

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 September 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Oliver Gerrish (Chair) John Allen (arrived at 8 pm), Tom Kelly, Terry Piccolo

Councillor Mark Coxshall, Regeneration Portfolio Holder

Apologies: Councillors Barbara Rice (Chair) and Peter Smith (Vice-Chair)

In attendance: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration & Assets
Stephen Taylor, Programmes and Projects Manager
Andy Millard, Head of Planning & Growth
Kirsty Paul, Principal Planning Officer
Ann Osola, Head of Highways and Transportation
Ken Dytor, Managing Director, Urban Catalyst
Lee Nightingale, Director, KSS Architects
John Rowles, Purfleet Community Forum Representative
Jessica Feeney, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

8. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 July 2016 were approved as a correct record.

9. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

10. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Kelly and Councillor Piccolo declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of the Purfleet Regeneration Update as they were both members of the Planning Committee and this item would ultimately come before the Planning Committee.

11. Purfleet Regeneration Update

The Head of Regeneration & Assets informed the committee that the Purfleet Centre Project was the largest regeneration programme that the Council is directly responsible for delivering. The high profile scheme would ultimately create more than 2,300 new homes and a state-of-the-art film, television and media studio complex around a new town centre featuring primary and

secondary schools, a health centre and local shops, leisure and community facilities whilst opening up riverfront access alongside 1km of the Thames.

The Council entered into contract with its chosen development partner (Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited (PCRL)) in January 2016 with those agreements going unconditional in March 2016. These agreements secured the funds necessary to deliver the first phase of the project which was anticipated to include several hundred new homes and much of the community infrastructure (schools, health centre, shops and local facilities) that the area currently lacks.

Since entering into contract, the Council and PCRL have been working together to review the initial proposals for the scheme with a view to developing a new master plan which would support the submission of the necessary planning applications in late 2016 to enable a start on site in Summer 2017. The Council's express approval is needed for any significant changes to the master plan and so the master plan is being presented to PTR O&S as part of that consideration. The Committee has previously received delegated authority from Cabinet to consider the development of the proposals.

The Committee invited PCRL to present their presentation. The presentation informed members of the work completed to date to review the master plan and the emerging proposals. The drivers for any changes and the remaining issues still to be resolved were outlined.

Mr. Rowles a representative from the Purfleet Community Forum was invited to the committee to make a statement. Mr. Rowles praised the master plan explaining that this was something he was very passionate about, he expressed that the development was a fantastic opportunity. It was explained that there were 25 individuals on the design panel who had been involved in the creation of the development whilst working alongside the Council and architects.

Councillor Gerrish supported the development and felt that it was a very exciting time for Thurrock and the Purfleet community. Councillor Gerrish praised the regeneration team, PCRL and the Purfleet Community Forum for their hard work. He was pleased to see some real progress and strongly supported the plan highlighting the benefits of the secondary school, studios and the opportunity for Purfleet to become a creative hub.

Councillor Kelly informed the committee of the areas that he felt the planning committee may want to understand when the necessary planning applications are submitted.

- The importance of the riverfront and how activity might be generated along it.
- Highways access to, from and through the proposed developments, via A13, M25.
- Clarification of the quantity and positioning of tree plantations

- If adequate access had been made for cars dropping and collecting children from the primary and secondary school.

Councillor Piccolo was pleased with the proposed developments and felt satisfied that the developers had worked alongside the community when creating the plan. He was keen to see the river brought into active use with consideration given to the jetty and the potential for ferry transport and tourism.

Councillor Gerrish questioned the timescale in which the level crossing closure would take place. It was confirmed that the level crossing closure would begin in either phase one or phase two.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee welcomed the progress made on the Purfleet Centre project, review and comment upon the emerging masterplan proposals and identify any areas which they consider require further development.

12. Thurrock Local Plan : Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation

Members were informed that the February 2014 Cabinet gave authorisation for the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the future development of Thurrock. As part of the formal plan-making process the Council was required to consult the local community, business and stakeholders on the content of the Local Plan. On the 24 February the Council authorised a 6 week public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Thurrock Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy.

Members were enlightened that the report provided a summary of the representations made in response to the Issues and Options (Stage 1) Public Consultation Document which would be reported to Council on 28 September 2016 with a recommendation seeking authorisation to publish the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Public Consultation.

Councillor Mark Coxshall supported the plan and was pleased with the process of the consultation so far.

Councillor Kelly questioned how the council could review that number of car parking spaces allocated to each dwelling in the borough. The Head of Planning explained that this could be explored through the design strategy. The Head of Highways and Transportation added that the parking strategy for 2016- 2019 would also tie into this matter.

Councillor Piccolo felt that the consultation had been successful, although it was suggested that a reduction in the number of questions in future consultations may increase a higher completion rate by members of the public.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- 1. Noted progress on the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan.**
- 2. Considered the attached Report and the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage1) Report of Consultation and provide comments for final documents for submission to September Council.**

13. Parking Strategy 2016

Members were informed that the Grays South Project, which seeks to create public squares and an underpass to replace the pedestrian level crossing in Grays High Street together with the development of modern retail and residential units, has been a long standing priority for the Council.

The Council has been working with Network Rail to develop the proposals for the underpass over the past four years. To date, the actions required for delivery had been divided between the partners with Network Rail leading design and construction and the Council leading land acquisition, urban design and the ultimate development of plots around the completed underpass.

It was anticipated that Network Rail would provide up to £4million of funding, with circa £3 million from the Department for transport Access for All Fund. However, Network Rail has changed the status of the project to a 'Third Party scheme' and, following a change in its classification to a 'public body', has had to take a much more aggressive view of its ability to fund projects where there is a risk that they cannot be completed within the relevant spend period . As a result of these changes, Network Rail have withdrawn the Access for All monies and are exploring the opportunity to add lifts to link the platforms within the station. Their funding to the underpass would therefore be limited to a maximum the £700,000 that they have spent to date developing the designs. In order to progress, the Council would have to meet the costs of the project and a funding strategy had been developed drawing upon the existing commitments within the MTFS, available s106 funds and anticipated receipts

from future developments matched against an application to the Local Growth Fund through SELEP.

Councillor Gerrish was disappointed that the funding from network rail had been reduced, but stated that the regeneration team must remain enthusiastic in relation to the project. The Head of Regeneration & Assets informed committee members that there was now a £6 million gap in the funding which was proposed to be filled through development receipts. It was confirmed that the existing and anticipated Council funding committed to the scheme was specifically set aside for the project and was not being taken away from other priorities.

Councillor Piccolo questioned if the funding was not resourced within the next few months, what was the next line of action. The Head of Regeneration & Assets explained this depended on the application which had been submitted to the Local Growth Fund through SELEP, Members were informed that they would be informed of the feedback from SELEP once received by the council.

Members recognised the change in responsibility for funding the scheme, and the significant delays which have been encountered to date in the work led by Network Rail, and considered the potential benefits of the Council taking on leadership of the delivery of the scheme.

RESOLVED:

Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the approach to managing the delivery of the underpass, public squares and development plots described in this report and to provide their view of the best way in which to progress the future management and delivery of the pedestrian underpass.

14. Grays South: Delivering the pedestrian underpass

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RESOLVED:

Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the approach to managing the delivery of the underpass, public squares and development plots described in this report and to provide their view of the best way in which to progress the future management and delivery of the pedestrian underpass.

The meeting finished at 8.57 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**