

Minutes of the meeting of the **SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 25 April 2018 at 6.01 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor L A Keen

Councillors: S F Bannister (as substitute for Councillor G Cowan)
T A Bond
P I Carter
R J Frost
P J Hawkins
P D Jull
M J Ovenden
N A G Richards

Officers: Head of Inward Investment
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer

Also present: Councillor P Walker

104 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence received from Councillors G Cowan and N Dixon.

105 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Councillor S F Bannister was appointed as substitute for Councillor G Cowan.

106 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

107 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 9 September 2017, 13 September 2017 and 17 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2017 were deferred the next meeting.

108 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Democratic Services Manager advised that no members of the public had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

109 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE

There were no items of business to consider.

110 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were no items of business to consider.

111 ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY OR PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OR PUBLIC PETITION

There were no items of business to consider.

112 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to the Committee for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

113 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration.

Members were asked to provide their Key Questions for the Private Sector Landlords meeting (date to be confirmed) to the Democratic Services Manager.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

114 DOVER DISTRICT REGENERATION UPDATE

The Head of Inward Investment provided a presentation and update on the regeneration of the district to the Committee and took questions from Members.

The key regeneration topics covered in the presentation were:

Transportation Infrastructure

- M2/A2 strategic network improvements – required to support the new Lower Thames Crossing, the growth of Canterbury and the ports of Dover and Ramsgate; also including Brenley Corner improvements; A2 dualling from Lydden to Dover and the bifurcation of traffic to the Port of Dover.
- M20/A20 improvements – supporting the growth of Ashford, Dover and Shepway, including a solution to Operation Stack, HGV overnight parking and access to the Port of Dover.
- Public transport improvements – including: South Eastern's franchise renewal; Dover Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and; improving access to north Deal for future development and connecting to the A256 to ease pressure on the A258.

Members considered the profound effect these plans could have on this part of the county. This district had a fragile road network and it was essential to ensure the

fluidity of traffic throughout the district. The Head of Inward Investment was hopeful that government would programme the dualling of the A2 carriageway into the Lower Thames Crossing plans.

With the onset of Brexit Members were concerned there was little known information available to Members and the public concerning the impact the potential delays, due to increased checks at the Port, would have on this district's roads and the rest of Kent. Recent studies by Imperial College and the University of Kent had been completed and the Leader was engaged with a number of parties. Concerns had been raised to the various parties involved regarding the potential impact of delays to the districts road network. Members argued that the data modelling so far was too crude. DDC should be producing its own studies analysing various variables, including the time to check loads, the number of lorries/vehicles that could be checked at once and future trends at the Port and use this information to provide the public and Council with a more detailed analysis.

Further attributing to the anticipated pressure on the districts roads was the commercial and large housing developments taking place. In particular it was recognised that as more homes were completed in Whitfield, the Whitfield roundabout which was regularly congested, was only likely to worsen as the White Cliffs Phase 2 was finished and the Lower Thames Crossing would divert more traffic down the M2/A2. The Committee believed this could be alleviated with a new Whitfield by-pass in the medium term. Members were reminded that the first phase of the Whitfield development would deliver traffic light improvements to the Whitfield roundabout.

Development Locations

- Discovery Park – currently had 160 companies and 3,400 employees.
- Betteshanger Business Park – visitor centre had progressed and was scheduled to open in spring 2019. Projections of 150,000+ visitors were expected.
- Tilmanstone Colliery – fabricated panels for construction industry. 105 employees, exporting to 160 countries. Confirmation from Multipanel UK that they were continuing their investment by 30% for 2018/19.
- Snowdown Colliery – Bee Equipment Ltd had secured agreement to develop a small business, including manufacturing, glamping, science research and would now proceed through the planning process.
- Connaught Barracks – Homes England had procured a developer for the site with detailed proposals to follow soon.
- White Cliffs Business Park – lots of activity and further planning applications received indicating that the market was now showing confidence and Phase 2 was looking hopeful to complete.
- Western Heights and Farthingloe – remained a live application although the Supreme Court had quashed the previous consent.
- Local Plan – approximately 210 expressions of interest for development currently being plotted on GIS map.

The new owners of the Discovery Park were determined to invest in its future, continuing to bolster life sciences and bring both housing and commercial offers on site. Members were advised that consent for 500 executive homes had been approved, although this was likely to be fewer due to flooding issues, and that a supermarket, hotel and pub were also part of the offer. This was likely to be a significant opportunity for Sandwich generating local jobs although there would be need for highway improvements, which Kent Highways would be looking at. Councillor P I Carter was also keen to promote green travel and links with the local schools.

Core Housing Allocations

Development	Units
Whitfield Urban Extension	5,750
Aylesham Garden Village	1,200
Dover Waterfront	500
Discovery Park	500
Connaught Barracks (Homes England)	500
Buckland Mill (Homes England)	400

Members considered various housing developments across the district, including the completed and partly developed schemes. Members argued there were a lack of utilities infrastructure (water, electricity, sewage and broadband) in place to cope with the increase and were often holding up developments. A long term plan was needed to ensure that provision was in place to meet the needs of future developments in the district and would urge Cabinet to work with other East Kent councils to plan ahead.

Tourism and Culture

- Dover supported the county's tourism industry
- 11 million passengers through the Port of Dover
- UK's second busiest cruise terminal
- The Open returned to Sandwich 12 – 19 July 2019
- Dover Castle
- Western Heights
- Lydden Race Circuit
- Investing in heritage/visitor assets:
 - Maison Dieu
 - Kearsney Parks
 - Fort Burgoyne
 - Roman Painted House

Dover Town Centre

- St James 157,000 sq ft of new leisure and retail
- £53m invested by Legal and General
- £4.2m Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the Maison Dieu
- Market Square – Coastal Community Fund
- Discovery Centre
- Connectivity to Waterfront and Western Docks Revival

Members were advised that retail studies of the town centres were continuing and that evidence gathering was currently being completed by the Policy and Projects Manager. Members were keen to know the effectiveness of projects, such as St James', and requested the Committee had sight of the final close out report for the development once it became available.

Dover Waterfront

- Piling works 90% complete. In-fill of reclaimed land underway.
- Port had recently confirmed the contract for refrigerated cargo terminal.
- Dover Waterfront Planning Framework – including the area around the Wellington basin and Bench Street and ensuring DDC capitalised on this for St James'.

Dover in an East Kent Context

- Five East Kent authorities and Kent County Council had worked together and produced a report showing the infrastructure needs vital for growth in East Kent.

Members thanked the Head of Inward Investment for the presentation and answering their questions.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Cabinet:

- (a) That the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee be advised when it was expected that the final close out report on the St James development would be made available for members of scrutiny.
- (b) That Cabinet be urged to meet as soon as possible, both locally and in conjunction with other East Kent councils, to plan ahead on a longer term basis with utility infrastructure providers (such as water, electricity, sewage and broadband) to ensure that provision is in place to meet the needs of future developments in the district.
- (c) That Cabinet be requested to produce a detailed report that will improve the public and Council knowledge on the impact of increased customer checks at the Port. It should analyse several variables including the time to check loads, the number of lorries that can be checked at once, the percentage of vehicles checked and future trends.
- (d) That the Committee express its concern that the Whitfield roundabout is becoming more congested and that this can only get worse as more homes are completed, the White Cliffs Business Park Phase 2 is finished and the Lower Thames Crossing that will divert more traffic down the M2/A2. The Committee believes that there will be a need for a new Whitfield by-pass in the medium term. The Committee requests that Cabinet or Dover Joint Transportation Board inform it of what

forward planning is being carried out to alleviate the anticipated congestion.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm.