critical, but not every last detail would come to the PAG.

It was agreed that the new leisure centre should be externally finished in render, in either white or off-white (final colour to be decided).

78

RISKS

An updated risks paper was circulated to Members. Mr Jepson advised that the risk of not meeting the delivery date for the new centre had gone down now that the spa was not going ahead. Some work had been carried out in respect of unexploded ordinance and this was now a low risk. The risk relating to the change of building location had also decreased. Site ownership was moving forward but remained a risk until the land was secured. The route of the proposed cycle path was complicated and made it technically difficult to deliver. The risk relating to archaeology had also risen following a desktop study which had identified that there might be remains on the site. However, a scheme would be agreed before the planning application was submitted. The PIDO reported that a Case Officer had been appointed to provide pre-application planning advice.

The risk relating to Sport England (SE) funding had also reduced following the removal of the spa. The Principal Leisure Officer (PLO) reported that, at a recent meeting with SE, Officers had gone through every aspect of the project. SE had reacted positively to the removal of the spa and to the project team's work in general. SE continued to encourage the Council to pursue a bid for capital funding

of £1.5 million. Officers would be submitting an expression of interest for funding in mid-March. The planning application would be submitted in June, and SE's decision was expected in July. Design and other information had been, and would continue to be, shared with SE in order to ensure that they were on board with the plans. Mr Thomason confirmed that he designed to SE's standards as a matter of course.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

79 PROGRAMME

The PIDO advised that the estimated date for the fit-out and handover of the new leisure centre had been brought forward to January 2019. In response to Councillor M D Conolly, the DECA agreed that a presentation to Council at an appropriate time would be sensible.

It was agreed to note the update.

80 CONTRACTOR INTRODUCTION

Mr Brenchley introduced his company which was a national contractor that had worked locally on projects such as those at the Duke of York's Royal Military and Portal House Schools.

He advised that BAM was currently working through the second stage of the contractor project, with the design phase being a 10-week process. BAM would engage with five key sub-contractors to test the cost programme and the way the leisure centre was built. This would be done in conjunction with the consultancy team. Competitive tenders would also be issued to BAM sub-contractors as part of the process.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

81 LAND ACQUISITION

The DECA advised that complications had arisen regarding the southern boundary of the site and the acquisition of the additional strip of land. There were also potential Planning issues over what was classed as employment land and land that remained unallocated countryside. Nevertheless, the price of the land and terms and conditions had been agreed. Draft contracts had also been prepared and it was hoped to exchange within the following two weeks. It was clarified that the cost of the land had gone up marginally to reflect the increase in land size.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

82 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the start time of future meetings be changed to 4.45pm.

83 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the item to be considered involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

84 PROJECT COSTS

Mr Lucas advised that the total cost of the project (excluding land) was £23.6 million which exceeded the Council's budget of £22.6 million. However, savings had been identified to bring the costs back within budget, including savings made on substructure and by not fully 'future-proofing' for the spa. Other potential savings could be made by moving the services intake to the bottom of the site and by moving the basement plant room to the ground floor. BAM had expressed confidence in the cost plan which included a robust contingency.

The DECA reassured the Group that costs were being closely monitored. Mr Jepson added that, even with all the consultants appointed, there remained a healthy budget to cover consultancy costs. Additional expenditure was not expected and, in his view, the Council was achieving good value for money.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

85 OPERATOR PROCUREMENT

The PLO advised that the intention was to tender the operator contract at the end of February, with the return of bids by the end of April. Tenders would be evaluated and recommendations presented to Cabinet in September. The DECA added that the Council would need to ensure that usage prices at the new centre were not prohibitive. Ceilings would therefore be set for the new operator and included in the tender documentation. The Group's input on pricing would be sought.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.38 pm.