

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

Minutes of a meeting of the Asset Development Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday 30th September 2015 at 4:00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Councillor David Chaplin
Councillor Steve Cheetham
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Mathew Shuter
Councillor Lisa Stubbs

OTHERS

Councillor Lis Every
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Spencer Clark – Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Emma Grima – Director, Commercial & Corporate Services
John Hill – Chief Executive
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

16. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

17. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Dan Schumann.

18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

19. **MINUTES**

The Chairman apologised as, at the last meeting Councillor James Palmer had suggested he write to Members of the Committee about potential site visits, this had not been done.

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Asset Development Committee meeting held on 22nd July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

20. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

21. **BUS SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS**

The Committee considered a report, reference Q80, that outlined the condition of the four bus shelters in Market Street, Ely.

The Open Spaces & Facilities Manager thanked Members for their input into this interesting project. The bus shelters were in a poor condition but the scratched perspex could not be repaired. This meant they would have to be replaced and this could be funded through Section 106 monies.

Councillor Bill Hunt noted the revised recommendations that had been tabled. The Open Spaces & Facilities Manager and the Chairman did not want to be held back from proceeding with this work and asked for the ability, if necessary, to go back over the options for replacement.

Councillor Mathew Shuter wondered whether it would be possible for any funds left over, if the work came in under budget, to be put to one side as a maintenance fund for the shelters. It was revealed that maintenance would be minimal. The intention was to replace the shelters with others that could be maintained.

Councillor Steve Cheetham suggested that advertising on the fronts by local companies should be looked at, to raise additional income. Councillor Bill Hunt was not over-enthusiastic about advertising, as it would depend on the company and potential incomes involved and the tendency for such advertisements to become vandalised.

Councillor Lorna Dupré had more concern over the revised recommendation relating to the construction of the new shelters and their impact on this important part of the town. She was uncomfortable with what was proposed as it did not specify what shelters would be provided. This should be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Bill Hunt reminded the Committee that this issue had been raised six months ago, as the shelters were untidy then, so the sooner the work was done the better. The Committee was being asked to trust the Open Spaces & Facilities Manager and Committee Chairman to get this work done within the cost constraints imposed.

The revised recommendation was duly proposed and seconded. Councillor Lorna Dupré then proposed an amendment: that options for replacement shelters be evaluated and be returned to the Committee as a report. There were no seconders for this amendment, so it fell. The valid proposal was then voted on and declared carried.

It was resolved:

That the Open Spaces & Facilities Manager be instructed to replace the bus shelters as set out in 3.4 of this report up to a total cost of £17,232, in consultation with the Chairman of the Asset Development Committee.

22. **THE GRANGE LIFTS UPGRADE**

The Committee considered a report, reference Q81, previously circulated, which outlined maintenance work to be carried out to the lifts at The Grange and included reports from Zurich Insurance Company and the contractor.

The Open Spaces & Facilities Manager advised the Committee that three quotations had been obtained for the work to the lifts. To keep costs down, most of the working mechanical parts of the lifts could be replaced, rather than include cosmetic improvements.

Councillor Mathew Shuter asked whether the quotations included a warranty and a maintenance contract. The Committee was informed that there would be a 12-month warranty but there was already a maintenance contract in place.

Councillor Lisa Stubbs questioned if the works undertaken would be as a result of the Zurich or the maintenance report. It was revealed that it would result from both. The Zurich report had inspected the lifts and made recommendations, which had been taken into account.

Councillor Bill Hunt noted that the last Committee meeting had confirmed that the lifts were not fit-for-purpose. The Council had to be compliant with relevant regulations to provide access but wanted to do the minimum work necessary.

Councillor Lorna Dupré queried how many of the issues in the Zurich report had been addressed and whether a thorough examination had been undertaken. The Open Space & Facilities Manager explained that all the issues had been dealt with and problems rectified. The alarm was now audible and was regularly tested. An inspection had also been carried out.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the report from Zurich Insurance Company and the report from the contractor (Appendix 1) be noted;
- (ii) That the Open Spaces & Facilities Manager be instructed to bring forward the planned works for the lift in the old section of The Grange to 2015/16.

23. **THE ROLE OF THE ASSET DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANY (LATC)**

The Committee considered a report, reference Q82, previously circulated, which outlined the future role of Asset Development Committee in relation to the establishment and operation of the Local Authority Trading Company (LATC).

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that a number of issues relating to the Local Authority Trading Company were being considered for reporting to Council in January. Part of that was the future role of this Committee, as it

would be the shareholder committee on behalf of the Council. This Committee had been very active in identifying and delivering Council sites. A number of those would be appropriate to transfer to the Trading Company, which would act as the developer, and the Committee would continue to do this. To achieve good value, flexibility to procure works locally and to ensure quality developments, the Committee would provide sites with detailed planning permission before transferring. This would let the Council be specific about the type of developments it would allow but would give the Trading Company some flexibility to award smaller contracts to local builders. Transfer would then occur at the highest value prior to development. Although this would reduce the added value for the Trading Company, it would help reduce the tax burden. It was anticipated that this role for the Committee would increase.

Another responsibility for this Committee would be for it to be the designated shareholder committee for the Council. This meant that the Committee would monitor the Trading Company and the Committee was in the perfect position to do this.

The revised Terms of Reference, as Appendix 1, covered these important roles and would have to be recommended to full Council.

Councillor Lorna Dupré wanted to ensure that there was a proper separation between the Committee and members of the Trading Company Board at both Member and officer levels. This had not been made clear within the report. Reference had also been made in the revised Terms of Reference about urgent matters delegated to the Chief Executive and other officers. It was suggested that in paragraph 5.2 the words “or any matter under 3.6” be added to the third paragraph.

The Chief Executive explained that the delegation would allow other Directors to take urgent decisions. Thought had been given to his role when the Committee would scrutinise the Trading Company and in those meeting the lead officer role would be taken by the Director (Regulatory Services) instead. The Committee would meet on those occasions only to discuss Trading Company matters.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point, at 4:29pm, to take advice from the Chief Executive and seek clarification from Councillor Dupré.

The meeting reconvened at 4:39pm.

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee of the concerns about delegations to officers over urgent decisions. This should be accepted in principle but further work on the Terms of Reference would be needed to clarify the situation. An amendment to the recommendation was then made: that the words “subject to revisions to the scheme of delegation with reference to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 in the terms of reference in relation to 3.6” be added.

Councillor Mathew Shuter questioned what would happen in the event that the designated Leader and Deputy Leader were not able to serve on the Trading Company Board. The Chief Executive stated that the matter would have to be

referred to full Council to amend the articles of association. It would be a matter for the Trading Company and the Council to decide.

The revised recommendation was put to the Committee and, upon being put to the vote, was declared carried.

It was resolved to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL in January 2016:

That the revised terms of reference of the Committee as detailed in Appendix 1, subject to revisions to the scheme of delegation with reference to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 in the terms of reference in relation to 3.6, be approved.

24. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item nos. 10 to 12 because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

25. **LAND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE 2015/16**

The Committee considered an Exempt report, reference Q83, previously circulated, providing an update on land development opportunities and the asset development programme.

The Chief Executive gave updates to the Committee on a number of land and asset development opportunities. The Legal Services Manager clarified the position relating to one asset. The Committee made several amendments to the report recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the relevant officers be instructed to take the actions as per the revised recommendations tabled at the meeting;
- (ii) That the update in relation to previously identified land opportunities and asset development programme (as set out in Appendix 1) be noted.

26. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee considered it forward agenda plan.

The forward agenda plan was received.

27. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Asset Development Committee held on 22nd July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 5:10pm.