

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER TOWN CENTRE AND WATERFRONT PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Tuesday, 23 May 2017 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor P A Watkins

Councillors: P M Beresford
P M Brivio (Minute No 11 only)
N J Collor
M R Eddy
P Walker

Also present: Mr R Coutts (Baca)
Mr Patrick Carter (Baca)
Councillor B Gardner
Councillor N Rix (Dover Town Council)

Officers: Head of Inward Investment
Head of Regeneration and Development
Policy and Projects Manager
Democratic Support Officer

6 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor N J Collor and duly seconded that Councillor P A Watkins be elected as Chairman of the meeting.

It was agreed that Councillor P A Watkins be elected as Chairman of the meeting.

7 APOLOGIES

It was noted that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor T J Bartlett.

8 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members appointed.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

10 TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was agreed that the Group's Terms of Reference be noted.

11 UPDATE ON DOVER WATERFRONT

The Group received a presentation on the Dover Waterfront Masterplan.

The Head of Inward Investment clarified that partners involved in the project were the Port of Dover, South East Property Management (as landowners) and Dover District Council (DDC). Kent County Council (KCC) Highways was also involved in

relation to public realm proposals, and a number of other statutory bodies were also engaged, such as Historic England and Highways England. A number of stakeholder workshops had been held, involving Dover Town Council amongst others.

Mr Coutts reminded the Group that the Masterplan covered the town centre and the new marina. In accordance with Policy CP08 of the Council's Core Strategy, it aimed to deliver a minimum of 300 new homes (although this was now closer to 415). The proposed uses and priorities of the project had been made available to all stakeholders at the last meeting. Once agreed, these would inform the cost plan and what Section 106 contributions would be sought from developers.

Mr Coutts advised that a baseline study had been undertaken to identify what was missing from the visitor experience in Dover. From this research it was evident that a lot of visitor 'circuits' converged on Bench Street and involved crossing the A20, the latter highlighting the potential importance of a land-bridge. It was estimated that the land-bridge would cost £10 million, but this could easily rise to £20 million. South East Property Management had expressed interest in hosting the land-bridge on its land, but Dover Harbour Board could equally benefit from the bridge depending on where it was sited. The Head of Inward Investment advised that an equalisation agreement would be needed.

The cable-car would be a key component of the project, with De Bradelei Wharf or Camden Crescent now short-listed as the potential site for the base station, with Granville Gardens the preferred 'drop-off' site for operators (the other being Wellington Dock). There were challenges in 'threading' the track through the town, and issues such as cost, health and safety, heritage and proximity to existing properties would come into play. The appeal of the De Bradelei site was that it would deliver footfall into the heart of Wellington Dock. Consequently, cable-car operators had been looking for assurances regarding the standard of development at that site.

The Masterplan included a proposal for 'Spanish steps' in Granville Gardens which, like the waterfront area, had great potential as a theatre and events venue. Proposals for a lido on the seafront would increase the town's leisure offer. There would also be space for a cultural building and a Pharos tower. A funicular railway would take visitors to the apex of the Drop Redoubt, thus providing linkage between the town, the proposed Commonwealth Memorial and the new hotel.

There were also plans for a (predominantly) residential tower on the marine promenade. This would be no higher than 21 storeys (or 65 metres) and the design had been changed following feedback from DDC. In respect of public realm, LDA was looking at key road and pedestrian movements through the town, with plans to introduce signage and green interventions at Dover Priory Station amongst other things.

Councillor N Rix commented that, unless it was of a particularly innovative design, a tower on the seafront should be avoided as it would have Burlington House connotations. Councillor Watkins agreed that a residential tower would be very unpopular. Councillor P Walker commented that a tower would be a detracting feature, particularly when many visitors to Dover expressed their dislike for the Gateway flats. In his opinion, the tower would do nothing to enhance the development. Mr Coutts advised that the Masterplan would set out the Planning framework, but it was more difficult for the document to define the calibre of development. Although Dover Harbour Board had plans to use the tower, it was

hoping for a large amount of residential accommodation as this would help fund the wider development.

In response to Councillor M R Eddy, Mr Coutts advised that the viability of the tower would not only depend on the number of storeys but also on land value. Most successful waterfront developments featured a tall building of some description. With the right architect and design, such a building could be an attractive feature and create a 'bookend' to the seafront. In respect of its impact on the Drop Redoubt, details of the proposal had been passed to Historic England and feedback was awaited.

Members welcomed the proposals for the land-bridge, Dover Priory, the floating lido and the Granville Gardens 'steps' which would help to encourage a café society. In response to a suggestion by Councillor Eddy, Mr Coutts agreed that a conference centre at the waterfront could attract visitors to Dover and complement the proposed hotel and food and beverage outlets. Councillor Rix added that Dover was in need of more high-class hotels and shops.

In respect of retail, Members were advised that there was a retail provision of 80,000 square metres in the current Masterplan. This was in contrast to the guideline of 200,000 square metres set out in Policy CP08. On hearing that retail proposals for Wellington Docks had been replaced with food and beverage provision, Members agreed that they wished to see the retail provision at Wellington Docks reinstated.

The Group was advised that, whilst there would be sufficient parking for the residents of the tower and Bench Street, parking for Camden Crescent would be more difficult, with only 150 residential spaces. However, it was likely that more on-street spaces could be created along De Bradelei Wharf. In total, it was estimated that there would be 1,300 public spaces, 180 marina spaces and 365 residential spaces, leaving a shortfall of 51 residential spaces. It was noted that a large number of designated spaces would be needed for the cable car. The Head of Inward Investment advised that there were wider parking issues associated with the Western Docks revival scheme, such as staff parking. Mr Carter reassured Members that WSP, the consultants, were looking closely at parking provision.

Like Folkestone and Margate, it was recommended that resources be invested in a dedicated website for Dover in order to raise its profile.

The Head of Regeneration and Development advised that the next stage in the Masterplan process was to test the proposals with statutory consultees in respect of air quality, transport, etc. From a Planning perspective, Officers would need to be convinced about the amount of public space included in the proposals, and the significant number of large buildings with their potential for overshadowing.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.38 pm.