

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on 27 October 2020

PRESENT -

Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman); Councillor Clive Smitheram (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Steve Bridger, Kate Chinn, Nigel Collin, Hannah Dalton,
David Gulland, Colin Keane and Barry Nash

In Attendance: Councillor Bernie Muir

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating
Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Rod Brown (Head of Housing and
Community), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Brendan Bradley
(Chief Accountant) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

38 QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked by members of the Public.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interests were made in relation to the business to
be considered at the meeting:

The Wells Redevelopment

All Members of the Committee, Other Interest: All Members of the Committee had
received a number of emails with regard to the Wells.

Distribution of Grant Funding to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor Barry Nash, Other Interest: Councillor Barry Nash declared that he was a
Trustee of Age Concern through his role as the Chair of the Council's Community &
wellbeing Committee.

Distribution of Grant Funding to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor David Gulland, Other Interest: Councillor David Gulland declared that he had
been an active volunteer at the Food Bank for a number of years.

Distribution of Grant Funding to Voluntary Organisations

Councillor Kate Chinn, Other Interest: Councillor Kate Chinn declared that she was a
volunteer with Age Concern and was well acquainted with the Chief Executive of that
organisation.

40 THE WELLS REDEVELOPMENT

The Committee received a report updating it upon the Wells site following the Council's Planning Committee on 9 July 2020. The report recommended a feasibility study be undertaken to enable Committee to consider the cost and layout implications of a revised scheme.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Proposed amendment.** A Motion to amend the recommendations of the report was moved by Councillor David Gulland and seconded by Councillor Kate Chinn. The Motion proposed that the following wording replace the recommendations in the report:

“The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree to the creation of joint working party to include residents of the Wells Estate to prepare options for a revised scheme;
- (2) Approves a budget of up to £25,000 to cover the costs of any required professional support to investigate such options, to be funded from the Corporate Projects Reserve;
- (3) Agrees to a report being brought back to this Committee as soon as the feasibility work has been completed.”

During the consideration of this Motion the Committee considered the following matter.

- **Consultation with residents.** Following a question from a Member, The Head of Property and Regeneration informed the Committee that a consultation open to residents of the Wells estate had been held in October 2018. Following that Officers had met with a group of residents. The consultation responses and discussions with residents had shaped the size of the community facility and parking facilities put forward in the planning application.

Following consideration the Committee resolved that the proposed amendments be rejected, with 3 Members voting for the Motion, 6 Members voting against the Motion and the Chairman not voting.

- b) **Finance for feasibility work.** Following a question from a Member, the Committee was informed that although £25,000 of the original budget for the Wells redevelopment would not be spent, it could not be utilised for the feasibility work proposed by this report. The Committee was requested to approve a separate budget of £25,000 for the feasibility work proposed by the report.
- c) **Terms of reference for feasibility study.** Following a question from a Councillor, the Committee was informed that detailed terms of reference for the feasibility study would be produced for the tendering of the works.

These would be available to Councillors once the tendering process had been completed.

Following consideration, it was resolved with 6 Members voting for, 3 Members voting against and the Chairman not voting, that the Committee:

- (1) **Agreed to the preparation of additional feasibility work on options for a revised scheme;**
- (2) **Approved a budget of up to £25,000 to cover the costs of the feasibility work, to be funded from the Corporate Projects Reserve;**
- (3) **Agreed to a report being brought back to this Committee as soon as the feasibility work has been completed.**

41 ROAD TO RECOVERY

The Committee received a report setting out the challenges facing Epsom and Ewell's local economy as a result of COVID-19 and highlighting the positive action being taken by the Council to support the road to economic recovery.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Work to support the local economy.** Following a question from a Member, the Committee was informed that the Council was utilising its existing resources wherever possible in its work to support the local economy, such as the High Street Task Force, High Street Marshalls and increased communications. The Committee was also informed that the Government had provided funding via one off grants and an income compensation scheme which enabled Councils to claim back a proportion of their lost income.
- b) **Impact of end in temporary ban on residential eviction.** Following a question from a Member, it was noted that information relating to the number of people presenting to the Council as homeless following the end of the Government's temporary ban on residential eviction would be circulated to all Members of the Committee following the meeting.
- c) **Thank you to staff.** The Committee thanked the Council's officers for their excellent work in supporting the Borough over a range of areas during the pandemic, with particular reference to those staff who were operating in new areas of work.
- d) **Evaluation of changes to footway, northern side of High Street.** Following a question from a Member, it was noted that changes to the northern side of side of Epsom High Street were the responsibility of Surrey County Council. The impact of the changed arrangements would continue to be monitored.
- e) **Use of European Union Regional Development Fund monies.** Following a question from a Member, the Chief Operating Officer informed

the Committee that there were a number of restrictive rules and requirements for accessing ERDF funds which made it very challenging to utilise, and that this view had been expressed by other authorities nationally. There were also significant risks associated with accessing the funds, as they could potentially be clawed-back if there were any errors in any of the processes followed to access it. The focus of the Fund was to support marketing and communications activities, which the Council was continuing to do, making use of the Fund where appropriate.

- f) **Local shopping parades.** The Committee was informed that all the shopping parades in the Borough were visited by the Council's High Street Task Force. Information about the work undertaken by the Task Force would be included in future editions of Members Update.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- (1) **Noted the challenges facing Epsom and Ewell's economy as a result of COVID-19 and its aftermath;**
- (2) **Confirmed its support for the range of actions set out in the report being taken by the Council to support local businesses and the wider economy with the process of recovery.**

42 DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT FUNDING TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Committee received a report seeking the allocation of grant funding to support those most impacted by COVID-19 and on-going pressures for winter 2020, including transition towards EU exit.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Foodbank support for families in receipt of free school meals.** The Head of Housing and Community informed the Committee that Epsom and Ewell Foodbank would be able to support families in receipt of free school meals during the upcoming school holiday.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- (1) **Agreed the full allocation of £38,598.65 of the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies to the Epsom and Ewell Foodbank;**
- (2) **Agreed the award of £10,000 from the EU Exit funding for local government, with the funds being awarded equally to the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age Concern.**

43 DEVELOPING A PIPELINE FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT

The Committee received a report recommending that a one-off budget of £50,000 be allocated to enable the Council to progress the development of this future investment pipeline.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Support for local areas.** The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that opportunities for investment would be sought from across the Borough, not just within the town centre.
- b) **Timing for investment.** The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that the Government, County Council and Coast to Capital LEP were looking to invest in schemes in Boroughs and Districts as an approach to support economic recovery. The Chief Operating Officer highlighted that investment supported jobs and confidence in the local economy. By developing a pipeline of future investment opportunities the Council was positioning itself to take advantage of those potential external investment streams. If the Council did not have a set of potential schemes identified, it was likely that external investment would be allocated to other parts of the County instead.

Following consideration, it was resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- (1) **Agreed to the allocation of £50,000 to support the development of a pipeline of future investment opportunities for Epsom and Ewell to be financed from the Council's corporate projects reserve;**
- (2) **Agreed that development proposals arising from this work be brought back to Strategy & Resources Committee for consideration.**

44 TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT WELLS ROAD

The Committee received a request for siting of telecommunication equipment on Council owned land at Wells Road. Permission for its siting was sought and agreement to a ten year lease on terms to be negotiated.

Following consideration, it was resolved with 8 Members voting for, 1 Member voting against and the Chairman not voting, that the Committee:

- (1) **Noted the provisions in the Electronic Communications Code (with effect from December 2017) with its significant changes favouring the presumption of approval for telecommunications masts and limiting the grounds for objection by land owners and occupiers of land.**
- (2) **Agreed the siting of a telecommunication mast on Council owned land at Wells Road, Epsom; and**
- (3) **Agreed to permit the instruction of an independent surveyor to act on behalf of EEBC to negotiate and agree Heads of Terms with the cost to be met by the operator; and**
- (4) **Agreed to enter a lease for a term of 10 years, with authority to agree terms and conditions delegated to the Chief Legal Officer.**

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.29 pm

COUNCILLOR EBER KINGTON (CHAIRMAN)