

Minutes of the Meeting of the Investment Advisory Panel held on 27 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Alex Anderson, Mark Hooper, Steve Liddiard, Fraser Massey, Elizabeth Rigby and Lee Watson

Apologies: Councillor Graham Snell

In attendance: Alex Kershaw – Stanhope Capital LLP
Kitty Bhaman – Stanhope Capital LLP
Mark Bowen, Interim Project Lead - Legal
Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place
Rob Large, Programme Director - Asset Disposals
Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was not being live streamed and recorded as the meeting was an advisory panel.

6. Apologies

7. Minutes

The minutes of the Investment Advisory Panel meeting held on 31 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

8. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

10. Verbal Update from Stanhope Capital LLP

Alex Kershaw and Kitty Bhaman from Stanhope Capital LLP introduced themselves to the Committee. Alex Kershaw explained that Stanhope Capital LLP is a leading Independent Wealth Management and Advisory firm. The role of Stanhope Capital LLP has been to provide investment assurance and to oversee the work of the investment manager at Camdor. Stanhope oversee recommendations, check they are best practice and that any assumptions made are reasonable and provide challenge.

Kitty Bhaman stated that they looked at the investment recommendations in detail and validated them to ensure it was the appropriate market and the right time to sell. Kitty Bhaman confirmed that they found that the work completed was of a high standard and well considered with detailed assumptions that had been well looked into. Stanhope were able to reassure the S151 Officer that the process was robust and the prices they wanted to receive for Toucan could be reasonably achieved.

Alex Kershaw clarified that Stanhope is not completing due diligence but instead checking that the work Camdor has done is reasonable and robust and in accordance with best practice. Alex confirmed that the next project they will be looking at is the wind farms.

- Members queried how Toucan was sold so quickly
- Members queried the timescales for selling the rest of the investments. The S151 Officer responded that Toucan had been a major job and it was right that it was dealt with first as it was the largest investment. By March 2024 90% of the investments will be sold or in progress. The Council will be moving on to consider other investments.

11. Treasury Monitoring Half Year Report - To Follow

The S151 Officer introduced the report. He confirmed the report had already been to Cabinet and was due to go to Council tomorrow. He stated that with regard to recommendation 1 of the report a 5 million pound limit had been put on the DMO (Debt Management Office) previously and this needed to be amended to unlimited. It is normal practice to have an unlimited amount as this is the safest place to deposit cash. The second recommendation refers to amending the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (MRP) and this has already been agreed by Cabinet on 21 February 2024. The S151 Officer reiterated that all sale proceeds need to be used to pay down the debt. The Council is under a specific Government direction to get the debt down.

The meeting went into closed session at 19.32

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the Investment Advisory Panel comment on the following amendments to the 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy:

- 1. That there is a revision to the Counterparty Limits in that investments placed with the Debt Management Office (DMO) are changed from £5m to unlimited.**
- 2. Amend the Minimum Revenue Provision policy to revert back to Option 1 in respect of supported capital expenditure in line with the Statutory MRP Guidance.**

12. Rental Income Update Report

The meeting returned to open session at 20.01

The Programme Director for Asset Disposals introduced the report to members.

- Members queried why Kemsleys manage some properties. The Programme Director for Asset Disposals confirmed that historically that is what has happened. Some Local Authorities manage everything in-house and some use just letting agents. Using a blend is not a bad thing. It is hard to get surveyors to work at Local Authorities. Letting agents can bring in extra resources if there is a spike in activity. A positive of completing rent reviews in-house is you don't have to pay commission.

The meeting went into closed session at 20.12

13. Work Programme

No items were added to the work programme.

14. Asset Disposal Programme Update

This item was held in closed session.

15. Legal Recovery - Verbal Update

This item was held in closed session.

The meeting finished at 9.03 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk