

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 13 July 2017 at 4.45 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: N J Collor  
M R Eddy  
Mr P Ward

Also present: Mr G Thomason (GT3 Architects)  
Mr R Thompson (Hadron Consulting)

Officers: Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer  
Principal Leisure Officer  
Corporate Architectural Project Officer  
Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P M Beresford, M D Conolly and P Walker.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor M R Eddy had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor P Walker.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting of the Group held on 6 April 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Members viewed updated plans and drawings. Mr Thomason advised that he and colleagues had picked the best and most innovative aspects of all the leisure centre buildings visited. He highlighted key points, including the retention of a curved reception/café area; the use of walnut instead of beech, and the installation of Tom Dixon lights as a focal point over the reception area. It was confirmed that there would be no lights directly over the swimming-pool as these would be more difficult and costly to maintain. There would also be a feature staircase. Some aspects of the detailed design, such as signage, would be finalised once an operator had been appointed.

Block colours would be used in the wet-side area. Pool-pods, which improved independence and accessibility for the disabled, would be installed in both pools. In accordance with Sports England (SE) guidance, fittings in the wet-side changing-rooms would be fixed to walls and streamlined to make them easier to clean and

improve hygiene. There were also plans to incorporate hand-dryers into the vanity units to avoid splashing and staining. There would be mixed changing facilities for schools, families, etc. Finally, it was reported that the landscape architect was reviewing the landscape specification to make final adjustments and improvements.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

## 6 PROGRAMME

A programme summary was circulated to the Group. Mr Thompson advised that the programme was broadly on track. It was anticipated that the planning application would be determined by the end of July. Most of the 35 tender packages issued had been returned, and an interim tender report was due in July. A final report on contractor and operator procurement would be presented to the special Cabinet meeting on 11 September. It was clarified that the projected opening date of January 2019 remained the Council's aspiration. Subject to the operator's input, it was likely that existing members would be allowed access during January 2019 to 'test' the facilities before they were opened to the public.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

## 7 PLANNING

The Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) advised that the determination of the planning application had been extended to the end of July in order to enable further discussions to take place with Kent County Council (KCC), Stagecoach and Southern Water regarding transport, the Section 106 agreement and drainage. Since only four objections had been received, the application would be determined by officers rather than the Planning Committee.

It had been anticipated that it would be necessary for the Council to enter into a Section 106 agreement with KCC which would be a lengthy process. However, this might not be necessary as KCC had asked for a Section 278 agreement to deliver the roundabout upgrade rather than a financial contribution. Approximately £70,000 would be made available for the bus ticketing incentive scheme, the detail of which would be set out in a travel plan, to be controlled by a planning condition. The plan would be developed by a consultant travel adviser and paid for by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the operator. Prior to issuing the decision notice, the Secretary of State would be consulted due to the fact that the LPA proposed to depart from the Local Plan. Once issued, the notice would be subject to a 6-week judicial review period.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

## 8 THE DANES

The PIDO reported that, during pre-application discussions, a number of issues had been raised concerning plans to move spoil from the leisure centre site to the Danes. Although the Council had previously commissioned contamination reports, the environmental health consultant had advised that additional work was required. The additional work had not been costed but, if costs continued to rise, a judgement would be needed on whether it was better to take the spoil to a commercial site. Investigations were also being made into re-using some of the soil on site. In response to queries, it was clarified that around 8,000 cubic metres of soil (or 40 lorry loads) would need to be moved each day.

Representatives from St Edmund's Roman Catholic School and Dover Grammar School for Girls had been invited to the public consultation event held at the Danes on 23 May. Both organisations were keen on the project to rejuvenate the Danes, and had been made aware of the lorry movements required to deliver the project. Lorry movements would be scheduled to avoid school drop-off and pick-up times. Feedback from residents, who had also been invited to the consultation event, had been overwhelmingly positive, with only one person expressing reservations about the scheme. A Statement of Community Involvement would be submitted with the planning application. The Principal Leisure Officer (PLO) added that the rejuvenation of the Danes would meet the wider objectives of the Council. Furthermore, the local representative of the Land Trust, which owned adjacent land and was working with the developers of land at Connaught Barracks, had expressed enthusiasm for the project as it would link well to their development.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the dates of future meetings be noted.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: 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 items involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11 RISKS

Referring to the risks summary circulated to Members, Mr Thompson reported that, since the Group last met, Southern Water had responded, proposing that an extensive and costly upgrade to off-site infrastructure be undertaken. This would present a significant risk to the overall project, including delaying the commencement date of construction. The consultants' engineers had identified an alternative solution and discussions with Southern Water were ongoing.

In respect of the risk surrounding planning conditions, Members were advised that these would not be known until the end of July, and there was a tight timescale for discharging them. In terms of construction costs, some tender packages had been higher than expected and others lower. The risk on water supply had reduced, as had the risk relating to plans to use deep bored soakaways to deal with surface water. Until the planning conditions were known, the level of risk on archaeological remains was uncertain. However, test trenches had already been dug and very little of significance had been found. Mr Thomason advised that discussions had been held with Building Control and fire safety assessors who had raised no concerns. Finally, the proposed building was on track to achieve a 'very good' BREEAM (sustainability) standard of 64%.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

12 PROJECT COSTS

Mr Thompson advised that, of the 35 construction packages tendered, 30 had been returned. Half of these had been fully assessed by BAM and the cost consultants, and the remainder would be completed by the end of July, at which time the final projected cost of the project would be clearer.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

13 OPERATOR PROCUREMENT

The PLO advised that four strong bids had been received following the operator procurement tender exercise. These had been evaluated by a group consisting of officers, the Sports Consultancy and Councillor Trevor Bartlett. Whilst two bidders had stood out from the rest, it had been a unanimous decision to recommend the award of the contract to one company. Both of the leading tenders had met the threshold for management fees and affordability. A decision on the award of the contract would be taken at the special Cabinet meeting in September.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

14 FUNDING APPLICATION TO SPORT ENGLAND

The Group received a briefing on the funding application that had been made to SE in June. The application had been considered by SE's Investment Committee on 11 July which had decided to make a conditional award of £1.5 million. SE would provide a draft contract for the Council to examine, and a report on the matter would be considered at the special Cabinet meeting in September.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.58 pm.