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Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 12 October 2017 at 4.45 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

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

Officers: Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer
Principal Leisure Officer
Democratic Services Officer

15 APOLOGIES

It was noted that Councillor P Walker had sent an apology for absence.

16 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.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

18 MINUTES

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the minute numbers were incorrect and would be amended. Subject to this, the notes of the meeting of the Group held on 13 July 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 PROJECT AND CONTRACT UPDATE

Mr Thompson informed Members that site works had started on 25 September, and the contract, subject to legal examination, would be in place by the end of the month. BAM would be issuing monthly progress reports that could be shared with members of the Project Advisory Group, although some redactions might be made. Works were ahead of schedule to date.

In response to a point raised by Councillor N J Collor on a planning condition, the Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) clarified that the use of electric charging points would only be permitted during the centre's hours of operation which would be set out in the condition.

It was agreed that progress reports would be circulated to members of the Project Advisory Group (and Councillor M R Eddy), with some redactions made if necessary.

20 ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was agreed that the order of business be varied to consider Agenda Item 7 (Operator Appointment) before Agenda Item 6 (Design Development).

21 OPERATOR APPOINTMENT

The Principal Leisure Officer (PLO) advised that there had been no challenges during the standstill period and Places for People, the successful bidder, had officially been appointed. It was intended that Places for People would move into the existing leisure centre in April 2018, until such time as the new centre was open. There were plans for the new operator to attend a Project Advisory Group meeting at the appropriate time.

Follow-up discussions with Your Leisure, the existing operator, had been positive, and Officers were hopeful that there would be a smooth transition. Issues surrounding the surrender of the existing leisure centre lease remained unresolved.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

22 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Mr Thomason advised that, not unexpectedly, Places for People had requested changes to the design of some areas to reflect how they operated as a business. In particular, they had put forward some good ideas for lockers/benches and higher quality/more robust lockers would now be used. Amongst other things, they had also requested a smaller staff area and a separate access for the spin studio. Members were shown the amended plans/designs.

GT3 had been able to incorporate virtually all of the changes requested whilst maintaining the overall footprint of the building. Sport England had been involved and was content with the changes. Mr Thompson added that the operator was aware that any changes that increased the capital cost would have to be met by them.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

23 PROGRAMME

A programme summary was circulated to the Group. Mr Thompson advised that progress was in line with the programme and ahead of schedule in some areas.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

24 COMMUNICATIONS

The PLO advised that there had been a ground-breaking ceremony at the new site on 4 October. A number of press releases had been issued since September, and subscribers to the Council's Keep Me Posted service were receiving regular updates. Work was progressing on a new dedicated Council webpage. BAM had also set up a Facebook page and photographs were uploaded to this regularly.

Mr Ward advised that, whilst most of the comments on the Dover Forum had been positive, some concerns had been raised about the cost of using the new centre. The PLO advised that the latter would be addressed through the new webpage.

Officers advised that correspondence had been exchanged with Charlie Elphicke MP regarding Vista Twisters. As part of ongoing engagement with Vista Twisters, there had been a site meeting at Christ Church Academy in 2016. Disappointingly, Vista Twisters had advised that the facility did not meet their needs due to the lack of storage. Officers continued to work with schools to find a solution.

In response to Councillor M D Conolly, the PIDO advised that public transport issues would be considered imminently, as required by conditions attached to the planning consent. They had also been raised with the operator. Evidence from similar facilities elsewhere in the country indicated that, whilst there was daytime demand for bus services, this fell away in the evening.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

25 PLANNING

The PIDO reported that Southern Water had advised that upgrades to the sewer network in Whitfield would be undertaken within two years of the new leisure centre being built. For this reason, it was re-considering its advice regarding the need for an attenuation tank. However, the Council had no choice but to go ahead and prepare to build the tank given that construction was underway and no firm advice had yet been received.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

26 FUNDING APPLICATION TO SPORT ENGLAND

The PLO advised that Sport England's award of £1.5 million had been the largest award made in 2017. It was anticipated that the agreement would be signed by the end of the following week.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

27 THE DANES

The PIDO advised that planning permission to cap the former landfill sites at the Danes would not be in place in time for spoil from the leisure centre development to be taken there. However, if planning consent was secured, then the project could be completed using spoil from other sites. These improvements would bring two areas of open space back into public use. Lizards and slow-worms at the Danes were being transferred to the Western Heights.

It was agreed that the update be noted and that there would be no further need to discuss the Danes at the Dover Leisure Centre Project Advisory Group.

28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the November meeting be cancelled. The next meeting would therefore be held on 11 January, with People for Places invited to attend. It was suggested that the March meeting could take place at the construction site. However, the Democratic Services Officer advised that this would present problems

since meetings of the Project Advisory Group were required to be accessible to the public.

It was agreed that People for Places be invited to attend the next meeting on 11 January 2018.

29 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.

30 RISKS

Referring to the risks summary circulated to Members, Mr Thompson advised that the Planning risks had diminished significantly, with the emphasis now on discharging conditions. That said, the risk relating to foul water drainage capacity remained significant, albeit that it had dropped slightly. The PIDO advised that, whilst there was a desire to introduce a cycle path, costs had not yet been fully defined and there was no budget for it. Design work was being undertaken on the access road which would be finished to a standard that could be adopted by Kent County Council. Archaeological risks had reduced following surveys. The Council's Building Control Officer had visited the site and was content with the works to date. Finally, Zurich Insurance had raised an issue with the cladding to be used on the building and discussions were ongoing.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

31 PROJECT COSTS

Mr Thompson reminded Members that the project costs had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 11 September. The total cost of the project would be £26.4 million. The contract sum would be monitored on a monthly basis.

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm.