

Scrutiny Sovereign Centre Task Group

**Minutes of meeting held in Meeting Room One. Town Hall on 23 January 2019
at 6.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor Paul Metcalfe (Chair)
Councillors Colin Belsey, Pat Rodohan and Jim Murray

Officers in attendance:

Jessica Haines (Head of Commercial Business), Ian Fitzpatrick (Director of Regeneration and Planning) and Paul Quanstrom (Corporate Projects Support Officer) and Jazmin Victory (Committee Officer)

Also in attendance:

Jason Roberts (Graduate Surveyor, Retail & Business Space, Stiles Harold Williams), Peter Coldbreath (Partner Development, Stiles Harold Williams) and Richard Pyne (Partner Retail and Leisure, Stiles Harold Williams)

12 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2018 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

13 Apologies for absence

There were none.

14 Declarations of interests

There were none.

15 Urgent items of business

There were none.

16 Sovereign Centre Task Group

Councillors noted the presentation from Stiles Harold Williams, an independent property real estate advisory business which specialises in many aspects of commercial and residential property. Topics covered in the presentation included:

The advantages of the Sovereign Centre Site:

- Exceptionally rare Seafront Development Site

- Capable of providing the catalyst for wider regeneration within an isolated and currently underutilised backwater
- A 'blank canvas'
- Prominent Gateway Site

Possibilities of development on the site:

- High quality residential development
- Affordable housing
- Retirement homes / village
- New water sport & Beach front leisure
- Beach huts
- Convenience store sub 5,000 sq. ft

Other uses:

- Supermarket – being mindful of the proximity of Lottbridge Drove
- Theatre/Arts – however due to the newly revamped theatre district of the Devonshire Quarter and Cineworld moving from Sovereign Harbour Retail Park to their new Multiplex in The Beacon unlikely to be suitable
- Commercial - with The Beacon now open and the Town Centre trading well, it would not be viable to cause further competition
- Office - Eastbourne has a good town office market but development in this locality was not likely to be financially viable

Benefits of a residential development on the site:

- Housing supply
- Re-use of Brownfield site
- Public realm enhancement
- Capital receipts and additional council tax income
- Jobs
- Sustainability
- Further good news that Eastbourne is expanding
- Catalyst for further investment

Councillors questioned why a hotel development was not recommended by Stiles Harold Williams and were informed that, not only would a 5* hotel have a detrimental effect on existing Eastbourne seafront hotels, but they did not envision a sustainable amount of clientele to warrant a developer being interested in the site.

Whilst Councillors were not satisfied with the suggestion of a Supermarket or convenience store being developed, they were inclined to the idea of a multiuse approach to the site, whereby residential flats would be built on top of a retail establishment and possibly high-end hotel rooms (4*). Possibilities for types of residential housing discussed by the Task Group included:

- Age restricted flats;
- Luxury high rise flats tailored for high earners; and
- Flats tailored for professional sharers.

Councillors felt that due to the unique location of the site, it could warrant unique seafront architecture with regards to both building design and height, and that a good scheme would be a competition for architects to submit designs.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the presentation of Stiles Harold Williams; and
2. That members and officers noted that this was the final meeting of the Scrutiny Sovereign Centre Task Group and that a draft report would be circulated to members in due course for their approval. Following this, the final report would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2019.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Councillor Paul Metcalfe (Chair)