

Scrutiny Sovereign Centre Task Group

Minutes of meeting held in Meeting Room One - Eastbourne Town Hall on 26 September 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present:

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

Officers in attendance:

Jessica Haines (Head of Commercial Business), Matthew Hitchen (Senior Planning Policy Officer) and Jazmin Victory (Committee Officer)

Also in attendance:

Alex Hall, AECOM

7 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2018 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

8 Apologies for absence

There were none.

9 Declarations of interests

There were none.

10 Urgent items of business

There were none.

11 Sovereign Centre Scrutiny Task Group

Members noted the presentation from the Head of Commercial Business and were informed that she would be taking over from the Senior Planning Policy Officer as the lead officer for this task group. Topics covered in the presentation included:

The Sovereign Centre Land - Options Appraisal:

- How to achieve best value for the community
- How to ensure sustainability of neighbourhoods & communities linking closely with the Council's planning colleagues
- Engagement and consultation with stakeholders

- Commercial viability and opportunity
- Potentially 3.39 acres of land for development

Members suggested that the potential 3.39 acres of land could allow for more than one option to be developed in order to maximise the commercial viability of the site. Officers suggested that at the next meeting of the task group 3D visualisations which presented multiuse potentials of the site could be provided.

Members queried whether the Council had any preference regarding whether the land be rented on a leasehold agreement or the land be sold. Officers responded that this would ultimately be a decision for Cabinet once proposals had been put forward by interested companies.

Option Appraisal – Initial Assessment:

- The site could lend itself to leisure and entertainment uses given its close proximity to similar businesses
- Opinion has been gathered from soft market testing and operators of
 - Ten pin bowling
 - Supermarkets
 - Hotel chains

Members unanimously rejected the idea of a supermarket being built on the site, on the basis that it was not considered best use of the sites seafront location. Members queried why housing options were not suggested by officers, and were informed that, considering what was developed around the building, given the close proximity of the site to other facilities and having worked closely with the planning department, the Council felt that the options provided were suitable and practical initial suggestions. Regarding hotels, members were mindful that a big chain hotel could have a negative effect on the existing hotel industry along the seafront of Eastbourne.

Members questioned what restrictions the Council were aware of, and were referred to information provided in the Senior Planning Policy Officer's report at the meeting of the task group on 6 June 2018:

5.2 The majority of the proposed development site is subject to various restrictive covenants, one of which prevents the land from being used "as a school or for any educational purpose or as a public house or beer shop".

5.3 In addition, there is a restriction on the use of the site for "any trade or business whatsoever or otherwise as a private dwelling house without the consent in writing of the Duke his heirs or assigns".

Pursuant to the minutes of the last meeting, the Senior Planning Policy Officer presented maps of the area which included site plans, a map detailing flood

zones of the area and a topographic map indicating the AOD (members noted that AOD stood for "above ordnance datum"). A copy of these maps is to be uploaded alongside the minutes of this meeting.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the presentation of the Head of Commercial Business;
2. That members noted the maps provided by the Senior Planning Policy Officer, pursuant to the minutes of the last meeting; and
3. That at the next meeting of the task group, the Head of Commercial Business would present a market engagement report with practical possibilities and commercial people who were interested in the site, alongside 3D visualisations of potential options. The next meeting of the task group was anticipated to take place in early December.

Reason:

To contribute to the focussed programme of work which would enable the task group to understand the planning policy considerations of the Sovereign Centre site; consider options for the site, as presented by officers and recommend a preferred option for the site to the Cabinet on 20 March 2019.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Councillor Paul Metcalfe (Chair)