

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 13 September 2018 at 4.45 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: P M Beresford
N J Collor
M J Ovenden
P Walker
Mr P Ward

Also present: Mr T Crafer (Places Leisure)
Mr R Thompson (Hadron Consulting)
Mr S Warriner (Places Leisure)

Officers: Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer
Democratic Services Officer

16 APOLOGIES

It was noted that Councillor M D Conolly had sent an apology for absence.

17 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor M J Ovenden had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor M D Conolly.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

19 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting of the Group held on 7 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 OPERATION OF EXISTING LEISURE CENTRE AND MOBILISATION OF NEW DOVER DISTRICT LEISURE CENTRE

Mr Tony Crafer advised members that Places Leisure engaged extensively with its customers via social media and by means of independent mystery shopping, gym and swimming-pool visits, and online surveys. Customers were also regularly invited to 'meet the manager'. With the highest score being 10, 25% of those using the existing centre had given it an 8. It was anticipated that the new centre would attract higher scores. The company would report such information to the Council quarterly, and operations meetings would be held with Officers every month for the first six months and then quarterly thereafter. Mr Steve Warriner added that, once the Project Advisory Group had disbanded, this information would be presented to bi-annual partnership board meetings.

In response to Councillor Peter Walker, the Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) advised that more new staff would be recruited in due course,

helping to maintain the momentum in service improvement and the excitement associated with the opening of the new centre. She reassured members that there would be lots of engagement between Officers and Places Leisure after the Project Advisory Group's role had finished.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

21 CONSTRUCTION

Mr Richard Thompson reported that the construction continued to be carried out to a very high standard. There would be close liaison with the operator in the four months leading up to the opening, and all parties were confident that the new centre would open in February. The PIDO advised that the Council would be responsible for landscaping works, including planting, maintenance, etc. Whilst the handover and opening dates were not definite, they were still within the parameters predicted.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

22 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Members received an update on design development.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

23 PROGRAMME

In response to concerns raised by Mr Peter Ward, Mr Thompson clarified that the drowning detection cameras in the swimming-pools were only visible to the lifeguards who, as a requirement of their role, were Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)-checked. Moreover, data protection regulations applied to the camera tapes which would be kept in a secure location.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

24 PLANNING

Mr Thompson reported that a comprehensive archaeology report had been submitted in accordance with conditions. The PIDO reported that there had been some issues regarding discharge of drainage conditions, but they were being resolved. She advised that consultants had been commissioned to prepare a travel plan. In respect of works to the Tesco roundabout, an order for works had been placed and the Council was working with Kent County Council (KCC) on suspension notices. The works would probably take place in the autumn half-term and would last less than a week. She was pleased to report that there were no concerns about the planning conditions which were steadily being discharged.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

25 COMMUNICATIONS

The Group was advised that a newsletter on the new centre had been circulated. There had also been a recruitment drive for new staff, and car-charging points had also been commissioned.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

26 ACCESS ROAD

The PIDO expressed confidence that proposals on drainage submitted to KCC would be acceptable. BAM Ltd had already programmed the road and drainage works into their schedule, and there would be a naming ceremony once the works had been completed. Mr Thompson advised that there would be a height restriction barrier at the entrance to the new centre to prevent lorries using the car park.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

27 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on 8 November and thereafter on 10 January 2019.

28 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.

29 CLIENT PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Thompson updated members on construction progress. A large number of apprentices were employed at the site. The Council's Building Control team was satisfied with the building works, and the Fire & Rescue Service had visited the site. Councillor Walker commended the cleanliness of the building site, and remarked upon the happy workforce. Mr Thompson agreed that it was an exemplar building site.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

30 RISKS

A risks summary was circulated to Members. Mr Thompson advised that the drainage works to the access road were the biggest outstanding risk as they were as yet un-costed. Councillor Walker expressed concerns about the cost of maintenance at the existing centre and whether a serious problem at the existing centre could cause a gap in the provision of leisure services before the new centre opened. The PIDO reassured members that monthly meetings were held to manage these risks. Sport England had given the project its final sign-off which meant that the remainder of the funding would be drawn down.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

31 PROJECT COSTS

The PIDO reported that a review of project costs with an accountant had indicated that the overall budget of £26 million was achievable. Whilst the access road costs were uncertain, it was felt that these could be contained within budget. A report itemising project costs, including the cost of demolishing the existing centre, would go to Cabinet in due course. Mr Thompson reminded members that most of the

contingency budget had been spent on improvements rather than on troubleshooting. It was good news that the project would come in under budget, yet with improvements made to the original specification.

The PIDO advised that a footpath to Melbourne Avenue would be provided if funds were left in the budget. In response to Councillor M J Ovenden, she advised that a detailed plan had been developed for the demolition of the existing centre and the disposal of equipment. Some of the latter was leased and would be sold to cover leasing costs (as far as possible). However, most of the equipment was old and the potential for its being re-used was limited.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.43 pm.