

Item 6b – Land East of the High Street, Sevenoaks

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet on 16 July 2024. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Cabinet (16 July 2024, Minute 19)

The Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation presented the report which set out the identified opportunity to regenerate the Land to the East of Sevenoaks High Street, following the pressing need to undertake significant work to decarbonise the existing leisure centre and other buildings owned to ensure compliance with new environmental standards. Regenerating Land to the East of Sevenoaks High Street would help achieve this, whilst also helping to deliver other objectives, in line with principles and policies noted in the Council's Communities Plan, the emerging local plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, the Economic Development Strategy and the Town Centre Strategy. The report had been thoroughly considered by Finance & Investment Advisory Committee, People & Places Advisory Committee and Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee.

The Regeneration Development Project Manager brought to Members' attention that this project was an opportunity to improve Sevenoaks town centre for residents and visitors. He advised that the project was in the very early state of testing the vision and early concept ideas for the site. The Council had undertaken key stakeholder and public engagement activities to seek views and feedback on these early concept ideas. Members noted that feedback received from this engagement would be used to refine the vision and clearly set development objectives and principles prior to procuring a strategic development partner. It was further explained that this feedback would feed into the Sevenoaks Town Centre masterplan work, the design brief, the invitation to tender and other associated procurement documents, and the evaluation criteria to be used for the appointment of the strategic development partner.

Further key stakeholder and public engagement consultation exercises would be undertaken once the strategic development partner had been selected and the LLP established, as the project progressed and more details emerged.

Members noted the comments received from the Finance and Investment, People and Places and Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committees. They considered the supplementary document which detailed the revisions to the main report as it progressed through the Advisory Committees. Members further considered the report of the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee Working Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Investment expressed his thanks to the Member Working Group and the officers for their work.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the public sector equality duty.

Resolved: That

(a) it be noted that the project supports the objectives, principles and policies noted in the Council Plan, Communities Plan, the emerging local plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, the Economic Development Strategy and the Town Centre Strategy;

(b) it be recommended to Council to approve the recommendations set out below (recommendations to Council (i) to (iiii)); and

(i) the development approach outlined in the report to deliver a mixed use scheme in collaboration with Kent County Council and to establish an appropriate special purpose vehicle and other arrangements between the two Councils and a Strategic Development Partner(s) be approved;

(ii) prior to the appointment of the Strategic Development Partner(s), a further Committee report be submitted to Cabinet to outline the heads of terms of the special purpose vehicle and the associated contractual documentation for approval;

(iii) authority be delegated to the Strategic Head of Property & Commercial together with the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Finance and Trading and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Investment to establish a special purpose vehicle and procure a joint venture Strategic Development Partner(s) subject to approval by Cabinet of the heads of terms of the special purpose vehicle and the associated contractual documentation; and

(iiii) authority be delegated to the Strategic Head of Property & Commercial, following consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Finance and Trading, to enter into necessary professional appointments/contracts to procure the services of the necessary consultants.

(c) the virement of £435,000 in the 2024/25 Capital Programme be allocated to this project to prepare, with the approval of the Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation, the required documents and reports and procure the necessary consultants to assist with the appointment of the Strategic Development Partner(s), subject to approval of the development approach being approved by Council.